

# The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875  
Don McDonald, Publisher

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT  
Editor: Harley Coles  
News Editor: Helen Murray  
Reporter/Photographer: Eric Elstone  
Sports Editor: Robin Incoe

PHONE 853-2010  
Business and Editorial Office

Published every Wednesday by Inland Publishing Co. Limited at 59 Willow Street, Acton, Ontario. Telephone 853-2010. Subscriptions: Single copies 20¢ each, \$10.00 per year in Canada, \$30.00 in all countries other than Canada.

The Acton Free Press is one of the Inland Publishing Co. Limited group of suburban newspapers which include The Ajax/Whitby/Pickering News Advertiser, The Brampton Guardian, The Burlington Post, Etobicoke Gazette, The Georgetown Independent, Markham/Thornhill Economist and Sun, The Milton Canadian Champion, The Mississauga News, The Newmarket/Aurora Era, Oakville Beaver, Oshawa This Week, Oshawa This Weekend, and The Stouffville Tribune.

Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with reasonable allowance for signature will not be charged for but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the applicable rate. In the event of a typographical error advertising goods or services at a wrong price, goods or services may not be sold. Advertising is merely an offer to sell, and may be withdrawn at any time.

Member of The Audit Bureau of Circulation, The Canadian Community Newspaper Association, and The Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association.

Second class mail Registration Number 0515.

ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT  
Advertising Manager: Bill Cook  
Classified Advertising: Marilyn McArthur

BUSINESS/ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
Office Manager: Fran Gibson  
Rhona Thornhill, Shirley Jocque, Carolyn Duval

CIRCULATION  
Marilyn McArthur



Copyright  
1979



6 The Acton Free Press, Wednesday, Jan. 31, 1979

## No way arts centre here

When the architects of regional government drew up plans to unite Acton, Georgetown and Essex into one municipality they based much of their reasoning on financial studies. Geographically they struck out.

This is evident in the recent decision by Halton Hills council for a \$5,000 study of the feasibility of an arts centre for Halton Hills. Ward One (Acton) councillor Ed Wood, after listening to the arguments both pro and anti re using a new addition to Wrigglesworth School in Georgetown, asked Rex Heslop, chairman of the group pushing the centre, if the study was just for Georgetown, or did it also include the whole of Halton Hills.

Mr. Heslop replied the study was intended to cover the whole of Halton Hills. Councillor Wood reminded the group which talked Wrigglesworth school there was also a new high school in Acton which just might have the necessary facilities.

Despite the group's good intentions there is no way the committee or council would vote to erect an arts centre in Acton. Georgetown has the majority of members in most cultural groups within the town and their weight will clearly decide where the facility is erected.

It is one of the problems council and groups interested in the welfare of the entire town face when they talk about the future. For instance it is unlikely more than a few people in Georgetown are interested in the preservation of Acton's old town hall. Conversely, few people in Acton would be interested in a cultural centre in Georgetown.

Georgetown, being the largest centre of population in Halton Hills will continue to receive the lion's share of the spoils. If the centre were located in Acton, the interest in Georgetown would dwindle to almost nothing. A similar centre in Acton would evoke sympathy and interest from people of this community but we doubt if the idea of an arts centre in Georgetown awakens much interest here now.

That is still the major weakness of regional government as conceived for Halton Hills. Uniting two communities spiritually and physically is a giant-sized job for council and all the best-intentioned people in all walks of life but that seven miles of road separating the two urban centres does more to keep them apart than any opponents of bill 151, the document that united or split Halton into four from six municipalities.



Thursday was a photographer's dream after the heavy snowfall and freezing rain Wednesday. However, the aftermath was a nightmare for home owners who had to dig themselves out either with shovels, plows or blowers. The heavy snow caused havoc for drivers, some of whom got stuck in the middle of the town streets before plows could get to them. Parking was next to impossible. Photos by Robin Incoe.

## Evening meetings better

A letter writer this week complains the Ontario Municipal Board with three months of dump hearings scheduled in Milton is adopting an Alice in Wonderland approach by barring evening meetings. She says meetings where public arbitration on evidence presented for and against destroying prime farm land should be held in the evenings, not in the daytime when it is most inconvenient for the public affected to attend.

It is true of many lengthy OMB hearings, not only the current ones in Milton. The interested public, unless they have plenty of time and money at their disposal, finds it hard to attend daytime meetings when they must report for work each day or face losing pay or even a job.

The writer points out that only two members of the OMB are

involved in the Milton hearings and they are funded with tax dollars taken from people who must spend more of their own money to sacrifice time from work.

We can concur with her conclusions. Too many OMB hearings occur in daytime. Evening meetings might be more profitable both for the board and the public.

No doubt the status associated with appointments to the OMB would soon dissipate if members had to work evenings but surely the practice of daytime meetings goes back to the time when only professional people and those with a great deal of money had the power or inclination to challenge the existing authority. In this age of participatory democracy daytime meetings seem outdated and elitist.

