

# The Acton Free Press

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ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 1968

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## Opposition kills Mill shopping mall but meeting agrees on parking need

The Chamber of Commerce's shot at commercial experiment, a mall proposal, fell to the ground with a gentle thud Thursday night at a special public meeting in the council chamber.

But the Chamber's second arrow in the bow, a recommendation to council for more off-street parking, hit the bull's eye and received the full support of all over-30 present.

President of the Chamber, Paul Nielsen chaired the two-and-a-half-hour long meeting of questions, explanations and occasional accusations.

The plan to close off two Mill St. blocks for a trial two week period required the full cooperation of merchants and since this was obviously not forthcoming, the plan would be dropped, Mr. Nielsen concluded.

After two hours of mall pros and cons, off-street parking was the main issue of the meeting. A recommendation will go to council from the Chamber which already has a three-man committee working on the parking problem.

Mr. Nielsen also revealed the Chamber already has alternate plans for merchants' promotion, should the mall idea fall through.

To begin the meeting in the council chamber, Paul Nielsen thanked the over-30 for coming. "Acton might find itself at a crossroad," he said. "Developers are planning 168 houses and 10 stores on the Seymour property and 288 houses and a large shopping mall on the Van Gils farm."

A central business district is important to the whole town. We have to get out there and scratch for it... we have to be dynamic, he urged the merchants.

We can't develop or maintain what we have without off-street parking. It's a far more important subject than the mall. People are afraid of the mall because it is a new idea, but we live in a changing society and we must absorb new ideas or we will not be in business. Somebody else will be doing our business for us.

No small faction wants to shove the mall down others' throats. The mall is not possible without co-operation.

Mr. Nielsen held up a large chart, comparing per capita sales in Acton and Georgetown over the past 30 years. Georgetown sales were consistently ahead of Acton until 1961. After the building of the shopping plaza, sales per capita in Georgetown went lower than Acton's for the first time.

In the apparel and accessory business, sales per capita in Georgetown are \$147. In Acton they are just \$71. "Is it because people in Georgetown are so much better

where No. 7 highway would be rerouted.

Both Mrs. Gloria Browne and Bert Hinton brought up the possibility of closing off Willow St. instead of Mill.

"It's a sensible experiment that wouldn't do anyone any harm," Mr. Hinton said.

Mrs. Browne said new people to town, not yet accustomed to shopping here, would come for a special promotion with a carnival air.

Mr. Rachlin felt "putting on a show" would only be successful for a couple of weeks, and would not bring out-of-town customers on a steady basis. The new homes and new plazas would bring new business for downtown, too.

Station Hotel owner Clarence Anderson and downtown merchant Ben Rachlin both asked to whose advantage the mall would be.

Mr. Nielsen said it would benefit the downtown merchants, but as an experiment it would be a guide for council's deliberation on a development of this type. He himself would hope to get more of the 50 per cent of business he doesn't get now.

