

The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

Don McDonald, Publisher

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Make Acton Leather Town

Downtown Acton and in fact the entire financial complexion of the community received a much needed shot in the arm last week with the announcement of plans for The Old Hide House.

Efforts have been underway for a while in Acton's business community to cash in on our leather heritage.

The Leathertown mall in the old Pro Hardware store downtown was an excellent first step.

Now with Frank Heller and Co. Ltd. moving to the Disston plant the principles in the firm along with some other investors have hatched a project for one of the company's old buildings which should really put Acton on the map.

The Old Hide House will be located in a building steeped in leather industry history dating back to Beardmore's use of the structure back at the turn of the century.

The project will involve a factory outlet for a variety of leather goods, with preference to goods made of Acton-produced leather, a large manufacturing area open to the public for viewing and space devoted to the work of local leather hobbyists and craftsmen.

The dream is to build on the initial aspects of the venture and expand it someday to include a restaurant and lounge and leather museum.

Success of the project hinges on it being open Sunday and turning it into a tourist attraction which will draw lookers and buyers from around the Golden Horseshoe.

The backers have a proven track record in the business world, the venture will be well financed and most importantly, it is an idea for Acton that was long overdue.

The plans are exciting. If the project is as huge a success as we expect it will be, The Old Hide House should be a tremendous boost to Acton.

However, the impact of this project could go far beyond just establishment of The Old Hide House.

It could be the catalyst which will set off a chain of projects directed at our leather heritage.

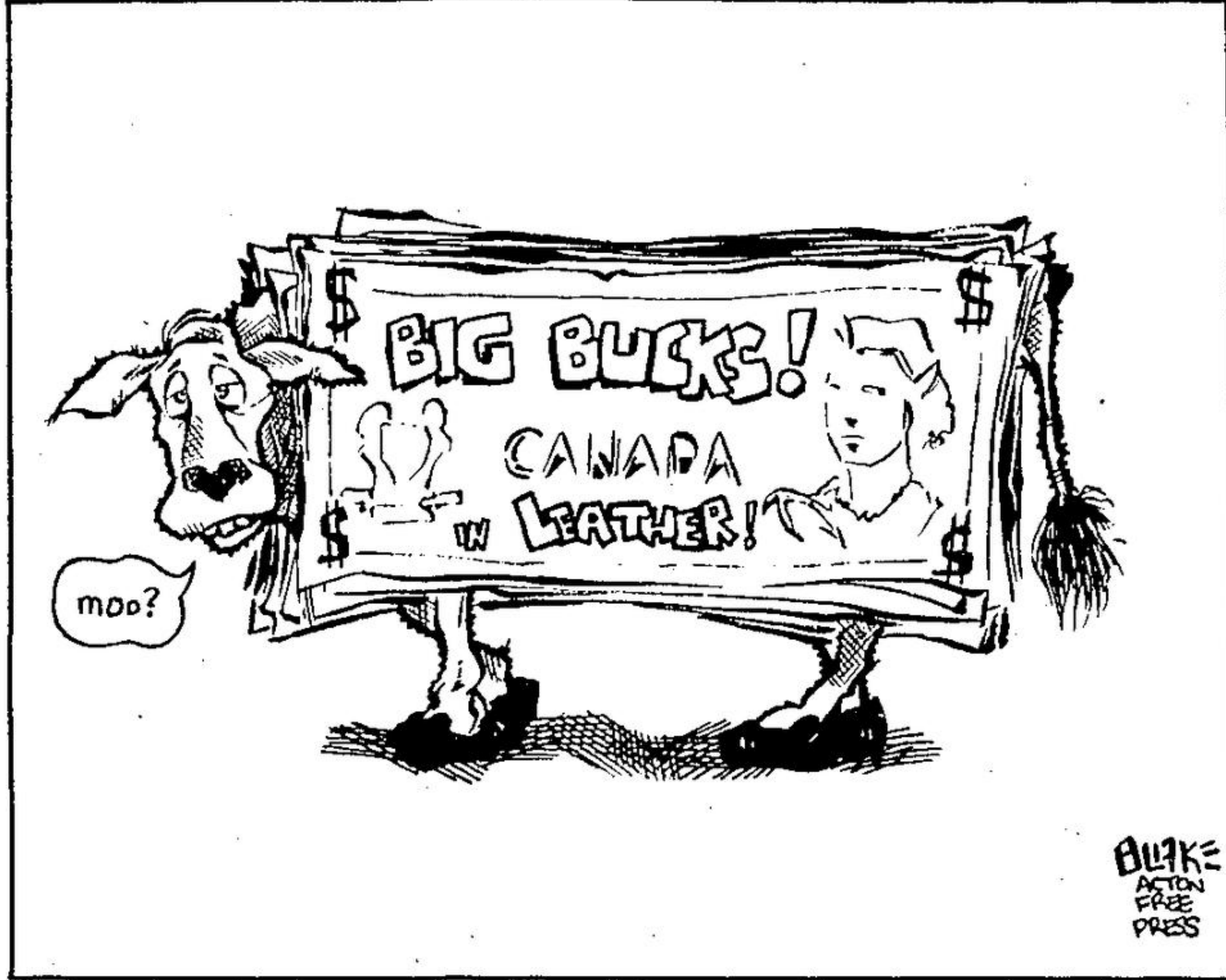
It could be the kind of drawing card for downtown which will prompt others to invest in commercial development of both the Dominion Hotel site and the Force Electric property.

