

The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

Don McDonald, Publisher

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Drop-in is a great asset

Acton's three councillors, Terry Grubbe, Ross Knechtel and Ed Wood should be commended for developing the weekly drop-in session.

In late November Grubbe followed through on an election pledge to make the local members of Halton Hills council more accessible to Ward One ratepayers and with the help of her two colleagues the drop-in at the Community Services Centre Friday afternoons was born.

The drop-in goes a long way towards bringing local government back to the people of Acton.

Ever since Halton Hills was born in 1974 a major complaint of Acton ratepayers has been that their local government is remote from them.

Halton Hills is still pretty much a political entity only and is predominately located in or around Georgetown.

Actonians, because their council now meets on Trafalgar Road, just outside Georgetown, felt their representatives were inaccessible.

Because of the drop-in, a major and valid Acton complaint about regional government has been eliminated.

For those who can't meet with their councillors during the day the three are more than willing to arrange evening sessions also. The councillors ask that people who can't come to the drop-in give them a call and they'll set up a time and place for a resident or residents to get together with them. In addition they say they can arrange to bring town staff to evening sessions to answer questions.

Now that we have the drop-in it is up to taxpayers here to make use of it.

Actonians must visit the drop-in. Make use of this time the three councillors are together. Take Grubbe up on her invitation for people to come to the drop-in not just to complain or give praise to the municipality, but also to get to know your councillors as people.

The councillors want and need to hear the voice of the ratepayers.

No question, the drop-in is a great tool to be used to ensure Acton's voice is heard at Halton Hills council.

All that remains is for residents to continue to make good use of the drop-in.



"In conclusion I'd like to say thanks for the effort to the one who made the signs and please don't admit you're a teacher."

Comment on store hours

Business and residents have only until next Monday, March 24, to comment on Halton Hills council's plan to repeal the old Acton and Georgetown store closing hour by-laws.

A by-law to do away with the old store closing hour regulations will come before council on April 14.

What started out as a move to blend the two old by-laws into one resulted in council deciding there shouldn't be any store closing hour laws in either urban area or the old township.

Comments should be sent to Ken Richardson, the town's clerk-administrator.

This is a double edged issue. On the one hand councillors are to be applauded for making a move which deregulates private enterprise.

Likely some stores will now opt for longer hours and this could be popular with shoppers, especially those wishing to purchase services available in Acton who work out of town.

At the same time ending legislated store closing hours will create some problems.

If store hours are lengthened only on a hit and miss basis this could lead to more loitering and vandalism. If, for example, just a single store in a block stays open

later than 6 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Saturday that will attract loiterers and vandals. Vandalism of business premises costs consumers money.

You won't just pay higher prices at vandalised stores, but at the ones which stay open later also.

Added hours of business mean added hours of labor costs. Consumers will foot, in these high inflationary times, those bills too.

Vandalism, loitering and higher prices all result in spin-off social problems. The related social problems will cost tax dollars.

This issue was really only aired once, at a general committee meeting. The next week at council, only informing the public of this change was discussed.

Maybe the pros, including more sales for local stores and possibly more people patronizing Acton merchants, do outweigh the possible drawbacks.

However, this issue was hastily decided. Council should take one more look at the subject of store closing legislation before re-circulating the old by-laws.

Council has heard a lot from businessmen.

The town fathers now need to hear from consumers.

Recipe for success—do the opposite

I've decided how to supplement my income, when they drag me, kicking and squealing, into retirement.

This is an occupational hazard of potential retirees, who, after living in this country for the past 30 years, know full well that their paper money is going to be good for starting fires with, and not much else, in a decade or so.

Canadians are extremely security-conscious. They don't give a diddle about growing old gracefully. They want to grow old comfortably.

It's hard to believe. These are the same people whose ancestors came from the fogs of Scotland and the bogs of Ireland and the smogs of England, with plenty of nerve and not much else.

They paid their dues with hard work, taking chances, raising and feeding huge families. The last things in their minds were pensions, condominiums in the south, the falling dollar, or Ayrabs.

