

The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

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Oppose Landawn plan

We had planned to stop raising our objections to the plan to build a plaza on the east side of Acton until the issue crops up again.

However, following a call from Jerry Sprackman last week we felt we must outline our complaints about the proposal once again.

Sprackman complained that we have been criticizing him personally in recent editorials. Pleading his case, he said he is only "representing" Landawn Shopping Centres in the matter.

We believe he is splitting hairs. But in the interest of bending over backwards to be fair, we now write that it is Landawn Shopping Centres, not Sprackman, who, in our opinion, has demonstrated it isn't a good corporate citizen of Acton.

We have referred to Sprackman by name in editorials simply because he is much more recognizable to our readers than Landawn. He has spoken for the firm at public council meetings. Correspondence to Halton Hills has been signed Jerry Sprackman, President, Landawn Shopping Centres. Therefore, it appears, in our opinion, Jerry Sprackman is Landawn.

Anyway, there are two reasons why we oppose Landawn's proposal for the east side of Acton, despite the fact, as Sprackman noted, that 400 residents have voiced their support for a plaza.

Firstly we feel that revitalization of our downtown is the top commercial development priority. Plazas have killed downtown areas in many Ontario communities. While competition is the lifeblood of free enterprise, the kind that would kill downtown Acton when efforts are being made to revitalize the area, (albeit some feel painfully slow and ineffectively) just isn't needed.

The location on the east side isn't suitable. It won't be the foreseeable future be surrounded by homes full of customers. It would likely lead to pressure for more commercial development, even strip on the east side of town.

If there was absolutely no effort being made by the downtown businesses to revitalize the area then we might support a plaza on the fringe of town. But as long as there is an effort to make

downtown a strong business area which can compete effectively with plazas out of town and even one in town the nod of support must go to the existing merchants.

We believe those supporting the Landawn plan are supporting a plaza, not necessarily that one, just any plaza. We don't think people here care where there is commercial development as long as it comes.

There are plans for more commercial development downtown. Some have included supermarkets. There have been problems, but that is normal with commercial development, especially in downtown areas. Problems are being attended to.

Acton has waited a long time for more commercial development. We believe most citizens, in the long run, would prefer to wait a little longer so that it takes place downtown, helping our core area be revitalized.

It will take time but we expect some sort of commercial development and revitalization will take place downtown.

Only after efforts have borne fruit or been abandoned can a plaza on the fringe of town be considered.

Our second reason for opposing the plaza is we don't feel Landawn has the best interests of Acton at heart.

