

# The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1876

Don McDonald, Publisher

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## Need more action on downtown

At a meeting of the Business Improvement Area as winter was heaving its last gasps, architect Lloyd Sankey told BIA members there had better be some action on development of Acton's downtown soon or developer Jerry Sprackman would make full use of the lack to press his case for a plaza at the corner of Churchill Road and 7 Highway.

Halton Hills planning board flatly turned down Mr. Sprackman's request for a zoning change to allow construction of a 35,000 square foot plaza at that location in March. The developer said then he would appeal the decision to the Ontario Municipal Board.

Now it has happened!

Mr. Sprackman has filed an appeal of the decision with the OMB in an attempt to reverse council's decision. Although the town's planning board has said the proposed plaza is premature and would destroy Acton's downtown, Mr. Sprackman believes he has plenty of popular support for his plaza—and architect Sankey concedes this could pull a lot of weight with the OMB.

Sankey told BIA members then they were lucky to have "another kick at the cat" and they had better get busy and do something about downtown development. He unravelled his own scheme for the downtown using the two ends at the railway tracks on Mill and the area by the Dominion Hotel or IGA as anchors. He warned the BIA cosmetic surgery was not enough. It was time to use the scalpel with telling effect to inform the public the BIA is serious about downtown development.

The public's demand for better shopping variety by means of another food store and better parking facilities as expressed at a public meeting has to be answered downtown, Sankey said, rather than at the outskirts of the community in a strip plaza as the developer proposes.

There has been some action downtown. Two food stores merged into one where parking facilities were best but it created an empty store so far still vacant. The BIA also has transformed the area in front of the small block of stores at the corner of Church and Main Sts. into an attractive setting, helping to uplift the downtown.

There have been other improvements made by downtown businessmen to their own premises but there is still an obvious lack of new development which would satisfy shoppers who want variety and better facilities.

Mr. Sankey's interest in Acton's downtown is not motivated by self interest but in preserving one of the few downtowns remaining in this area. He believes strip plazas would destroy the downtown and take the commercial heart out of Acton.

However, his pleas and those of participating merchants will likely fall on deaf ears at the OMB appeal if there is no indication of further drastic development of Acton's downtown. Public support will also increase for the developer so long as there is no sign of such development forthcoming.

If ever there was a time Acton needed new development in its downtown it is now—and the sooner the better.

## A unique sight!

It would be difficult to go past the new Halton region headquarters on Bronte Road just north of the Queen Elizabeth Highway without giving it a second glance. It stands out a vivid green.

Motorists not expecting such vivid colors may even give it a third or fourth look before passing on to more mundane things and colors. It's a neck cracker.

It has been called the "Green Monster," the "Jolly Green Giant" and the "Incredible Hulk" by politicians at the official opening Friday, June 1. But no one has yet coined the proper word to fit this intrusion into a rural area, one of Halton's beauty spots.