They didn't need oil; they cut their own wood. They couldn't even spell condominium. There was no such thing as a pension.

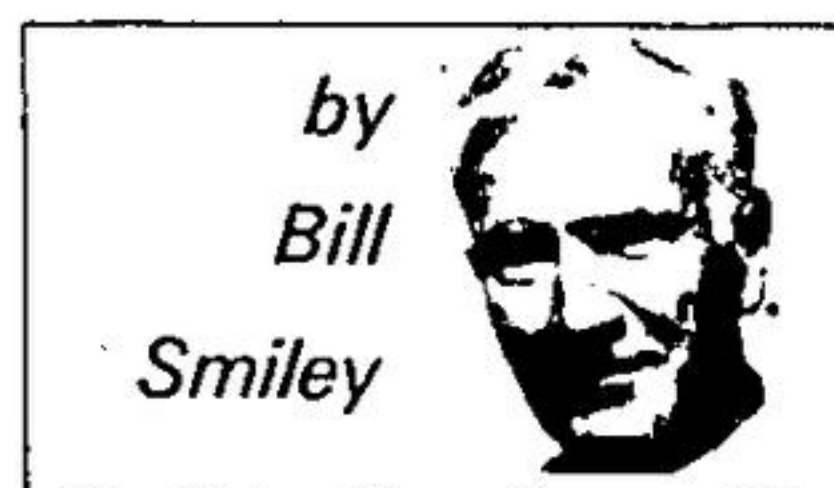
The old man was Grampa, and he hung onto his land, bullied his sons, and made most of the decisions, until he retired to senility and the fireside.

The old lady was Gramma, and she helped birth her grandchildren, bossed her daughters, had a wisdom that only hard living can give, and was buried thankfully, but with copious tears all around.

They lived with a certain ugliness: brutal work, vicious weather, cruel child-bearing by the women, until they were warped and arthritic and sick in body.

Few pleasures like music and books and drama and automatic dishwashers and television and milk in a plastic carton instead of a cow.

But they didn't need two martinis to give them an appetite for dinner. They didn't need a couple of Seconal to put them to sleep, or a couple of mood elevators to re-



by Bill Smiley

lieve their depression, or a couple of Valium to relax their muscles.

They ate like animals because they worked like horses. They slept like animals because they were exhausted. They didn't need mood changers because they had only two or three moods; angry, tired out, or joyful. They didn't need muscle relaxers because their muscles were too busy to relax.

Now you may think I'm making a pitch for 'The good old days.' I'm not. I think they were dreadful days. I remember the look on my Dad when he couldn't even make a payment on the coal bill. I remember watching my mother, who never cried, weeping over the sewing machine at midnight, when she thought no one was looking.

But in those days, people grew old with a certain dignity, if not beauty. They accepted their final illness as "God's will." Most people today say, "Why me?" when they are stricken.

Today people want to be beautiful when they're old. They want to be thought of as "young at heart." They want to be comfortable. They don't want to be ill. They dread the cold. They fear poverty. They search, sometimes desperately, for some sort of womb, or cocoon to go back to, where they will be safe and warm and fed, and never have to look that grim Old Man straight in the eye.

And modern economy lets them down.

Their hard-earned, and hard-saved dollars dwindle into cents. They come close to heart attacks and strokes when they have to pay \$3.80 for a pound of beef, 89 cents for a lousy head of lettuce, over a dollar for a pound of butter. They are disoriented, confused, and frightened.

And it's not only the old who are frightened and insecure. I see it in my younger colleagues. They don't talk about Truth or Beauty, Ideas and Life. They talk about property and RRSPs and the price of gold, and inflation, and the terrorizing possibility of losing their jobs.

Some of the smart younger teachers bought some land when it was cheap (they're not so young any more, eh?) and built on it. The smarter ones have a working wife. The smartest ones have both. Most of them, even those in their 30s, are already figuring on a second income when they retire: selling real estate or boats; doing the books for some small businessman; market gardening; antique shops. Who can blame them?

But I have the answer for every one of them, as I announced in my thesis, back in paragraph one. No problem about retirement.

