

The Acton Free Press

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Don McDonald, Publisher

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Why not an independent study?

It is almost five years since residents along the route of the proposed Bruce to Milton hydro corridor asked for an independent study to determine whether the corridor was necessary and if alternate route should not be considered.

They asked for the same consideration as people along the route of the east-west corridor who received an independent study conducted by Dr. Ormond Solandt, appointed a one man commission by Premier Davis.

As a result of that study by the Solandt Commission the east-west corridor was moved. Parts of it now ran along Highway 401 instead of invading farmland north of Acton and then bisecting into then Nassagaweya township.

Dr. Solandt hired Bruce Howlett to do much of the study and Howlett and his company came up with various alternates for connections to the Bruce nuclear station.

In his report Dr. Solandt recommended that any crossing of the Niagara Escarpment for the north-south corridor should take place at Limehouse, disagreeing with recommendations from Mr. Howlett. Ontario Hydro took Dr. Solandt's recommendation as gospel and immediately prepared to march towers from the Bruce nuclear station to the proposed new transmission station, east of urban Milton.

However, it is also noteworthy

that Hydro did not accept Dr. Solandt's recommendations for single shaft towers instead of the lattice type towers being used. Dr. Solandt said they improved the appearance of the corridor. Hydro said it would mean an extra \$40 million in costs.

Meanwhile residents along the corridor from Bruce to Milton kept hammering away for an independent study suggesting a Bruce to Essa alternative made more sense and cost much less. Their requests were continually rebuffed by the frequently changed ministers of energy with the excuse neither time or money was available.

That was almost five years ago and still the struggle for an independent study goes on.

The OMB this week and last heard the same story over again that has been repeated in committee rooms, hearings, and any place hydro is mentioned in this neck of the woods. The Independent Citizens' Group is just not going to give up asking for the same consideration people from east to west received.

Think of how much money and time would have been saved if the Government had only assented to an independent study of the corridor five years ago. No more studies, no more meetings, and maybe the corridor would now be finished.

Surely, it isn't too late?

At the public trough

Back in January, 1974, Milton businessman Gus Goutouski asked the provincial government to conduct an investigation into the affairs of the 1973 Halton County Council, in particular overspending on the warden's dinner held in November. It was held to honor 1973 Warden Anne MacArthur and the final cost exceeded the budgeted figure of \$1,500 by \$2,424.

It was the second consecutive year the \$1,500 budget had been overspent.

Despite good intentions of subsequent councils, Halton's retiring regional council went out of office last year (1978) in grand style with a dinner at the House of Palermo, running up a tab of \$945, including a \$396.55 bar bill, which works out to about \$45 each for the 20 regional councillors who attended.

Guess who got stuck with the bill?—the taxpayers. Things really haven't changed much, have they?

Retiring regional chairman Ric Morrow professed shock at the size of the dinner bill. He said he thought about getting councillors to contribute but there were no more meetings in the year so his only choice was to pay the bill.

Dinner meetings where municipalities pay the tab for an end of the year celebration are a hangover from times when local politicians got paid little or nothing for their services. They were a reward.

Those days are long gone but the custom dies hard. Regional councillors who receive over \$8,000 a year for regional efforts don't really need the charity. They can afford to pay for their own celebration.

The amount of that dinner bill doesn't come to much divided over all Halton's taxpayers but it does not change the principle. Councillors were feeding at the public trough and taxpayers expect better things from them.

Brief comment:

Last summer's drought left Halton region with the worst crop yields in the last 20 years, according to year end statistics from the Milton office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. While other areas reported cereal crop yields slightly lower than normal Halton's crops were cut by at least a third by the drought which gave the area less than three inches of rain in June and July.

The crop losses can partially be made up for by crop insurance from the federal government, but some farmers lost their entire grain corn crop. Shows the risk farmers take with weather.

The death of Al Forrest, editor of The United Church Observer, in Toronto December 27 came as a shock. One of the best known officials of the United Church he was never afraid to comment on current affairs. He criticized his own church for supporting liberal abortion policies and promoted recognition of Communist China at a time when such policies were unpopular. He'll be missed, not only by his many friends, but by hundreds of thousands of Observer readers.

Sunday, January 21 Rev. Andy McKenzie preaches his farewell sermon at Knox Church before going on to a new pastorate at Perth. Fond good wishes go with him in his new charge.

Those who scoff at the institution of marriage should note the number of 50th (and one 60th) wedding anniversaries in Acton and area in the last few weeks. They testify to the fact that if two people really work at marriage it can last a lifetime without break-up. Of course, as one celebrant noted it also takes patience and understanding.

