

Profiles

with Jennifer Barr



Did you gain much weight this Christmas? Is one of your New Year's resolutions to stick to your diet and lose those extra pounds once and for all? You and several million other overfed Canadians!

One woman who has not only kept her resolution but managed to stick to her diet and lose 65 pounds is Reta Rowsell of Vimy Street, Acton.

Reta, a tall (5'8") well-built blond has lived in Acton since she was a grade 7 student in Speyside. She was a Miss Acton Fall Fair candidate in 1965.

However, like a great many of us, when Reta married Noah Rowsell and gave birth to her daughter Bernadette, now 11, Reta found her weight creeping up.

"I always had a weight problem but I was always healthy," Reta comments adding "I was a great junk eater - bread, chips, popcorn."

She gradually found clothes hard to buy and had to look for larger sizes. By the time she was a size 24½, nothing seemed to fit.

"Once we went to a wholesale place in Toronto and I had a ball trying on size 50's - nothing was ever big before," she chuckles.

Cheerful and good fun, Reta was quite happy with herself until she saw some pictures taken at a goodbye party in the composing department of the Acton Free Press where she works.

"I didn't realize how big I was until I saw those pictures" she groans. She then weighed 230 lbs.

The pictures were taken just before Fall Fair weekend, 1980 - a weekend of partying and good

food for Reta and her family. But Reta had made a resolution to start losing weight and nothing would deter her. Fall Fair or no Fall Fair, Reta stuck to her diet and the pounds started to come off.

Cutting out her downfall foods, Reta stopped eating bread, potatoes and all fattening foods.

For breakfast she ate an egg and melba toast. Lunch was usually salmon and salad. Supper consisted of the regular meat she cooked for the family plus all vegetables except potatoes. Evening snacks consisted of an orange or an apple. Before each meal Reta drank a small (6 ounce) glass of grapefruit juice. Not only are grapefruits full of vitamins, but they contain a natural diuretic according to many doctor's diet books. Reta's doctor also recommended she take a multi-vitamin tablet daily.

Slowly the pounds peeled off, never more than five a week and often less. Sometimes she hit a plateau and lost nothing for a week or two but Reta didn't give up.

"I was determined" she states, "besides the girls at work would never forgive me if I gained."

She found the encouragement from her co-workers invaluable and weighed weekly at her sister-in-law Dolores Rowsell's house until she acquired her own scale.

By Christmas last year, Reta had lost 30 pounds and had fun choosing new party clothes, always delighted when a smaller size actually fit.

"I didn't lose any weight over Christmas, but I didn't gain" she smiles proudly.

A slimmer body and more determination kept Reta losing into 1981. She and Noah took up cross-country skiing. Reta walked to work every day and started doing situps, callisthenics and dancersize exercises at night.

By spring her new Christmas slacks had been taken in three times. Friends with whom she camps in Thornbury every spring and summer didn't recognize the new Reta, now down to a size 16.

By summer Reta weighed 165 pounds and looked not only slim and elegant, but considerably younger than she had the year before.

She had no trouble with slack skin and credits the exercise, grapefruit juice and slow weight loss for her healthy condition.

"When I go to parties now I never sit down - I love to dance and show off the new me," she chuckles.

The best reaction, Reta says, comes from her husband Noah. Although he was never critical when she was big, Reta loves his pride in her now.

"How do you like my new girlfriend," he says with justifiable delight.

Losing 65 pounds hasn't been easy for Reta. She's a big meat eater and didn't take any special pains to cook her own meat a different way from her family's. She was haunted by visions of smoked meat sandwiches. However, her weight loss rewards meant more to her than a momentary taste sensation.

Congratulations, Reta. Happy New Year to all, especially those of us who will be living on melba toast and salmon after January 2.



Reta Rowsell

News highlights of 1981

January

Responding to community concerns Halton Regional Police began the year by naming the 12 policemen who will work in Acton during 1981 as well as announcing plans for an open house to improve relations between the force and public for early in February.

Over 200 residents went to Halton Board of Education and successfully persuaded trustees not to demote and dismiss Acton High School teacher Keith Black. Board administrators recommended action be taken against Black who was convicted of theft over \$200 in December and given a suspended sentence. Black supporters maintained the teacher had already paid a stiff penalty for his offence and that his conviction had nothing to do with his ability to teach.

Robert Mitchell was found not guilty by reason of insanity and remanded to the provincial mental health facility in Pentangushene following his trial for the murder of former Acton OPP Officer Duncan McAleese who was killed in early 1980 in Delhi.

