

OUR READERS WRITE:



GROUP OF Canadians is pictured on a visit to Government House in Sydney, Australia. Second from the left in the front and rear rows are Eleanor and Jim McCulloch of Acton.

Newsletter from Australia

55 Asquith St.
Austimmer
North South Wales
Australia 2514
October 31, 1977

Dear Editor:

Here we are again, turning up like bad pennies after so many months. We expect by now that you will have stopped sending us our copies of the Acton Free Press as we will probably never receive them. We will be returning to dear old Acton, Ontario, on December 20th, and as we have just received the copy for September 28th, it will probably take another month for the rest of the weeklies to turn up, because of the mail strikes which keep occurring every now and again.

We have enjoyed our stay in Australia very much, but will be very glad to be home again. "There is no place like home" is there? On the other hand we will be very sorry to lose all the companionship of the friendly people here, who have made our stay much happier than we thought would be possible.

We have met many cousins while here, one family (cousin of Jim's) whom we hadn't seen for 27 years, and three cousins and their families of mine whom I had not seen for 40 to 50 years. These cousins were quite shocked when they met me because evidently I am the double of my mother's twin sister and they thought they were seeing a ghost.

We have also travelled quite a bit. Sydney is about 50 miles from Woolongong and we have spent a number of weekends there. The Barrier reef is very nice to visit in the winter. Adelaide was our favorite city. Melbourne was wet when we were there so we saw little of the city.

Canberra is a very new city and capital cities are always nice to visit. Magnetic Island, Port Macquarie and the Banana Groves of Coffs Harbour were most interesting places to visit also.

Our longest trip was a seventeen day bus tour of the north and south islands of New Zealand. It is a most beautiful country, and for its size, has the most varied and contrasting geographic features one could possibly wish to see, as well as wall-to-wall sheep. There are sheep everywhere, yet we can buy New Zealand lamb cheaper in Canada than they can in their own country. The Maoris are most delightful people and we will long remember attending a native concert in Rotarua, and never forget skinny-dipping in hot mineral pools in the same city. Also had a most pleasant visit in Dunedin with a cousin of mine whom I had not seen since the end of the war. Had the front wind shield of the bus blow in on us as we were running down into the city of Queenstown and had a cup of hot soup in my lap as we flew out of Christchurch, so we have many varied recollections of New Zealand.

We went to a reception in Sydney at Government House and were guests of the Governor Sir Roden Cutler and Lady Cutler. All the exchange teachers were invited and a very pleasant time was had by

all. Please find enclosed photographs of our visit to Government House.

I have had a most wonderful social experience with the ladies of the Country Women's Association, similar to our Women's Institute, taking part in their monthly business and craft meetings, attending conferences of craft displays. As a member of the singing group of the Bull Club, of which I have been a member for the year, we placed first in an area competition. They were very interested in the Free Press news items about the monthly meetings of the branches of the Women's Institute in our area as they receive no such press coverage, therefore their many good works and deeds are unknown to the public at large.

Because of a great deal of American cultural and economic influence, many aspects of Australian life are similar to ours, except that things British are more evident here. Not that I am trying to infer that Australians are not different to us, they are, as anyone will tell you who has lived here. Because of their climate, they are able to spend much more time outdoors, and from my observation, they are much more active in all forms of sport than we are.

Not that the climate is all sunshine and pretty girls (not to mention the men on Bondi Beach. There were times this winter when I have never been as cold since I lived in England, and James never took his overcoat off 'til after lunch through the winter months in his unheated classroom. Taking a morning shower in an unheated tiled Australian bathroom was meant for a more Spartan Race than we. Saturday it was 36 degrees c. until 2.30 p.m., then it blew a southerly buster—low black clouds, 100 km. winds blowing up the sand 'til we could hardly see, a 16 degree drop in temperature in half an hour and torrential rain. From a total fire ban to flooding streets in half an hour. As contrasting as Canada can be.

In total, we have had a most memorable and interesting year in this wonderful and friendly sister commonwealth country and the general election, taking place one week before we leave for home, should prove to be a true cultural finale.

Thanks to the Free Press, a weekly news letter from Jim's school, and the many interesting letters we have received from our dear neighbors and friends, we have never seemed far from home and it will be wonderful to be back with you all once more on December 20.

Yours very truly,
(Mrs. J.) Eleanor McCulloch

Asset to the town

Dear George and Members of the Acton Citizens Band:

This is a personal note of congratulations and recognition for the great asset the Acton Citizens Band is to the Town of Acton. During my career as a politician which, admittedly has been brief to this point, I have often had occasion to hear or march with this fine group of well trained, well directed musicians. This letter was prompted by the recent Remembrance Day Service held last Sunday in which the Citizens Band played its traditional prominent part.

I was most moved by the quality of

presentation, the versatility and the depth of musicianship which has grown up and matured over the years. I am sure every citizen in Acton is proud and most appreciative of the continuing contribution the Band makes to the life of this great community.

Best wishes for the future. May you continue to flourish.

Sincerely,
Julian Reed

Mr. George Elliott
Band Master Acton Citizens Band
Acton, Ontario.

cc: Acton Free Press

Must sell downtown as 'your own place' - Wood

An enthusiastic report on downtown business cores was brought back from the recent symposium by Ed Wood, who attended as a representative of the Business Association. He presented his report to the B.A. meeting in the Y last Wednesday, saying he wished he could convey to his fellow merchants some of the excitement he felt there.

