

The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

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Let the public test board's next budget

"What you see is what you need," is how a Halton Board of Education trustee described the \$115,646,671 spending estimates for the year. What he says may be so, however, how do taxpayers really know?

They don't. Smart money, though, says the record budget is padded.

That's not known for sure. But, and it's a big BUT, the proposed estimates represent a 12.49 per cent increase—ten per cent or so for inflation plus 2.47 per cent for new programs—over what was spent last year. That's reasonably tight assuming the previous budget was also one of the "what you see is what you need" type.

But it wasn't a squeaker last year. There was a \$1,381,594 surplus. In the private sector that's called net profit.

Granted there is some benefit to the public in producing puffy board budgets. Better some extra change in the till than be forced to borrow at cloud scrapping interest rates.

How are budgets written? Well, trustees and board administrators labor on a committee to bring one to the rest of the board by the March deadline. They do their work in private.

Comes budget night, trustees and staff unfold their revelation in something like two-and-a-half hours. In two-and-a-half episodes of Dallas television time they illustrate how one hundred and fifteen million, six hundred and forty six thousand, six hundred and seventy-one dollars are to be spent.

Once the budget is presented taxpayers have a couple of weeks to examine it and come up with questions. But it's doubtful if any informed questions will be forthcoming. After all, where does one begin with such a pile of

dollars? People are having difficulty with their house budgets, let alone the board's mega buck plan of spending.

Some other mechanism of public scrutiny is needed. Trustees do the best they can, however, with a nine-figure spending plan, no harm would be done in letting taxpayers help with the budget preparation. Why not test the budget and the reasons for its items?

The following are two approaches to public scrutiny which may have some success.

Number One. Let the press each year pick a budget item, say, instruction or education services or plant operation. Then in one public meeting go through that item from start to finish—line by line. Let the taxpayer, with trustees, get full answers from administration on just what is in category: supplies and services, or fees and contracts.

Approach Number Two. A qualified accountant might be useful in examining the budget. Better still, why does not some citizens' group or the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation or Halton Elementary Teachers' Association hire a budget wise person to challenge the budget next year? Why not consider the board's finance and business superintendent, Bruce Lindley? He is retiring this year. And he knows the budget's soft spots.

Administrators and trustees ought to welcome this additional public examination. It is not, after all, a threat to their authority.

What would this new public scrutiny accomplish? Perhaps it could trim some of the fat. Say one-half-of-one per cent. That amounts to half a tidy half million dollars.

E.E.



On the Leavell

With Helen

My suspicions were confirmed this week. The dogs on the Buckeye Beer commercial are local canines from Kortar Kennels.

The commercial shows a team of beautiful Siberian Huskies pulling a sled. Everytime I see the television ad I remarked on the resemblance to the Kortar dogs, but shirked it off on the basis that all dogs look alike.

However, the dogs' owner Carol Broadhurst recently let us know all about them. The ten Canadian Champion Siberian Huskies are indeed hers. I met some of these dogs while doing a feature on Mrs. Broadhurst and her kennel at R.R. 1, Campbellville some years ago. This was shortly after one of the champions was made a star in a magazine ad for a dog food, and on the bag of the same brand.

One of the lead dogs on the recent commercial, Champion Kortar's Kesu, won the Best of Breed award at the prestigious Metropolitan Kennel Club Dog Show in Toronto. As well, a 7-month-old pup "Kortar's Khaki Kolonel" made his debut in Best Puppy in Breed and Reserve Winners as well as first in the puppy class both days.

Congratulations on the recent wins and for the beer commercial. But please pardon me if I don't ask for an autograph.

Whoops, it doesn't happen very often, but when it does, I'm the first to admit it. I made a mistake in my column a few weeks ago.

I told everyone Miss Acton Fall Fair Lisa McGrath attended the Ontario Agricultural Societies' Association (or something like that) convention in Toronto

last month. Well, she didn't. She was sick in bed, as was first runner-up Gwyneth Gibb. Second runner-up Kym Lakin stood in for Lisa.

There's still time to make your pledges for the Rotary Skate-a-Thon this weekend. All area schools are participating. The kids are sponsored per lap. Proceeds raised are divided among the schools and the Rotary Club.

There are prizes galore for the youngsters taking part. Adults can skate too.

Spent the weekend at the Hotel Toronto attending the annual Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association (OWNA) convention, and got a chance to visit with a number of former Free Press staffers who have gone on to other papers.

Former sports editor Denis Gibbons, now news editor of the Burlington Post, was as usual the life of the party. I think what made Denis' weekend was finally meeting current Free Press sports writer Diana Weltmann. Denis has wanted to meet her since she wrote about him in her column.

Murray Scoyne, owner of the Ridgeway Dominion, is probably remembered in Acton for his reporting days with the Dills brothers.

Thursday hubby Gord was introduced to a former Dills linotype operator Bill Whitbread by localites Don Ryder and Hartley Coles. Bill is now editor at the Bolton Enterprise, one of our newest sister papers.

