

The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

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Editor: Gord Murray
Reporter/Photographer: Eric Elston
Sports/Women's: Diana Wallmann
Rockwood News: Jennifer Barr
Contributor: Helen Murray
Darkroom: Ken Bustin

TELEPHONE (519) 853-2010
Business and Editorial Office



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Anti-region petition can help

Acton and area residents are getting another chance to tell Queen's Park they don't like regional government.

A few years ago a group of concerned citizens banded together under the banner of Actonians for Action and presented a thoughtful, well considered, brief citing reasons why this community should be allowed to break away from Halton and Halton Hills and become an independent municipality again, in Wellington County.

The concerns of Actonians for Action were ignored.

Part of the problem was there weren't enough voices crying foul about regional government to worry the provincial government.

Another factor likely was that Acton and area is represented in the Ontario Legislature by a member of an opposition party.

A Waterdown man who is fed up with seven years of regional government, Mike Majic, has started circulating a petition throughout Ontario's 10 regions, including Halton, hoping to collect the signatures of 100,000 people who are just as fed up with the extra level of government.

Majic is asking Acton, Esquesing and north Nassagaweya renters and to join him in his fight by circulating his petition here and sending him statements of opposition against regional government.

Majic wants regional government abolished because "it is yet another parasite implemented by your (Premier William Davis's) administration."

He complains that regional government has resulted in greatly increased property taxes and it was implemented without the people's consent.

If the province doesn't respond to his petition within 60 days of his presenting Davis with evidence that 100,000 or more people have had it with regional government, then he plans to take the matter to court.

It can only be hoped previous frustrations with swaying the provincial government on issues like regional government and the hydro corridor won't keep the people here who might get out and help Majic circulate his petition from becoming involved.

Likely Queen's Park won't jump to flush regional government down the drain just because a lot of people sign a petition indicating they don't like it.

At the same time the party in power won't be totally unmoved by 100,000 disgruntled voters either, especially if some of those signatures come from riding represented by government members.

Also Majic's threatened legal action won't likely result in regional government disappearing altogether either. It's unclear if he can even take the province into court over the issue of regional government. Another problem with taking the government to court is we end up in effect fighting ourselves and that's pretty costly. We, the taxpayers, will foot the bill for the high priced legal help Queen's Park will bring in to fight the court battle.

Then why help Majic fight regional government by circulating his petition in Acton and area?

What's the use? Well, for one thing it will help prevent further growth of regions in Ontario.

More importantly it could lead to a full scale local and provincial review of regional government and that could result in some regional responsibilities being passed back to Halton Hills jurisdiction where Actonians have more influence on decision making.

Lastly, if the province isn't made aware again that people here are unhappy with regional government then the region could in years ahead become more powerful, have even more control over Acton.

There have been some benefits from Halton Hills and Halton region but there is no question both levels could be improved and made more sensitive to Acton concerns.

Abolishing the region, without a replacement for it at ready hand, isn't the answer anyway and neither is reverting back to the old county system.

But letting Queen's Park know we aren't satisfied with regional government through Majic's petition may result in a happier medium between the region and county systems being born.



Agony, elation for teachers marking exams

Marking examination papers brings out the best and the worst in a teacher. Any fool can set an examination. Any other idiot can write the thing. But marking the finished, or more often unfinished product is something else.

In some ways, marking exams is the absolute anus of the sometimes creative body of teaching. It is to the teacher what an over-flowed toilet is to the plumber.

Normally, a plumber's life is a fairly happy one. Whanging away at pipes. Cursing gaily as he tries to unscrew a rusted nut. Dropping a dirty great wrench on the customer's new tile floor. And writing out a whacking great bill at \$14 per hour, plus parts which must be made of 24-carat gold. On the whole, a satisfactory, fulfilling life. A plumber is usually a smiling, affable chap, much like the highwaymen of olden times, who grinned gallantly as they stripped the passengers of the stage of the valuables.

It's the same with teachers. You seldom see a teacher who is not smiling, except between the first of September and the end of June.

They too have their little joys in everyday life: bullying kids; cursing the principal, under their breaths; gossiping venomously about colleagues who are having more fun than they; happily whining about being underpaid and over-worked; thanking God that it's Friday. A challenging life of dedication and idealism.

But both parties have one crow in their ointment, or fly in their throat, or whatever you call it.

When a plumber walks in, rubber-booted, and faces a floor covered with water, sanitary napkins, toilet tissue, and semi-dissolved feces, his normally serene mien becomes one of stony stoicism.

