



Autumn has arrived and there are lots of fall activities these days at Mountaberg Wildlife Centre. Sundays October 4 to 26 there's activities like displays of apple pressing and corn cobs. Checking out the apples with resource interpreter Joanne Lester is 'Barney.' Photo courtesy the Milton Champion

'I feel misled' MPP says

Secret Cabinet paper puts pits before people

By Jim Robinson

Quarry pits and gravel extraction will be made more important than people, housing, and food production if a secret Ontario Cabinet policy paper is passed.

This newspaper has obtained a copy of the "provincial policy statement on planning for mineral aggregate resources" which is to go to the Cabinet within weeks for discussion and approval.

The document contains a number of statements which clearly state that housing, people, and other "incompatible" uses are not to be allowed on or near possible future gravel and aggregate sites.

Under general policies the document states: "Any planning jurisdiction including municipalities and planning boards shall identify and protect as much of its mineral aggregate resources as is practicable to supply local, regional, and provincial needs."

Under policies for official plans it states: "The official plan shall identify legally existing pits and quarries and shall protect them from incompatible activities."

In order for pits and quarries to be protected, the document states official plans should not allow "residential development and other incompatible uses on adjacent lands" and, "residential, commercial and industrial developments on top of the mineral aggregate deposits, other than those directly related to aggregate operations."

But most shocking of the policy statements is "the official plan shall permit wayside pits and quarries throughout the municipality without requiring an amendment to the plan."

This newspaper has talked with Welland-Thorold MPP Mel Swart who currently sits on an Ontario Select Committee investigating several months of

submissions on Bill 127 which govern pits and quarries in Ontario.

He said that if the so-far secret policy statement is approved by Cabinet, "all your environmentally sensitive areas in Halton will not be protected."

Mr. Swart, who also had obtained a copy of the policy statement said he feels "that I, personally, have been misled" by Natural Resources Minister James Auld.

He said the Minister had sat through hours of submissions about Bill 127 but had given "no indication whatsoever" of a new policy being written and submitted to Cabinet without the select committee having time to even see it or comment.

"The Ontario Municipal Board which will or-

bitrate disputes on location, expansion and licensing of pits and quarries, must use the policy statement as a main factor in its decision.

"Environment, agriculture, and other concerns thus will have to take second place to aggregate extraction," he said.

Councillor Bill Johnson, who has been the major opponent to any changes in the Quarries Act and who ramrodded a Halton Regional submission against any changes through council, said "this is what I've been afraid of since the beginning."

"I said 'way back when, that this was being done for the aggregate industry and not for us."

"You take the widening of Highway 25, that's being done for them, not for us."

Acton Fall Fair '80 wrap up

Nellis wins tractor pull

Tractor Pull winners at the fair fell into two classes. Winners of the 6,000 pound class were Brian McDuffy of Milton in first place, Charles Speck of Georgetown in second place, and Ed Stewart of Erin roaring into third place.

In the 8,000 pound class first prize went to Bill Nellis of Acton, Bill Webb of Rockwood took second place, and third was Bud Snow of Georgetown. -30-1320 Tug of war

Tug-of-war champs

Tug of War winners at the fall fair have been announced. Top winning place was copped by the Georgetown Golden Bears with the Acton Bulldogs coming a close second. Galloping in for third place were the Milton Bushwackers.

Ladies fair meeting

The Ladies' Division of the Acton Fall Fair invites anyone interested in the hall exhibits for the Fair to join them for their October meeting. It will be held tomorrow (Thursday) at 8 p.m. at the home of Mrs. Lucille Cooksley. For directions call 656-9760.

Fairgoers counted

Fair secretary John Rowe has finished counting. Sale of advance tickets number 414 bringing paid total fair attendance to 10,928.

However, an unestimated amount of youngsters under 12 years of age were allowed in free to the fair Saturday so actual attendance figures could be close to 15,000.

The Acton Free Press

An Inland Community Newspaper

ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1980

Eighteen Pages - Twenty-Five Cents

One Hundred and Sixty Year - No. 12

Minister won't meet about Acton school

Ontario Minister of Education Belle Stephenson doesn't plan on meeting with a delegation from Halton Separate School Board, parents' association president Vince Whelan and Halton-Burlington MPP Julian Reed to discuss the need for a new Catholic school in Acton.

