

# The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

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## Must have large number at police open house

Looking ahead to 1981 it isn't hard to crystal ball gaze and conclude there will be an event the first month of the new year of paramount importance to this community.

Halton Regional Police are busy planning for an open house in this community for an as yet undetermined date at an as yet undetermined location.

However, it is certain the chief, deputy-chief, staff officer, district commander, crime prevention officer and 12 policemen assigned to cover Acton next year will be in town for four hours one day, two in the morning, two in the evening, to hear what Acton has to say about police service and what we'd like to see done.

The people of this town had better be out at that meeting in large numbers or forget about the police, or any other branch of Halton regional government for that matter, ever taking our comments and concerns seriously again.

A few weeks back when local businessman Lorne Doberthien and Chief James Harding were firing volleys at each other through letters published in this newspaper emotions were running pretty high.

Cooler heads are now prevailing, now is the time for both residents and police to listen to each others views and hopefully make concrete changes which will benefit all concerned.

After meeting with Doberthien and a few other residents and hearing the comments about the force's operation here from staff of the Free Press the chief has made a few changes.

First he has promised to stabilize the group of officers working in Acton, except in rare instances throughout 1981 the same 12 officers will be working here.

The officers will be urged to get to know the community, but at the same time the police hope residents will make an effort to get to know these men.

The chief has said if we can convince him we really want a police station open more than 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. five days a week he will go to bat with the region and police commission for the needed funds, despite the fact he views extended station hours as simply a comfort blanket. Harding allows it could be a very important comfort blanket, one which would go a long way towards building up community confidence in the police and thus result in more co-operation between the public and police in Acton.

Harding has pledged to hold an open house next month in an effort to not only hear our complaints and ideas for improving police service, but also so he and the top brass can get to know us too.

Repeatedly, ever since the chief and his senior officers quit being defensive about criticism from Acton, Harding has said he has to hear from not just a handful of Actonians, but a large cross-section of the community if there is to be any chance of them getting a handle on what Acton wants.

The chief, we believe, is quite sincere when he says he wants Acton's input.

He has set crime prevention rather than crime reaction as the long term goal of the force. Harding says he'd rather see his officers out preventing crime, preventing there being victims of crime, than chasing bad guys and locking them up.

This would seem to be a quite logical even enlightened, approach.

And we fully agree with Harding when he says this approach will never ever work if the police

don't have the cooperation of the public.

This isn't to say we think the police have done everything right during their five years in Acton and area. There have been loads of problems, many of the force's own making, sometimes simply because the people running the police didn't know what the people here wanted from them.

Complaints have been numerous over the years, particularly the first few years the regional police were here, before Acton became so disheartened with fighting the region and force for changes.

Of late far too often the remarks about the police, understandably have been just bars and jabs. Little of a constructive nature has been said.

Some will say if the police don't know what Acton wants and needs in the way of police service by now they never will.

However, what most forget is that the people running the police department now have been brought in by Harding, who has himself only been in the region for 18 months. The present police administration needs to hear from Acton.

The police have held out the olive branch of peace and made a few changes they are under the impression Acton wants.

They have even said Doberthien can be the medium to carry Acton's concerns to the force, though they'd like to hear from more individual residents.

Now the force has tossed the ball into our court.

They have invited the community to come and meet them in January and tell them their mistakes, our ideas for changes, our wishes, so they can tailor their service to the community's needs.

Doberthien, we believe, is correct when he says the things he has been saying represent the views of 90 per cent of residents.

However, is it fair to this individual to leave him to carry our message to the police almost singlehandedly?

We applaud his efforts and, yes, courage in coming forward, airing his views and having the guts to back it up with his name.

We think it would be a serious mistake on the community's part if the whole job is left to Doberthien.

He needs the support of dozens and dozens of residents, those who share his views and those who think the police are doing an excellent job, and we have no doubt there are those who feel that way.

Also it is hard to expect the police to be convinced of Acton's deep concern and the need for changes, development of a little police force of our own which is still part of the larger regional operation, if they heard from just a few people.