And when a teacher finishes a term at school, utterly exhausted, empty of ideals, drained of dedication, and faces the marking of about 180 exam papers, his normally congenial expression turns into something resembling agony.



by
Bill
Smiley

Nobody looks quite as agonizing, staggering home with both arms full of exam papers, as the English teacher. His/her thoughts about Phys. Ed. teachers, shop teachers, business teachers and others who don't have formal exams are unprintable in a family journal. Their attitudes toward science teachers and geography teachers, with their true-false exams, are barely less charitable.

These rumination, none of them original, returned to me as I sat serenely during this year's March break, pursuing the current crop of regulations, wild guesses, and hopeful meanderings that constitute the average student's exam.

Thwarted from pressing into the frozen North, while so many of my colleagues were heading for the sunny south, by that common enemy, the common cold, I shucked off all resentment, irritation, and hopes for a holiday, and marked my papers.

It was my old lady who had the cold, and she stayed out of my hair for a change. I sat like Solomon, alternately amused, bemused, bewildered, and occasionally bewitched, by the outpourings of adolescence.

Some were simply stunned. Others were desperate, seeking any port in a storm. Some had a cue, but couldn't solve the case. And very occasionally, there was sheer delight in seeing a keen, original mind at work.

I mentioned the chore as bringing out the best and the worst in the harassed pedagogue, peering, penciling, pouting over the papers.

Occasionally, one is enchanted. One of those students who is a wall-flower in class, obviously shy, hiding behind drooping eyelids, flowers on paper, all inhibitions forgotten in the sheer joy of expression, and turns in a brilliant piece of creative thinking. And the teacher is momentarily elated, realizing he has kindled a flame.

All in all, an enriching experience, giving the marker a good look at a good cross-section of youngsters, a few good laughs, some self-doubts, a certain humility, a delightful feeling of playing God, Jr., and the odd flash of sheer satisfaction, if not joy.

To heck with holidays from now on. Spend a lot of money getting nowhere with a lot of disgruntled fellow-travellers, get home exhausted and disappointed. From now on, I'm going to stay home and mark papers.

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One becomes a philosopher: "Oh, well, what the hell? We can't all be brain surgeons," after reading the efforts of one who has professed the desire for such a profession, and spells it "brain surjen."

One becomes a philanthropist: "He's flunking badly. But he did clean the blackboards and plug in the record players and said 'Have a nice holiday, sir,' and he's going into the old man's business because there's nowhere else to go, so I'll give him 10 marks for cooperation and attitude. That'll please the Guidance Department."

One is amused. She wrote on the outside of the paper: "I did my best, Mr. Smiley. I hope you're in a good mood when you mark this." I took off a mark because she misspelled "you're."

One is appalled. Question: "Use a sentence containing the word morale." Answer: "A hero thinks he is greater than ordinary mortals." Things like this make the young teacher panic and ask self, "What's happening? I'm not getting through to these kids at all." Not to worry. The kid will probably be a good mother.

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Back issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Acton Free Press Wednesday, April 22, 1970

An engineer has warned against delaying on necessary arena repairs.

Apparently Energy Minister George Kerr told a group of businessmen North Halton should not be too hasty about turning down proposed garbage disposal plants such as the one planned on the Rogvaldson farm south of Acton.

The excellent turn-out of 300 at the first meeting of the drug education program caused a rethinking of the planned program. About 60 were selected for a further session.

Post office hours will change from 8.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. on Saturday mornings, rather than 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., to make it easier for businessmen to pick up mail before they open their stores.

Parks board chairman Peter Marks favors dropping the spectator charge at the arena, to encourage youth to meet their friends there. Art Gordon and Bob Laughlin favored a small charge.

Marsha McKenzie and Patricia Last have been accepted at the spring semester of the University of Guelph.

There were nine grass fires on the weekend.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Acton Free Press Thursday, April 14, 1960

Hillsburgh bank was held up and robbed of \$4,056 on Tuesday. Two suspects were arrested.

Avian Industries' experimental gyro-plane crashed after an unscheduled take-off at the Wellington-Waterloo airport. The company was formed last year by employees and engineers laid off from A. V. Roe Arrow project. The pilot, Emil Zuber, has a broken ankle. The plane was undergoing tests when it accidentally became airborne. More than \$100,000 has been invested in the prototype aircraft. The craft was badly damaged.

The son of the first school teacher in Rockwood, James Hill has died. He was a nephew of J. J. Hill of St. Paul, Minn. who in company with Donald Mann, originally of Acton, had a lot to do with the opening up of the railroad business in the American North West.