He heard participants at the symposium discuss how to generate enthusiasm in the downtown areas. Hope is the basis of downtown revitalization, he reported. If we don't work together it'll all go down the tube.

We have to alter circumstances or alter ourselves to meet them.

Opposition—or worse, apathy—will stand in the way. Between the idea and reality must come dedication. "We've talked disaster long enough."

There is government assistance, he learned, to improve the second and third storeys of downtown business buildings. The upper facades hold the downtown together while the downstairs store fronts show originality.

Students will be employed next year on downtown business projects.

Promotion and marketing are very important, he learned. A focal point is needed, and he perceived Acton's as probably the town hall.

Objectives must be established for a target audience. The strengths and weaknesses of the community must be understood. A theme is recommended.

He referred to the

possibility of newsletters, briefs and delegations to public bodies, press releases and personal connections. Joint activities with other town groups are good, to show a broad interest.

The merchants must decide the direction of the downtown. By creating traffic and social amenities we can survive.

Customers have seen the glitter of the malls. We've got to sell the downtown as a fun place, their own place, something special where everyone is welcome. The downtown represents the past, the present and the future of Acton, he concluded.

Fellow merchants applauded his stirring presentation, and urged that he should make it again at another meeting.

Henry Stachyra reported on a seminar he attended in Burlington. There, the council is sold on downtown development and on public parking. Businesses are allowed 100 per cent occupancy on lots and there is a parking lot in every block. There are meters. There is a five hour parking limit in the lots.

Parking is under the city engineering department. They purchase land. The cost is not all borne by the businessmen.

In his report on the Downtown Core symposium, Cory Van Merkestien also mentioned the need for parking. In small towns, people expect to walk a short distance. In a large city they will walk farther.

We will have a parking crisis soon, Mr. Stachyra

commented.

Chairman Alma Swetman mentioned the Halton Hills council committee which is studying parking, including councillors Pomeroy, Maltby, Armstrong and Marks.

Town to buy equipment

If quotes are in line with estimates the town will buy 15 pieces of small equipment worth \$20,300.

Halton Hills works committee approved the purchases Monday.

Engineer Robert Austin reported after a truck price came in well over budget it was decided to save the money and possibly use it for other equipment. He noted there is \$33,000 left in the equipment budget.

Two riding grass mowers, six hand mowers, one weed sprayer, an aerator, two power scythes, two fall mowers and a steam jenny are to be purchased.

Speed signs

Councillor Russ Miller wants 80 km per hour signs posted on rural roads in Halton Hills' when reconstruction takes place.

In a letter to works committee, Miller noted there is speeding problems after rural roads are reconstructed.

May have to forego credit counselling

A credit-debt counselling service which was extended to North Halton just over a year ago may be rescinded next year unless a source of additional funding is found.

The regional community and social services committee last week voted against providing a \$2,500 grant requested by Halton Consumer Credit Counselling Service. All three councillors from North Halton who sit on the committee voted against the grant. They said banks and credit companies should fund the service.

Halton Consumer Credit Counselling Service provides remedial and preventative debt counselling. An estimated 200 clients will be served by the end of the year, 25 per cent of them residents of North Halton, said Nancy Brown, executive director of Oakville Family Service Bureau, which manages the program. The estimated cost of the service was given at \$200 a client. Mrs. Brown said she expects \$170,000 will be returned this year to creditors as a result of the program.

The counselling service receives a grant from the province and has been assured of some funds from Burlington-Hamilton-Wentworth United Way and Oakville United Way, but not as much as had been requested.

The agency was directed to ask for a grant from regional government because the program serves the entire area.

The agency approaches the financial community for funds as well—believed to be the only program of this kind to do so. Of the \$1,000 sought in community donations from the northern part of the region, only \$100 has been received, given by a credit group. (There is no United Way in the north.)

Joyce Page, president of the board of Oakville Family Service Bureau, said there was resistance in Oakville to providing financial support for services to the north. After being refused the request, she told the committee the agency's alternatives were to cut the service or to approach municipal councils for grants.

Milton Councillor Jim Kerr said he'd like to see the agency get funds from the financial institutions which give consumer credit. He said using a collection agency would cost the institutions more than the counselling service.

Acton Councillor Garnet McKenzie said institutions which advertise easy credit should fund the counselling service. "They're screaming, 'Do this now and pay later,' and then they want tax money

to help people who get into debt," Mr. McKenzie said. "I don't like to see people in debt but, if they need counselling, I believe it's good business for the people who loaned them the money to fund the service."

Mr. McKenzie also wanted to see credit management taught in schools, if it isn't already.

Georgetown Councillor Russell Miller too put the blame on easy credit. After the meeting he said there should be legislation controlling credit advertising.

Noting the three committee members representing the north voted against the grant, Mr. Miller said he believed the north was more money conscious. Mr. Miller said he like to be as conservative as possible when it came to government spending. "A lot of soft services I know we have to finance, but there has to be a limit on what can be financed with the tax dollar," the councillor said. "We can't be guardians of everybody."

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