

Esquering Historical group weaves past with memories

Remember me is all I ask
But if remembrance prove a task,
Why then forget me!

Many people were remembered during the Esquering Historical Society's informal gathering in Trinity United Church Monday evening. Reminiscences of the radial railway, a Willow Street home, the hardware business and the old town hall linked names with events and places.

Long time Actonians Marguerite Taylor, Laura Dennis, Sabra and Bob MacArthur and George Elliott used books, newspapers and slides to spark memories and draw more notions from the nearly 40 member audience.

"By holding such meetings we hope to encourage interest in the past," Esquering Historical Society chairman Rev. Richard Ruggie told the audience. Notes were taken and a private tape recording was made to preserve the evening.

The verse at the beginning of this story is from a selection made by Mrs. Dennis from her mother's autograph book.

Here's another sample:

This world's full of care and trouble,
Whether you go it, single or double,
But single people's greatest trouble,
Is how and when they can be double.

Mrs. Dennis also offered for view her home's log—a collection of papers and drawings of her Willow Street domicile. During 75 years the home has had five owners and one mortgage for \$1,000, said Mrs. Dennis.

Recording the changes in a home is fascinating work. The log is a project sparked by the Women's

Institute, Mrs. Dennis said. The book will remain with the house. There is room left on pages for new owners.

Here's another example of verse from the autograph book which dates from the 1880s:

I slip my pen into the ink,
And grasp your Album tight,
But for My Life, I cannot think
One single word to write.

Mrs. Dennis' neighbor up the street, Marguerite Taylor was also nearly stumped for something to say to the gathering, until conversation turned to the subject of the radial railway.

Mrs. Taylor related how her father, the owner of a hardware store in town, cornered all the business for construction of the rail line because he knew what was required for the railway.

The electric powered radial railway joined Toronto to Guelph and started during the closing years of the First World War. It went out of business in the Depression.

The rail line passed through Georgetown and Acton, stumps of a trestle remain in Fairy Lake, and through such legendary places as Dolly Varden, Blue Springs and Lambton plus surviving communities such as Arkell, Limehouse, Huttonville and Norval.

Names tugged and pulled the threads of recollection in Bob MacArthur's mind. He remembered the radial cars would stop at any road if you flagged them down. Travel time from Acton to Toronto was about two hours, he said.

The MacArthurs—Sabra and Bob—employed a copy of the book Acton's Early Days and the 75th

edition of The Acton Free Press as stimulants for recollection. Many in the audience were from old Esquering and Georgetown for whom such information was fresh.

The tennis courts, near where A-B Foodland is today, the athletic club across the pond, and quaint CNR station were described. "When you think of these places, well they're gone now," Mrs. MacArthur observed.

The couple turned its attention to the Pioneer Cemetery where many of Acton's first citizens are laid to rest. The burial ground was in use for 56 years starting in 1830, Mr. MacArthur observed.

During the early years of this century the grounds fell into disrepair. However in 1933 a trustee committee was appointed. Soon the grounds were cleaned up and the monuments put in a cairn.

Historical society secretary Shirley Cleave prompted Mrs. MacArthur to describe her grandfather's saw mill. There were apparently two of them: one at the end of Scene Street and later a second one across the pond from the arena. And where the senior citizens' apartments are being built, on Elizabeth Drive, used to be a plane mill for smoothing wood, and a horse stable.

Town Hall Restoration Committee chairman George Elliott enlightened the gathering on details of the group's struggle to have the 19th century hall saved from the wrecker's hammer.

The committee goes to council in May to ask for funds.

With color slides Mr. Elliott illustrated his contention that the soft red brick used in the two storey hall's construction is suitable for another hundred



Marguerite Taylor



Laura Dennis

years or so. He discovered examples of nearly the same brick in a 200-year-old English building.

The Acton hall took about two years to erect starting in 1881. The cost was \$6,000. According to Mr. Elliott's town's folk were split by arguments concerning the cost: should it be \$5,000 or \$6,000.

Upstairs the dance floor has many windows. "Very few of the townhalls I've seen have this window space," observed Mr. Elliott.