Just follow Bill Smiley around, do exactly the opposite to what he does, and you'll come out healthy, wealthy and wise, when it's time to put your feet up. My wife could have told anyone that years ago.

If Smiley buys equities, buy blue chip stocks. If Smiley buys gold mining stock, buy a swamp. If Smiley calls the Tories to win, vote Liberal. If Smiley buys an ounce of gold, dump yours fast, because it will drop \$200 overnight. If Smiley gets into seat-belts, because they are compulsory, you get out. The law will change.

I could go on and on, but I won't. Just watch what I do, and do the opposite. And I have all the papers to prove it. But I'm charging 20 per cent of everything you make. And that's how I plan to weather inflation and retirement.

Back issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Acton Free Press Wednesday, March 25, 1970
Mason Knitting, makers of Carter's children's wear, are using standard sizing. Steven Papillon is being recommended for a Boy Scout award, following his rescue of Suzie Hill from the icy water of Fairy Lake.

Janet Braida has joined the news staff of Dills Publishing, working mainly in Milton. The first team to accomplish an eight ender in the new rink are Andy McKenzie, Mary Marks substituting for Eleanor Goy, Val Drinkwater and Dave Dawson.

Over 300 attended open house at the newly-renovated Bank of Nova Scotia. Chester Anderson came as manager in 1961. Others on the staff are Clark Hooton, Mrs. Betty Hawes, Mrs. Marie Broughton, Mrs. Beverley Bodfield, Miss Mary Bos, Mrs. Eileen McFadden, Miss Pat Synnott and Mrs. Sandra Thiessen.

A presentation was held for Mr. and Mrs. Don Matthews and family who are moving to the Fergus area.

Work began on the third apartment on Churchill Rd. S.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Acton Free Press Thursday, March 17, 1960

Saturday's third annual Fun Fair was the most successful yet when over 700 gathered in the Robert Little school for an afternoon of shopping and entertainment. General convener was Mrs. J. Dowling and decorations were under the supervision of Mrs. Monty Root. Wares were sold out and games and fish pond had to close down when they ran out of prizes. Last to keep going was the Punch and Judy show entirely made, written and acted by Mrs. E. Browne of the Home and School executive. Bill Wilson welcomed the crowd over the P.A. system. Ron Smith was in charge of the bingo room, George Haggitt the games room, Mrs. Lidka and Mrs. J. McGeachie the fish pond. Book Sales were directed by David Sproston, John Dowling and David Lidka. Mrs. W. Wolfe was in charge of admissions.

A ballot in today's paper asks: Are you in favor of capital punishment?

David Benham of Rockwood appeared on the Ken Sobie amateur hour.

Gas war prices dropped to 34 cents a gallon.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Acton Free Press Thursday, March 20, 1910

The banquet and presentation to the Hockey Clubs of Acton in the town hall was a splendid community affair. The Intermediate and Junior clubs were the guests of the citizens. The ladies of the Women's Institute and I.O.O.F. chapters had charge of the banquet for about 225 and Scoutmaster George Mason said grace. Acton orchestra played and Scotty Burton, Geo. Musselle, Alex Mann and F.J. Salt sang. Veteran sportsman R.M. MacDonald proposed the toast to the teams.

Gold wrist watches engraved "Acton Intermediates 1930" were presented to the team by Reeve Mason, G.A. Dills, Dr. Nelson and Councillor Hansen. Several of the players were vociferously called on for a speech. John Greer, who had won a sweater for the most goals, rocked the crowd with laughter. The toast to the hosts was proposed by Neil Gibbons, who sprung the surprise of the evening when he presented a cheque for \$350 to the arena committee to be applied on the new building.

Dr. Nelson, who is chairman of the arena committee, expressed thanks and said there was enough to cover debenture charges. He paid tribute to the patronage and loyalty of the people of the community. The floor was cleared and dancing followed to Mason's orchestra.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Acton Free Press Thursday March 18, 1880

The arrival of immigrants of a good class from the old country is cause for rejoicing, and we hope the influx may continue.

