



Ernie Marks

Ernie Marks has his own memory lane

by Terry Grubbe
Taking a stroll down memory lane is an expression used when we recall the past. Recently however it was discovered that there really is a memory lane in Acton.

Ernie Marks has lived on Mill street for 35 years. Until 1971 he operated a grocery business at that location.

Always wanting to own a business of his own, Marks purchased the business in 1947 from Mr. Kingshott and moved wife Mary and five children into the residence behind the store.

Although he knew the building and business had been in existence since 1880 at that location, it was not until a short time ago that he learned of the historical significance of the laneway beside the property.

Recently, while his grandson Greg, was helping Marks trim the bushes in the laneway, he discovered names and dates carved in the bricks. It seems that as early as 1924, the earliest date recorded on the wall, some of Acton's youth hung out at this location. Some of those who felt compelled to record events for history were C. Jocque 1935, Ted Clifford 1924 and C. Tyler among other names and initials.

During his early years in business, Marks recalls customers arriving on horseback, filling their

potato sacks with purchases. Not many did their shopping in this manner, but preferred to have them delivered, which Marks did, as far away as Speyside. When sewers were installed in Acton, Marks recalls there was mud everywhere and delivering around town was quite a problem.

Still, today kids who bought his penny candy and suckers return with their families to visit Mr. Marks. "We never had any problems with vandalism or damage," said Marks. "Sure the kids soaped the windows on Hallowe'en, we expected that, but we always got along with the kids. Once, when Marks caught a young man stealing an orange, he told him if he really wanted it he could have it free. That same person still recalls the incident and often stops by to visit Marks.

Besides supplying Acton residents with their daily needs, Mary Marks now deceased, ran Acton's first florist shop in a corner of the store. Cut flowers were brought from Georgetown to make the corsages and arrangements. For those without a green thumb Mary would also sell Acton's first boxed plants.

Through Mary's involvement with the local IODE chapter, the Marks dining room, for at least two weeks before Christmas, was full of the Christmas hampers being prepared for delivery by the Rotary Club. Much of the work had to be done at the last

minute to avoid spoilage. One individual who really stands out in Mark's memory was "Old Mr. Harrop" the police chief. According to Marks, not only did he patrol the streets, but also handled the duties of public works, assessor, court clerk and truant officer.

Through his own involvement as chairman of the committee of adjustment, Ernie Marks was named Acton's first building inspector. The annual salary was \$500 or the total of the building permit fees, whichever was higher.

Although he was very involved in many local clubs and activities such as the Lions, Holy Name Society, and the Legion, his real love was minor sports. Besides coaching and managing for 18 years he was president of the first Tri-County League.

"Then we had no artificial ice or blue lines," he says, "and often it was five below in that arena before the addition. When the ice was too soft to play on, we headed for Georgetown, where there was the artificial ice." Many hockey games were played on the lake.

Mudville had its Casey, but Acton had its Ryder, and we won. "It took 14 innings in 1947, with Don Ryder pitching the whole game, but Acton won the Ontario Intermediate Hardball Championship by one run. "What a day," recalls Marks. "Hardball was a big spot in Acton once."

One thing Marks misses today in Acton is the train station. One time when the Prime Minister, Louis St. Laurent travelled through Acton on the train, a day's holiday was declared. Although he doesn't remember if the same happened when the Queen Mother graced the rails he does recall her waving to the crowds from the platform.

For three terms, Marks sat on the school board for Acton. During his time on the board, the addition was made to the Robert Little School and his name plus those of the other trustees are on the corner stone.

As a boy of eight, Marks immigrated with his family from England in 1913, one year after the Titanic sank. Soon after his father would be called to war and at the age of 12, to help the family, he entered the work force. For ten cents an hour, at the Campbell Flour Mills in west Toronto, he would work a 12 hour shift.

After working for United Cigar Stores for 15 years, Marks decided to purchase and run his own Cigar Store. However, his wife's uncle who was a butcher, offered to assist in starting a grocery business and teach him the trade. They first located in Oakville, but because of the war could not find housing, saw the ad for the business in Acton one night and moved to town shortly after.

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Citizens meet Harding Dec. 18

Acton's new regional councillor Dave Whiting will lead a delegation of Acton businessmen to Halton Regional Police headquarters in Oakville on December 18 for a meeting with Chief James Harding.

Whiting says he has been talking to the chief about complaints about police service from Acton businessmen as well as other residents. He has talked to a number of people of late about their police concerns. After talking to Harding he has arranged a meeting at the police headquarters for a week this Thursday at 1:30 p.m.

He has also contacted representatives of the Acton Business Improvement Area, Acton Chamber of Commerce and Lorne Doberthien, who raised the issue of poor policing in Acton in a letter to Harding and this paper a few weeks ago. Most policing complaints are coming from businessmen.

Whiting explained by going to police headquarters it is hoped Actonians will learn more about the total operation of the regional force.

He also invites any concerned residents who wish to attend the meeting to contact him at 853-3725.

Whiting says there is a possibility a public meeting will be held later in Acton dealing with policing.

Noting Policing is a regional concern and there are complaints about the force in other areas of Halton too, Whiting says he will urge the regional council meet with Harding and the Halton Police Commission to discuss the issues.

There has also been talk this week of Acton businessmen and residents forming a delegation to go to the Police Commission in the future.

Saturday Doberthien received a lengthy reply to his letter from the Chief (this newspaper also rec-

eived a copy of the letter, turn inside for the text, as well as an editorial on page 4). In the letter Harding

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Letters bolster guilty farmer

One of the most unusual aspects of the trial of Eramosa farmer Keith Black, who was convicted of stealing more than 300 cattle, is the degree of community support he has received.

