

# The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

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## Come clean on deficit

Judging by the rumors, frequent in-camera sessions and the unresponsiveness of regional councillors to probing questions it would appear the final chapter of the Halton deficit saga is a long way yet from being written.

Two senior officials have already lost their posts over the huge deficit discovered just a few weeks ago.

Taxpayers reactions to the news of the deficit, which is ruining region budgets and will result in service cutbacks and projects being shelved, has been varied.

Many are shocked at the incompetence of region staff and councillors to keep a grip on purse strings. Ratepayers can't believe region bookkeeping measures were so lax.

Others are concerned about the impact of the deficit on services, long awaited projects and the eventual impact on their already hefty property tax bills either in a special levy later this year to tide the region over or else in 1981.

Many aren't really surprised to hear of the big hole in the region's finances. Many never thought the politicians or staff really knew what they were doing and so aren't surprised to hear they misplaced \$700,000 or possibly more.

While most are concerned or disturbed by the deficit few are really boiling mad.

Most voters and ratepayers are waiting for the whole ugly mess to come out before making their final pronouncements.

However, facts are only trickling out at best.

Council and committees are continually meeting behind closed doors of late, Presumably discussing the deficit, staff and the ramifications of the hole in the budget.

It's time for the region to come clean with the voters; it's just a little over a month until nominations open for the municipal vote and the election is two months away today.

The region should lay all the cards, every bit of the bad news known to date, on the table. Then they should outline solutions to the deficit dilemma now being considered.

It can only be hoped the politicians aren't scheming to keep the real truth from coming out until after the November 10 vote and then plead an incompetent staff and council and impose a special levy to cover the budget hole.

Before the election battle starts to heat up regional councillors must fully air the dirty laundry so voters can assess the situation and both incumbents and fresh candidates for region seats can develop their positions.



## Mowatt, Simpson novels excellent

Had time to do some reading this summer, though precious little, in between losing my wallet, entertaining my grand-boys, being almost torn limb from limb by mosquitoes at a lake up north, and being thoroughly whipped at golf by some old guys who should be in nursing homes but can still hit the pill right up the middle.

Highly recommended is Farley Mowat's account of his personal World War II. Its title alone would have made me read it. It's called *And No Birds Sang*, borrowed with a slight change from Keats' *ballad, La Belle Dame Sans Merci*.

First part of the book is typical Mowat, very readable but merely an account of the training and bumbling experienced by the average Canadian soldier, and sprinkled with a few highly improbable incidents.

But when Mowat gets his feet into the real war, the invasion of Sicily, the brutal fighting up through "sunny" Italy, where the men were half-frozen most of the time, he hits his stride, and I don't think he's ever written anything better.

No one could have written this book who was not there. He conveys with chilling accuracy the exhaustion, the bitterness, the dogged courage, and, yes, the very humor of the real fighting men in a campaign that had little of the drama and dash of the invasion of France. Just tough, bloody fighting over range after range of mountains, against some of the toughest and best troops in the German army.

Mowat seems to have put himself back into the mind and the emotions of the young Canadian lieutenant he was then. He drops his posturing, and eloquently and movingly reveals the anger, the bewilderment, the savagery and the suffering of the Poor Bloody Infantry.

Narrowly missing death himself a number of times, he makes no effort to put himself in the hero's role, and indeed deprecates his own ineptitude in many situations. Rather, he writes with an admir-

ation that is almost love, of his friends and fellow soldiers and sufferers.

He flares with rage at the incompetence and stupidity of senior officers, and in a couple of paragraphs strips all the gilt from that pompous little idiot, darling of the newspapers, General Montgomery. It's an honest book, and a good read.

It had a little special interest for me, because one of his friends, Major Alex Campbell, was in his unit, and died just as he would have wanted to, in a mad, single-handed, hopeless charge against a German position.

It could only be the same Alex Campbell I knew. We grew up in the same town, Perth, Ontario. Alex's father had been killed in the first World War. From the time he was a nipper, he wanted revenge. He joined the militia as soon as he was old enough, and by the time I was in high school, he had a commission.

Alex used to help train our high school cadet corps, ferociously but with an underlying decency. A few years before, he had been a tiger on the line of the football team, a vast man with great strength and no fear of anything or anyone. I'll bet he was the happiest man in the country when Canada declared war on Germany. And he died exactly as he would have wished, hurling his buck against machineguns instead of opposing linesmen.

Another author I discovered this summer was Leo Simpson. He lives in the village of Madoc, Ontario, and I knew of him, but hadn't read his novels, probably due to the incredible ineptitude of Canadian publishers when it comes to promoting good books.

He is an excellent writer, much more literate than the famous Farley Mowat, who knows how to promote his own books and keep his name alive in the papers with various stunts and burning causes.

I managed to grab two of Simpson's novels and read them straight through.

hope they weren't out on an actual military mission. They may have been hired by regional councillors who want to bomb Halton off the map before anyone deficit boo boos turn up.