Trustees received a letter at last night's meeting (Tuesday) from Stephenson saying there is no need for a meeting until there are funds available.

Parents who are fighting to have a new school built to replace the antiquated St. Joseph's in the rented old Stone School, have been waiting for several weeks to hear when the meeting would be held.

Stephenson wrote informing the board there would be no meeting on September 5, but because of mail delays in recent weeks it didn't reach the board chairman Robert O'Brien until early last week.

Last week Whelan contacted Terry Grubbe to see if she could find out when the meeting would be held.

Both Whelan and Grubbe emphasized she contacted Stephenson not as a local councillor but as a concerned non-Catholic parent who has tried in the past to enrol her son at crowded St. Joseph's and been turned down. Grubbe is an old family friend of the minister.

She talked to Stephenson Thursday afternoon and learned the minister has received nine letters from parents and one from a five-year-old child regarding the need for a new separate school in Acton. The minister, who told Grubbe she had the Acton file in front of her, could find no record of the board requesting a meeting with her. After a flurry of calls Friday, the letter from the board, dated August 14, as well as her reply dated September 5, were located. In addition sources in Acton believe many more than just 10 letters have been sent to the minister.

Grubbe said Stephenson explained she won't be meeting with the parents association or visiting Acton. The minister doesn't meet with parent groups because her time won't allow it and there are hundreds and hundreds of groups in Ontario like the St. Joseph's Parents' Association.

Stephenson, Grubbe said, noted she will meet with school board officials only and only spoke to Grubbe about the matter because they are friends.

There are no funds in the budget for a new Acton school and the minister couldn't tell Grubbe when there might be monies available. Grubbe added the minister pointed out the school board sets the priorities for spending of their allocation.

According to Grubbe the minister also said there are emergency funds available and if the province

received a fire or health department report condemning the building then money could be allocated to correct health or fire hazards.

Stephenson wrote the board saying a meeting between the board and herself wouldn't be productive until it is determined if there will be funds available.

O'Brien said the minister is "sensitive" to the concerns of the board and Acton parents. "I'm optimistic we are going to get our school in Acton. It is just a matter of timing." O'Brien added the board will continue to push for a meeting with Stephenson.

O'Brien told Whelan about the letter Thursday evening when he was contacted by the parents' association president. The board chairman admitted the parents wouldn't have learned of Stephenson's reply until today (Wednesday), after trustees saw the letter, if the matter had not come to light Thursday.

Whelan said he can't see how a meeting can be considered useless even when there is still no money available.

He is pleased to see the board will continue to press for a meeting. Whelan said he couldn't see how Stephenson can refuse a meeting if the board and parents keep "pressing" for one.

He said the letter from Stephenson was "negative and discouraging" and all parents can do now is "wait it out."

New leather factory outlet soon Acton tourist attraction

Acton could soon be known as Leather town right across the province if ambitious plans for a leather factory outlet in the Frank Heller and Co. Ltd. Eastern Avenue plant bear fruit.

Don Dawkins unveiled plans for a unique Acton tourist attraction in the factory after Heller's moves into Disston, Monday night for Halton Hills general committee. It should bring tourist dollars to Acton and create some jobs here.

A group of investors in the project want the region to allow them to keep the leather factory outlet open Sundays. The factory outlet won't be part of Heller's though the owners of the leather firm are involved in the project.

Back in July when it became official that Heller's was moving to Disston it was revealed the firm would add a factory outlet offering leather goods primarily manufactured by customers of the company.

Dawkins said the project has "evolved considerably" in the past couple of months and will now combine both commercial and manufacturing operations.

There will be a factory outlet retail area of approximately 8,000 square feet, a furniture manufacturing area covering about 10,000 square feet and eventual on site manufacturing of leather goods including furniture, gloves, handbags, purses, wallets, belts and other leather goods.

They will also look at having local craftsmen and leather hobbyists sell their wares at the new store

and have all manufacturing areas open for public viewing.

If the project is a success then the possibility of adding a restaurant and lounge, a leather and tanning museum and more manufacturing of crafts on the premises will be explored. They want to fully utilize the building.

Nothing Acton's leather heritage dates back to the last century Dawkins said, there hasn't been a "serious attempt to exploit the commercial possibilities evolving from a leather town image."