It should also be a real encouragement to downtown merchants to increase their efforts to revitalize our core area. For instance, the BIA could work with The Old Hide House to carry the Leather Town image right through the shopping district.

Most importantly The Old Hide House as a tourist attraction will bring dollars into the town, bring back to Acton some of the money which has been flowing out for years to merchants in larger centres.

The Old Hide House could be just what Acton has needed for so long.

Too bad the job of turning Acton into Leather Town didn't start years sooner.



Smiley had another of his September Affairs

by Bill Smiley



Every year I have an affair, whether my wife likes it or not. I fall in love and let the chips fall where they may. I have my September affair.

In movies and novels, that title means that a man, or woman, falls in love in the fall of his or her life. It has a sweet, nostalgic note, with a touch of sadness in it. But I've had a September Affair since I was a sprout. Every year, I fall in love with the month of September. And it is sweet and nostalgic and a little sad. And achingly beautiful.

As a tyke, it meant coming home from two months of wild, free running about at the cottage, one of a big family. We were sun-burned and bramble-scratched and just a couple of jumps ahead of the gopher or the groundhog, socially.

What a thrill to be home! Flip a light-switch, flush a toilet, in the big, old house with the high ceilings and cool rooms, after eight weeks of grubbing it.

And then, the magic of modern living rediscovered, it was out into the streets to find the "kids" and race around in the glorious September evenings, playing Run Sheep Run, and Redlight and Hide and Seek. Mothers called, but nobody came. It was the first fascination with the September Affair. Our mothers seemed to sense it and let us have a last fling before life became serious and autumn dimmed the lamps.

As a teenager, working 500 miles from home in September, I had my Affair. There was a churning yearning to get back to school, friends, football and the interrupted romance with the brown-eyed girl. It almost hurt physically.

As a youth, there was the headiness and tension of going off to College, a big word, in September. A strange and frightening place. A small-town boy in a big puddle. New people. New manners. New everything. A September Affair.

And at college, first year, there was the wrenching affair with a South American wench, Sylvia. We met by chance and it was wrenching because she had to go back to Rio in four weeks, and I was really gone, and I knew I'd never see her again, and we wandered in the soft, September dusk, hands clutched, and my heart turned over in its grave.

Then came the war years and there were a few memorable Septembers. One on the Niagara Peninsula, with the grapes and peaches lush, and the thrill of knowing I had passed elementary flying school and could put the white "flash" of a pilot on my cap.