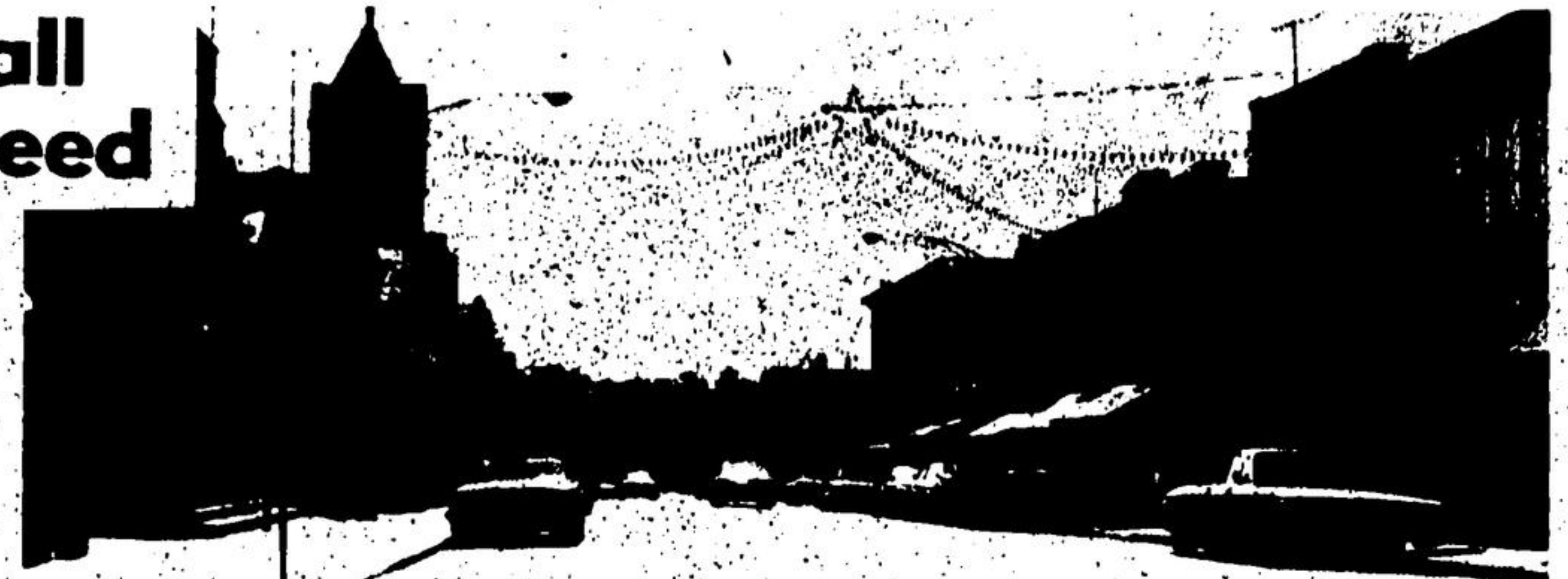
Mr. Anderson spoke for himself and Art Gordon as saying they would lose business, since they were in the area to be bypassed.

An off-the-cuff survey of the 30 in attendance was taken. The sheet circulated revealed: Merchants for the mall - 3, against - 3; others for - 9; against - 2.

The discussion on the mall was called "constructive" and "enlightening" by meeting chairman Nielsen who concluded, "I think this is as far as we can go."

He was asked if the Chamber would be dropping the mall proposal.

Mr. Nielsen said he would be dropping the mall proposal.



THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE has decided not to go ahead with a mall in Mill St. from John to Main following some opposition to the proposal from merchants involved. (Staff Photo)

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## Rev. Michael Bennett to be ordained priest

Rev. Michael J. Bennett will be ordained into the priesthood at the Cathedral of Christ the King, Hamilton, this Saturday morning, June 1.

The young Acton man was ordained a deacon a year ago in the same cathedral. Saturday's ceremonies will culminate years of study at St. Peter's seminary, London.

The new priest will celebrate his first mass at his home parish, at St. Joseph's church, Acton, this Sunday at 12 noon. A reception and dinner are being held afterwards in Guelph.

Sunday evening parishioners at St. Joseph's are holding a reception for Father Bennett in the church hall.

## Set new water rates for rural residents using Acton water

Rates for township residents using water from the Acton system will be double the combined sewer and water rates paid by

residents of town, council decided Tuesday night.

The recommendation from No. 2 committee accompanied a revised system of rates for water and sewer installation in town and township, which also was approved.

Mayor Dudy and Councillor Masales opposed township residents paying double the Acton sewer and water rates while Reeve Hinton opposed the new installation charges.

Township residents are only paying 10 cents more for water than ratepayers in some cases, Deputy-Reeve Oakes charged.

"We're in the business of selling water," Mayor Dudy stated, "and it's simply getting more business when we supply water to people who live along the water line."

Both the reeve and councillor Tyler challenged the mayor's statement. "No, we are not in business," they stated and they maintained rural residents were receiving water cheaper than Milton gets it.