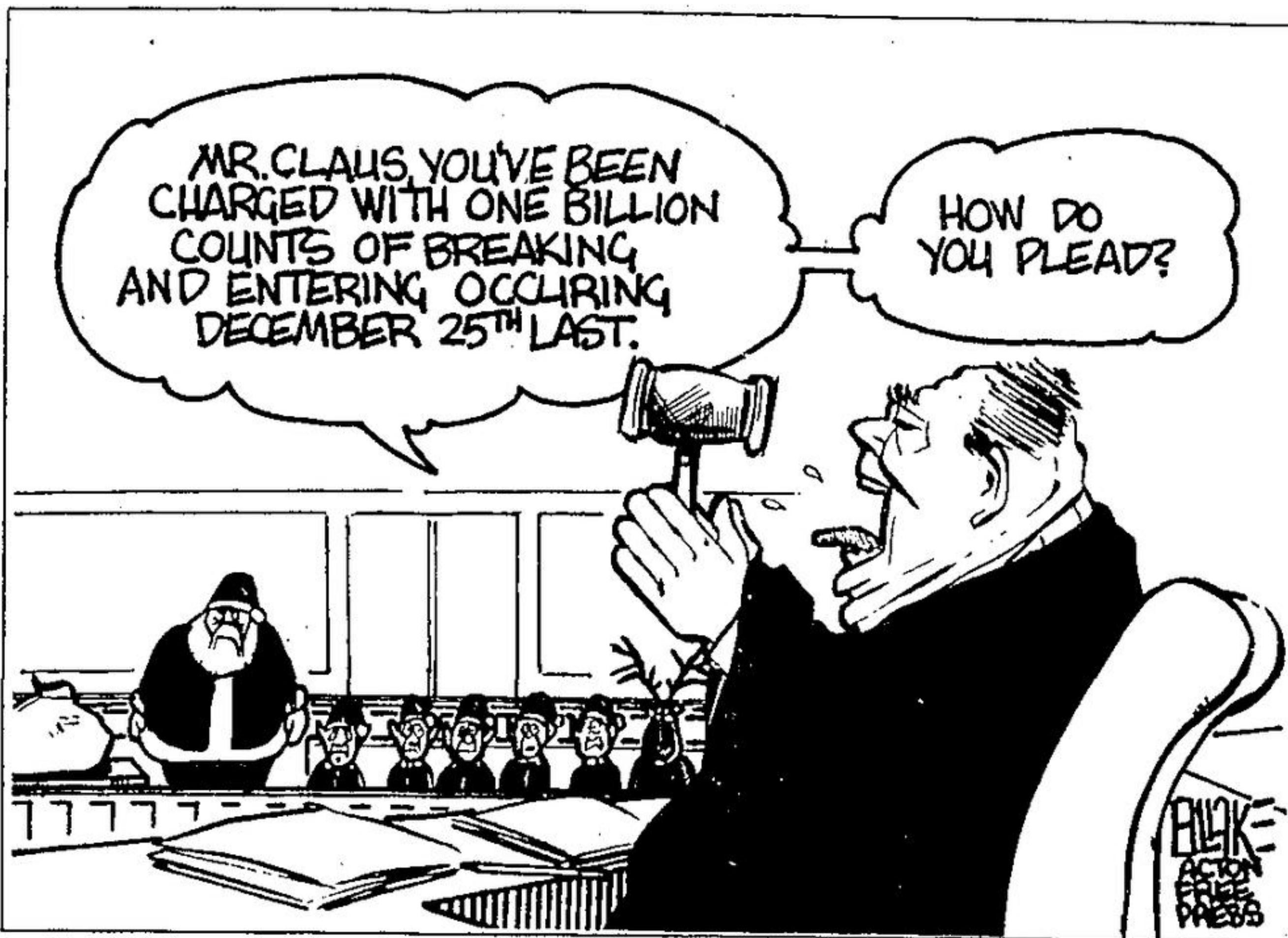
If attendance is as poor at the open house as it was at the recent meeting at police headquarters in Oakville then Acton had better be prepared to be ignored completely by the police and region for a long, long time.

We've got them listening to us now.

Now is the time to be heard. Don't be apathetic. Don't leave the whole job to Doberthien.

Making ourselves heard is the only way we'll get anything changed, the only possible way to ever have our concerns satisfied.

Let's hope everyone in Acton makes it their New Year's resolution to attend the police department's open house next month, regardless of what day it is held or what plans we may have made.



## On the Leavell

With Helen

The sun shone in Acton on Saturday when local gal Cathy McGrath was the Toronto Sun's Sunshine Girl that day.