One in England, hot and hazy and languorous after a cold, wet summer. And the weekend leave in London, 29 years old and a pretty girl on my arm and death lurking

in the wings, and caring not. Too fast it went.

One in Normandy and jump to Lille, and jump to Antwerp and life every day on a tenuous, white-hot wire, and the beautiful weather and the terrible daily disappearance of Paddy and Mac and Taffy and Dingle Bell and Nick and Freddy.

And that long, hot September of 1945. Home. Alive. Unreal. Really unreal: the family, the places, the peace, the boredom, and then the silly young people back at the university. But the September Affair with the trees and the cool blue sky and the long dark hair and yet another pair of brown eyes, browner than ever.

And the next September. Marriage to the brown-eyes and a wonderful week at the old cottage in Quebec, with this strange woman. Canoeing and swimming and me teaching her how to cook. And she's just as strange today. And just as brown-eyed.

And a lot of Septembers since, golden and blue, with the last breath of summer in the green trees and the first kiss of fall in the cool nights, and the magic that makes me fall for the ripe charms of that ripe lady of the year, September, oozing with plenitude, gorged with the fruits of summer, yet wakening with a sigh to the brisk business ahead.

I have a bad crush on the lady.

Actario tickets can still be purchased from any member of the town hall restoration committee, or other organization in town. Frank Toth was the lucky winner of the first trip a few weeks ago to the Bahamas. You could be the next winner. Buy now and get in where the action is.

Don't forget, the Friends-in-Deed are still collecting Zehrs and Dominion tapes. Once they reach a certain amount they will be able to get a wheelchair free of charge thanks to the generosity of the super-markets and shoppers.

Tapes can be sent to me here at the Free Press, 59 Willow St., Box 120, Acton. The handicapped organization also needs volunteers to help with Sunday morning swimming at the indoor pool. For more information, contact Emily Price, at 853-2324.

10.30 at McKenzie-Smith School? It's a free evening out for both males and females. Call Susan Holbiski at 853-2954.

In the small world depart: While I was at the baby show at the fall fair waiting to take pictures of the prize winning babies, I saw several familiar faces. As a reporter, I met most people in town, but not having a photographic memory I can't put names to a lot of faces. That was the case with one of the mothers. She looked vaguely familiar, but I couldn't put a name to her face. After a while she came up to me, called me by name (I cringed because I didn't know hers). Then she asked me if I was in Paris in 1971. Because I was, I said yes. Just then, the voice clicked in. She was on my five week tour of Europe. It was Susan Cermak, now Susan Patterson, of Acton. Her hair was different, giving her an almost totally different appearance. She lived in Pembroke when I knew her in those wild weeks overseas. The Canadian Youth Hostel Association threw 13 strangers together for the \$500 tour, and we all parted friends.

Susan moved to Acton in April, I did so in May. She had seen my picture accompany this column and suspected it was me, but dismissed the idea. When she saw me at the baby show, she was positive it was me. Turns out Susan lived in Norway when I did, just up the road a few miles.

It was a real surprise to meet up with Susan again. Just a few weeks ago I was wondering how I could start getting in touch with the rest of the gang.

Susan had another surprise. Her son Harvey took second prize in the boys' four to six month category.

Our readers write

Support candidate

Dear Sir: I was delighted to learn last week that Arlene Bruce has declared herself as a candidate for Halton School Board Trustee. There is not anyone I would rather see elected to such an important and sensitive task in our community.

Arlene was born and raised in the Acton area. This is the place she calls home and thus brings to the office a depth of understanding of this community that few of us have. Acton is a town which has some growing pains. Arlene has the grace and the ability to be able to bridge the gap between the old and the new—who can help us work in harmony with one another.

Furthermore, she understands the educational process. Having been a teacher in Acton for 15 years, she knows the problems which schools and educators must face. She cares for kids and the quality of their education.