A young men's Literary Association has been formed at Knatchbull, with Mr. David Waldie, blacksmith, as its president. The association meets every Saturday evening in Knatchbull Town Hall.

Over half a mile of sidewalk has been laid in the small village of Horoby.

The annual meeting of the Bible society was held in the Presbyterian church, Mr. John Speight, President, in charge.

The following dialogue actually occurred at the recent open winter: Pat: "Molke, did I ever see a winter like this wan?" Mike: "Indeed I did, Pat." Pat: "Whin?" Mike: "Last summer, shure and begone to ye!"

We believe a veterinary surgeon would do well by a weekly visit to Acton.

More people from this vicinity are moving to Nebraska to take up land.



Reed cynical about promises in Throne speech

Halton-Burlington MPP Julian Reed is somewhat cynical about the speech from the throne introduced in the Ontario Legislature last week. If the province acted on each of its promises "our province would go ahead with great strides," he says. But he adds, he's yet to see all the promises fulfilled in past Throne speeches.

Commenting on the 80 point program in an interview this week, Reed remarked he felt the establishment of 600 more nursing home beds would mean a great deal for Halton which is on a nursing home priority list. However, he's afraid the promise will get lost in the economic shuffle as each project is constantly moved into further phases.

He sees one of the great ironies of the throne speech in the pledge to put heavier emphasis on hydraulic power. Already Hydro has slashed it's "measly" budget of \$2.4 million earmarked for hydraulic power exploration to \$1.5 million says Reed. This is only one tenth of one per cent of Hydro's total budget and "hardly allows them to do the paperwork," he observes.

However, Reed was positive about plans for more efficient farm productivity.

"We do know plans are underway. The old grants and loan system is being replaced by productivity loans designed for a 'bigger bang for the buck'."

He was also pleased to see French language services being upgraded.

"The Francophone community is located in pockets" he said, feeling services were being increased in areas where they were needed. "We have a responsibility as Canadians and the whole question of Francophone services is part of our overall responsibility."

As the Liberal energy critic, Reed said he was pleased the province did adopt some of his attitudes in four major energy areas. The province has made a commitment to examine the issue of alternate liquid fuels such as alcohol, Reed explains.

On the whole question of energy, he becomes excited. He feels the province is beginning to move on such things as standards for appliances, greatly upgrading small electric motor efficiency.

"Conservation is good business—the cheapest barrel of oil is still the one you save," Reed says, "and the cheapest kilowatt of electricity is the one you don't have to use." Although he's pleased to see changes in

energy thinking Reed would like to see the province go further. He'd like to see more encouragement of small hydro plants rather than large installations. He'd like to see use made of the 50 per cent waste on government cut wood in tree lots.

He has many facts at his fingertips to prove the efficiency and low cost of small hydro plants.

"We've got to get away from the window dressing he says referring to huge installations."

"We need to adopt the viewpoint of a young farmer who has just purchased his first farm. He would walk around his land to find out what he had and how to utilize it most efficiently. We're not doing that (with our province)."

Reed feels the Government has to venture into the field of leadership on this question of energy exploration instead of simply being a mirror.

"We've got to risk falling. The government has to stick its neck out," he says. "That's what I see for the '80s, we can't hang back and do nothing about it."

Two areas he would have liked to see in-

cluded in the Speech from the Throne is more environmental protection. The problem of "acid rain" was commented on in the Throne speech but Reed feels the problem is far more serious than making strategic proposals.

"We know the sources (of acid rain) we know how to deal with it—we're now at the stage where we have to make a commitment to it."

"We've got to do it by example, we've got to clean up our own act first, then we can go to the States and say 'this is what we're doing.'"

Reed was also concerned about the lack of land use commitment in the Throne speech. He is increasingly concerned about the disappearance of agricultural land and feels that we need to move now on a program to save the five per cent of tillable land left in Canada, half of which is in southern Ontario.

He has strong feelings on energy conservation and a return to alternate methods of using energy.

"I don't advocate going back but using the resources we've always had with applied new technology. Ontario has a golden opportunity to become a world leader in technology (for conservation and pollution abatement). What is now our problem should become our asset."