

On again—off again downtown plaza off again

The on again-off again plans for commercial development of the Force Electric property at the east end of downtown are off again.

Owner of the property, Art Gordon, and a variety of developers have been working many months now to put together a commercial development on the site, but all plans have fallen through.

Gordon, however, remains optimistic development will materialize.

Doug Rosart, Rosart Properties of Oakville, and Neil McLaughlin Bosley Real Estate of Toronto, have come up with a number of plans. However they have all collapsed.

In a recent interview McLaughlin said it would appear they won't be able to put any project together for the Force Electric land.

Back in the spring McLaughlin unveiled a big proposal which called for a 25,000 square foot expanded A-B Foodland, a theatre, drug store, convenience store, restaurant, bowling alley and other shops. A few minor objections to the proposal by the municipality and a lack of interested firms to fill the

semi-enclosed mall and investors sent the proposal down the drain.

The next proposal he came up with featured an A-B Foodland of 6,500 to 13,000 square feet and a row of shops at the rear of the site but that also fell through when Lumsden Brothers, who lease the Foodland store and then sub-lease it to the operators of A-B Foodland rejected expansion plans. William Lumsden said at the time McLaughlin's plans were too costly and the rent would be too high.

It was back to the drawing board for the summer with the project, though everything hinged on Lumsden Brothers going for an expansion, McLaughlin noted.

McLaughlin reported recently he "half expected new numbers (cost and rent figures) would produce a new proposal."

That hasn't been the case. McLaughlin says Lumsdens just don't want a larger store and price wasn't a consideration this time.

He and Rosart are now back to looking for a major tenant for the development, an anchor store for a

small plaza, and they have already explored virtually every avenue they can think of with no luck.

McLaughlin notes they have put too much work into the possible development of the Force site to just let it go but without a major store there is just nowhere to go with it now.

At the same time Gordon says he has been hearing for weeks there is another developer interested in bringing in a proposal for commercial development on the site.

He noted he has never met or heard directly from this developer, only heard about it through Century 21 Real Estate in Guelph. Details of the proposal are sketchy, Gordon believes it involves eight or nine stores.

However, after weeks of waiting Gordon is running out of patience.

He reports he has been told repeatedly by the real estate people a developer in Toronto has come up with a proposal, but just hasn't signed it yet.

"I'm anxious to get going," Gordon declared.

He hasn't heard for some time from McLaughlin and hasn't contacted that developer because "everything is changed every time I talk to him." Gordon isn't optimistic that group will wind up putting something together now.

Gordon is now out looking for a new developer and real estate firm to handle the development for him, in fact Tuesday he was waiting on a phone call regarding getting something new going for the Force land.

"I want to get moving on this. The town needs it badly," Gordon stated. He wants one large store, like a grocery store, and five or six other shops, and not hamburger places or beauty salons which he says seems to be all the new business Acton gets these days.

Back in January Halton Hills approved rezoning of the land for commercial development subject to site plan approval. Gordon says the municipality is 100 per cent behind his efforts to develop the land and the planning department is doing all it can to

help get development going.

Development of the Force site and refurbishing of downtown Acton are key aspects of the town's case in its battle to prevent Jerry Sprackman and Landawn Shopping Centres from building a plaza on the east side of Acton. An Ontario Municipal Board hearing on that issue is still pending. Gordon says he wants to have something concrete going on his land before the east end plaza case comes up.

Gordon says he'd welcome a proposal from anyone for the site. Any developer can come forward with a plan. "I feel certain once the first step is taken (development of the Force site) there will be lots of development at that end of downtown," Gordon says. He pointed to Canadian Tire which wants to expand but is waiting to see what happens with his land as an example of the kind of redevelopment he expects will take place.

He said everyone he has talked to seems a little nervous about commercial development in Acton and about prospects of renting new stores.

The Acton Free Press

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ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1980

Eighteen Pages - Twenty-Five Cents

First Actario draw Saturday

With the first draw just three days away Ted Tyler has branded Actario a success.

In an interview Tyler said as of Tuesday about 415 tickets have been sold and turned back in so they have covered the prize money and trip prizes commitment.

Tyler said organizers know there are sold tickets which haven't been turned back in yet and the ticket sales push for the first draw will continue right up to Saturday morning.

Besides covering the prize money and trips, Actario has raised approximately \$7,000 in profit for restoration of the old town hall.