Our children are the most important gifts entrusted to us in life. We need a trustee who believes that and who will help parents insist on a first-rate education from kindergarten through high school.

Moreover, I can assure all of you that, as chairperson of our Church Board, Arlene handles a meeting with tact and tenderness. She has enough firmness to get on with the job and not be sidetracked by trivia. Her sense of humor and her stance on issues have endeared her to all of us at Trinity Church.

Acton needs a trustee on the Board of Education of whom we can be proud. If Acton elects Arlene Bruce, we will be well served.

Yours Sincerely,
Rev. Chuck Beaton
Trinity United Church

Hydro's advertising

Dear Sir: Federal government advertising says Canada has enough hydro-electric power to export.

Hydro advertising says Ontario potential is limited and there isn't enough to meet our own needs.

Liberal energy critic Julian Reed believes the former is true; therefore, the latter is wrong and misleading (Ontario Hydro advts. misleading—Reed, September 24).

I believe both ads are right. What is said about Canada as a whole does not hold true when you look at the individual parts. For example, the case can be made that Canada is self-sufficient in oil. On paper, at least. But that doesn't mean each province is self-sufficient in oil. In fact, due to a number of factors, oil is imported to the provinces east of the Ottawa River, while some oil is exported from Western Canada.

Similarly, the case can be made that there are vast untapped water resources in Canada capable of generating huge amounts of electricity for both for our own consumption and for export, as is done in the Federal ads. In fact, that potential has been estimated at 240,000 megawatts by the Canadian Association of Consulting Engineers.

Ontario Hydro doesn't dispute the figure, but we certainly don't interpret it as meaning each province has a potential of 24,000 megawatts. Again, some provinces, like Quebec, have a large share of the potential while others have very little. We are somewhere in between.

In Ontario, we have estimated there is a potential of about 10,800 MW of undeveloped hydro-electric power at more than 40 sites, including the major rivers in Northern Ontario. That does not translate into 10,800 MW of continuous power, only the capacity of the generating facilities. In fact, the actual output of these sites would be more in the area of 3,000 average MW on an annual basis.

Ontario Hydro is currently carrying out feasibility studies on 17 of these sites, with a timetable of implementation by 1995. If all 17 are built the total capacity would be about 2,000 MW, but the annual output would actually be less. Even with the completion of our current nuclear construction program in 1991, those 2,000 MW of hydroelectric generation will still leave Hydro 5,000 MW short of our forecast needs for the year 2000. Extensive study is needed to determine if the sites are practical and economical. A major factor will be their impact on the environment.

And if you feel there is strong opposition to nuclear plants, one only has to look to British Columbia to see the opposition mounted against the construction of hydro-electric dams.

But we are not ignoring the water potential, nor are we disagreeing with the Federal government's figures. We're just trying to put Ontario's position in perspective. And that is what our advertising does.

Yours very truly,
D.B. MacCarthy
Vice-President
Corporate Relations



On the Leavell

With Helen

Well known Acton resident Rick Bonetto was caught up in the middle of a riot in Amsterdam recently, while attending his brother Bob's wedding.

A few days before the wedding, Rick was to meet Glen McKenzie at Dam Square. While waiting at the square, huge crowds gathered and got very rowdy. The police showed up with tear gas guns, and flat-tuffs started. Rick was still there when the tear gas started flying and arrests were being made. After thousands of people started running in all directions, with Rick in the middle, he decided he would forget about Glen and head to his hotel room.

The riot was protesting a landlord-tenant act which was being newly enforced.

Rick was quite impressed with Bob's wedding. In Holland, he said, the groom is the centre of attention instead of the bride. The bride and groom are sequestered in their separate quarters while the families have all the fun. Then a black limousine picks up the groom, and takes him to the bride's home. He then goes to his bride-to-be's room, and takes her into the living room, where the families are partying.