Cathy, a former Miss Acton, was the second local girl to be in the daily photo feature. Victoria Lenizky was a Sunshine Girl almost two years ago, during her reign as Miss Acton. Victoria was modelling in Paris, France at the time the photo appeared in the paper.

Two Acton residents have hit it big with Air Canada. Jason Wegman, 8, won first place in the Christmas Card contest Air Canada was holding in their publication Horizons.

Jan Wegman had his picture and a small story in the publication Toronto Base Pulse (for inflight service personnel; stewards, stewardesses, sales etc.) for graduating from Wilfrid Laurier University with a Bachelor of Arts degree. While

continuing his education part-time, Jan was employed with the air line in route operations, supervisor FSD, in Toronto. Congratulations are extended to both.

Heard in my travels of lots of holiday visitors to the homefronts this holiday season. From western Canada came George and Anne Cook, nee Toth, who followed the western dream almost two years ago. They are now living in Whitecourt. George's sister, Betty Ferguson and husband Ken and sons, also from Whitecourt, were also home for the festive season. Other western visitors from Alberta were Sherry Trotter of St. Alberts and Sally Dick of Edmonton.

From Montreal were Ron and Trev Loutlet, nee Patrick. Kathy Hall, of Toronto, spent Christmas with her parents Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Given of Ballinacra.

One Actonian who wasn't home for Christmas was Cathy Coles, nee Papillon, who was in Guelph General Hospital after presenting hubby Tim with a brand new son, Bryan Joseph on December 23. A check with the hospital revealed that Cathy had the baby born closest to Christmas, from Acton. Sister Elizabeth now has some company at play time.

I was up in Collingwood visiting my family on the weekend and came upon who I thought was Acton's very own Elmer Dunn. The man said a friendly hello, and I replied by asking what in heck he was doing sitting in Towers (in a plaza built by the infamous Jerry Sprackman). Turned out it wasn't

Elmer after all, but a man I grew up living beside. I hadn't seen him in about seven years, since my parents moved to the other side of town. Anyway Elmer, you were in my thoughts.

I experienced my first Boxing Day Sale Saturday. My mother suggested we go to the new plaza and try to pick up some bargains. The store seemed empty enough at first, until we got to the Christmas decoration section. Then all heck broke loose.

Women (sorry men) were pushing and shoving, trying to get at the 50 per cent off decorations and wrapping paper. Christmas trees were stripped, paper pulled from its packaging, bulbs broken and icicles scattered on the floor, making it look like a disaster area.

I picked up a few items and tossed them in a cart to be shared between my Mom and I. Then my sister and her husband showed up, and started tossing their purchases in. Next thing I knew, I was attempting to push a rather heavy, clumsy cart up a very narrow, crowded aisle. I found myself bumping into people and reaching past them, but not to pick items off the shelves, but to get some air.

I admittedly bought a few things, but I think I spent about \$50 less than most people there. My aversion to crowds is only emphasized in situations like Saturday's. There are times when I would rather pay full price in an empty store, than save 50 per cent in a crowd. Call me frivolous.

## Back issues

10 years ago

Tuesday, December 29, 1970

At an O.M.B. hearing, a 70-foot height restriction was placed on apartments in Acton. Neighbors with property adjacent to the Beverly property objected. Apartments are planned for the site on Church St.

C.L. Rognvaldson was installed as Worshipful Master of Walker Lodge. Acton U.P.W.A. Midgents presented coach Jim James and manager Bill Knight with the best possible Christmas present, a 3-1 win over Brampton Legionaires. First year players Gary Fisher, Steve McInyre, Henry Toebes, Ken Hurren and David Lee showed tremendous hustle and goalie Steve Webster was almost unbeatable.

Rev. Peter Tucker, his wife Nancy and two children have left Rockwood United Church to live in Dundas.

Town men did a fine job of clearing the streets of the heavy snowfall during the Christmas season.

20 years ago

Thursday, December 29, 1960

Christmas dinner means a busy time for the ladies of Acton Baptist church and this year they catered again to members of the congregation.

The annual Sunday School entertainment of the Pentecostal church was under the direction of Ross Norton, senior superintendent. Following closing prayer by Rev. K. Reid, candy, nuts and oranges were distributed.

New Master of Walker Lodge is Stan Joe. Members of the United church Junior Choir sang carols over the public address system in the Y, to the pleasure of shoppers.