"Actario is not something that almost made it. It's made it and is going ahead," Tyler declared.

Acton's Citizen of the Year Arlie White, who has sold about a dozen tickets, will make the big first

draw for \$350 cash this Saturday morning at about 11:30 a.m. in front of the Actario booth at Family Cleaners downtown. The Acton Citizens' Band will be on hand to entertain the crowd.

There will be 52 weekly draws for \$350 and 12 monthly draws for trips valued at between \$1,200 and \$1,800.

Besides the \$350 prize money draw and monthly trip draw there will be weekly bonus prize draws. Winners of cash or trips need not be present for the draw, but bonus prize winners must be downtown.

For this Saturday's draw there is a special bonus prize for the cash prize winner if he or she is downtown for the draw. The cash winner will also walk with a 12 inch black and white TV.

But there will be lots of other bonus prizes for ticket holders who are downtown.

Tyler says most merchants have responded positively to Actario and there will be weekly clothing and food voucher prizes as well as vouchers for film, bowling, shoe repair, milk, cleaning and meals out.

Another bonus this Saturday morning will be the announcement of the destination for the first trip draw which will be made at the end of September.

The odds for the first draw are fantastic and in fact will be throughout the entire 52 weeks the Actario program lasts since a maximum of 1,000 tickets will be sold.

Even after the first draw is over tickets will continue to be sold. Ticket prices will be reduced monthly, not weekly, so at the end of September the price will drop \$8.70 and shrink by the same amount every month through the year.

A year long Actario ticket costs \$100 cash or cheque or \$28 plus three post-dated cheques for the same amount.

Tyler admitted sales haven't been as high as hoped, nor have profits, but the Actario part is over and every ticket sold now takes the town hall a step closer to being saved.

Free Press goes up 5¢

The single copy price of The Acton Free Press was increased from 20 cents to 25 cents for home delivery and at newsstands publisher Don McDonald announced today (Wednesday).

He said increased newspaper, production, labor and distribution costs forced the five cent a copy increase.

Free Press carriers and dealers will receive part of the increase.

Home delivery of the paper will cost \$1 or \$1.25 a month depending if there are four or five publications in the month.

Subscriptions remain at \$12 annually.