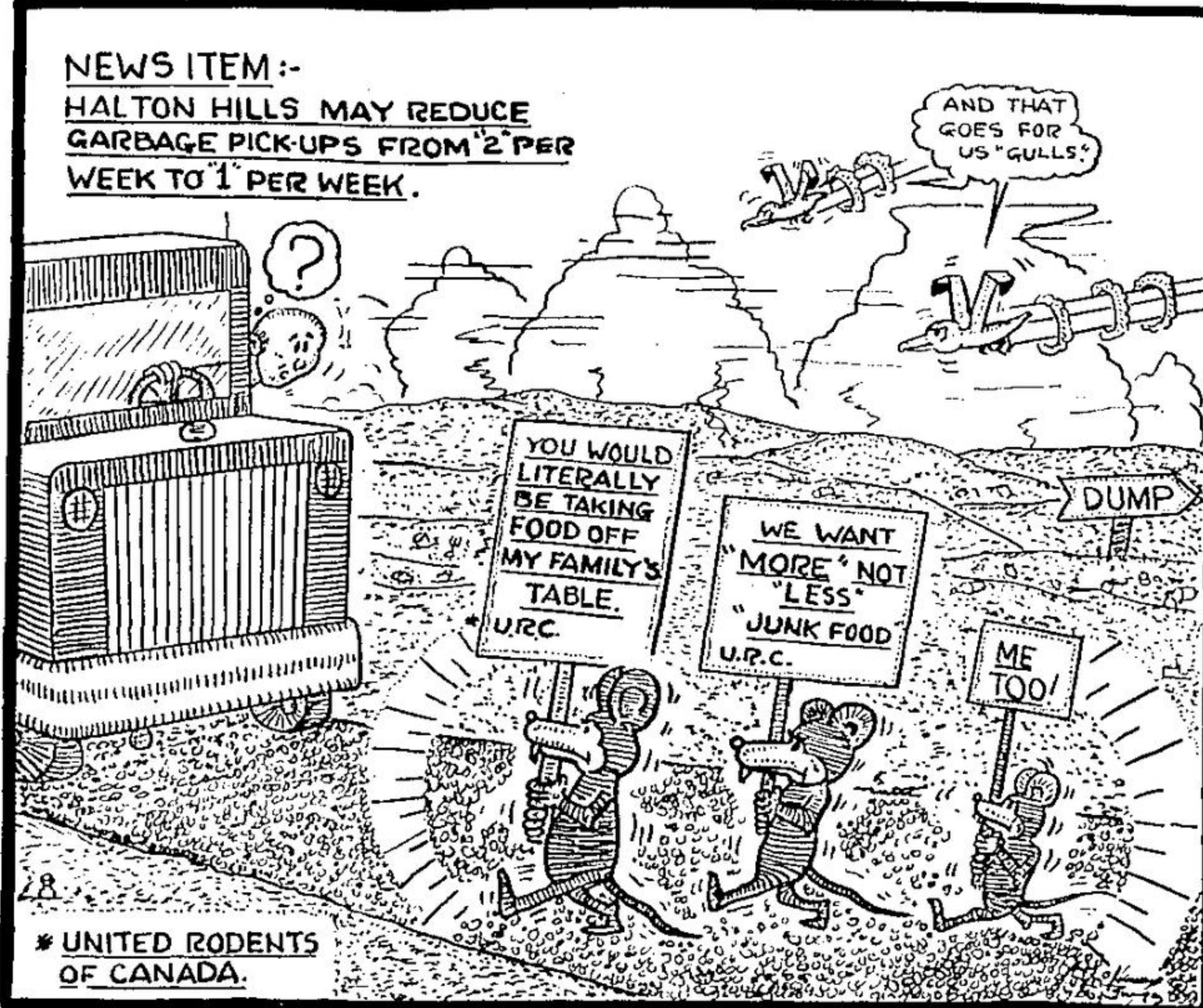
It is not ugly. It is probably functional. It is not beautiful. It is

different. It is not impressive but it is the first permanent home for Halton Region, discounting the old county days when the capital of Halton was in Milton.

Since it cost \$2.6 million to build and taxpayers from the north as well as south of Halton contributed to its construction it should be an oddity, a place for all taxpayers to visit.

Municipalities in Halton should charter special buses to visit the headquarters to give taxpayers a look and perhaps take a side visit to Bronte Provincial Park as a bonus.

No matter what adjectives are used to describe it, the new Halton headquarters is certainly a unique sight.



## Mountsberg camping experience

It is the season for "polliwogs," or tadpoles as they are better known, and in honor of the event, many area pupils are taking part in "Polliwogs and Rubber Boots," a program offered by Halton Region Conservation Authority.

The program is to be part of a summer resource project sponsored by the

Authority, taking place at Mountsberg Wildlife Centre and other conservation areas.

Pupils will have an opportunity to visit Mountsberg, tour the facilities, participate in pond studies, pioneering, hiking, survival techniques, bird studies, canoeing, swimming, sailing and stream studies this summer.

The resource program is a day program with education and recreational activities. It is geared towards a better understanding and appreciation of the environment and management.