Holding the bottom line seemed a method of making decisions in the 1880s. Council, after many debates, voted against hiring someone to ring the hall bell at 6 a.m. Someone would have to be paid to perform the chore. There were some town's folk who wanted the early ring to waken workmen.

Instead council decided the bell would be rung at the hours of seven, noon, one and six.

Most people, but not all, in the audience were generally interested in the town's history.

The meeting's occasion in Acton encouraged Betty Brownridge, of near Hornby, and Georgetown's Jean Ruddell in their search concerning the circumstances of a relative's long ago death during a gold rush.

Robert Ruddell, from Ashgrove, met his death in a snow slide in 1867. The Acton connection is that some local men, also up north, identified Mr. Ruddell at the inquest.

The ladies are searching for information regarding old Acton families with names of Dunn, Malcolm, Kelso, Burns and possibly Warren. Mrs. Brownridge's telephone number is 674-6730. Miss Ruddell's number is 877-2803.



Four Rockwood area youngsters recently discovered a balloon which had been blown up from Arkansas. An attached note explained the balloon had been set loose as a class project for a Jacksonville school.

Boys find balloon sent from U.S.A.

It's a bird! It's a plane! No, it's a balloon.

For five excited young boys, it might just well have been Superman they found hanging in the trees Easter Sunday. They would have had the same reaction.

Jim McLean, R.R. 2, Rockwood, brothers John and Dirk Glen Schrader and Robert Jones were going for a walk through the bushes near the McLeans' Fourth Line, Nassa-gaweya home when they spotted something blue caught in a tree. Further investigation revealed it to be a balloon. An attached note explained it was from Arkansas.

The four boys ran to the McLean home to show their parents. The note was written, they discovered at home, by Tom Reshel, who explained his grade 7 math students of Jacksonville Junior High School in

Arkansas released the helium filled balloon as part of a Geometry project. He asked that the finder let him know how far the balloon had travelled.

The McLeans dug out a map and located the American state. Through rough estimation, they calculated the balloon had travelled over 1700 miles! Unfortunately, there was no date on the note, so there was no way of knowing how long it had taken the object to make its trip. Mrs. McLean feels it could not have been in the tree long as it shrank within a few days once it was taken in the house.

The youngsters plan to answer the note and ask Mr. Reshel what date he set the balloon free.

None of the boys involved had ever found a balloon before nor had they taken part in a project of setting some loose.

School border shifts

Milton high schools will surrender some students to Acton while Acton loses a few to Georgetown under proposed boundary changes from the Halton Board of Education.

Director of Education Em Lavender told trustees Thursday at Burlington the proposals will be aired at public meetings before the board takes any final action.

Under the proposed changes with Acton, Milton would give up a slip of land the southern boundary of which is about two miles south of 15 Sideroad from Highway 25 in the east to near the Guelph Line in the west.

Today two buses work a road which runs off 15 Sideroad. One bus, which goes to Milton, picks up one student. The second bus takes about six stud-

ents to Acton. Anyone registered in the area for Milton may still go there, but parents are responsible for transportation to a pick up point.

Georgetown High School stands to pick up some students from the Terra Cotta area who would normally go to Acton.

The opening of the new Milton high school will also mean some changes

Police investigating shooting incident

A rifle shot caused a rural Rockwood man to bolt into action last week.

The man was working out on his front lawn when a suspect, about 25 or 30 years old, fired a rifle nearby. The Rockwood man chased the suspect.

Jelinek takes aim at Gun Control law

Halton Progressive Conservative candidate Otto Jelinek spoke out against Bill C 51 and gun control at a meeting of the Guelph Rod and Gun Club in Eden Mills Monday evening.

"I oppose it," said Jelinek as he talked with some 100 interested listeners. "I speak from my heart," he said, "not as a politician."

Jelinek spoke of the civil rights and freedoms of Canadians and their rights to own guns.

"Bill C 51 isn't going to keep the gun away from the criminal," stated Jelinek. "People are innocent until proven guilty but under C 51 the gun owner is guilty and must prove himself innocent."

Jelinek spoke against "Orders of Council" which had brought Bill C 51 to Parliament. Under such an order the government has the power to act on a bill without going to parliament first. It returns to Parliament for ratification.