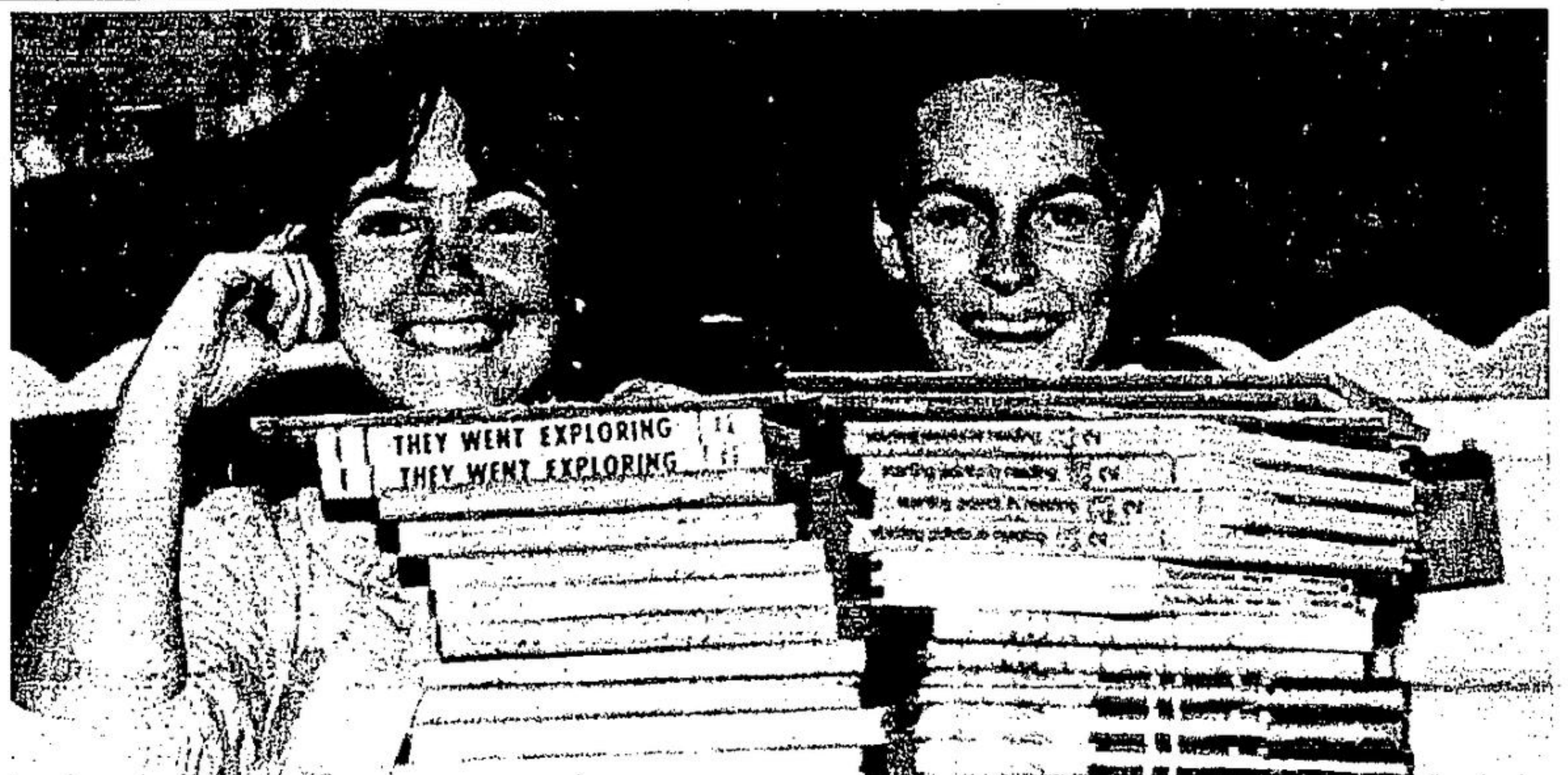
inside

Good to bumper crops are predicted for Halton this summer. Details on page 10.

All three of Acton's sitting councillors are running in the next election. Turn to page 3.

Acton High School's new principal welcomes students back for another year. More on page 7.

Today's paper features a number of wedding reports on pages B6 and B7.



School has started again today and teachers Sharon Bradley, left and Donna Robertson of St. Joseph's have made sure there are plenty of textbooks, notebooks and workbooks to go around. It won't be all work and no play for Bradley's grade three and four classes and Robertson's grade one class. There are plenty of

colorful displays and a few games in the room. Teachers were back to school last week throughout Acton preparing for today's onslaught of pupils. For a look at more teachers' and schools' preparations see This Week Through The Lens, page 3. Photo by DIANA WALTSMAN

Insane at the time

Mother not guilty of murder

A former Acton resident was found not guilty by reason of insanity of the murder of her son and stabbing of her two other children following a trial in Iowa last week.

Gail Vukovich was released by the court following her acquittal. Mrs. Vukovich can now return to Toronto and live with her parents while continuing her psychiatric treatment.

Mrs. Vukovich was charged with first degree murder in connection with the stabbing death of her son Michael, age 7, on October 1, 1979. She was also charged with attempted murder for the stabbing of her other two sons, Matthew and Jonathan. She also stabbed herself.

The Vukovich family moved from Acton to Cedar Falls, Iowa, in August of 1979 and the stabbing incident took place on the day her husband, Dr. Joseph Vukovich, formerly of Glenlea Medical Centre, started work at Allen Memorial Hospital in the adjacent city of Waterloo, Iowa.

Assistant County Attorney David Coil said the trial was held last Monday.

The court heard that on the night of the stabbings Mrs. Vukovich feared a tornado was on its way that would destroy everyone and was worried blacks would break into her home and hurt her children. Psychiatrists testified Mrs. Vukovich believed the

delusions and stabbed her children to protect them. She was said to be so psychotic she didn't know right from wrong and felt what she did was not only morally and legally right but also absolutely necessary.

On Friday the judge ruled Mrs. Vukovich was not guilty of the three charges by reason of insanity and then conducted a hearing to determine if she should be committed to a state mental hospital.

Two psychiatrists, as well as Dr. Vukovich, testified at the hearing and it was concluded Mrs. Vukovich should continue her program of treatment.

Coil said the judge agreed with witnesses that Mrs. Vukovich isn't dangerous now and attached no conditions to her release.