Back issues

10 years ago

October 7, 1970
Grand opening of the new Toronto Dominion bank was celebrated. Attending the ceremony was Mayor Les Dubsy, George Simpson from the Ontario division of Toronto Dominion and new manager Don McDonald, now Free Press publisher.

Sideroad 17 residents were asking industrial trucks to use Sideroad 22 instead of sending an estimated 90 trucks per hour down that road.

A Two Day Open House at Elm Tree Farm attracted numerous people to see the works of Martha Hoey and her mother Elizabeth Wilkes Hoey.

Former Acton Citizen of the Year George Musselle died.

Thompson Fuels baseball team won the Acton Minor Baseball Association Championship.

The recently renovated Dominion Hotel held an Open House with co-owners Mr. and Mrs. Ed Startek and Mr. and Mrs. Lou Wasowicz greeting patrons.

20 years ago

October 6, 1960
Frank Toth Motors were engaged as temporary ambulance service after Guelph ambulance driver Vern Bogue resigned. An ambulance on loan will be kept at Toth Motors until needed and better arrangements could be made.

Big discussions surrounded the decision to paint Acton High School windows or whether drapes should be purchased.

Sixteen volunteers worked all day Saturday to rid Fairy Lake of stumps.

Mrs. James Brown and Mrs. T.C. Brown were sent as Delegates to the W.I. convention in Guelph.

A visitor from Johannesburg, George Francey was treated to a tour of Disston Saw plant in Acton. He had been a representative for Disston Saw for 35 years but, until recently, had never been through the Acton plant.

Ed Watson of Watson's Music and George Elliot are working closely on installing the new organ for Trinity United Church. The tracker organ came from Berkeley United Church in Toronto. It is expected to take some time before the 1,500 pipes will all be installed.

50 years ago

October 9, 1930
The beechnuts are a plentiful crop this year.

On Tuesday the Inter-county softball league started in Acton Arena with a doubleheader. Acton Ladies hosted Georgetown Ladies, and the Georgetown Club vs. St. Alban's, Acton. In the ladies' game the local team emerged victorious. Mary Chalmers, the pitcher, was the star of the Acton team.

The game between the boys did not prove as exciting.

Two groups of the CGIT were organized at the United Church. Officers include Reita McHabb, Lorna McComb, Helen Cook, Helen Ostrander, Ruth Gibson, Velma Blair, Isobel Switzer, Sheila Gibson, Elizabeth Darby, Sylvia Williams, Irene Darby, Leaders V. Ramshaw, M. Odbert and K. Savage.

The Annual Field Day of the high schools of Halton county was held at Oakville. Under the auspices of Acton High school, an evening with Shakespeare was presented at the town hall with the Kingston Players.

Acton's assessment will amount to \$10,846 for county purposes this year. Over a quarter of a million dollars is required altogether. There are now 263 aged people receiving pensions.

The fame of the ladies of the Churchill congregation for providing a bounteous supper is well known, and a capacity crowd attended the anniversary supper and entertainment. Rev. H. Caldwell presided.

Mason Knitting Company is working nights to keep up with the orders.

100 years ago

Oct. 7, 1890
We were shown several pieces of bracket work, manufactured by Mr. Charles Speight. Among them is a beautiful piece in which is worked the motto "Home Sweet Home."

Mr. S. Dilts of the Georgetown Herald, sold out to Mr. J. Neelands.

A Total Abstinence Club has been organized with more than 60 members. The club will meet in the Temperance Hall every Monday evening and will consist of interesting temperance entertainments and lectures, and the securing of signatures to the Gospel Temperance pledge. There is plenty of material for the club to labor with in Acton and we hope to see a good work accomplished. President is Robert Warren Sr., first vice-president Eli Snyder, second vice-president Thos. Moore, Teacher, third vice-president Edward Nicklin, secretary H.P. Moore, treasurer Robert Craine.

Quite a number of our citizens attended Rockwood, Nassagaweya and Georgetown exhibitions.