The Canadian Bankers Association notes that Canadians continue to save in record amounts despite the doom-sayers who say the country is going down the drain economically. The bankers report that as of mid-1978 there were 24 million personal savings accounts at the chartered banks holding \$47.34 billion, compared to 23.3 million accounts and \$43.23 billion a year earlier. The average account held \$1,972 against \$1,854 a year earlier and \$668 in 1968.



Councillors should have paid for "bash"

Dear Mr. Coles:

The last issue of the Acton Free Press has a news item on the front page dealing with a farewell dinner tendered by the members of Halton Regional Council to Ric Morrow and 12 other members of the council, who would not be returning as members of that body. You refer to the fact that "a few eyebrows were raised at the first meeting of the Halton Finance and Administration Committee in December when it came to picking up the tab" for this dinner.

I am sure that many of your readers,

with myself among them, did something more than raise their eyebrows, when they scanned this particular news item. We are told in this choice piece of news that 20 councillors were present and that the overall cost was \$945, an average of \$45 each. Listed in the bill are \$403 for beef, \$56 for wine, \$25 for room charge and \$120 as a tip. This leaves a balance of \$341 not accounted for.

Are we to assume that the 160 drinks at the bar cost this amount? If so, how big was each drink? It seems to me that the regional police ought to have been on the

job with breathalyzer tests for all present at this gathering, since I take it for granted that each councillor drove home after this festive occasion. The taxpayers might have recouped some lost money.

In any case, if the councillors wanted a "bash" of this nature, they are the ones who should have paid for it. Is it any wonder that the term "politician" has associated with it so often the feeling of outrage and disgust?

Yours very truly,
A. Walter Fosbury
124 Tidey Ave.

Atrocious waste on dinner

Jan. 9, 1979

Dear Sirs:

I was incredibly appalled at the article which appeared on the front page of your Jan. 3 issue titled "Dinner tab is \$945." I don't object to an honorary dinner being given for Ric Morrow, chairman, and the 12 regional councillors who were leaving. What I object to is Halton Hills footing the bill, thereby passing it on to the taxpayers. The members of council and other people who attended this dinner should donate their own funds cheerfully if they truly wish to show their appreciation

of the former council members.

Also, this was not only a simple "going away" get together. It was a roaring drunken bash as attested by the facts published in your paper. The 20 persons attending consumed 8 bottles of wine. That is almost half a bottle each, which in itself is not excess. But when you add 160 drinks from the bar, which is an average of eight per person, I would consider this a booze party. What was the \$25 room at the hotel for? Someone too intoxicated to drive!!!?

These councillors drank over half of the

total evening's bill—more than they ate. A hotel with a dining lounge licence must get a liquor lounge licence if they sell such a ratio of food versus drink, which goes to prove my case.

In a time of so called cutbacks of government spending and when you consider the tight family budgets adhered to by a good number of the taxpayers, I consider this not only an atrocious waste but an insult to our intelligence as well.

Lynda Glendenning,
114 Poplar Avenue,
Acton.

Citizens afford to feed council while Fairy Lake ducks go hungry?

January 9, 1979

Dear Sirs,

I am writing concerning the 'going away party' held for "outgoing chairman Ric Morrow and twelve regional councillors

who wouldn't be returning," as reported on the first page of January 3rd's Free Press.

According to your article, the 20 councillors consumed a ridiculous amount of alcoholic beverages (more specifically, seven \$8 bottles of wine, not to mention 160 drinks from the bar) and ate \$45 worth of dinner pie, tipped \$120.00 and booked a room for the night at an additional cost of \$25. (Personally, I'm sort of curious as to exactly what the room was for.) In any event, this whole thing does not paint a pretty picture.

This whole incident in itself is bad enough, but what really takes the cake is the unfortunate fact that Halton Region footed the bill. If the councillors really felt respect for the departing chairman and councillors, one would think that they would have managed to scrape up the funds out of their own pockets to show that

the sentiment really was sincere. This way it was just a free party. (The very least that they could have done would have been to cover the tip on their own.)

When one considers the plight of the elderly and disabled, who are tied to fixed and limited incomes, yet who are required to pay taxes: Is this what their tax dollars go towards? In this time of skyrocketing deficits, and cutbacks in all areas, this certainly does not improve the record of Halton Region. Are we going to stand for this type of decadence and allow it to continue unchecked?

As a final note, how can the citizens of Acton afford to feed the councillors so well, when the ducks of Fairy Lake must go hungry?

Sincerely,
Miss Laurel L. Russwurm,
Acton, Ontario

Sandy's gone

Old Sandy's gone and left me now
He got an urgent call.
Ond "Clotie" must have needed him,
To fill an empty stall.