"It's 50 times cheaper than drilling at their own home," maintained the deputy-reeve.

"But we're not only asking them to pay double water rates but double sewer rates as well," answered the mayor. Most councillors agreed but thought this was the only way to tax rural residents for the privilege of using the system which Acton ratepayers financed.

New charges are as follows with the previous figure in brackets. Minimum water installation - \$125 (\$45). Sewer only installation - \$140 (\$75). Combined installation - \$180 (\$125). Out of town installations will be the actual cost with a minimum of \$150. Minimum bi-monthly town rates will be on 1,000 gallons. Minimum bi-monthly out-of-town rates will be \$10.

## Charge of arson in Speyside fire

A Brampton couple, former residents of Milton and Speyside areas, have been jointly charged with arson following a fire that gutted a Speyside home they were renting on March 5.

Milton O.P.P. laid the charges this week. The couple appeared in court for a preliminary hearing and the case was adjourned until late in June.

Police suspected a fire at the Glenroy Farms home owned by Bruce Frame might have been deliberately set. It was gutted

and many possessions including a cat owned by the tenants were lost in the March fire.

The Ontario Fire Marshal's office and Milton Fire Chief A. E. Clement have been advised of the charges. Milton and Acton fire departments both answered the alarm. Const. Joseph Feldcamp is handling the investigation for Milton O.P.P.

Charged are Ron Wilson, 26, and his wife, 26, of 89 Mac-Murphy Ave., Brampton.

## Town turned on to lighted signs

Aesthetic, illuminated street signs like the one donated by Ted Tyler Sr. at the corner of Tyler Avenue and Elmore Drive, may someday be erected all over town.

The issue was discussed at the regular meeting of Acton's Hydro Commission last Thursday night.

It was agreed that in the light of new subdivisions, the signs would be an asset. Milton has the illuminated signs on most streets.

Mayor Dudy said he would suggest the signs at council, although he doubted if Acton can afford such a luxury for some time.

Hydro Superintendent Doug Mason has been instructed to find out the exact cost of installation in terms of labour and cost per foot.

It was decided not to contribute to the Salvation Army drive as it is against company policy to donate to any organization. However, members agreed that it is a very worthy cause and would donate on the personal level.

The cost of renting the "ditch witch" for private work has not been arrived at. There have been no requests for the machine as yet. The Commission is attempting to arrive at a price that will be within the means of the average citizen and still cover the costs of labour and overhead.

A resolution was passed, stating that any commissioner able to attend the A.M.E.U. Summer Conference to be held in Niagara Falls June 5, 6, 7, be authorized to do so expenses paid.

And the post office did manage to pay its hydro bill on time this month.

## Two-car accident Tuesday

An accident late Tuesday afternoon in Rockwood injured Miss Donna Hiseborough, Robert Little school teacher and Mrs. May Newton of R.M. 4.

The two-car collision occurred on wet highway. Both cars were considerably damaged.

Miss Hiseborough, alone in her car, suffered a cut face, injured nose and bruises. She is a patient in Guelph General Hospital.

In the other car were Mrs. Syd Newton, R. M. 4; visitors Chief Master Sgt. and Mrs. Kenneth Brazall, Illinois and Mrs. May Newton, R.M. 4. All four were taken to hospital but only Mrs. Newton Sr., with a broken ankle, was kept there last night.

## Council rescinds motions on mall

Acton council last night (Tuesday) rescinded two motions passed at the last meeting favoring a mall on Mill St.

Another resolution asked the clerk to assist the Chamber of Commerce to find more off-street parking was left intact.

However, complaints from businessmen that Acton lacks sufficient off-street parking were vigorously denied by councillors in a long discussion turning down the proposed mall.

Reeve Bert Hinton said council should look ahead at any further petition presented to them, and let the lessons of the past two weeks be a guide in the future. A recirculated petition had shown only eight merchants were in favor and 20 opposed to a mall in the business section.