The program is open to children eight to 12 years of age. Pupils will be grouped with their own age.



"POLLIWOGS" proved fascinating for 10-year-old Andrea Shannon, (left), and Meagan Elliott, nine, both grade five pupils at Robert Little School in Acton. The school class made a trip to Mountsberg Wildlife Centre Friday to learn about the life of a tadpole. Pupils had the opportunity to catch them for closer examination at the Mountsberg pond.



TADPOLE TRAPPING with the help of a flour sifter netted 10-year-old Andrea Shannon of Acton several good catches during a recent visit to Mountsberg Wildlife Centre.

## From the Editor's Note Book

by Hartley Coles

Just about everybody thinks they know how to run a newspaper. It is one of the hazards of the business, so naturally we are gratified here at The Free Press when someone tosses a bouquet in our direction instead of the inevitable brickbats. It happened twice this week from old Actonians who have forsaken greener pastures for less appealing parts of Ontario.

First there was a note from Mrs. Sid Eisen (Toronto) renewing her subscription and trying to straighten out one of those mix-ups that sometimes occur in the mailing process. Mrs. Eisen says she "would not wish to miss a single issue of your paper."

Good news. Lots better than the fella who recently told me he never read it because there were no Acton stories in it. I began to wonder what the staff and myself did all week and it is only letters like Mrs. Eisen's that keep us humming at our job.

Then a letter arrived from Mrs. Howard Coles (No relation) saying she still enjoyed the Free Press each week although she recognizes fewer names as time goes by.

She lives in St. Marys. "Your publication does an excellent job of mirroring a rapidly changing area," she says, noting she particularly enjoyed George Elliott's and this scribbler's articles on the old town hall. "Those 'Empire Day' concerts and 'High School At Homes' were a highlight of our school year," she remembers.

Thank you, Mrs. Coles, and if you ever want a letter of reference to the governor General or the Queen this staff will gladly supply it.

As they say anyone who makes a profit is seldom honored in his own stamping grounds.

Since the object of this column is to keep readers informed of some of the back room stuff in the newspaper business as well as to keep the editor amused after penning destructive editorials, we should also bear the happy tiding with readers that the Canadian Community Newspapers

Association also saw fit to throw some distinction in this direction with an award in their annual better newspapers competition. We decided to accept it before they changed their mind or find out they added the marks up wrong.

The award is a tribute to everyone who makes this newspaper possible every week. Believe me, the roll is so long no one could come up with an entire list out of their head. There are so many people contributing to your home town paper each week there's no possible way of recognizing everyone.

So here's to you out there—and keep reading.

One of our keen eyed reporters arrived in the office last week with a colorful story that will likely never find its way into the news columns. He says St. Joseph's school has a new line of T-shirts out which they sell to students. Profits go towards school activities. However, the colorful part of the story is the T-shirts are orange.

He felt perhaps they were practicing to enter the 12th of July parade, a fancy story indeed. But then in these ecumenical times the kids from St. Joe's are maybe ahead of the times. Who says the T-shirts shoulda been green?

Students! Want a job? The Association of Student Councils and the National Union of Students is developing a program to assist Canadian Students over 18 years of age to spend a "working holiday" in Britain.

"Participants will be working in various jobs in clerical and service establishments" said association spokesperson Claudia Falkenberg. "All jobs are of a temporary or part time nature. The exact position and location will be determined at an interview in London shortly after arrival."

Jobs pay between 43 and 63 British pounds (\$100.00-150.00) per week depending on the nature of the work and the pro-

ximity to London. Positions are available in various locations throughout Britain including Portsmouth, Birmingham, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow and York. Accommodation while working is provided at a charge of about 10 pounds per week.

Application for the SWAP program may be picked up at campus placement centres or at AOSC/CUTS, 44 St. George Street, Toronto Ontario (416) 979-2406.