Other Acton faces at the convention were Mr. and Mrs. Don McDonald, Mr. and Mrs. David Dills, Mr. and Mrs. Hartley Coles, Laurie Cook (don't ask why), as well as Gord and I.

I have always been paranoid of heights, and staying two nights on the 28th floor was a bit unnerving. When we checked in, the first thing I did was locate the fire exit, and plan my escape route in case of fire. Luckily the weekend passed with no disasters, but a sight I saw in the lobby made me wonder how the building did not catch fire.

As Gord was checking out, I sat in a chair in the lobby. I noticed a newly lit cigarette in the ashtray. Thinking the owner would return shortly, I left it there.

By the time it had almost burned itself out, I realized the owner was not coming back. It is carelessness like this that kills. If you must smoke, please be responsible for what you light... and listen to Smokey the Bear's advice.

A special award for youth was announced at the convention. The Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year Awards Program is sponsored by the Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association and CP Air and is designed to honor the youths of Ontario.

The competition is open to both boys and girls, between the ages of six and 18 years and will run from mid-March 1981 to December 1, 1981.

To be eligible, competitors must have performed acts of physical heroism; overcome disabling physical or psychological handicaps; made a meaningful contribution to personal family well-being; or have been involved in some worthwhile community service endeavour.

Competitors will be nominated by those Ontario residents who are aware of the outstanding deeds or accomplishments performed by the youth of their community during the year. Nominations will be made through the 217 member papers of the O.W.N.A.

Nomination forms will be available in the future at all community newspaper offices, CP Air ticket sales outlets, and all elementary and secondary schools throughout the province.

Fifteen of the most outstanding nominees (which could include groups of two to an entire classroom), will be selected to receive the awards, consisting of a framed citation certificate outlining the individual's or group's accomplishment; a savings bond; a junior citizen of the year pin; and a family portrait with the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario John Aird, will be presented at next year's newspaper convention.

Have you or a friend been away for awhile, or had company? Maybe you know someone who has done something out of the ordinary.

Well let me know. Call me at 853-3224 after five or at the office 853-2010. Shy? Drop me a line instead.

Back issues

10 years ago

Wednesday, March 10, 1971

Every bowler's dream—a 450 game—was rolled by George "Shorty" Lowin at Acton Bowling Lanes. It's the second perfect game rolled there. The first was by Mrs. Frances Crooks in 1962. Proprietor Ken Hulford smelled a perfect game around the ninth frame.

Tomorrow 45 students and 17 adults leave Acton for the Mediterranean.

Acton council turned down a resolution to renovate the cells in the town hall for emergency overnight accommodation for travellers or youths who had been "kicked out of home." The cells are not used at present.

Harrietta Otterbein was the hit of the night at the Ma and Pa bonspiel. Prizes were given out by men's president Bob Drinkwater and ladies' president Mrs. W. Dumarsh.

20 years ago

Thursday, March 9, 1961

The \$1,500 mortgage on the scout hall went up in smoke. Scout group committee members watching with interest were Sid Newton, Frank Frouse, Bill Penleton, Gord McKeown, Jim Ledger and George Haggart. Recently the Rotary Club took over sponsorship.

A wacky high school play They Gave Him a Co-Ed filled the play school auditorium two nights. Mrs. E.G. Franklin was director. In the cast were Barry Kirkness, Paul McGeachie, Bill Henry, Bernice Wasowicz, Eva Hansen, Andrew Smith, Brian Sproston, Ricky Currie, Moira McKelvey, Gertrude Kuhn, Barbara Norton, Mary Beth Elliott, Beth Parsons, Andrew Tarrant, Janice Gardner and Carman Woodburn.

In this issue, Alf Long tells of his hunting trip in the African jungle.

Town workers spent a sleepless night Monday to keep the streets open.

50 years ago

Thursday, March 12, 1931

The euchre and dance in the town hall held by the Junior Chapter of the IOOE was attended by a large crowd. The Regent, Mrs. Jas. Adamson, welcomed special guests, the members of the hockey team.

The Busy Bee group of the Acton Women's Institute gave a concert in St. Alban's hall with Rev. Poole as chairman. Among those performing were Black's orchestra, Wilmer Davidson, William Hall, Jack Noble, Mona and John McGeachie, Pearl McEnery, Mrs. Poole, Mrs. A. Bishop, Rev. Bennie, Miss E. Hawthorne, Mrs. Wm. Evans, LaVerne Smith, Jean Evans, Beatrice Woods.

Acton curlers met with defeat and the Peter Smith trophy goes to Georgetown.

It has been recommended to County Council that officials' salaries be reduced.

All accounts for indigent patients will now be paid by the county rather than the municipality.

75 years ago

Thursday, March 8, 1906

The monthly meeting of Acton Women's Institute was held in the Council Chambers. The subject was Spring Sewing.

