

The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

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Bovis, others too quiet about assessment reform

Where are all the people from Bovis and other parts of Acton who were screaming for property assessment reform just last spring?

Halton Hills councillors, who have been handling the issue of equalized assessment through Section 86 of the Assessment Act like the hot potato they perceive the issue to be for over a month now, are a little surprised they haven't heard from the many people who raised the issue loudly at a public meeting in Acton last June.

We suspect everyone is so quiet these days about assessment reform because ratepayers haven't received their 1981 tax bills yet, just interim levys.

It should surprise nobody if there are noisy howls of protest about high assessment from the new areas of Halton Hills this spring when they see their final bills. A crystal ball isn't needed to forecast a steep tax hike in the wake of the 1979 and 1980 regional deficits in several accounts.

More than one person has suggested taxpayers don't really understand the relationship between the mill rate and their assessment, and we think they're right.

Taxpayers do however clearly understand the bottom line on their tax bills, and residents in newer areas of town do easily understand they are paying in most cases substantially higher taxes for the same services as residents living in longer established neighborhoods.

Last year councillors rejected bringing in equalized assessment, or as most people call it, market value assessment.

However, luckily for them, they left a loop hole, a study, to crawl into the night of the council meeting at Acton High School when about 100 ratepayers turned out to hear what the town fathers had to say about a variety of issues. Easily the most popular topic, at least as far as residents were con-

cerned, was assessment reform. Councillors, on the other hand, didn't seem eager to discuss Section 86.

Councillors noted repeatedly they had set up a special committee comprised of both councillors and citizens to study Section 86.

That committee spent eight months studying the issue, reviewing reports and hearing from experts, including officials of towns which have opted for Section 86. They produced an impressive report, but no recommendations.

The facts were tossed into the political arena and since then councillors have spent most of their time finding ways to avoid making a decision, not discussing the facts, both pro and con.

Acton's three councillors have voiced positive views, several others seem to be sitting on the fence and the rest at council are deathly opposed to Section 86. It appears when and if there is ever a vote on the subject it will be close.

They've made it clear they'd like to hear the voice of the people.

It would be far preferable for taxpayers to voice their concerns now and not wait for their tax hikes, or worse yet wait until Section 86 is implemented here and then holler when they receive their 1982 bills.

If residents, such as those from Bovis were were so vocal last spring both at the public meeting and the drop-in, continue to remain silent, likely the councillors are just going to keep deferring the subject hoping someone forms a majority government after March 19 and eventually takes the problems out of their hands and implements some form of assessment reform.

Then the councillors will be able to point the finger of blame at Queen's Park when residents scream about their tax bills.

Councillor's drop-in dying

The ward one councillors', and now trustees', drop-in is dying a slow, painful death.

What was a year ago being hailed by politicians and citizens alike as a major step towards returning government to the people of Acton was recently revamped in a bid to breathe some new life into the drop-in.

The drop-in isn't dying because of lack of interest on the part of our councillors, but because of public apathy.

Maybe taxpayers are taking it for granted.

The councillors, frequently the mayor and even representatives of ward two, too, have spent far more Friday afternoons chatting, staring at the walls and waiting for citizens to drop by than they have listening to taxpayers' complaints and concerns.

One of the major complaints of regional government has been it took government away from Acton.

While the drop-in hasn't eliminated all the communication problems it has demonstrated that it is going a long way towards bringing government back to the people.

In a relaxed, informal setting taxpayers and councillors have exchanged views. The drop-in, when it has been in use, has afforded residents a chance to meet their three representatives and discuss problems like parking, speeding, mosquitoes etc. It has also been a great benefit to the

councillors. They heard taxpayers' views, were able to get situations clarified, and most important mobilize groups to make excellent presentations to the entire council, giving them a big hand in persuading the other 10 people on Halton Hills council to their thinking.

Communication between elected representatives and taxpayers is crucial, even if it doesn't always produce the results some are looking for.

But if residents don't start attending the drop-in again a crucial line of communication will likely be severed.

In an effort to broaden the drop-in's appeal our two school board trustees have been added. Realizing there may not be enough issues to keep the drop-in busy every Friday, the councillors and trustees have decided to trim it back to twice a month, the second and fourth Fridays. The hours remain the same, 1 to 3 p.m. and the location is still the Acton Community Services Centre in the YMCA building.

