



Harry Otterbein, Don van Fleet, Sam Tennant and Doug Mason retired from Acton volunteer firefighters as of Monday. The foursome represent 110 years of fire fighting service to Acton and area.

## Firefighters foursome ends century of service to town

The siren's wail will no longer be a call to action for four Acton firefighters after this week. Sam Tennant, Harry Otterbein, Don Van Fleet and Doug Mason retired Monday. Between the foursome there are 110 years of fire fighting service to Acton and area.

Mr. Tennant is the most senior in service with 35 years. He wears the 30 year, Long Service Medal, from the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office. Mr. Van Fleet has 28 years service, Mr. Mason 27 and Mr. Otterbein 20.

Mr. Tennant is also a former chief of the Acton Fire Brigade, starting in January 1953. His tenure was for at least two years, according to the old minute books, how-

ever memory recalls about four years service as chief.

All have life memberships in the Ontario Firefighter Association. All of them feel it's time to retire. "I feel it's time for younger men to come in," said Mr. Van Fleet. Mr. Otterbein took up a different theme regarding the need to retire: "I can't get here in time for the first truck."

The four men were interviewed in the refurbished firehall.

"I'm still not catching the first truck, I used to," said Mr. Van Fleet. He lives on Willow St. S., the closest of the foursome. Mr. Otterbein and Mr. Tennant are 64 and Mr. Mason is 62.

The retiring foursome leave behind 31 men to work the trucks. Mr.

Tennant has a son Chris in the department. Bern Van Fleet, Don's brother, remains with the volunteers. He has about 28 years service behind him.

They are also leaving behind some memories, the worst of which are the fires which have a connection with death, the two hotel fires and the Jones' house fire.

Under the heading of good times come a number of reminiscences. Mr. Mason recalled the many Saturday mornings when he used to drop by to help clean the trucks. Then after chores he would put a quarter in the fridge and get a beer.

The 1927 Studebaker fire truck was the subject of some memorable work. Because of the cold weather, a plug running from the engine block used to keep it warm. However, children used to unplug the heater—for reasons best known to themselves.

The firefighters had to push the truck in order to get it going.

For a time the Studebaker had to get along without a fuel pump. To keep it going, it was a fireman's job to ride on the running board while pouring gas into the engine through a funnel.

Over the years, the most obvious changes in fire fighting have been in equipment.

"We used to rely on an axe with a pointed end," commented Mr. Tennant.

They also recalled having to ride on the trucks in extreme cold weather. Today firefighters have a warm coat to ride in.

Mr. Mason recalled the innovations introduced years ago by Chief Jack

Newton—many of which are still in use. Mr. Newton managed to get radio communications for firemen.

And, according to Mr. Mason, Chief Newton introduced the Mutual Aid System. The system had firefighters of different municipalities helping each other.

One man recalled a mutual aid test which forced the Acton brigade to drive to Burlington. "And we beat Georgetown. We were pumping water when Georgetown arrived," the firefighter chuckled.

There have been other changes. The growth of the number of people in town has meant a loss of closeness between the firefighters and residents. The retirees recalled getting rides to the hall as the siren sounded. Citizens use to pick them up, because they were known to be firefighters,

but that does not happen often anymore.

"Over the years, employers have been real good with firemen," observed Mr. Van Fleet. He recently marked 30 years with Goy Cartage Ltd. Mr. Otterbein said that his former employer, Force Electric, suggested he join the volunteer firefighters. He said the company looked upon his connection with the force as a benefit to the company and a contribution to the community. Today he is unemployed. Mr. Tennant works for the town and Mr. Mason is with Acton Hydro.

"I'm gonna bring my beeper back," said Mr. Otterbein. So far no one has asked the new retirees to turn in their keys to the upstairs recreation room. So it looks as if they will still be able to drop by for a game or two of euchre.



The Acton Agricultural Society Ladies' Division elected its 1980 executive last Wednesday night at a meeting held at Acton Public Library. Front row,

## Racial slur...

(Continued from page 1) whether a policeman or private citizen, has the right to impose his own punishment. "No man has the right to give out punishment to others. However, what punishment is there for those people who deal out their own racial punishment to people of different ethnic backgrounds?" Bellegem asked.