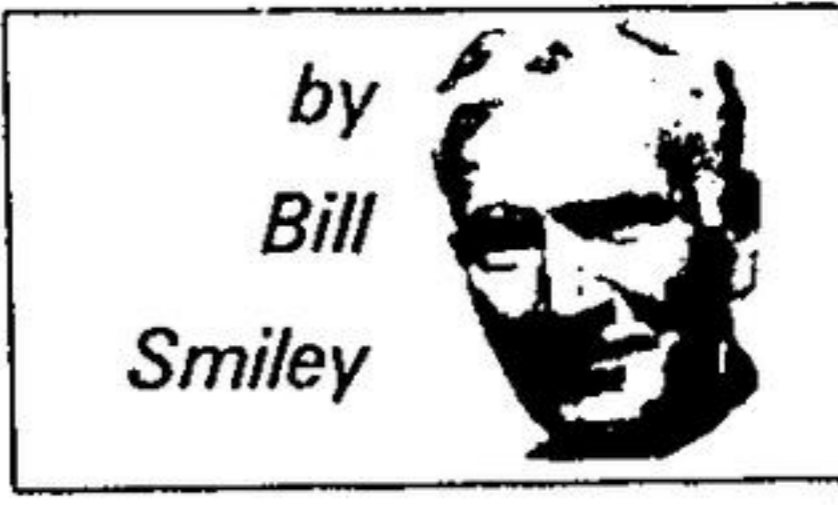
Got former Free Press sports editor Robin Inscoc married off on Saturday to Cheryl White. On hand for the wedding were Robin's grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. A. Inscoc, all the way from England. A hearty welcome is extended to them.

At least two Acton homes are the subject of a television research questionnaire this week: Television is being monitored this week at the home of Dolores Rowsell, and Reta and Noah Rowsell, to determine the hours of viewing, the type of shows etc., much like all-so-important Nielson ratings. Adscoc Research of Canada is looking after the Acton area. Other homes in town were approached, but I have no way of knowing how many are taking part in the week-long survey.

Enumerators have been out in full force the past few weeks taking down essential information needed to get everyone's



by Bill Smiley



## Back issues

10 years ago

September 9, 1970

The success of Sunday's sportsmen's show and preliminaries Saturday night ensure a repeat of the event again next year, Chamber of Commerce president John Shadbolt says. The show attracted almost 3,000 visitors. Events started with a dance and Monte Carlo night and ended with the model flyers aerial combat. The gun show was the best effort yet. There were exhibits and boat events on the lake. Mayor Les Duby kicked the first ball in the soccer match. There were show dogs and golfing. There were 62 entries in the model plane contest.

Council is still playing a waiting game as far as senior citizens' housing is concerned. Councillors are groaning over the delays. Georgetown applied after us and their senior citizens are already living in the new apartments, moaned the mayor.

Ed's Fish and Chip Restaurant has opened. Response was so good Ed Huxley ran out of food.

There were four hands on two knives when the wedding cake was cut at the marriages of Sherry and Trudy Morris, and John and Alan McNabb.

A farewell gift was presented to the Wins by the Golden Age Club.

20 years ago

September 15, 1960

D.D.G.M. Night for Walker Lodge was a special occasion when Dr. A. J. Buchanan, newly-appointed D.D.G.M. of Wellington district, visited his mother lodge. He was specially welcomed by W. M. Jack Reid and past D.D.G.M. Dean Leslie.

Council is seeking approval for a \$143,000 extension including a million gallon reservoir from the Churchill R. water supply.

School trustees Cliff Bradley, Tom Watson, Ernie Marks and Doug Manning are concerned at the danger to children at the Mill-Main crossing, since the installation of the traffic control system. Acton OPP officers will temporarily assume duty at the intersection to assist the children. Corp. Ray Mason was there the first day.

Four Acton Guides joined 70 others at Camp Kiawa near Dunnville for the weekend. They were Jill Hurst, Pat Blundell, Jean Hart and Janet Rognvaldson.

St. John Ambulance corps church parade was held in Acton Sunday.

About 50 high school students left early this morning by train to see Romeo and Juliet at Stratford.

50 years ago

September 11, 1930

When Provincial Constable Lawrence Carr was driving into town he was overtaken by a car on Young St. going sixty miles an hour. The Kilchener commercial traveller requested a speedy trial so he was taken before Magistrate Moore at his residence. After pleading guilty, paying a substantial fine and an undesired endorsement on his driver's licence, he proceeded homeward.

In the Public School there are three hundred scholars enrolled in various classes. There are eighty-eight pupils enrolled in the forms of the high school.

Mr. D.H. Lindsay's horse Baron Grattan made a good showing at the CNE.

Mary Waterhouse is one of the winners in the Women's Christian Temperance Union poster contest for Halton.

An informal meeting of council was held to discuss the interests of beneficiaries under the will of the late A.J. Murray.

A delegation met with council concerning the condition of the cemetery at the park. Following the building of the arena the cemetery grounds have been in deplorable condition.