Councillor Ted Tyler maintained, however, that the petition included names of people who merely worked in the business establishments and did not reflect owners' opinion.

The mayor defended the Chamber of Commerce who presented the mall petition and said they arrived at their decision by calling a meeting and basing a decision on the conclusions reached that night.

Councillor Drinkwater said he had just one comment to make: "It is unfortunate that the business people of Acton are so reluctant to make any business changes... If they won't accept change, we'll be forced to allow people to come in with the changes."

Defending businessmen, Reeve Hinton said they could not accept the proposed change. "We can't suggest to the business people what they want. They have enough capital investment to be interested."

Councillor Drinkwater, however, felt it was the ratepayers who dictate what kind of business they'll deal with. "That's why they're so busy out of town to shop."

Reeve Hinton claimed, however, the town of 4,000 or 5,000 could not possibly support facilities larger towns and cities have.



Susan Heard, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Heard, Church St., graduated in home economics from Macdonald Institute, Guelph, on Friday, May 24. She majored in home management.

She received the degree of B.H.Sc. at convocation at War Memorial Hall. Present were her parents, sister Eleanor who is a student at the University of Toronto, and her grandmother Mrs. R. V. Rickotts of Guelph. On June 3, she begins working for the Ontario Department of Agriculture in the home economics branch. She will be home economist for Huron county with the head office at Clinton. Susan is a graduate of Acton high school.



Donna Pendleton receives B.A. at U. of Toronto

On Thursday Donna Pendleton will receive the degree of Bachelor of Arts at convocation at the University of Toronto. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. Pendleton, will be attending the ceremony.

Donna, an Acton High school graduate, attended Victoria College at the U. of T. She majored in psychology.

She is working at the O'Keefe Centre for the summer and expects to study guidance and testing at the Ontario College of Education in the fall.

## Decoration Day this Sunday

Decoration Day, designed to honor the dead of the World Wars by placing wreaths and flowers at the cemeteries, is being held this Sunday afternoon. Citizens are invited to participate in the ceremony and at the same time decorate the graves of their own loved ones.

Guest speaker at the service at Fairview cemetery will be the Rev. Gordon Turner.

The parade begins at 2.15 p.m. with the service at 3 p.m.

## Survey favors mall

According to an opinion survey conducted in the Acton High School on Wednesday, the majority of young people are in favor of the recently rejected proposal of a mall in the downtown business area.

The results were as follows: Q. (1) Are you in favor of an experimental mall down town between John and Main? Results: Of the 375 who answered the question, 340 (90.7 per cent) said YES; 35 (9.3 per cent) said NO.

Q. (2) How long do you think it should be? Results: Of the 374 who answered yes to No. (1), 3.8 per cent said two days, 41.8 per cent said one week, 55 per cent said two weeks.

Q. (3) What is your parent's opinion? Results: Of the 374 who answered, 38.27 per cent said YES; 12.03 per cent said NO, 38.70 per cent said they didn't know.

This indicates that 76 per cent of the parents whose opinions were known, were in favor of the mall.

Winnia Vlietstra, 20, graduated from Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, with her Bachelor Degree in Education on Saturday May 25.

She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. S. Vlietstra of 210 Churchill Road. The family has lived in Acton since they emigrated from Holland 15 years ago. Winnia graduated from Robert Little Public School and completed her grade 12 at 16 years old in the Acton High School in 1964. This fall she will begin teaching in Timothy Christian School in Toronto, but eventually plans to return to the University of Michigan for her M.A. Attending her graduation were her parents, her sister Joann, her brother Albert and an aunt and uncle Mr. and Mrs. Elmer



BATHING BEAUTIES, circa 1900, at the Carol Wharton dance recital in the high school auditorium Friday were Joy Musella, Robin Marshall and Lynne MacNaughton in a catchy turn of the century number "By the Sea". Turn to second front for more pictures and story. (Staff Photo)