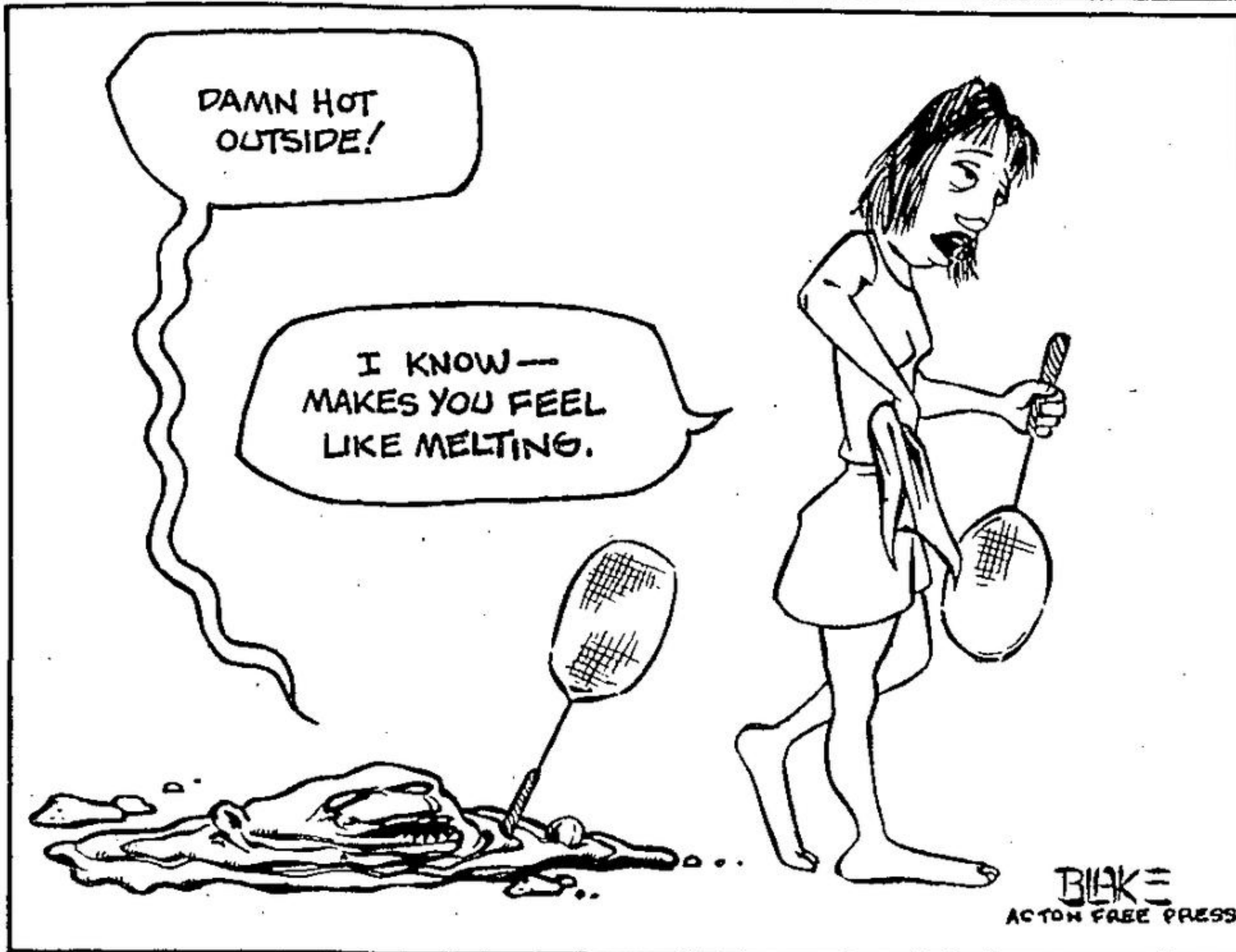
We point to the firm's objection to rezoning of some property in the north-west of the town for industrial development.

There is no question Acton is in dire need of more industry. More industry will not only create jobs for residents, but also improve the local tax picture. Landawn has objected to the Ontario Municipal Board about the industrial rezoning on the grounds that there is a limit on sewage capacity in the town and industry could take capacity required for a plaza.

We don't feel Landawn has the interests of Acton at heart when it places any kind of roadblock in front of possible future industrial development.

Landawn isn't the first firm to try this tactic, objecting to every other rezoning until its request is met by the town or approved by the OMB. Landawn won't be the last either.

But we ask is this tactic the kind used by a good corporate citizen?



Prolonged fame can spoil a good summer

by Bill Smiley



Well, it looks as though I have my summer's work cut out for me. Instead of loafing around in the backyard with the birds and a beer, I'll be up to my ears in joining things or refusing to, putting together a book, judging a humor competition, and answering a few hundred letters from complete strangers. Some prospect.

I'd much prefer to be left alone to rot, in my own way, into the senility that my wife suggests is creeping upon me apace.

I'm in only my second week of celebritydom, or whatever they call it, and it's a fair strain.

My mouth is stiff from smiling while people congratulate me on that fine article in Today magazine. I don't know why the congratulations. I didn't write it. My smile is much less stiff when someone says, "I liked that there column about how, tough the farmers have it. That was the real cat's-paw."

My ears are ringing from long-distance calls from people I've never heard of or of before, and who had never heard of until they read a minor article in the Saturday supplement of a magazine that is second-rate compared to its predecessors.