The promoters who are applying for a charter for an electric railway from Port Credit to Guelph, by way of Acton, are interviewing the Railway Committee this week.

Robert Campbell, Esquing, has sold his farm to our townsman John Elliott, Esq., for \$6000 and has purchased the Donald farm adjacent to Fairy Lake, from George A. Mann for \$5000.

There is no body of men in the country more generous to their fellow workmen in the time of accident or trouble than the employees of the tanneries. Last week, after pay day, Mr. F.B. Tyler, in behalf of fellow employee Robert Craig, who had his hand so badly lacerated, handed the unfortunate man a well filled purse to assist him and his family while he is off work. Mr. and Mrs. Craig appreciate this kind act very much.

100 years ago

Thursday, March 10, 1881

A musical and literary entertainment under the auspices of St. John's church, Rockwood, was held at the Town Hall, Crewsons Corners.

Council has limited the number of tavern licenses in Acton to three, with the fee \$75. The young men who enjoyed snowballing on the street on Sunday are a disgrace to the community. One of Mr. J.C. Hill's shop windows was smashed.

Tuesday evening was the cause of considerable excitement among the fair sex, the cause, as usual, being a marriage ceremony. The contracting parties were Mr. Wm. Scott and Miss Caroline Grinlinton. The bride and her three maids were fashionably attired in silks, satins, etc. The happy couple left for their new home in Toronto on the 9.30 p.m. train.

The harp of Erin

Catherine Graham, R.R. 1 Limehouse, once again shares her thoughts about the Emerald Isle with Free Press readers. St. Patrick's Day is next Tuesday, March 17.

Ireland is unique among the nations of the world in having the harp as her national emblem.

Who has not heard it and not thrilled to its strains?

The harp still retains a place in the world's great symphony orchestras, but the days of its greatest glory have passed. Today there are few performers, the only one I know of is W.B. Yeats' (the Irish writer) granddaughter.

The Irish missionaries after the time of St. Patrick carried the harp with them to different countries and Irish music became known and loved all over Europe.

The Irish missionary Maogal was appointed head of St. Gall's in Germany where the scribbling of "Sacred Music" became such a feature that they provided all Germany with copies of the "Gregorian Chant", beautifully illuminated with Celtic designs similar to those found in the "Book of Kells."

Dante, the famous Italian poet, left a written record to say the Irish missionaries introduced the harp to Italy.

The Irish harpists continued to develop the instrument until the Brian Boru harp came into existence. This is the oldest harp in Europe and can be seen at Trinity College in Dublin. It was a harp of the type used by Cathal O'Daly. He wrote the words and music of "Irelen Aruh" and lived in the 14th Century.

Prior to O'Daly's time songs were written in two strains. He introduced a third

strain effect in his songs and helped to make possible the work of the great European masters centuries later.

Most of the Irish airs would have been lost had it not been for the Harp Festival held in Belfast in 1792, the last of its kind held in Ireland.

Here ten harpists attended, some of them over 90 years old.

Edward Bunting, the famous musician, noted on paper the airs that these musicians played that gave Thomas Moore inspiration to write his famous melodies.

I will conclude with one of his famous melodies:

The harp that once through Tara's halls,
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls,
As if that soul were fled.

So sleeps the pride of former days,
Her glories thrill is o'er,
And hearts that once beat high with praise,
Now feel the pulse no more.

No more do chiefs and ladies bright,
The harp of Tara swells,
The chords alone that break the night,
Its tale of ruin tell.

And now since freedom seldom wakes,
The only throb she gives,
Is when some heart indignant breaks,
To show that still she lives.



Learning drawing at the Library's Kind's Art Group the last Saturday of each month are, left to right, Monique Bartlett, Sandy Gillespie and Lauri Gillespie.



The Story Time with Erica television program for children was brought to Acton's public library Saturday—much to the delight of children and parents. Erica Harris, whose program appears on cable TV and Toronto performer Jerry Brodey unleashed much music, laughter and general amusement for 45 minutes. A TV crew was on hand to tape the episode.



Bonnie Smith gives drawing lessons at the monthly meeting of the Kid's Art Group of Acton Library.

Our readers write

Belleghem misinterpreted

Dear Sirs:
It was Mark Twain, I believe, who said "Recent rumours concerning my death are greatly exaggerated." Will Rogers of course is reputed to have said "All I know is what I read in the papers."

It was with interest therefore that I read in several papers that I had "resigned" as President of the Halton-Burlington P.C. Association. To my knowledge there has only been one resignation and that person's reasons are his own business.

At the height of the recent controversy, while defending the Association Executive position in putting the letter of the law before political expediency (the propriety of which position has now been vindicated), I was asked by some reporters what I intended to do after the election.

I replied, in a probably somewhat frustrated state of perplexity, that upon completion of my term as president at the next annual meeting in the spring, it would be a great relief to let my critics
(Continued on page 5)