Forest display well underway

By Jane Muller

Mountsberg Wildlife Centre's northern forest display has been in the planning stages for two years now and this summer, two art students began making the display a reality.

The display located in the main foyer of the interpretive centre will incorporate preserved specimens of nocturnal wildlife set in their natural habitats.

The students, Mark Craig and Caesar Parenti, started working on the northern forest display June 2 and employed through Experience '80 grants.

The pair didn't complete the display, which will span the four seasons, but made a good start.

Caesar, entering his third year at Sheridan College in animation, is experimenting with materials to give the effect of snow. His choice is an important one and as the display must stand the test of time durability is a major consideration.

Night creatures large and small will have a place in the display. A great horned owl swooping for the kill, a beaver in its natural environment and a cross section of a mole burrow on an artificial river bank providing a good view of a star-nosed mole.

Caesar constructed the mole's habitat, a job which required research into the tiny animal's habits and environment. He discovered moles often burrow into river banks with the mouth opening into the water. Moles can swim under water, a point which was overlooked in the display's original conception, but Caesar's design alleviated the original inaccuracies of the plan.

Mark Craig is studying illustration at Sheridan College and will be returning for his second year in the fall.

Fire a rest home danger operators don't think so

A tragic fire similar to the one which claimed the lives of over 20 senior citizens in a Mississauga nursing home earlier this summer could happen in any rest home in Acton, a fire department official says.

Larry Brassard, Halton Hills fire prevention officer, says a tragic rest home blaze could happen in Acton.

However, operators of a couple of local rest homes expressed confidence that they have taken ample precautions against fire.

Brassard noted Jeanette's Home for Senior Citizens is governed by provincial legislation while Acton Seniors Residence and Cher Rest Home aren't. Mapleview Lodge, RR 2 Acton, comes under Erin Township jurisdiction.

The fire department official said all three rest homes in Acton have been inspected and some of his recommendations for all three haven't been followed. The town can't make them follow the fire department suggestions.

Brassard noted the town is working on a by-law to govern rest homes and the fire department made comments. He said the town needs regulations because set standards would certainly help. Rest home regulations were urged by Acton Councillor Terry Grubbe early this year and a by-law is due back at council.

In recent interviews the operators of Acton Seniors Residence, Jeanette's Home for Senior Citizens and Mapleview Lodge outlined the fire safety precautions they had taken even before the killer blaze in Mississauga. A fourth rest home operator,

Travina Cheronlak of Cher's, was invited to comment but no statements were forthcoming.

Jeanette Fernandes reports she hasn't taken any special precautions or added new equipment since the big fire in Mississauga.

There was no need to. Jeanette's rest home was already loaded with smoke and heat detectors.

Each resident's room is equipped with heat detectors and smoking is allowed in just one room, the dining room. Seniors must also check their supplies of cigarettes in and out with staff.

There are smoke detectors in the dining room, lounge and kitchen and nine fire extinguishers, which are checked regularly, spread throughout the building.

The building is equipped with an Edwards fire alarm system which runs on electricity and if there is a fault in the system a buzzer sounds. There is also a monitor which lets staff know where the fire is immediately when the alarm goes off.

In summer there are fire drills once a month at Jeanette's, about every two-and-a-half months in winter and the location of the mock fire changes with every drill. The building housing 40 seniors can be emptied in about five minutes.

of the home noted.

The fire department makes regular spot inspections of Jeanette's and at least every six months an inspector comes out from Queen's Park. The alarm system is serviced every six months.

Janet Booth of Acton Seniors Residence also expressed confidence her building won't be the scene of a tragic fire.

She says her home has been rated "A-1" ever since it was first inspected by local fire officials back in 1977.

There are smoke detectors on every level of the building and in every room and the eight seniors living there have been made aware of what the fire alarm sound is and what they should do if they hear it.

Drills are held every three months and the one time the detectors sounded the senior citizens were all at the front door within three minutes. Mrs. Booth said it was "amazing."

Mapleview Lodge "follows closely" all the recommendations of the Erin Township fire department and the seniors rest home has been inspected several times in the past couple of years Joan Waldie said.

There are smoke detectors in bedrooms, hallways and the living room as well as fire extinguishers at four strategic locations. Twelve seniors live at Mapleview Lodge and all are "very alert" to fire dangers and fire emergency procedures.

Mrs. Waldie noted the fire department has set requirements for the building and they have been followed.