I'm certainly glad I turned down that offer from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer 40 years ago, to play Tarzan, after Johnny Weissmuller got too fat to do it. The adulation would have turned my head so badly I'd have been able to see Death catching up with me.

It's just a good thing that it wasn't a centre-fold in Playgirl. Instead of lovely old ladies writing to tell me they have arthritis too, the mail would be crammed with mash letters containing naked photographs and lewd suggestions.

As it is, my wife, whose head is completely unturned by the article, is getting powerfully peeved at answering the phone

to half-stoned old fighter pilots, coy ladies who won't give their name, and total strangers who want six autographed copies, prepaid.

To her, I am just the guy who puts out the garbage sometimes after the truck has gone by, wears light-blue socks with a green tie, makes an ass of himself with "jokes" nobody gets at parties, has no interest in her decorating schemes, can't find Middle C on the piano; will never talk to mechanics and tradesmen, has taken four months to sweep the basement, in ten-minute stints every second Saturday, and, generally, doesn't know his arm from a hole in the ground. To skim the surface.

To the guys on our staff, the article was a godsend. Now, when I'm lining up a difficult shot on the shuffleboard, instead of the tired old, "Don't miss it," they've found new ammunition. "Here's the old fighter pilot, nerves of steel," chorus the heckling watchers. And when I miss, about three out of three, the chant is, "No wonder we nearly lost the war."

To those of my students who had to write their final exams, it was also a bonanza. "Sure like the article, sir. Would you autograph my copy. Hope you write a book, and I'll buy the first copy. Sure hope you have a wonderful summer." Those who didn't have to write looked at me with amused disdain.

To those who never thought I'd amount to anything—all my friends, all my colleagues, most of my family—it was a chance to say, "Well, never thought you'd amount to much. Ain't it a corker the trash the media will print these days?"

Along with all the garbage that's been coming in, of course, are some warm and welcome letters from old friends, former students, and regular readers of the column, those intelligentsia as in The

People's Smiley, or whatever that inane heading was.

But, on the other hand, I'm dismayed at the number of letters from people who want something. The Fighter Pilots' Association wants me to pay up my fees, five years in arrears. The Prisoners-of-War Association wants me to pay up my fees, 18 years behind.

Something called Author's Awards (sic) wants me to judge a Magazines-Humor competition. This is a very rewarding pastime. I was a judge, for some years, in the Leacock Award of Humor. I was a judge, for one year, of the Outstanding Canadian Columnist Award for community newspapers. As a result, every humorist, and all but one columnist in Canada, think I am an utter cretin.

My syndicate manager wants me to put a book together this summer, when I have trout to catch, golf to play, swimming to enjoy, grandboys to entertain, and a pile of rocks outside our French windows to transform into a patio.

As has been my wont, I'll probably just let the letters moulder on my desk. I find that if you don't answer things, they eventually just go away.

I dread going to the Air Force Reunion in September. I know I will be cornered by various aged airmen who will tell me they read the article, then bore me to death with every single incident that has occurred to them since they got their discharge.

There's been only one—count it, one—tangible benefit from the article. Today I met the guy who sold me the typewriter with the lazy A. After ten years, he reckons he can fix it. He didn't say for free. Probably charge me double because it got national exposure.

home at 31 Brock St. Vocal and piano numbers made a varied program.

The long awaited Chamber of Commerce Directory made its debut at the Back to Acton Days opening ceremonies last week.

It's chock full of local info, with every business and industry categorized. A history of Acton is also included. It's a terrific booklet to have at your fingertips. Acton High School students should receive an A plus for the thorough and neat job they did.

By the way, that beautiful picture on the cover was taken by former Free Press staffer Robin Incoe.