Wren Sheila Paul has completed her entry training at HMCS Cornwallis.

Walker Lodge was honored by the visit of DDGM Bruce Omand. Wor. Master is J. Reid.

300 Georgetown Delrex subdivision home owners have signed a petition to secede from the town.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Acton Free Press Thursday, April 17, 1930

Council discussed the advisability of adopting Daylight Saving Time in Acton. All other neighboring towns are adopting this time this year. Councillor Thetford had secured opinions from manufacturers and business men and encountered no opposition.

The matter of tying dogs up during the summer months was discussed. Since dogs were tied up, rabbit and skunks were causing depredations just as serious as the dogs.

Acton Oddfellows held their 13th annual At Home in the town hall. Two hundred enjoyed a banquet, concert and dance.

Rockwood Division Court has been abolished, and the Eramosa area becomes part of the Guelph jurisdiction.

Mr. N. S. Marshall is making extensive renovations in his store at Eden Mills.

Spring plowing started last week, about a month later than usual.

Miss Doris Gowdy of Limehouse won a silver medal in the W.C.T.U. contest at Georgetown.

A band of gypsies, travelling in the up-to-date method, by automobile, camped near Acton for a night.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Acton Free Press Thursday, April 15, 1880

While all the world is sending relief to the famine-stricken people in Ireland, another famine is raging in Russia.

The brotherhood of Masonry started out as an experiment in Canada 25 years ago, and the success it has obtained is unparalleled. Walker Lodge, of this village, is in prosperous condition.

The frost is pretty well out of the ground and the land dry enough to cultivate.

The village granted tax exemption to Phillip Jacobi for five years provided he occupy Beardmore tannery and employ at least six hands.

Mr. A. C. Black, who has been teaching a class in vocal music, gave a concert in the Temperance Hall.

The men engaged in the ice cutting business are shipping day and night. Already a great deal of the ice that was packed has melted badly.

Our readers write

Coverage disappointing

April 9, 1980

Dear Sir: It was with great disappointment that I read the Acton Free Press of April 2.

The Acton Figure Skating Club, like many organizations, has battled inflation to stage its annual carnival on March 30. It was the hard work and sincere effort of over 120 skaters, parents, volunteers and professionals. Over the past 13 years that I have been associated with this organization we have enjoyed marvellous coverage of this yearly event in your paper, usually with at least one full page, many times two full

pages of pictures of these youngsters. They were always most appealing and interesting pictures. I know that many copies and prints were sent to many friends and relatives. However, for some reason this year we have dropped to three somewhat poor pictures and a dull account of this show. There were no interesting or appealing pictures, no facts or items of interest—to put it bluntly your account was just plain dull!

I would respectfully request that you look over your issues of previous years and you will see what marvellous pictures and stories were

written. Please—all we ask is that you continue to do the same for the sake of the skaters, the parents, and the interest of the general public.

This week (according to a note in the paper) we have to look forward to a special presentation of pictures on the hockey day of champions. This is great for all these youngsters as it was a very special and proud day for all of them. Sunday, March 30 was a very special and proud day for the figure skaters of Acton. I speak for many people when I say please recognize this.

Sally Leatherland
Acton

Refereeing is improving

April 14, 1980

Dear Sir: We, The Acton Referee Association feel a comment should be made in response to the statements, regarding officiating of minor hockey games.

We agree that officiating can always be im-

proved, as can coaching managing, etc., of OMHA teams.

We feel that in the short period of time that our association has been in existence, our officiating had improved substantially. It is our goal to continue improvements. It should be noted, that

grooming officials is as costly and complex as putting a team on the ice. Remember, all parties concerned are non-professional.

We feel the statements made were general comments and respond accordingly.

The Acton Referee Association



On the
Leavell

With Helen

Acton Chamber of Commerce membership is slowly but surely increasing, as secretary Janet Fleming announced five more names have joined the organizations role call, bringing the total to 98.

In the past few weeks Acton Pre Cast Concrete Ltd., Aquatic Enterprises Ltd., V & W Contracting, Acton Welding and Phil Noble have joined.

Mrs. Fleming hopes the list will climb to 100 or more in the next few weeks and encourages past members to remember to renew their membership.

Mr. and Mrs. Pete Papillon returned home last week from "just" a six week stay in Tampa, Florida. Pete's golden tan sure did stand out from everyone else at the Citizen of the Year award banquet to