

# Miss Minnie Z. Bennett celebrates her 101st birthday at party today

Miss Minnie Z. Bennett, Miss Education in Acton, celebrated her 101st birthday today (Wednesday). A resident of Central Park Lodge nursing home in Kitchener she celebrated with a cake and party this afternoon with other residents of the seventh floor according to spokesperson Debbie Clemens. There were about 25 residents expected to attend. It was to be a quiet "affair."

Yesterday she was visited by a group of retired school teachers and a representative of the province was expected to drop by today with another plaque commemorating her long life. Staff wasn't aware of any other tributes being sent to Miss Bennett or of family, friends or former students planning a birthday visit as of press time. Local sources didn't know of anyone from Acton planning to visit either.

Miss Bennett was described as having good and bad days, her health hasn't changed much since she

celebrated her 100th birthday last year. Ms. Clemens said Miss Bennett's 100th year hasn't been too hard on her. In fact she looks very much as she did last year on August 5.

Miss Bennett has lived at the rest home for 13 years and is its oldest resident in that time. The closest people to her age are 96 and 98.

M.Z. Bennett, a former citizen of year, was one of the first women school principals in Halton and left an indelible mark on Acton's schools.

When the board of education opened a new public school in Acton in 1957 it was named after Miss Bennett as a lasting memorial to the dedicated teacher. She was citizen of the year in 1964.

Miss Bennett's career as an educator started in 1901, when Queen Victoria was on the throne, at S.S. 10 in Erin Township (Woodside School). She later graduated from the Toronto Normal School (Ryerson) and went on to teach at Clay Hill School for \$325

per year.

The reputation as an able teacher and a skilled disciplinarian, which was to mark Miss Bennett's career, soon spread as far away as Hornby. Trustees of that school invited her to instruct their 36 pupils in 1905.

Two years later Miss Bennett gave up forever having to teach alone. She was appointed to a graded school in Acton where she was able to enjoy the company of other teachers. One of her pupils was William R. Stewart, who became a deputy minister of education for the provincial government.

In 1913 the school board engaged Miss Bennett as principal of the public school, a post she would hold for 26 years.

Miss Bennett encouraged students to do their best. Her efforts bore fruit indeed. In 1919 the highest marks in the county for Entrance Examinations were earned by one of Miss Bennett's students.



One of Acton's best known and most beloved citizens, Miss. M.Z. Bennett is celebrating her 101st birthday today.

# The Acton Free Press



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Surf's up, and so is John. Bryan Creasey and John Ford found the waves at Fairy Lake just right for a little surfing. For more water fun see page 3.

Photo by DAVE DORKEN

## MP Jelinek starts petition legislate end postal strike

Halton MP Otto Jelinek has started a petition calling for the federal government to legislate inside postal workers back to work.

He is also urging his colleagues in other ridings across the country to start petitions amongst their constituents in the hopes of bringing enough pressure on the government to take some action to end the over a month old labor dispute which has shut down the post office.

Because of the mail strike, Jelinek has enlisted the aid of riding newspapers to publish his petition and after they are filled out return them to the newspaper office. The Free Press is co-operating. He will pick up Acton petitions on a regular basis at the Free Press.

He just started the petition in Oakville on Saturday and by Tuesday morning had collected over 4,000 signatures.

To be a legal petition presented to the House of Commons and federal cabinet people must print their name, sign the form and put down their address.

This postal strike has resulted in his offices in Halton and Ottawa receiving more calls and telegrams about the strike than any other issue during his political career.

Now he has started the petition and it is really "snowballing."

He hopes "hundreds and hundreds of thousands of signatures" can be collected across Canada to be presented to the Postmaster General Andre Goulette and the rest of the Liberal cabinet. He notes it can't be presented to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau because he is in Africa on vacation.

Calls and telegrams have been coming in "non-stop" since the start of the strike and in fact are increasing each week the strike continues. Jelinek says "proportionately" he has received as many calls and telegrams from Acton as from the rest of the riding.

### Yugoslav Centre

## Town plots legal action

Halton Hills is considering taking legal action against the newly opened Canadian-Yugoslav centre on Highway 25 south of Acton.

Noise from the Centre has neighboring residents at the end of their ropes with frustration and anger, and noise bylaw violation charges have already been laid by Halton Region Police. The matter was to be brought to court yesterday (Tuesday) but the results were not known at press time.

George Brockelsby, of the Third Line, a half mile from the centre, attended last night's council meeting to present a petition from 27 disturbed residents.

In his presentation to council, Brockelsby described what neighbors consider a nightmare every Sunday afternoon since June 14. Until then no one was even aware of the centre. He explained the public address system was turned on about 1.30 p.m. and continued into the early evening. Nothing was said because he and neighbors thought it was a one day picnic.

The next week, the same problem and noise arose. By July 5, the noise was loud enough to call police, Brockelsby said. Before the day was out the police had to visit the site three times, and still the noise persisted, he claimed. The public address system has been on as late as 9 p.m., Cathy Brockelsby says.

According to Mr. Brockelsby the police have been called every Sunday since then, except for one week when the weather was poor. Residents in the area for 30 years are just as upset as he and his wife, who just moved to the area three months ago.