The Eastern Avenue plant was built in 1899 as a hide house for Beardmore and is brick wall with Douglas Fir trusses with 48 foot spans. There are a number of solid wood columns up to 18 inches thick in the building. The group has decided to name the Factory outlet the Old Hide House.

"The building offers similar potential for attractive interior development to many of the old mills in Southern Ontario that have been successfully converted to restaurants or other commercial activity. Our intentions are to make full use of the history and character of the building and to promote and exploit the leather town history and image of the town of Acton," Dawkins explained.

"Our objective is to create a unique commercial and craft based light manufacturing centre with leather being the largest common denominator," Dawkins said. He noted the goods for sale will be Canadian made and as much as possible incorporate leathers made in Acton.

Right off the bat the project should create eight to 10 full time jobs and another 20 to 25 positions for part-time workers. If it is a success then there should be 15 to 20 permanent positions and 25 to 30 part-time jobs created within a year or two.

They plan to get started immediately; they want to cash in on some of the Christmas shopping trade. "The venture can be truly successful only if it achieves tourist status similar to Chudleigh's Apple

Farm, the pine furniture manufacturers in western counties or the factory outlets for leather garments in Blythe, Ontario," he stated. They must draw customers from outside Acton, in an area of 25 to 50 miles.

The project has very firm financial footings, Dawkins said, but costs will also be high so they want to get started quickly.

It is essential, if the project is to evolve into a highly successful tourist attraction bringing dollars into Acton, that it be open Sundays. They expect to do considerable advertising of Acton as leather town to bring in business from Toronto, Hamilton and Kitchener areas.

"We believe the merits of the project speak for themselves. It is very much a tourist business in nature in a community which presently offers no such attractions. It both capitalizes and emphasizes the leather town image which Acton is known for and of which it should be proud," Dawkins declared.

He said it was unfortunate a similar project wasn't launched in Acton earlier.

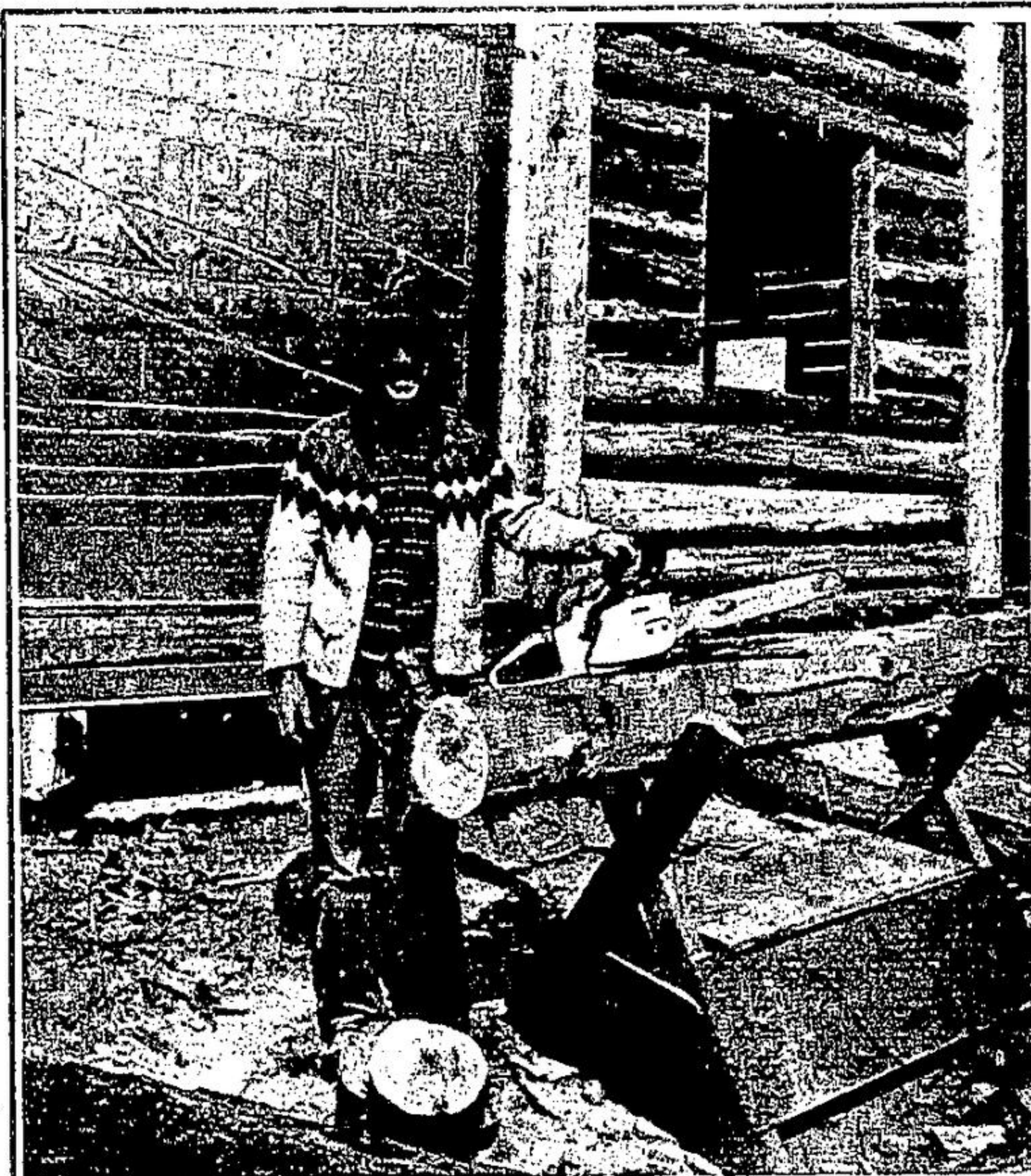
Dawkins repeated the importance of being operational by November and the need to be open Sundays, just like Blythe. "It is a significant venture which will benefit the entire community."