Rumor has it Halton Hills Mayor Pete Pomeroy wore his Back to Acton Days t-shirt to the Glen Williams Canada Day festivities last week. So what, you ask? Anyone at Acton's opening ceremonies will recall the writing on the back of his shirt. A few weeks ago, Pete was mistakenly referred to as the mayor of Georgetown, by a guest speaker at a public function. Terry Grubbe, chairperson of the weekend, and also Halton Hills councillor was not about to let Pete live it down. She made

sure plastered on the back of Pete's shirt was "I'm mayor of Acton too!"

Acton Travel proprietor Rick Bonnette must have itchy feet these days. The local travel agent flew to Las Vegas a few weeks ago for a wild weekend, and spent the holiday weekend in Montreal at a Montreal Expos' game. Somehow, Acton's infamous conniver got the tickets through the Montreal Canadiens. Stadium officials were probably looking forward to meeting the city's newest hockey star, only to be confronted by Rick. A nice guy, but Guy LaFleur he isn't. (Those are his words not mine).

Went to my home town of Collingwood this past weekend, only to find the main street ripped up from store front, right across to store front. Seems the town is installing interlocking paving bricks like we have here in Acton, putting in picturesque benches and flower beds, like in Georgetown and repaving the street. Now, if we can convince Acton and Georgetown to somehow put angle parking in like Collingwood and get rid of this terrible parallel parking, I need never get homesick. In addition, my parking problems would be over.

Back issues

10 years ago

July 15, 1970

An auction sale at Rockwood disposed of the life-long collections of Harry Edwards. The village constable for 22 years, he worked with the Department of Highways. Harry was much a part of Rockwood life.

Councillors are wondering what to do about the noise from model airplanes at Acton high school. Deputy-reeve Tyler says the planes buzz every night until dark. The group is planning another big model plane event on Labor Day weekend.

The Chamber of Commerce will prepare a brief on the need for off-street parking in the main business section of town. It is imperative that steps be taken, Paul Nielsen and Fred Gordon told council.

County council and Halton Board of Education have formed a committee to study regional government. Reeve Frank Oakes of Acton told county council there is a political battle going on and only one minister will get what he wants—either Darcy McKeough will subdue Bill Davis or it will be the other way round.

Eight members of Acton Citizens' Band are at the Ontario Youth Music Camp, Jim Coles, Peter Pavli, Paul Petric, Heather Buchanan, Mary Watson, Barbara Pratt, Susan Scott, Carol Buchanan.

20 years ago

July 7, 1960

The Rev. Dwight Engel was inducted as minister of Acton United Church. With the old church condemned and the new one under construction, the service was held in Knox church. Choir leader George Elliott again presided at the organ after many months at the piano in the YMCA. Members of the congregation were introduced afterward to the Engels by O. Johnson, B. Veldhuis, F. Prouse and Rev. Miller.

Acton Industrial Commission has announced that negotiations have been completed for Michigan Bulb Company to relocate in the old Wool Combing Buildings. The company moved to Acton after a serious fire which destroyed their building in Rockwood, and presently occupy the former Storey Glove building on Bower Ave. An average of 35 employees are supervised by J. D. Tomlinson.

About 70 youngsters are attending vacation Bible school at the Christian Reformed Church. Some of the talk is in Dutch and some in English. Everything will be in English on the last day, when parents and friends are invited. Rev. Jelle Nutma is in charge. Some country children are staying with families in town while the school is on.

50 years ago

July 10, 1930

Miss M. Z. Bennett, principal, said Acton schools have registered another success in the Entrance Examinations. All 33 pupils were successful in passing and 25 of them received honors standing. The highest five were Howard Norton, Harold Skilling, Elizabeth Harrison, Margaret Arnold and Barbara Taylor.

Knox Sunday School picnic at Edgewood Park. Eden Mills, drew a great concourse of scholars and parents. Rev. Mr. Bennie and Superintendent Cooper were the life of the event. F. S. Blow's stalwarts pulled W. F. Mooney's crew right along the ropes in the tug-of-war.

The last will and testament of James Albert Murray is published, as requested by him. \$20,000 is left to Acton for a home for poor or sick children or a YMCA. "It is my wish that all the beneficiaries who can conveniently do so should meet once a year at Fairview cemetery and place a sprig or flower on the grave."