Halton M.P. Sandy Best won high praise from Prime Minister Diefenbaker for his speech in parliament.

Fireman Henry Bittorf averted possible tragedy when he spotted a fire at the Spratt home at Speyside.

50 years ago

Thursday, December 31, 1930

The Community Christmas Tree on Christmas Eve was a splendid community event. The frost played havoc with the band instruments and only a few marches could be played. Mr. R.J. Kerr made the announcements and told how the event was organized by the Ladies True Blues with the assistance of all. Mr. Robert Wallace brought in Santa Claus and helped him with a sleigh load of treats for over 600 children. The tree was supplied by Mr. Duncan McDougall.

In Esquusing there will be no election this year. All the old council have been re-elected: George Clave, Reeve; George Currie, Deputy-reeve; G. Appelbe, W. Wilson and I.L. Mullin councillors. Duncan Campbell was elected Nassagaweya reeve by acclamation.

Re-elected Rockwood village trustees for another year were Messrs. Fred Smith, J.A. Little and George H. Pearen.

75 years ago

Thursday, December 28, 1905

Since the decision of the County Council to locate the house of refuge at Georgetown some of the people of the county town who think everything the people pay for in the county should be located at Milton, have been feeling very sore.

Commence the New Year right by voting to banish the bar and the treating system. It is freely reported that \$1000 arrived in town during the week for the purpose of persuading the free and independent electors to vote against the Local Option bylaw on New Year's Day. Interested friends of the liquor traffic are arguing among themselves who shall have control of the boodle and the recipient has about decided to save all trouble by keeping the most of it in his own pocket.

The annual Christmas family gathering of the venerable Christopher Swackhamer was held as usual. Nearly all the members of this large family were present.

100 years ago

Thursday, December 30, 1830

Dr. McGarvin intends removing with his family to Georgetown where he will practice with Dr. Freeman of that village. The Dr. has been a citizen of Acton for about 25 years and has been connected with the village council almost since its incorporation.

Municipal nominations took place on Monday. Considerable interest was manifested, with three proposed for reeve and 12 for councillors. As Mr. John Speight and Mr. W.H. Storey withdrew, Mr. C.S. Smith was elected as reeve by acclamation. Speeches were made by all nominated who were present.

Council has decided to use pine for sidewalks hereafter as the sidewalks laid this year were much better than those previously laid. Oysters are in great demand these days.

## Looking back at '80

# Branch 197 burns mortgage

Taxpayers expected to dig deep into their pockets once the new 1980 levys were established after Halton Board of Education began the month by passing a record budget, over \$101 million. It was the first time the public education system's budget had hit the nine figure mark.

Later in the month Halton Hills brought down its modest, in comparison with the school board, budget and ratepayers felt the sting again.

With the region levy still to be established the average tax hike in Acton was guaranteed to be at least \$45.42, only \$5.42 going to Halton Hills and rest to the school board.

It was all smiles at Branch 197 the night all the men who had co-signed the mortgage for the new Legion a little more than five years earlier saw it turned to ashes.



It was all smiles at Acton Legion when branch 197 members torched the mortgage in March.

on Highway 7 east of Acton for several hours one afternoon hoping to catch a trio of robbers who had knocked over a bank in Alton in their net. The men were caught, but not around here.

The flu bug had a steel grip on much of Ontario, but while it showed up here school principals and local doctors said it wasn't hitting Acton too hard.

There were signs of the recession in Acton all winter, such as the March lay-off of 30 workers at the town's largest industry, Beardmore.

Eden Mills, Everton and Rockwood areas, but little flooding in Acton. Veteran cancer fund raiser Arlie White, who had put Acton on the map for its generosity, was chosen as the town's Citizen of the Year.

## March

# Branch 197 burns mortgage

Heller's confirmed they had been trying to buy the closed Disson plant, but nothing would be settled until April and allowed a deal was far from firm, in fact it was going down the drain.

Mayor Peter Pomeroy, who received a surprise \$2,900 pay raise from council at budget time decided to honor an election pledge not to raise his pay and donated half of his raise to the Acton Town Hall restoration.

Spring run off from a mild winter and heavy late March rains caused considerable flooding in

Council decided to scrap its store closing hour by-law and allow merchants to determine themselves when they will be open.