In answer to a question from council Dawkins said they now have parking for 80 to 90 cars and are negotiating with CN to add another 60 spaces.

Councillors backed the proposal and recommended to the region the factory outlet be given a Sunday closing exemption as a tourist attraction.

Councillors felt it would be a big boost to Acton, particularly the downtown area where efforts have been made to enhance the area and promote the leather town theme.

Having visited Blythe, Councillor Ross Knechtel felt the project could be a real shot in the arm for Acton. He said Sunday opening has caused no problems in Blythe.



Burl Clark is a unique fellow. He is building a log house; fairly common, but this house will be solar heated. Photo by KEN BUSTIN

Solar heat log house marries past, present

by Ken Bustin

In this day and age of people trying to simplify their lifestyles building a log house isn't that unusual.

But, only a unique person would want to combine an old lifestyle with an ultra modern technology, solar energy.

That's what long time rural North Halton resident Bill "Burl" Clark is doing; building a solar heated log house.

An Omagh native who has also resided in the Speyside and Campbellville areas, Clark has always had the knack of trying things that are unusual and different, or at least not everyone's cup of tea.

It is his nature. And this strong individual nature has taken him down many different roads.

For example some of his undertakings over the years have included such things as hot air ballooning and operating log raft trips down the rapids of the Fraser River in Canada's west.

And since he is an accomplished musician, from time to time you just might see him playing stand up bass at a bluegrass festival.

He has even tried life in a teepee.

You could say Burl is a basic back-to-the-land type who has allotted some room for modernization.

So designing and building a traditional log house

and then heating it with modern solar technology is not so unusual to Burl.

Timber framing has been part of his life for the last six years.

Since completing a log building course at Seneca College in 1975 he has worked with four different companies and built a total of 15 homes in rural southern Ontario.

It was during these years that the idea to undertake a big project like a log home was first implanted in his mind.

Then, in the fall of 1979 he attended a solar energy course at the University of Guelph.

This was the turning point. The additional knowledge of solar energy combined with his vast knowledge of timber framing produced the inevitable for Burl.

Last winter, at his Speyside residence, he spent his spare time with T-square and pencil drafting out the design for the solar heated log house. At the time it was still more a dream than a reality.

But in the spring of this year, following hours of preparation, the blue printed plan was sold to a Kitchener client.

Now, this fall, at a work site located south of Owen Sound that dream is becoming a reality.

Log houses were common places in pioneer days.

(Continued on page 3)

inside

Bert Hinton will have competition for the Acton trustee's job now that Arlene Bruce has announced she is running. Details on page 5.

A mediator has been appointed to help Halton Separate School Board and its teachers get their contract negotiations back on track. See page 9.