Sheridan College president Jack Porter addressed graduating students last Friday and told a story about a Cape Breton resident who had to go to the hospital for brain surgery. The surgeons cut open his head, took out the brain and while they studied it closely their patient got up and walked out. Efforts to find him failed. "They finally found him years later," Mr. Porter said, "working in the administration offices at Sheridan College."

Nothing like a joke on yourself to establish a rapport with an audience, is there?

## Back issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Wednesday, June 18, 1969  
 Jim Slaven and Susan Clendenning were chosen top athletes at the high school. Mr. and Mrs. Elton Cole celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary.

Dr. Frank Oakes was part of the four man team conducting a rabies clinic for dogs and cats in the Community Centre. Graduates—Fred Dawkins M.A., Dr. Raymond Braida, Gail Breen, Beverly Bruce, Theresa Marzu.

Last appearance for the public school board will be at the official opening of the M. Z. Bennett school tonight. They are Orval Chapman, Vic Bristow, last chairman Cyril Bishop, Murray Smith, Charles Heard and secretary-treasurer Bill Middleton.

Rockwood carnival was again a huge success. The parade was not as long but the carnival was larger with more booths.

After 15 years as primary teacher at Robert Little, Grace Reed retires this year. When Kathleen Alger retires this week, she will leave principal Elmer Smith the lone survivor of the original staff at M. Z. Bennett School.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday June 11, 1959  
 Acton council recognized the 20 years service of Gus Clifford, who is retiring.

Prior to her retirement and the completion of 40 years of teaching at Acton public schools, Miss Isabel Anderson was honored Thursday evening during a program and presentation. Trustees T. Watson and M. Smith, former pupils, presented her with a rocker. She also received a set of dishes, pearls, flowers and a portrait. School board secretary William Middleton read the address.

There was a large gathering at the Decoration Day service and Rev. Brooks was guest preacher. The Junior Pipe Band made its first public appearance in the parade. Mill St. was lined solidly for the parade and there were 900 people in Fairview cemetery for the service. Cyril Leighton, committee chairman, welcomed all present. The memorial wreath was laid at the cairn in Pioneer Cemetery by World War I veterans E. E. Barr and Willard Britton. Boer War and World War I veteran Wilfred Coles raised and lowered the flag. The future of the Scottish Dance Club was discussed at the annual meeting at the home of president Dr. Robert Buckner.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, June 13, 1929  
 An aeroplane made use of the park as a landing field for a few hours on Tuesday afternoon. A few citizens availed themselves of the opportunity to go for a flight and enjoyed the thrills of a trip in the air. The plane was a two passenger machine. Mr. Alex T. Moore of Campbellville graduated from the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Commerce degree.

On Sunday afternoon Acton Citizens Band played a concert at Edgewood Park, Eden Mills. It was such a success it is possible the band will play there every second week.

The lime business at Dolly Varden is assuming quite an air of increased activity. There are now three kilns going and it is possible a fourth may be put in operation. Rockwood cemetery, with its system of perpetual care, is beginning to present a very attractive appearance. It has assumed quite a metropolitan air, with its new and improved system.

A number of the Acton lady True Blues attended the church parade at Glen Williams.

The brick work of the new building of Halton Glove Works is now well advanced.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, June 12, 1879  
 Everybody has heard ere this the result of the elections held on Thursday last. And now there is great joy in the heart of the Grits, while the Tory evinces his feeling by saying he "does not want to hear any more about the election." The Mowat government has been sustained. In Halton the Conservative Mr. Beatty has returned to his farm labors and Dr. Robertson with a majority of 32, will attend to Halton's interests in the local parliament. Acton returned the Conservative candidate with a majority of 10 votes, although always before giving a majority for the Reform party.

We announce with pleasure the marriage of one of Esquering's swains, Mr. Thos. Perryman, to one of Acton's fairest belles, Miss Fannie Christie. The ceremony was performed yesterday morning at the bride's home and the happy couple left on the 9.10 train on their wedding tour. The bride was the recipient of many useful, handsome and costly presents, including one to help things run smoothly, a set of Mrs. Pott's Smoothing Irons.