



Eugene Braida will turn 94 tomorrow (Thursday).

# Eugene Braida has never missed voting

by Terry Grubbe  
This Monday, Eugene Braida will go to the polls to cast his ballot in the municipal election, keeping in tact his record of never missing an election during his 54 years in Acton.

Perhaps the oldest resident still living in town, Mr. Braida considers his right to vote a privilege. He has never missed a federal, provincial or municipal election. "Not enough people have that attitude. To Dad it is very, very important," said son Nino.

Thursday another milestone for Mr. Braida will be achieved when he reaches the age of 94. Sunday four generations of his family gathered at his home to celebrate the occasion.

Many things have changed here since Mr. Braida arrived in 1926 in the then incorporated Village of Acton, to work at his trade for Beardmore.

For him the growth of the town is the most obvious change but, he added, the people are still friendly.

At age 19, Mr. Braida immigrated from Italy on money he borrowed from his widowed Mother. Speaking no English, he arrived in hopes of finding employment. Being the oldest child he felt responsible to help support the family he had left

behind. He returned three times to Italy, once in 1912 to marry his wife, whom he had known since school days. He went back again in 1923 for three years, but decided Canada offered opportunities and returned permanently in 1925. He would later bring out his two brothers, who were also to make Acton their home.

Finding a good place for his family to live, and better opportunities for work are the reasons he gives for choosing Acton. After living on Main Street South and Park Avenue, he purchased the Cooper farm, his present home on Queen Street.

Acton began its first major development, said son Nino when Mr. Braida sold 52 acres to the Thomas Brothers, for the building of the Glenlea subdivision, in 1955.

After working for Beardmore for 12 years, he purchased his own business, named Acton Exclusive Footwear. He prides himself on the good service he offered to the people until he sold in 1956.

Raising a family of four in a small community, especially during the depression, was difficult, but the lack of funds and transportation also created great family togetherness. Skating on the lake was a pastime for the children, and the whole family

looked forward to the Sunday evening band concerts in the park.

The major social event of the year, the fall fair, was the big outing where everyone in town participated.

Before the Santa Claus parade became tradition, residents would gather at the four corners the week before Christmas to sing carols while candy was given to the children, and Bob Wallace displayed his team of white horses.

With the building of the arena in 1929, hockey became the main sporting attraction in town.

On the site of the old A&B, the Gregory Theatre provided a relaxing outing.

Although Mr. Braida's children spoke little if any English when they first attended Acton Public school, as quickly as they learned so did Mom and Dad. The Continuation School, where St. Joseph's is located, provided their high school education to grade 12, when they would then go to Guelph to finish.

Being 94 has created a generation gap for Mr. Braida but, he notes, that people of ages still stop to talk to him especially at church, where the Braida family can be found in the records of St. Joseph's for over 50 years. His family has always been his

number one priority in life but adds the church has also been very important.

To what does Mr. Braida attribute his long life? "Hard work, being active, and having family close."

In 1914 Acton saw its first car, a Model T Ford owned by the local veterinarian Dr. Cox. In spite of this new form of transportation, Mr. Braida never learned to drive, continuing to walk to and from work.

Still today, Mr. Braida makes breakfast for himself, daughter Elma and son Nino, with whom he lives, and five nights a week prepares the evening meal. His great grandchildren make regular visits and according to great grandson Jason, "Grandpa makes great spaghetti."

Close to 164 years of service has been given to Acton by the Braida family. Besides the years by Mr. Braida senior, 12 years at Beardmores, 18 in the shoe business, and 12 years in farming, his children can claim close to 120 years of active life here.

Daughter Elma has operated Acton Home Furnishings for 42 years, and son Nino will soon see 40 years with Blow Press. His other daughter Rene lives with her family next to her father and has been

(Continued on page 6)

# The Acton Free Press

An Inland Community Newspaper

One Hundred and Sixty Year - No. 17

ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1980

Twenty Pages - Twenty-Five Cents

## Canada Battery expands in Nov.

Canada Battery will add 4,000 square feet of storage and production space to its Acton factory this month.

The Commerce Crescent plant is shut down for a few days while alterations are made to the existing plant.

Canada Battery official Barry Peddie said the shutdown is only for two or three days. It is meant to facilitate washroom expansion, painting and maintenance work which is necessary before the expansion takes place.

Con-Ex, a general contracting firm from Owen Sound, is slated to start work on the expansion on November 24.

Canada Battery had hoped for a 5,000 square foot expansion but plans had to be revised down to 4,000.

The additional space will be used for both storage and manufacturing. Some new jobs will be created in the future by the expansion.

Canada Battery opened in Acton about five years ago, operating in its present 9,000 square foot factory.

## Building Products expects business will bounce back

Building Products was forced by slumping sales to lay off 30 workers last month but the firm expects business will bounce back to normal early in 1981 and they'll be bringing workers back.

Building Products enjoyed strong sales early this year and built up inventories, plant manager Tom Ostrander said. However, as the year wore on business fell off and with a large inventory the lay off became necessary last month.

He said the firm's plan now is to maintain its current level of production with 38 workers until the end of this year.

Ostrander said Building Products is "optimistic

that with the turn of the year we can get back to our normal level of operations."

He refused to speculate how long it would take to build up sales sufficiently to hire and rehire 30 workers. How quickly production resumes at its old levels depends on sales. Ostrander said he understands a good number of the workers who were laid off last month have found other jobs.

Sales so far in the last quarter of the year have been a little better than expected and the slide has been halted, he said.

