



Does Acton's main stem need a shot in the arm?

Acting on the premise that problems are better identified and solved when they are exposed to light, the Free Press this week asked reporter Dave Pink to interview Acton businessmen and sales people regarding the alleged lethargic state of business along Acton's main stems.

A number of vacant stores and complaints by some merchants that too many people in the town and district take shopping dollars elsewhere prompted the interviews. Next week we will ask the shoppers if they think there is a problem. Meanwhile here is what Dave found in his rounds:

By Dave Pink

A large number of the town's people choose to travel to shopping centres in Brampton, Georgetown and Guelph rather than shop in Acton.

Some Acton businessmen are worried by this trend but the majority are indifferent. Some admit they themselves often travel to an out-of-town shopping area for the same reasons that many of their former customers do—convenience of one-stop shopping and a better selection of goods.

When asked what they thought would improve the main street and make it more attractive to the shoppers some merchants

struggled for words. Others said there was a need for more public parking facilities and a better kept sidewalk but most were unconcerned with public opinion of downtown stores.

No effort

Realtor Alec Johnson laid the blame for the public apathy squarely on established sales people, saying the town merchants do not make an effort to promote their own sales. He said only a few local businessmen decorate their windows in a manner to attract customers.

Mr. Johnson elaborated, saying that planters of flowers were provided to bring

people downtown, but the merchants do nothing to bring them into their own stores. He remembers a plaque donated by former IGA owner, Jim Ledger, which was awarded annually to the store with the best decorated window over the Civic Holiday weekend. Mr. Johnson pointed out that the competition was dropped after the second year because of lack of interest from storeowners and managers.

Many shopkeepers thought the lack of public parking areas was the biggest problem with the main street. They told the Free Press that a number of their customers had also complained. One merchant

suggested the two hour parking limit be enforced but could offer no solution to the shortage of parking space.

A large number of merchants thought the appearance of the street was a major problem. Some suggested that the town workers be responsible for keeping the streets swept during the summer.

One local proprietor wondered why nothing had been done about weeds growing between buildings.

Sales people applauded the new flower planters and thought there should be more placed along Mill St. There was also a request for more waste disposal containers.

Some town storekeepers were concerned with empty stores in the downtown area, realizing more stores will attract more customers. At the same time a number decided not to renovate their stores for fear of going out of business. Taxes also had an effect on their decisions.

Merchants thought that a general facelift of the business section would probably do a great deal to attract customers into their stores but could not see complete co-operation from all the merchants involved.

Acton Family Billiards as an example. Jeweller Ben Rachlin stated: "A face

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Blue Fox make stuffed animals provides employment for students

Two Opportunities for Youth projects in Acton have been getting most of the ink so that few people are aware that another student youth project has been thriving since the first part of July.

Called the Blue Fox it was set up as a business to assist students to find work with a \$150 grant from the Self Help project of the Ontario Government. The group is managed by Russell Coultrup who received a \$500 grant to manage the business.

Three full time employees, three part time and a list of 10 others available on a temporary basis make up the Blue Fox. They have been so busy they are looking for additional temporary employees to share the load.

Original plan of the Blue Fox was to make crafts and do leatherwork at the high school art room but several of the original 15 students dropped out and leather was slow in coming. They decided instead to make stuffed animals as well as running an employment service.

Make samples

Samples of stuffed dogs, elephants and bears were made and taken around to see if people would be interested in buying them. The success of their product surprised them.

"All of a sudden we had so much work we didn't know what to do," says manager Russ Coultrup.

The students make the animals at the art room of the high school, which they were able to arrange through the Halton County Board of Education. Guidance teacher Brian Skerritt arranged to get the grant

DO US A FAVOUR

HIRE A STUDENT
We'll do ANYTHING
LABOURING, BABYSITTING ETC.
\$150-175/AN HOUR
OR
by the job
PHONE **BLUE FOX**
self-help
853-2630 10-4 p.m.

from the provincial government, applying in the middle of June. Then the students approached the Rotary Club, whose members agreed to sponsor them.

Since then the only direction has been up. The original \$150 set them up in business, paying the cost of a telephone and other expenses necessary to get the project going.

Filled requests

So far, the group has filled 15 requests for help at two local firms, area farms and households. Manager Coultrup works along side the others when he is not busy with arranging work. When there is no other work to do, they make stuffed animals.

"We are available for any type of work at any time," says the Blue Fox manager. Phone number of the group is 853-2630.

Full time workers in the group are Margaret Gentles, Dorothy Fargeter and Sandi Patterson while Lorie Mellor, Bill Gentles and Barry Breen work on a part basis. There is also a list of 10 temporary employees which manager Russ Coultrup would like to add to with students over 16 years of age.