That was the observation of defence lawyer David Smith as he presented Guelph County Court Judge J. D. Sutherland bound letters from more than 50 Acton and area people who offered support for Black.

Black, who has taught at Acton High School for about 23 years, pleaded guilty Thursday. The judge registered a conviction and remanded Black out of custody until December 22 for sentencing.

Smith offered the letters to the judge for purusal until then. Meanwhile a presentence report is being prepared.

According to Crown Attorney R. F. Chaloner, Black owned a farm on which he fed the cattle of other partners. Earlier this year a number of the cattle, belonging to Jack Arthur Stansbury, were discovered to be missing.

There was a contract, Smith said to the judge, however "it deviated in what was normal in the cattle business."

"There was obviously, from day one, a loss to Black which he did not see," said Smith.

In Crown evidence, which the defence agreed was substantially correct, Black sold about \$160,000 worth of cattle at auctions. Some \$60,000 would have been Black's legitimate share, said Chaloner.

A great deal of accounting remains between Stansbury and Black, according to Chaloner, who went on to say that there are three civil court actions on the books between the two men.

The court dealt with the case without taking restitution into consideration because, as the crown said, "it's so complicated."

The money from the auction, according to Smith, went right back into the farm operation.

The Ontario Provincial Police investigated from October 1978 until last January. Charges were laid in February.

One of the two Black farms, plus the equipment, has been sold. There have been difficulties selling the larger farm because of high bank interest rates.

"Black is, in effect with 20 years of investment, wiped out," Smith told the court.



Back at work

The new Halton Hills council got back to work Monday night after a few weeks break from regular meetings. Front row, left to right, Pam Sheldon (Ward Two), Mayor Peter Pomeroy and Marilyn Serjeantson (Ward Four). Back row, Mike Armstrong (Ward Four), Harry Levy (Ward Four), Walter Bieha (Ward

Three), George Maltby (Ward Two), Terry Grubbe (Ward One), Russ Miller (Ward Two), Roy Booth (Ward Three), John McDonald (Ward Three), Dave Whiting (Ward One) and Ross Knechtel (Ward One).

Photo by ANNE CURRIE

Judge raps public schools

Family Court Judge James Fuller levelled some criticisms at Halton's Board of Education, which were brushed aside by education director Em Lavender.

Judge Fuller, speaking to trustees during the board's inaugural meeting Thursday, urged them to improve the identification of learning disabilities.

Lavender agreed with the judge's call for such improvements, however, he stressed that they are not easy to make.

"I think we all agree we must improve our identification of learning disabilities," replied Lavender, "but that is like saying doctors need to cure cancer."

"As there is good will with the medical profession, I hope there is good will with the teaching profession," continued the education director.

Judge Fuller prefaced his comments by saying "I think it is fair to say all of us would agree all young citizens have the right to be educated to the maximum of their potential."

The judge expanded his view by using the example of a Burlington high school where it was reported that 25 per cent of the students were about two years behind in their reading abilities.

"It is my view, essentially, to identify these

disabilities earlier and correct them." "I've seen many of these young people who have potential for further education, but they leave without knowing why they are frustrated and we lose the benefit of a citizen who could have been more worthwhile."

The judge also indicated that he was happy with a return to a more structured form of education in Halton. He wondered, however, if the board can balance that structure, stability and consistency with the need to perform intelligent experiments.

"We make mistakes in offering them (students) too much freedom without responsibility," he said.

The judge said it is his feeling that in the '60s and '70s there was less structure, less consistency and less stability which resulted in a loss of respect for teachers.

"Why do I see (in court) practically no people from the separate school system or from private schools?"

"There are children, who in the '60s and '70s, who would have been in detention centres who are in public schools because we can't refuse them," replied Lavender.

Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation District Nine President Ron Ness agreed with the education director's comments. There were some disagreements with some of the assumptions which the judge made, indicated Ness.

One of the assumptions Ness mentioned in a later interview is that the students in the private and separate school systems are model citizens.



New Acton trustee Arlene Bruce took her place at the table round of Halton's Board of Education for the first time Thursday. It was the board's inaugural meeting. The previous representative for Acton, Betty Fisher, took her place as Georgetown's representative.

Consider special education class for new St. Joseph's

Halton Separate School Board's planning and property committee wants to have a special education classroom in the new St. Joseph's School opening in 1982.

New Halton Hills Trustee Irene McCauley, who sits on the committee which will plan the new

school, said the committee held its first meeting Monday night and decided to ask the board to include a special education classroom in the new kindergarten to grade eight facility.

McCauley said she plans to contact Halton Hills Mayor Peter Pomeroy to see if he can assist in speeding up municipal approval of rezoning of the school site on Mill St. West. The board's solicitor told the committee he took the rezoning request to the town a couple of months ago but council hasn't dealt with the matter yet.

The architect for the new school, M. J. Torseney, was advised by the committee to start working on the design of the new school. McCauley said surveyors are out at the site working this week and the architect is expected to come up with several designs. Because of the lay of the land the committee expects the new school will have to be bi-level, even if it turns out to be a modular building, McCauley noted.

inside

Sunday's Boar's Head dinner was a smashing success. Turn to page 5 for pictures and a story.

Acton Baptist minister Rev. Dan Sydney will be leaving town the end of this year. Details on page 7.

Three Rockwood area children are being treated for suspected rabies and tests on a dog haven't been completed. See page 6.



Music for all tastes

The Acton High School band and Acton Citizens' Band will combine forces Sunday. Dave Sale conducts the super orchestra at one of many rehearsals for the big night to present a Christmas season concert at the high school at 7.30 p.m. Here night.