He emphasized the firm's long range plans are to remain in business in Acton.



Billy Middleton and Ed Footitt are just two of many Acton and area veterans who will gather at the Cenotaph this Sunday morning for Remembrance Day services. Footitt is the poppy chairman and Friday night a few hundred Legion members will be out knocking on doors selling poppies.

Photo by GORD MURRAY

## Service Sunday at cenotaph

Remembrance Day will be observed this Sunday in Acton with a parade, service at the cenotaph and a service at Trinity United Church.

This week is poppy week in Acton and Friday night 200 to 300 members of the Legion will blitz the town door to door selling poppies. Money raised goes into a benevolent fund to help veterans. Last year about \$3,000 was raised in Acton.

Sunday the parade will form up at the Post Office at 10:30 a.m. Participants will include Legion and Legion Ladies' Auxiliary members, Acton Volunteer Firefighters, Scouts, Cubs, Guides and Brownies as well as representatives of many community organizations. The parade will be led by Acton Citizens' Band.

The parade will march to the cenotaph where the last post will be played, the flag raised and lowered, names of the brave men who lost their

lives in combat read and over 30 wreaths placed at the monument.

The service at the cenotaph will be followed by a service at Trinity United Church. There will be a dinner at the Legion in the afternoon.

On Tuesday there will be another short ceremony at the cenotaph. Bob Angell will lower the flag at 11 a.m. and raise it again after two minutes silence has been observed.

## It's your choice November 10

Acton, Esquesing and district election stories

on pages 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and B 6

Former Halton MP Hughes Cleaver has died. More on page 2.

Acton High School holds its annual graduation this Friday night. Turn to page 2.

Prime Minister Trudeau sent Alice Pilkington a plaque on her retirement from the post office and she's tickled pink. See page B6.

High school history teacher Harold Swallow was honored at a retirement dinner last week. Story and picture on page 5.

Area potter Larry Davidson will be holding an open house this weekend. Turn to page B4.

## Extra police needed here to disperse Hallowe'en crowd

Extra police had to be called in to Acton to break up a large crowd of youths downtown Hallowe'en night.

Halton Regional Police Inspector Matt McPherson said other than the crowd of 50 to 60 youths milling about on Mill and Main Streets Hallowe'en was pretty quiet.

With Hallowe'en on a Friday evening police took extra precautions to make sure the situation in town remained calm.

He noted five officers and cruisers were posted for Acton; usually there are just two officers and cars patrolling each shift in Acton and area.

McPherson added he, as well as a Staff Sergeant and Sergeants, were in town Friday night and two extra men and cruisers were called in from Oakville to help break up the crowd downtown.

He said the crowd, which was milling about, wasn't really causing any problems, though there were lots of eggs thrown at store windows. The crowd dispersed "quite rapidly," McPherson reported.

Pranksters seemed to start celebrating Hallowe'en a couple of weeks early this year, there were numerous reports of eggs and windows being smashed the past two weeks and they didn't let up Friday night either. A few windows were broken and lots of eggs and other things like tomatoes were thrown at cars, homes and stores and windows were soaped.

However, McPherson said there weren't many reports of other types of vandalism. Police received no reports of people bothering children out trick or treating or of poisoned candy or apples with razor blades in them being given out.

McPherson said he didn't see any "big problems" in Acton and just three arrests were made; all youths for drinking offenses.

The police were assisted by 10 members of the Halton Amateur Radio Club who also patrolled streets in Acton and Georgetown.

## Hallowe'en egg attack last straw for merchant

Hallowe'en was the last straw for one Acton merchant. He's selling to escape vandalism.

After several years of problems with vandalism Bert and Martha Bigelow, owners of the 747 Restaurant, have decided to sell their business following Friday night's plastering of their building of with eggs by youths.

The 747 Restaurant was just one of several businesses pelted with eggs, tomatoes and pumpkins by a large crowd of youths downtown Hallowe'en night, and in fact almost nightly last month.

There are conflicting reports regarding the problem downtown. Halton Regional Police Inspector Matt McPherson said the crowd numbered 50 to 60 while other observers have said there were as many as 150. The beefed up police contingent for Acton and area on Hallowe'en night had to call in extra officers from south Halton to help disperse the crowd. Some people reported eggs were thrown at officers.

Mrs. Bigelow said the "hoodlums" have taken

over downtown and they are getting out. She called the repeated egg attacks "terrorism".

Youths, many in their early 20s, have been prevented from entering the restaurant and for some time have been retaliating with egg attacks and breaking windows. Plexiglass was even installed, but is now so badly scratched it looks filthy.

Mrs. Bigelow said the building was sandblasted a couple of years ago to remove egg stains and now needs it again. The Bigelows don't care for the idea of spending another \$2,000 for sandblasting.

Last year they had to close down for two days after Hallowe'en and this year were closed Friday night.

She said police aren't doing their job. They have done nothing despite the fact she and her husband have discussed the problem with police numerous times.

The vandals have also damaged the roof of Henry Stachyra's business, climbing up to throw eggs at the 747.

## Bucaneers n' bunnies



Winners of the Speyside Hallowe'en costume contest gathered around school secretary Irene "the bunny" Murphy. Winners are left to right, Craig Ivison (buccaneer), Brandt Gillett (witch), Glenn Zuest (bug bunny), Randy Knight (a woman), and Lalilli Khan (a bear). Back row, David Deforest (mountain climber), Irene Murphy, and Sharlene Dereruk (robot).