Work commenced this week on the remodelling of the Wonderland theatre for the installation of "talkies."

100 years ago

September 9 1880

The librarian of the public school library requests that all parties who wish to receive books would make out a list of the books they want from the catalogue before coming to the library. The public should have the courtesy to do what they can to facilitate the work of the librarian, especially as they have the free use of all the books in the library. Catalogues cost ten cents each. The library now has 1400 volumes.

The Board of Education Committee on Finance submitted their estimate of expenses for the Acton School Division for the current year: teachers' salaries \$1,078; salaries of sec. treas. and caretaker \$105; fuel and repairs to school property \$200; school apparatus \$5; school library \$37; interest on school debentures \$84, contingencies \$85. Less legislative grant \$103; grant to rural section \$20, municipal \$103; clergy reserves int. to rural section \$20, clergy reserves int. to Acton \$128. To be raised by assessment \$1300.

Hop picking is in full blast. It is almost impossible to get butter. The farmers' wives are holding it in hopes of getting higher prices.

## Deficit jokes at region

Lots of politicians in Halton are making jokes these days about the region deficit.

Its such a sad mess they'd be crying all the time about it if they didn't find a little black humor in the situation.

There was one joke at a meeting recently when one councillor was outlining a favorable financial picture and a regional council member asked "you don't have a spare \$700,000 around you could loan a guy?"

Another time a staff member gave council a cost figure and later in the meeting revised it. The staffer was kidded by a councillor that "you must have had Don Farmer (former Halton treasurer) figure that out."

It can only be assumed that Oakville Councillor Ron Planche was making a joke when he recently suggested the deficit ridden region consider contolling the budget of the Halton Board of Education.

Now the Halton public school system isn't cheap. Last year's

budget was over \$100 million. Many a taxpayer has found fault with board spending in the past. The board's bite accounts for 60 per cent of the local property tax bill.

However, the board can't boast what the region has accomplished, a massive deficit after just six years of operation.

Before the region ventures afield and takes over any budgets other than its own it had better learn to keep its own house in order.

The board may not spend every cent as carefully as some feel it should, but at least the trustees haven't lost in the books close to three-quarters of a million dollars.

Planche got the idea from former Oakville maverick trustee Dick Goodin. Planche and Goodin feel the region should either control the board's swelling budget or else force the board to collect its own taxes so ratepayers will realize just how much is being spent on education.

## Our readers write

### Conflict of interest?

Dear Sir:

Is it a conflict of interest? With all the publicity that both "Actario" and "Ted Tyler" have received through your paper over the last months isn't there a conflict of interest?

The fact that Ted Tyler is the spokesman and organizer for "Actario" one cannot help but wonder if there is not a direct conflict of interest when the big prize, a trip worth \$1200 to \$1800 each month, is arranged and sold to "Actario" by Ted Tyler's Travel.

Mr. Tyler's efforts on behalf of

"Actario" are and should be appreciated. We know his intentions are honorable and his integrity goes without question.

However, I do not believe that it might be in the best interest of all concerned (organizers, sellers and ticket holders) if the big prize of \$1200 to \$1800. would be in "Cold Hard cash", that both young and old can use, than to have a "trip" that not everybody, for many reasons, can take advantage of.

Larry Taillefer, R.R. 1, Acton

## Profiles very interesting

Dear Mrs. Jennifer Barr:

Thank you for the most interesting way you managed to "Profile" me in the last Acton Free Press. You are truly amazing in that you were able to come up with something as coherent, in spite of my ramblings!

You will be pleased to hear that we were able to keep schedule with VK6JR this morning at 7.00 a.m., in spite of a thunder storm that threatened to put us off the air. The lights blinked twice on us, but all was fine after that. The News, Fred and Eileen were happy to talk with daughter Mary again. Signal strength was not too great at first, but increased over the hour of our contact, and at sign-off it was a good

strength 9.

Due to a trip Mary New is about to take about Australia, our next proposed schedule has been set for October 19. Things have gone so well, that we now expect this next schedule to come off without incident!

Incidentally, you made only two small errors in your article-my call sign is VE3ACB, and the amount of concrete anchoring my tower is 4 x 4 x 4 ft. (64 cubic ft. or nearly 3 cubic yards). I'm sure your readers would never know the difference!

Again, my thanks; your profiles have been very interesting the past while, and I'm sure you will find many other local people who have fascinating hobbies too.

Wilo Near



## On the Leavell

With Helen

From inside the house it sounded like the sound track of *Apocalypse Now*, (a controversial, but realistic movie about the Vietnam War). From outside, it almost looked the same on the night Acton was invaded.

On Friday night, at 8 p.m. 14 army-looking helicopters flew over Acton, in two neat formations. They were loud, but quite a sight as their green contrasted against the blue and white sky. Sure was impressive. If they were army helicopters, they may have been heading towards Base Borden near Barrie, but I certainly hope for a drill, or maybe an air show. Let's