I'm going to miss his friendly smile,
He had while sipping tea,
Tho' he was spent, I now resent,
He didn't wait for me.

But he always said if he went first,
He'd keep a place for me,
Where we could chat and chew the fat,
And drink a little tea.

I'm sure we'll both drink a lot,
Inside the furnace door,
We'll both be warm, out of the storm,
They won't TAX us any more.

So, now he's gone I raise by cup,
To promise I'll be there,
Tho' I have to stay, while he's away,
To dust his vacant chair.

I'm left to pay the TAXES,
For the things he'll never need,
For Government boot, his death duty,
Won't satisfy his greed.

Victor Smith

Back issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 15, 1969

Owner Sam Liebowitz estimated his loss at close to \$100,000 following a disastrous Sunday morning fire which almost completely destroyed a large poultry barn and over 20,000 young turkeys on the First Line.

Esquering's reeve George Currie was named Warden of Halton County at the inaugural meeting Tuesday. Reeve Currie was beginning his second term as Warden, having filled the position 33 years earlier. Acton council gave approval for senior citizens' units and family housing units on Cobblehill Rd.

Dredging at Fairy Lake continues despite the severe winter weather. Men from Cummins dredge estimate they have another three weeks dredging and they are using dynamite to keep the 18-inch thick ice away from the dredge.

County honors presented at the North Halton 4-H achievement day went to Nancy Snow, Beryl McEnery, Sheila Jamieson, Grace Bird, Kathy French, Pam Snow, Doris Burt, Heather Kirkwood and Laurene Rennieck.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Acton Free Press of Thursday, January 15, 1959

Beardmore and Co. Ltd. was closed all Monday afternoon as officials and employees revered the memory of the last member of the Beardmore family to be actively associated with the company, Col. Alfred Owen Torrance Beardmore. He was president of Beardmore and Co. until 1945, after joining the firm in 1904. He resided in Acton at Hill Hall, presently the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Creighton, until 1920. He raised Shorthorn cattle at Mono Mills. He served as a councillor in Acton and was actively instrumental in getting the first waterworks in Acton. He was a warden of St. Alban's church when the first parish hall was erected. He was a former officer in the Grenadier Guards and served in World War I. J.J. Stewart was re-appointed chairman of the Public Utilities Commission at their inaugural meeting. Following a plebsicite, this year will mark the end of the P.U.C. in favor of a Hydro Commission. Also on the Commission are E.G. Tyler Sr., Dr. F.G. Oakes, Mayor W.H. Cook, R. Everdell with clerk treasurer J. McGeachie.

J.B. Chalmers died in his 91st year, ending an active life. He was one of few living veterans of the Spanish-American war. He was a former reeve of the village. Mr. M. Coles is chairman of the 1959 North Halton school board and J.H. Creighton is vice-chairman.

Mrs. Peter Sayers celebrated her 93rd birthday.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Acton Free Press of Thursday, January 10, 1929

The first regular session of the new council had Councillors Harrison, Thetford, Hansen and Dr. Nelson present with Reeve Mason in the chair.

The vote in Esquering township gave T.L. Leslie a majority of nearly 200 over his opponent M.J. Carton. Councillors are W.J. Applebe, Geo. Currie, W.A. Wilson. Deputy-reeve George Cleave was elected by acclamation. Nominations for Eramosa Township Council took place last Monday. Councillors elected by acclamation are Sims McLean, Joseph Stovel, Nathan McKersie and Albert Cox. The election for the reeveship between Archibald McNabb and Joseph Rutherford resulted in a tie, each polling 187 votes.

Nearly every household has had its share of the flu. The quarantine cards for mumps and chicken pox adorn many windows these days.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Acton Free Press of Thursday, January 8, 1879.

Little or no excitement prevailed in Acton over the municipal election on Monday. The reeve, D. D. Christie, was elected by acclamation and the councillors did not appear to care very much whether they were elected or not. The polls closed at five o'clock and a number of electors assembled at Mr. Matthews hall about six o'clock to hear the results. The new councillors elected are Ransom Adams, Broker; David Henderson, Merchant; Edward Nicklin, Miller; and Charles Sidney Smith, Gentleman.

It is intended to make Mrs. Danford Swackhammer, whose husband was lately killed by accident, the recipient of a donation. These presents will consist of anything the friends of the widowed lady wish to present. The presentation will be made in the Church Hill Congregational church. It is our sorrowing duty to report the death of Mr. Charles Symon, a former resident of Acton who moved to Furry Sound. An attack of typhoid fever was the cause of his death. The deceased carried on the dry goods and grocery business in Acton with his brother James Symon at the stand now occupied by Christie, Henderson and Co. He was 56 years of age and leaves a wife and seven children.