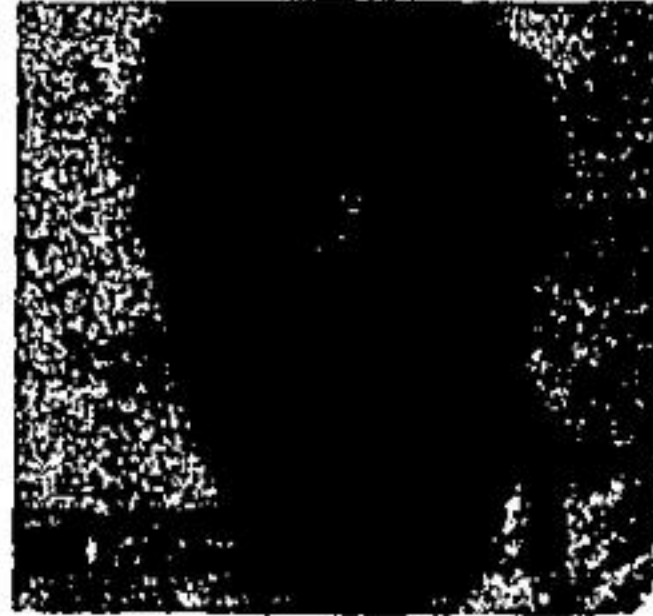
Why is the group called the Blue Fox?

"It is a name we liked," says Russ Coultrup.

People generally have been fully behind our efforts to promote our own business, he said. They work a five day, 30-hour week.



BOB STANFIELD



ROGER CUMMINGS

Stanfield visits Acton election-free summer

Taking advantage, as he put it, of the time the Prime Minister has given him to have a closer look at parts of Ontario he has never seen before, Conservative leader Robert Stanfield spent over an hour in Acton yesterday (Tuesday) morning on the middle leg of a whirlwind "Meet the people" tour of Southern Ontario which began Monday in Toronto.

Guest of honor at an early morning community breakfast at the Acton Curling Club, attended by party workers and dignitaries from the North Halton area, Mr. Stanfield chatted informally with workers, dined on ham and eggs along with Halton P.C. candidate Terry O'Connor and concluded his first visit to Acton by stopping at the local municipal offices on Mill St. to officially unfurl the town's 1974 Centennial flag.

Close to 100 supporters and municipal officials from Acton, Milton, Esquesing and Nassagaweya were on hand for the breakfast which was arranged by the local Progressive Conservative Association, under the direction of president Brian Cargill.

Mr. Stanfield was welcomed to town by Mayor Les Duby and officially introduced to the gathering by Mr. Cargill. Also seated at the head table were Mr. O'Connor, Ontario University Affairs Minister George Kerr and his executive assistant Gord Hampson, Wellington-Dufferin M.P.P. John Root, and officers of the Acton Progressive Conservative Association vice-president John Shadbolt, secretary Gail Maltby and treasurer Don McDonald.

Municipal officials also present included included Acton Reeve Frank Oakes, Deputy-reeve Pat McKenzie, Councillor Jack Greer, Nassagaweya Reeve Mrs. Anne MacArthur, Milton Councillor Mrs. Marjorie Powys and Esquesing Councillor Len Cox. Rev. Andy McKenzie said grace before breakfast.

Mr. Stanfield expressed a fondness for small town life, reminding the crowd he himself grew up in a small town in Nova Scotia.

"The best education I got was growing up in a small town," he said. "You can't help but be aware of other people's problems, you learn how the other half lives."

He said those who grow up in a small

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Roger Cummings dead

Acton man critical following accident

A 23-year-old Acton man, Kevin Hall remains unconscious in the intensive care unit of Toronto General Hospital six days after he was involved in a tragic three vehicle collision at the intersection of Highway 10 and Peel County Road 14 in the village of Snelgrove.

The collision which occurred at 7:45 Thursday morning claimed the life of 28-year-old Roger Cummings of Limehouse, father of two young girls.

Cummings and Hall, both Canadian National Railways employees, were on their way to work in Toronto, travelling east on Peel County Road 14 in a 1967 Beaumont driven by 26-year-old Ann Elmalle of Georgetown. Miss Elmalle was taken to Peel Memorial Hospital where she remains in satisfactory condition.

A Snelgrove O.P.P. spokesman said the Elmalle car collided at the highway intersection with a westbound 1964 Corvair driven by 50-year-old Hazel Thomson of Brampton, then continued east of the intersection striking a westbound Albion ready-mix truck driven by Harry White of Orangeville. Police say charges are pending. Mrs. Thomson and Mr. White were not injured.

Hall was first taken to Peel Memorial Hospital, but transferred to Toronto General the same night where he was placed in the care of a neurosurgeon. An examination Friday revealed he was suffering from a serious contusion on the right side of the brain and an operation was performed Saturday to relieve pressure.

When his condition worsened he also underwent a tracheotomy to aid his breathing process. Monday he was transferred back to the hospital's intensive care unit.

Cummings was also taken to Peel Memorial Hospital, but was dead on arrival. Funeral Mass was from Holy Cross Church, Georgetown, Saturday morning with interment at St. Cornelius Cemetery, Caledon.

A native of Clinton Ontario, Cummings moved to the Georgetown area approximately eight years ago. He is survived by his wife Patricia, daughters Sibhan 4 and Colleen 1 1/2, parents Frank and Pearl of Clinton and three brothers Kenneth of Montreal, Harry of Ottawa and Gary at home.



STUFFED DOGS, ELEPHANTS and bears roll off the assembly lines at the high school art room where students started their own Self Help project with a small grant from the

Provincial Government. Left to right are the full time workers in the project, Margaret Gentles, Dorothy Fargeter, Sandi Patterson and manager Russell Coultrup. (H. Coles Photo)