Brockelsby pointed out on July 24, the president of the centre visited his home and asked the neighbors to compromise. Brockelsby said he pointed out the

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### inside

Acton's first daycare centre will open next month. More on page B2.

Police had to disperse a large crowd from in front of the taxi stand over the weekend. Turn to page 2.

Eden House is a happy place to live. Details on page 7.

He is particularly concerned about the strike's impact on small businesses which are "dropping like flies" right across Canada, including in Halton riding.

Jelinek isn't sure how much impact the strike is having on Acton firms, though he did receive a telegram of concern from Standardbred, a horse magazine produced in Acton where staff was laid off.

His petition calls for the immediate recall of Parliament to legislate the Canadian Union of Postal Workers back on the job.

Remember, bring your petitions to the Free Press office on Willow St. North, during business hours or put through the mail slot off hours.

I the undersigned hereby petition the Government of Canada to recall Parliament forthwith for the purpose of the legislating the Canadian Union of Postal Workers back to work in order that full postal service may be restored.

NAME (print) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

### Tracing our leather heritage

## Fascinating Acton history make fine walking tour

There should be about 30 fascinating stops on the Leathertown historical walking tour when it is developed, the three students researching Acton's history, particularly our leather heritage, have concluded.

To most long-time residents the reams of historical tid-bits, tales and material Anne Lindsay, Laurel Benville and Elizabeth Morrison have gathered in two months of research isn't really news.

But, to the few newer residents made privy to the information gathered so far through their involvement with the Leathertown committee Acton's history has proved fascinating.

The girls note Chip Petrillo and a few others are "eager" to quiz them about what they've learned on an almost daily basis and are "amazed" by range and depth of Acton's history.

This fascination by those who aren't as familiar with Acton bodes well for the success of the future walking tour and eventually a museum.

Our heritage should prove to be just as interesting to the thousands of tourists the Leathertown Committee hopes to attract to Acton in the years ahead after they have some attractions besides the olde Hide House to lure them here.

"If a person is interested in historical sites and facts then they'll enjoy Acton and the walking tour," Miss Lindsay speculates.

But, she thinks Acton will really have to do a job publicizing "what you have here."

They hope their final report, which they'll begin compiling shortly, won't wind up gathering dust on some shelf in town.

However, they don't really expect this to happen. The small but energetic Leathertown Com-



Elizabeth Morrison has found lots of history in the bound copies of the Free Press.

mittee will carry through on the work the girls have started. "Chip won't let it die," they declare confidently.

And they facts they've uncovered are fascinating.

Here's just a sample:

"In its early days Acton council used to appoint residents to the positions of Pathfinders. It was these residents' civic responsibility to keep the streets clear of thistles and six potholes. If they didn't carry out their duties they'd be fined.

"The semi-detached homes on Bower Ave. will be 100 years old in 1982. These homes were known as the syndicate homes because they were built by a syndicate of local businessmen trying to provide cheap housing in town.

"Acton area was once renowned for, of all things, turnips. Apparently early farmers grew excellent turnips and extraordinarily huge amounts were shipped off to the States on the Grand Trunk Railway.

"There have been about 15 different firms in Acton at one time or another involved in the leather industry.

"Acton's first school was at the corner of Main and River and there was no playground so children used to play on the street.

"When River St. was opened the course of the creek was changed forever, but only slightly.

"At least one Acton historian disputes the following facts, although the researchers have heard it from a number of sources. In

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Laurel Benville is busy these days making sketches of Acton and Leathertown landmarks for tour displays.



Dr. Bill Gregg is shown here with his fully restored Tiger Moth biplane. When he feels the need to get away from his RR 2, Rockwood farm he just takes off into the wild blue yonder.

## When Bill takes off, he really takes off

Really getting away from it all. When Dr. Bill Gregg wants to escape the long hours of work on his RR2 Rockwood farm, he just revs up the motor and takes off.

But when Dr. Gregg takes off, it isn't down the road but up into the blue in a rare, and fully restored DeHavilland Tiger Moth biplane.

Dr. Gregg bought the Tiger Moth, one of the very last built, and had it restored to flying condition by expert aircraft refurbisher Wat Martin who incidentally, restored the Moth once used by bush pilot Max Ward, now the head of Wardair.

The aircraft was purchased as a form of side exhibit to complement Dr. Gregg's unique Canadian Military Historical Society museum which features, perhaps, Canada's finest collection of Second World War trucks, armored cars, and light tracked vehicles.

And when Dr. Gregg straps on his goggles and turns over the diminutive two-blade wooden propeller of the Gypsy engine, anyone lucky enough to come along for a ride begins to understand

why there was so much fascination with flight prior to the present age of jet propulsion.

Off the short grass landing strip on Dr. Gregg's property at a stately 60 mph, a Tiger Moth does not so much shoot into the sky as waft upwards.

All the vibrations and the sensation of moving flaps and a busy, little four-cylinder motor come literally through the "seat of the pants."

The ground is never more than a few hundred feet away.

Even if the engine should develop a malfunction, there is the feeling the Tiger Moth would just glide slowly back to earth like a butterfly.

Another sensation is that of the pilot being in full control at all times instead of the closed door at the far end of first class.

Imagine, instead of just spending a bright summer day sitting around home, having the ability to hop in your own aircraft and as Dr. Gregg says "just take off and fly around."

What a way to go!