Mr. J. Lindsay is having the old photograph gallery removed from the Hill Block this week. Photographic plates, old photos and other relics were found in the demolition. The old chairs belonging to the studio in which many a resident spent a strained and quiet moment in order to acquire a flattering likeness were also among the articles of equipment which had to give place to the improvements.

100 years ago

July 8, 1880

On Tuesday morning at 10.30 o'clock, the event of the season, the marriage of Miss Emma Matthews, eldest daughter of the late George Matthews Esq. of this village and Rev. Charles A. Cook, pastor of the Baptist church, Kingston, second son of Rev. R. B. Cook of this village, took place in the Baptist church. Long before the time announced the church was well filled with an expectant company, the fair sex predominating. A flutter at the door told the story of the happy couple's arrival. (And so on).

Messrs. W. H. Storey and Son have established a factory in Birmingham, England, for the manufacture of the Eureka Spring Glove Fasteners. Mr. Geo. Matthews of this village will assume the management of the mechanical part of the business. Mr. Wm. Firstbrook of Toronto will superintend the sale of the springs in England.

Members of Acton Brass Band will give a ten cent promenade concert in the drill shed, proceeds to be applied to the liquidation of the balance due on new uniforms. Acton Parlor orchestra will also play.

Our readers write

Watkins says goodbye

Dear Students of Acton High School:

I very much regret that I will not be with you in September: I have been transferred to another school, Lord Elgin in Burlington. The transfer became official after school was out and so I was unable to inform you of the situation in the normal way. But I leave you knowing that you and your school will be cared for by a very fine lady, Mrs. Betty Moore, who will be Principal when you return.

Although I have been with you for barely two years I have formed close bonds with both staff and students of Acton High School. So often in situations like this simple good manners force one to say pleasant sounding things about colleagues and students. In this case I can write the truth quite

easily—in twenty-two years I have never known such a combination of kindness, good sense and a high concern of excellence as I have with you. In a world grown cynical with disrespect for modern education and modern youth, your school exemplifies the best in spirit, will, and common courtesy. It represents the most sound basis of democracy, a place where young people from all kinds of backgrounds can live and learn together.

And you must work hard to preserve it. Never take it for granted, neither facilities, nor staff, nor each other.

Thank you for the experience. It was my privilege.

With best wishes,
Wally Watkins

Child Evangelism coming

July 2

Dear Sir:
Do you readers know of the wonderful organization which increases their Sunday School?

Child Evangelism Fellowship is a group which trains teachers, and teaches children. Its purpose is to encourage the children to go to church.

Because the children come to church, often the parents will attend as well.

Child Evangelism is almost 50 years old, thus has built up much experience in reaching children's hearts. During the summer the teachers will teach outdoors wherever children are—parks, beaches, camps, or backyards. It is not always easy.

The summer work is much like a

vacation Bible school; it teaches Bible truths, singing, and has a missionary story. But child Evangelism tries to reach those who are missed by the regular classes, those who don't go to a church building, but who will listen in a backyard or park outdoors.

In the Acton and Rockwood areas the teachers will be coming July 14 to July 18. Look for them and sit in on a lesson.

Advertisements will be in stores soon!

"I saw Tomorrow look at me Through little children's eyes And thought how carefully we'd teach If we were really wise."

author unknown.

Mrs. S. Drijber,
Rockwood.



On the Leavell

With Helen

Wow! Are those save the town hall committee people ever offering a good deal now.

Anyone who pledged money in the fund raising drive for the town hall is now being given an option of donating the money, or receiving Actario tickets for money pledged. i.e. If \$300 was pledged, the donor would have the choice of receiving three Actario tickets, or just letting the money stand as a donation.

Committee callers Stella Brunelle and Sue Sale ask those who have previously pledged to get in touch with them so everything can be arranged.

Now, that's being fair.

Miss Jean McLean held a piano recital for her pupils and a few relatives at her