

# Leathertown proposal is dropped

The Leathertown Association has dropped its proposal to buy the town hall from the municipality.

The Leathertown proposal was discussed at length at the new association's founding meeting Thursday night. Actario representative Ted Tyler was in attendance as well as another lottery organizer and Mayor Peter Pomeroy and councillors Ross Knechtel, Dave Whiting and Terry Grubbe. Unfortunately nobody was on hand from the Restoration Committee.

The discussion involved just about everyone in attendance and people agreed at the end that while little was settled the exchange of views was worthwhile. Nearly 20 people attended the meeting at which a number of Leathertown plans besides the town hall were discussed.

Leathertown chairman Chip Petrillo noted Leathertown originally wanted to wait until the town hall feasibility and structural analysis study was completed before announcing its plan, but was urged by town officials to move up its timetable and make a presentation of its proposal before the study goes ahead.

He explained Leathertown is concerned about the study coming back at half a million dollars for restoration and the town hall being torn down. The Leathertown plan would be for an incorporated Leathertown Association (this hasn't been done yet but a lawyer has begun the work) to buy the town hall for \$1 million from Halton Hills, skip trying to secure Wintario money, put together the municipal, Actario and Restoration Committee funds, apparently in excess of \$80,000, and start repairing the building right away.

Leathertown was prepared to present its proposal to councillors last night (Tuesday), but not proceed further until it had the complete backing of Actario and the Restoration Committee. Restoration Committee head George Elliott has told both Actario and Leathertown organizers that while he supports the concept of some community body taking over the town hall from the municipality he wants the \$1,000 consultant's study completed and for the town to find out if Wintario money can go towards the town hall.

Petrillo said he was sure the town hall could be restored for a lot less money than it will cost government to do the job. He also suggested the building could be rented to private enterprise, he knew of someone who was interested in renting half of the first floor, or even selling the building some years down the road but with a provision the exterior couldn't be changed.

Tyler said he appreciated Petrillo's enthusiasm and agreed with Leathertown's view that another study is a waste of time and money. He said he and others are "sick" of studies, but Actario people only supported the Leathertown plan to a point.

Somewhere along the line people have lost track of the goal, Tyler said, which was to save the town hall and find the money for restoration and the aim was switched to finding restoration dollars and then saving the town hall. He knew of no study which said the town hall isn't structurally sound and every time money

was sought from Queen's Park it cost money for studies. The whole five year cost of restoration has escalated, Tyler added, and government just keeps dangling grant "carrots."

Local contractors could be brought in to look at the building and hired to handle various phases of saving the building; such as detergent washing the exterior for not sandblasting, replacing poor bricks, putting in new glass etc, at much less than it will cost the municipality to do the job.

Leathertown has called in a contractor to look over the building and compile a report quickly on the structure for a little over \$300, Actario has also sought contractor's estimates. Leathertown will proceed and obtain a structural study.

Tyler emphasized the town hall can't ever be sold and if it was rented stores or restaurants wouldn't be acceptable, maybe lawyers offices might be suitable.

Pomeroy said the town isn't sure it can legally give any community group its \$40,000 town hall funds and suggested fixing the town hall so it

is safe and meets current building standards will cost much, much more than \$80,000. He added Wintario funds might still be secured, though none of the councillors would say how strong the prospects of Wintario funds were.

Acton has council support on the town hall he assured, the easiest thing to do would have been to tear the building down, but council feels the town hall, despite the fact there isn't complete community support for restoration, is important to Acton's community "fabric." He said a totally unbiased study of the structural soundness of the building is needed.

Don Dawkins, who supervised renovation of the old Heller's plant into the Hide House warned the town hall doesn't involve renovations, but bringing the building up to 1975 building standards. This involves a lot more than simply determining the building is structurally sound.

Pomeroy asked what people thought of not using the interior of the town hall but simply preserving it as an unused historical building.

Tyler said he thought the building could be restored for community use as meeting rooms, public washrooms etc. Dawkins countered the building could wind up being very, very expensive washrooms. The beams might be sound, but the building had to be made safe if it was going to be used by the public, Pomeroy added.

The town hall has become like a snowball going down hill, costing more and more all the time, and studied and studied to the point where it's costing money to have a chance at grants which may not materialize.

Knechtel said he feared that faced with two choices, the study of community acquisition, councillors outside Acton might vote just to tear the town hall down. He agreed the study might be a waste of money, but it had to be done to meet provincial requirements. He said he thought Actario, Leathertown and the Restoration Committee

could get together with a joint proposal for community ownership because he viewed the "nib" of contention as being if Wintario funds should be sought.

The study could be completed, answering cost questions, and then a decision made about Wintario funds and the Leathertown plan afterwards, Pomeroy said. He invited all three groups to get involved with the consultants' study, going with them for the structural review.

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## Co-op Nursery finds new home at MZB

Acton Co-operative Nursery has found a new home.

Organizers of the nursery are currently in the middle of moving their facilities from Knox Presbyterian Church to an empty classroom in M.Z. Bennett School. They should be completely moved in by November 2.

The nursery had been planning to move to the Curling Club when a room was made available, but when the space at the school came open they took it.

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Gordon and Jean Johnston celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on Saturday.

## 50 years wed

Fifty years of marriage were celebrated Saturday by Gordon and Jean Johnston, R.R. 3, Acton. The Johnstons were married October 10, 1931 at the Knox Presbyterian Manse, by Rev. H. Bennie. They spent the first 10 or so years of their marriage in Hamilton before moving back to the Acton area. Fifteen years ago the couple built their present home.

Mr. Johnston is well known in the area for his mechanical work at Thompson Motors and later L and L Ford. He was also a farmer. In his spare time he enjoyed hunting and gunsmithing, although he has since abandoned this hobby. An anniversary tea was held at their home, catered to by the Green-

ock Women's Institute. Friends and relatives assisted.

About 140 attended the tea Saturday afternoon and evening, with the farthest coming from Neepawa, Manitoba, and North Carolina.

Guests admired an anniversary cake made by Mrs. C. Gough, and decorated by Mrs. G. Young. Mrs. Johnston's sister, Flora Bruce, greeted people at the door and was in charge of the guest book.

Six nieces of the Johnstons served the guests. They were Shirley Wilson, Lynda Patenaude, Lorna Bell, Betty Phillips, Leslie Phillips, and Cathy Johnston. Pouring tea were Mrs. Bessie Vincent, Mrs. J. Van Loon, Mrs. C. Lodger, Mrs. Elmore Johnston and Mrs. Charles Gough.

## Legion happenings

By Bill Cook

What a weekend! It is to be hoped everyone enjoyed Thanksgiving weekend and that great weather.

A newsletter will be going out this week with the annual Beef Draw tickets enclosed. Let's see 100 per cent participation in this annual event to raise monies for the Minor Hockey Association.

Hockey Pool winners for October 10; first goal Henry Cripps and Gus Jeffrey; last goal, Al Hall and Alex Wilson.

Sick list includes Del Jordan, Fred Wright, M. Mullen, Ed Ryder and Lloyd Cutting.

The Dart League has started with a full quota. The Crib League starts October 15 (tomorrow). Those interested in playing should sign the list at the branch or call D. Fritzell at 853-0813.

Start making your costume now for the Halloween Dance, October 31.

Remembrance Day Parade and Dinner will be held November 8 so plan to parade.

If you or your group have any news or information of interest to the membership or the branch please drop off at the branch, attention Bill Cook or call 853-2010 during business hours.

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