"There were 17,010 of these orders passed since 1974," stated Jelinek "and Bill C 51 is just one of a group of many that have infringed on people's rights."

"Freedom built this country to what it is today," said Jelinek. "We cannot afford to have Trudeau."

He showed the spectators a news clipping and informed them that this was not just his own feeling but that of party leader Joe Clark.

Turning to politics Jelinek added that Trudeau had lost control of national unity. "He has the federal government against the Provincial, West against the east, and rich against the poor."

Jelinek stated the fact that whether or not he were elected in the May 22 election, he would always feel the same way about the gun control laws. "I believe in rights and freedoms and a strong and united Canada," said Jelinek. "I for one will fight for our country the best way I can."

Jelinek ended his discussion by saying the best way to rid Bill C 51 was to elect a Progressive Conservative government.

Mr. Jelinek answered a few questions on the issues of the election before leaving for another appointment.

Bill Jones of the National Firearms Association spoke next claiming Bill C 51 was "bad law." He explained how it was necessary for police to enforce the law even if they didn't agree with it causing people to lose respect for their law enforcement agents.

Jones stated that the loss of respect would result in a lawlessness which would be increased with each passing law on gun control until there was a total lawlessness, resulting in anarchy.

Jones asked how many people present owned hand loaders. "Under Bill C 51 all hand loaders are criminals," said Jones. "Hand loading is a social threat." He used this as an example of how the law is ridiculed.

Jones feels if everything remains the same in the government the final outcome would be anarchy. "The gun con-

from an argument that arose in the hotel.

Various pieces of equipment from a 1979 Bronco in the parking lot of L and L Ford were stolen last week. Value of the equipment was placed at \$271.

Police are also investigating the York St. break and entry which netted thieves \$325 worth of rings, radio and liquor. One of the rings was a gold wedding ring.

The suspect is driving a '74 white colored Gremlin. There was a man and a woman in the car. The man who fired the rifle is six feet two inches tall and about 170 pounds. He has brown neck length hair. He may also sport a moustache.

A \$135 ten-speed man's bike was reported stolen from the high school Monday.

On the weekend vandals snipped the ignition wires of a car which was parked on Kingham Rd. Sometime between the middle of the month until Sunday thieves broke into a Kingham Rd. home and stole three silver dollars and three half-dollar coins.

Halton Regional Police are continuing an investigation into an alleged assault which took place in front of the Dumfries Hotel. Police state the assault resulted

Injuries suffered in crash

The occupants of two vehicles which crashed Sunday at Main Street and Mill Street, suffered injuries, police said.

A car driven by Michelle Lynn Mellor, Wallace Street, was in collision with a car driven by John Feenstra, R.R. 1 Acton, police said.

Both drivers suffered minimal injuries, police said, while the passengers, Marjorie Mellor and Nellie Feenstra, suffered minor injuries.

Estimated damages were \$2,000 to Feenstra's vehicle and \$600 to Mellor's.

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ACTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

St. Joseph's C.W.L. Rummage Sale in the church hall Friday, April 27, 7-9 p.m. Saturday, April 28, 10-12 a.m.

TAKE NOTE OF THIS!

Fund Raising Dance sponsored by C.B.S. - Committee for Better (Telephone) Service. Friday, May 11, 1979 9:00-1:00 Hillsburgh Community Centre. Buffet Lunch, Bar, Door Prizes. Music by Kent Tocher and friends. Tickets available in Erin at the Co-op, Simpson-Sears, in Hillsburgh at Saul's Variety, Marsville Store, Ospringe General Store, Bollinafad General Store or any C.B.S. executive.

The Acton Citizen Band in conjunction with the Georgetown Choral Society are pleased to present a concert on Saturday, May 5, 8:15 p.m. at McKenzie-Smith Middle School. Everyone welcome. Admission Free.

YARD SALE MAY 5 1-4 p.m. 14 Campbell Court, Acton Rain or Shine Baking, Crafts Theta Phi Sorority

Back to Acton Days planning meeting Wednesday, May 9, Station Hotel dining room, 7:30 p.m. Any ideas for July 1 weekend? All welcome.

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