## Rockwood plan looks good

Planners for the Police Village of Rockwood are ensuring that buildings of historical interest or character are protected in the village's official plan. At a meeting in the village hall last week, draft amendments to the secondary plan spelled out protection for these parts of the past, many of which are in an excellent state of preservation, or have been restored.

Included in the list compiled by a committee named for that specific purpose are such places as St. John's Anglican Church, the house and barn on the Dunbar property which relate to village pioneer Squire Strange and Sir Casimir Gzowski respectively, the Rockwood Academy, and branches out into Eramosa township to include St. Peter's Catholic Church, Oustic, the old hotel on the corner at Eden Mills, and Speedside United Church.

Many of these fine buildings reflect the masonry of early Scottish pioneers who built in stone that would last. Their work can be seen in the fine stone barns of Nassagaweya township, now Milton, in hamlets such as Eden Mills or in the cities of Guelph and Galt.

It was the insistence of village residents that historical buildings should be protected by the plan which also is geared to orderly

slow growth for the village.

Because Rockwood has an expensive new sewer and water system it was deemed necessary that infilling in the village on serviced lots until population reached 1630 people by 1990 would be the only desirable avenue of growth. It was an astute move to help villagers pay for their new system with the aid of infilling on existing lots. Further subdivisions have been discouraged.

If planners allowed growth beyond the new systems it would make the new systems more expensive for users. However, there is also a provision in the secondary plan to review it every five years. Changes can then be made if conditions warrant.

Of course the plan can't be all things to all people but it does seem that planners, township and village officials have carved out a unique agreement to preserve Rockwood's unique character and setting and at the same time allowing reasonable growth. Would that all communities had the same protection. If Acton had such a protection for historical buildings no doubt the old town hall would have been better cared for over the years and buildings such as the C.N. station would still stand.

Rockwood's secondary plan looks like a model for all

## Feeling sorry for hardy pioneers

Just struggled home through about the tenth blizzard of this month. You could see your hand before your face, if you had a large hand and good eyesight.

Found my street more by feel than sight, turned off with a skid, went through the routine of getting into the garage. It's rather like launching a small boat in a large surf. It takes a lot of skill and a fair bit of nerve.

At the entrance to the driveway are the boulders. These are huge gobbets of snow thrown up by the snowplow, which then freezes them bigger than a large man's head.

Then there is a flat space, shovelled, about the length of a car. Then, just at the entrance to the garage itself, there is a sort of reef of ice, built up to a foot or so of frozen snow.

You have to hit the driveway, and there is a large maple tree on one side, at about 24 miles an hour. There is a great rending noise from beneath, just like rocks tearing the bottom out of a boat. But you don't even slow down. With a judicious touch of brakes here and accelerator there, you sashay past the maple, line her up for the middle of the garage, and goose her just a little on the flat patch. There is six inches clearance on each side. All being well, you than ride up over the reef of ice, with another rending noise, this time part of your roof peeling away, slam the brakes at the last minute so that you don't go through the end of the garage, switch off, and sit there wiping your brow.

My wife is a big chicken. She won't even try to put the thing in the driveway, let alone in the garage. Maybe that's because she has hit the side of the garage door about six times, both going in and coming out.

I enjoy it. I feel like a skipper whose ship is sinking, and who has launched a boat, taken her through the surf, over the rocks, through the reef, and beached her on golden sand.

But inevitably, on such occasions my thoughts turn to the poor devils, our pioneer ancestors, who had to cope with the same weather and snow conditions, with a pittance of what we have to work with.

by  
Bill  
Smiley



When I've shut off my engine, feeling a bit like Captain Bligh on one of his good days, all I have to do is walk 40 yards to the house. Inside there is warmth from an oil furnace, light, an electric stove to cook dinner, a colored television to take me to lotus-land.

I can huddle in the cowardly safety of my modern home and defy the elements. Let 'er snow, let 'er blow.

No chores to do. No trips to the barn to feed, water, milk the beasts, by the light of a lantern, in sub-zero temperature. No wood to lug in from the woodpile, or ashes to carry out. All I have to do is sit down with a drink, unfold my daily paper, and wait for dinner.

And it's no dinner of salt pork or canned beef, with a hearty helping of smashed potatoes and some turnips or carrots my wife had to dig up from the root cellar, topped off by some preserved raspberries from last summer's crop.

No, the refrigerator is one of our modern gods, and one of the most popular. I think it takes precedence even over the car as a twentieth-century deity.

We kneel before it, contemplating its innards. We place offerings of food inside it, much as the ancients proffered food to their gods.

And, just like the ancients, we are smart enough to take food back and eat it, after the god has been placated.

Not for us the pioneers' meagre fare. We have fresh (frozen) meat to hand. We have fresh vegetables, nothing from the root cellar. We have cheese and fruit and eggs and orange juice and a myriad other exotics that would make our ancestors blink in awe and fear.