If interest perks up again then undoubtedly the drop-in will go back to every Friday.

But if councillors continue to have to stare at the walls for pretty much two hours every other Friday then it will be understandable why another good idea has died.

Taxpayers will have only themselves to blame if the drop-in centre drops dead.



On the Leavell

With Helen

Got a call from Laura Dittich the other day. She wanted me to be the bearer of good news for all the budding artists hiding in closets around town.

Laura feels there are many artists in town who don't have a place to work, and aren't expressing themselves enough at home. A few of these people for some time now have been meeting in various homes to work. Now, they are meeting in the Art Room at McKenzie-Smith Middle School, every Tuesday night from 7 to 10 p.m.

All budding artists are invited to join the group. There's no charge. It's a perfect opportunity to get out of the house, meet other artists, and express some of your potential.

Laura has more information. Call 853-0805.

Happy wedding anniversary to Stan and Linda Eckstein, of 10 Young St. They celebrate their eighth year of wedding bliss today (March 4).

Stan, better known as Stan the Postman says "who says eight years haven't been wonderful!"

I'll let you know in three years, Stan.

And here's a message for all young mothers, or would-be mothers from Marilyn Cox:

"If your family is awaiting the arrival of a new member, the Acton La Leche League meeting "Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby", may interest you. Informal discussion will centre on how to manage those first hectic weeks with emphasis on the entire family as well as timely tips for mother and baby. The meeting will be held on Monday at 8:00 p.m. at 79 Churchill Rd. S. For further information call Marilyn Cox 878-4803 or Karen Gregory 878-3884."

There's been a new addition to the Barton family. Gary and Lorene are just bubbling over with joy at the arrival of their adopted son Jesse, from New Brunswick. Six-year-old Jesse is deaf and is in the process of learning sign language from the Bartons who have another deaf son, Andrew. Jesse travels back and forth to the E.C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton with his brother, and his mother, who teaches there.

To open your home and hearts to an adoptive child is one of the most generous acts a family can do. But to knowingly and willingly take in a child with a handicap takes very special people, and the Bartons are just that.

Jesse arrived about a month ago and has settled right in to life in Acton and his new family.

Former Actonian Rosalyn Hall of Alberta, was home for a visit, with her new son, whose just six weeks old. Roz's husband Rod Edwards was unable to make the trip. Roz headed west about five years ago.

The Globe and Mail sure did blow it on the weekend. They wrote up a very nice story about Doodle's, that quaint little

restaurant in Rockwood owned by John and Maureen McLeod.

The story is sure to bring in the customers. Unfortunately, the story leads potential patrons directly to the railroad tracks across from Toth's garage.

In two places in the story, it mentions the restaurant is located at the north-west corner of Highways 7 and 25. Now, I've only been in Acton for seven years, but I'm pretty sure there's nothing at that corner but railroad tracks.

The story also mentioned Schneiders Sweet Factory "A few yards south of Doodles on Highway 25." It clocked Doodles as being "90 minutes drive west of downtown Toronto."

Besides those glaring errors, the story was an excellent one, written by Pam Hobbs.

I don't follow sports very much (I always pick the losing team), nor do I ever mention any achievements in this column, but the moral victory of the Acton Sabres cannot go unnoticed, even by me.

For the real hockey nuts, being put out of the playoffs is no victory. But to an optimist like myself, I think it was terrific they even made it to the playoffs. Let's face it, any team who can come from the basement spot of last year, to challenge the league leading team, should be congratulated, and honored. If that achievement wasn't enough the Sabres went right down to the wire, forcing the series to seven games.

Today, fifth place, tomorrow the championships!

Having an anniversary, special party, or a birthday? Give me a call at home after 5 p.m.—853-3224, or call the office, 853-2010 and leave a message with the news room. I look forward to hearing from you.

Back issues

10 years ago

Wednesday, March 3, 1971

Acton police detachment now has seven men. Cons. Steve Czerlau has been transferred here from Simcoe. Cons. Nick Farion is now back with the Acton detachment. The others are Corp. Ray Mason, Cons. Bruce McArthur, Bruce Kressler, Roy Wood and Paul Brown.

Terry Holmes earned \$5 first prize for a crest for Acton Snowmobile Club.