Bellegem told the court how the officer owned up to the incident by immediately informing his superiors and pleading guilty. "He never tried to escape the responsibility or consequences of his actions. However our law doesn't recognize temporary emotional upheaval," Bellegem said.

Bellegem concluded by asking together with the Crown Attorney for an absolute discharge of the assault charge. "I could bring in character witnesses for Prasad but there wouldn't be enough room in the courthouse. Community-wise this

may have a beneficial effect," he concluded.

Judge Young said he had no hesitation about granting an absolute discharge to the officer. "This is a very sad commentary on our society when I say Mr. Prasad will have to face similar circumstances again," he said.

Crown Attorney Haw said client, Mr. Harding, said he wanted it on the record that although the comment came from someone in his vehicle it was not from him.

"It doesn't matter who said it—it is still a reprehensible action," the Judge replied.

Haltom Hills planner Mario Venditti was one of many municipal officials and planners who attended an Ontario Ministry of Energy seminar yesterday (Tuesday) in Toronto designed to acquaint them with techniques in planning energy-efficient developments.

## \$700 stolen from car

Cash totalling \$700 was stolen from a car parked outside the IGA food store January 4. Police say the money was reported missing from the vehicle late Friday evening.

Q. C. named

Haltom Crown Attorney James Treleven was one of four Haltom solicitors named as a Queen's Counsel by Ontario Attorney General Roy McMurtry on New Year's day.

## Planner at seminar

The seminar, one of five being held this month in Ontario, was conducted by officials of both the energy and housing ministries.

### COMMUNITY CALENDAR

A CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS IN ACTON AND DISTRICT

La Leche League of Acton offers monthly meetings for women who are interested in information about breastfeeding. For further information call Marilyn Cox 878 4803 or Karen Gregory 878 3884.

Annual meeting of Acton Agricultural Society will be held on January 22, 1980 at Knox Presbyterian Church at 7:30 p.m.

## Ladies elect new executive

The Ladies' Division of the Acton Agricultural Society held their first meeting of 1980 last Wednesday night at the Acton Public Library.

The new officers elected that night are past president - Carmela Cobham, president - Heather Rennie, first vice-president - Lucille Cooksley, second vice-president - Marilyn Murray, secretary-treasurer - Irma McEnery.

correspondence Carmela Cobham, press reporter Diane Evans and auditor Elva Pearson. There will be tickets sold on the quilt the ladies' board made and exhibited at the 1979 Acton Fall Fair. The winning ticket will be drawn at the 1979 fair.

The annual fair board meeting will be held Tuesday, January 22, beginning at 8:30 p.m. at Knox Presbyterian Church Hall.

## Obituary

### Molly Downey

A woman active in the Progressive Conservative Party in North Halton, Mrs. Mary Alice (Molly) Downey, RR 3 Milton (Speyside), died December 29 at Joseph Brant Hospital in Burlington after a lengthy illness. Mrs. Downey was 56.

Mrs. Downey was born on July 7, 1923, in Dublin Ireland and married her husband George 37 years ago.

The couple came to the Speyside area nine years ago from Willowdale.

Mrs. Downey is remembered as a wonderful mother by her six children and a friend of all who knew her. She is sadly missed by her Speyside neighbors.

Mrs. Downey loved to work outdoors in her bush and flower gardens. Funeral service was held December 31 at Shoemaker Funeral Home in Acton with Rev. C. Beaton officiating and the ladies of the Trinity United Church attending. Cremation followed the funeral.

Mrs. Downey is mourned by her husband George; daughters Linda (Mrs. David Richards) Richmond Hill, Colleen (Mrs. Donald Laadlay) Georgetown; and Maureen (Mrs. Ruddy Holmes) Acton; and sons Douglas, Brampton; Larry, Mississauga; and Michael at home. Mrs. Downey is also survived by 10 grandchildren.

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