On the shelves in the kitchen we have another host of luxuries: canned fruit and vegetables and soup, coffee and tea and sugar and smoked oysters and sardines and salmon and tuna. In the bread-box, cookies and cakes and bread that cost money but no labour.

After a meal that would appear to a pioneer as food for the gods (even though half the stuff in it is going to give us cancer, according to the quacks), we don't have to sit huddled by the stove trying to read a week-old newspaper by the light of a kerosene lamp.

We can sit in comfort and read a book from among thousands in a library five minutes away. Or we can listen to music or drama from hundreds of miles away. Or we can watch the same, or the news of the day, from thousands of miles away. By merely twisting a dial.

How did they stand it, those sturdy forebears of ours? Wouldn't you think that they'd have gone starker under the burden of never-ending toil, never-ending cold and snow, never-ending monotony, and loneliness, in winter?

Not a bit of it. They thrived and multiplied.

Many of them didn't survive, of course. Children died in infancy. Women were old at 30. But it was a life-long test course in survival, and the tough ones made it.

What a lot of complaining, complacent slobbers we are to-day!

Our Frankie now is working. Alongside "Solar-Joe" They're catching heat to cook my meat, And met away my snow.

They're harnessing the "sunbeams" So I can warm my cheeks With the price of oil, this turmoil Has sold us to the "Sheiks".

But we've still got old "Windy-Bill" We don't need hydro towers, To do my chores and wash my drawers, And save on kilowatt hours.

## Back issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 5, 1969  
Susan Shoemaker topped five other orators on Wednesday morning in the public speaking contest finals between Acton's two schools. Others in the finals were Lorna Sutherland, Glen Lee, Deborah Anderson, Karen Atkinson and Richard Rocher.

Acton post office is among those chosen to conduct an experiment to determine whether post office lock box offices will remain open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Bad weather is delaying the construction of the M. Z. Bennett school by at least a month, says architect Donald Skinner. It had been originally planned to end staggered classes in February.

Nassagaweya council members are all unanimously opposed to any dissolution of the township in plans for regional government.

The Pairs and Squares are planning two dances at the R. L. auditorium this month, a Novice Night and a Hard Time dance.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Milne celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Heidi Merritt, R.R. 5, Rockwood, won the Wellington county public speaking semi-finals.

Rockwood main street will have new lights.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 5, 1959

With hearts beating fast and smiles on their faces, 46 of Halton county's new Canadians declared an oath of allegiance and became citizens Monday. Mr. and Mrs. John Van Aragon were in the group.

Water consumers in Acton are presently using 150,000 gallons a day, all supplied from the new water source on Churchill Rd. Residents are finding the water softer.

Since the Christmas holiday the Water Y's swimming club has met Friday for swimming at Guelph Y.

At the congregational meeting of Knox Church, the Rev. A. H. McKenzie revealed that one out of four persons in Acton is under the Presbyterian pastorate.

The urgent need to increase the library at the M. Z. Bennett School was discussed at the Home and School meeting.

Long-time Nassagaweya friends made a presentation to Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Anderson and Doug as they are moving to Acton.

At the request of councillor Rachlin, a "caucus" excluding the press was held following the council meeting. During the meeting council agreed to make application for warning signals at the Main St. railway crossing, and granted taxi licenses to Reliable Taxi and Mildred Beerman. Councillor F. Watts told council something would have to be done about the icy condition of the roads.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 31, 1929

The congregation of the Baptist church has secured a minister to fill the vacancy caused by the removal of pastor Baxter to Toronto. Mr. Forsythe has received the unanimous call of the congregation.

The orchestra, under the leadership of Mr. Chas. W. Mason, gave splendid music at the evening service at the United Church, Sunday.

Statistics prepared by the Waterworks Department are very interesting. There are now 445 patrons of the waterworks department and only 44 residences in Acton are without the convenience of water being piped into their home. The growth speaks well in view of the fact that it is only eight years since the waterworks were installed in Acton. The number of gallons pumped during the year was 14,668,520.

Mr. J. F. Robertson, the well-known breeder of registered sheep and swine, held an auction sale Thursday. Young sows brought as high as \$46 and sheep were sold at \$38.

The United Church had a prosperous year. The finances totalled \$13,752.41, which is a record amount for this church with its 400 members. Rev. C. L. Poole, the minister, had charge. Reports were given to Miss Fern Brown, Miss Kitty Savage, Mr. Duncan McTavish, Mr. John R. Kennedy, Mrs. Fred Cleave, Mrs. Malcolm McLean, Mr. A. T. Brown, and Mr. William Wilson.

## Need or Greed

But if they TAX these things still free. Then we'd be out of luck, My "Sunmobile" and every meal. Would cost me my last buck.

It seems no matter what we do, To supply the things we need, We'll have to pay, in every way, To satisfy our Greed.

Victor Smith  
R. R. 2, Rockwood