Strong objections from freshman councillor Dick Strong persuaded Eramosa council to delay signing the controversial \$1½ million Rockwood sewer and water project.

Acton Tanager veteran Harold Townsley wins the Cyril Swim trophy for leading scorer and Jack Marshall trophy for most valuable player.

Ten schools were involved in a variety program at Acton High School. This kind of program was suggested among changes for the Music Festival.

20 years ago

Thursday, March 2, 1961

Following complaints of water discoloration, Health Unit water samples were sent to Toronto, with word returning it was possible surface seepage was entering the Churchill Rd. well. Mayor Goy authorized the firefighters' public address system to notify residents to boil drinking water. A large amount of chlorine has now been added to the water and the system will then be flushed with clean water. Public notices were distributed door to door. House taps should be left on tonight for a short period. Citizens will be notified by sound truck when to stop boiling drinking water.

An organization chart was established for all town employees. They are clerk-administrator Jack McGeachie, assessor J. Ladouceur, assistant H. Perkins, office manager Joe Hurst, clerk Mrs. Pauline Preston, Typists Mrs. Lorna Clark, work superintendent Alf Dudy, foreman Al Kirkness, workmen Jack Lambert, Sam Tennant, I. Frank, W. Shepherd, S. Oakley.

50 years ago

Thursday, March 5, 1931

Acton council, the school board and the Board of Health all oppose a county health unit. The cost of \$20,000 or over to the county and the share of the municipalities would be prohibitive. The system was proposed to replace the present system of municipal health officers.

V. Alger won the nine pound chocolate bar in Wiles Confectionary window, for correctly guessing its weight.

A couple of believers in Chataqua were canvassing for guarantors in Limehouse this week. These Acton people hoped to interest out-of-town people in these splendid entertainments.

This week's paper features brief sketches of all the Acton players who went such a long way to Intermediate OHA honors, Bill Holloway, John Greer, Frank Gibbons, Russell Salmon, Joe Kentner, Lorne Walters, Clarence Kentner, Henry Arbie, Fred Kentner, Joe Woods, Gordon Huffman, Neil Gibbons, Fred Dawkins, Gordon Farlow, manager N. H. Garden and executive members Wm. Eccleshall, Carney Byrne, W.K. Graham, J.M. McDonald and L.B. Shorey.

75 years ago

Thursday, March 1, 1906

Messrs. J.M. Warren and Fred Plank, who are exploiting the proposed cheese factory for Acton, attended a meeting of the committee for the Rockwood cheese factory. They found the Rockwood factory is eminently satisfactory and in many cases an average of over \$50 per cow for the season was realized. John Ramsay of Eden Mills sent the surplus milk from his one village cow and showed cash receipts for the season of \$55.50.

A little lad, Master Winston Grace, was playing on Cororation Pond, when he fell into one of the open spaces where the icemen had been harvesting. Two of his companions ran away, but Master Melvin Williams succeeded in pulling him out. Mr. and Mrs. Grace that evening presented him with a beautiful silver watch and chain, as a mark of gratitude.

Those narrow tires are playing havoc with the new Church St. macadam.

100 years ago

Thursday, March 3, 1881

Roads all over the county are passable. Sleighting is tip top.

The annual meeting of Halton County Sabbath School Association was held in one Methodist Church Tuesday and Wednesday.

What about a new town hall? Let's keep the ball rolling.

Parties who do not send their children to school in the winter, when their services at home are not valuable, deserve censure.

Baked bean parties are the latest get up. Oakville town council finances are in a very bad state. A large portion of taxes have been allowed to remain uncollected. We are proud to be able to say that since the incorporation of Acton every cent of taxes levied have been collected, and paid over to the Treasurer.



These youngsters competed in the recent Robert Little School public speaking competition. Front, left to right Chris Lindsay, Heather Ormsby and Jane Dawkins. Back row, Ole Flisker, Tracy Flindall, Gemita Vasquez and Jill Brigg.



Speaking at St. Joseph's public speaking contest recently were front to back: Billinda Taras, grade six, Renata Luisetoo grade three, Cynthia Donston, grade four, Jill Whelan, grade five, Linda McGrath grade five, Monique Agnes, grade four, Brad O'Neill, grade seven, Pam Demontmorency, grade five. Missing is Victoria Rodques, grade eight, Shawn Taras grade eight and Stephanie Lampkin grade seven.