Acton's independent Red Cross Branch was officially born in January.

Halton Hills councillors voted themselves a \$590 wage hike for 1981, while the mayor received a \$1,500 wage boost.

A small group of Acton parents launched a protest over Halton Board of Education's decision to change the birthdate deadline for starting kindergarten.

Acton's councillors began lobbying in January to persuade colleagues to back property tax reform through Section 86.

Local veterinarians issued a warning that parvo virus had cropped up in Acton again and had killed some dogs. The disease had been thought to be just a hot weather affliction.

Operators of the olde Hide House announced plans to open a restaurant in the growing retail store during 1981.

Halton Hills council was asked to examine stiff swimming safety regulations at Waterfalls Park in Limehouse after receiving the verdict of a coroner's inquest into the sixth drowning at the park since 1967. The inquest into the summer of 1980 drowning of a Toronto resident was held in November.

Plans were unveiled for a new IGA store and six other shops at a plaza to be built on the site of the fire destroyed Dominion Hotel.

Acton Chamber of Commerce announced a major drive for 1981 to promote Acton as Leathertown.



Acton Red Cross president Henry Kroes accepts the new independent organization's charter at the inaugural meeting in January.



Chief James Harding greets Lorne Doberthien at the police open house in Acton in February. The police held the open house in response to complaints from Doberthien and other citizens about the force.

February

The Halton Regional Police open house for Acton residents to get to know the force was a huge success with over 250 Actonians attending.

The new Leathertown Committee aiming to make Acton a tourist attraction approved a logo as well as beginning to make plans to develop a walking history tour of the community.

A second farmer in Halton Hills was convicted in February for growing asparagus without an asparagus marketing board licence.

Halton Separate School Board announced Sean Briggs wouldn't be back at St. Joseph's School next school year because he was being transferred to Oakville.

Armed hitch hikers stole cash and a Guelph man's car just outside of Acton.

Acton's not growing, in fact figures released by the region showed the town's population declined by four people in 1980.

Beardmore and the Ontario Ministry of Environment were reviewing a preliminary report in February

which showed its disposal site was one of 11 Ontario sites with potential waste runoff problems.

Three men were committed to trial for the second degree murder of a man in connection with the Dominion Hotel Fire in August 1979. No date was set for the Supreme Court trial.

Julian Reed, Fran Baines and Chris Cutler were picked to carry the banners of the Liberals, Conservatives and NDP respectively in the March provincial election.

Lady luck smiled on 10 Beardmore workers who shared a \$100,000 prize in Wintario.

Despite parent protests Halton Board of Education decided it must comply with provincial kindergarten starting age regulations beginning next year. This meant as many as 500 children, including 17 in Acton, wouldn't be able to start school next year as expected.

Former resident Cosimo Mercuri was fined \$500 and given a year's probation for firing two "warning" shots at a truck in 1979 with a rifle.

March

Liberal Julian Reed won his third term in March as Halton-Burlington MPP in the provincial election.

Beardmore began taking steps to solve chemical waste runoff problems at its disposal site.

With work on the region's 1981 budget nearing completion Acton Councillor Dave Whiting warned the average Acton homeowner can expect to pay about \$35 more this year in taxes to support the senior level of local government.

The president of the Bank of Nova Scotia came to town to persuade the Trinity United Church board to reconsider its decision to switch banks because of Scotia Bank's loans to South African government. Following a congregation meeting the Church moved its accounts.

Halton Hills council approved a rezoning for a small piece of property where the new IGA plaza will be built downtown.

Acton BIA announced plans to bring a circus to town in May if a suitable site could be found.

Police were searching for a young Acton High School couple who vanished after a week they were found safe and sound in western Canada.

Halton Separate School Board unveiled tentative design plans for the new St. Joseph's School which were forwarded to Queen's Park for approval.

A 1981 budget of nearly \$116 million was approved by Halton Board of Education.

Halton Hills watered down swimming safety equipment regulations for Waterfalls Park and other area recreation centres after hearing protests from park owners over costs.

Acton Rotary Club announced it was for the first time sending a student, Denise Dilbey overseas. The club also hosted an exchange student from Australia, Jenny Nunan this year.

Acton Legion, Branch 197, celebrated its Golden Anniversary in 1981 and kicked off the festivities with a gala dinner in March.

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Julian Reed won his third term in the Legislature by defeating Fran Baines and Chris Cutler in the March provincial election.



Rotary Club sent Denise Dilbey to Japan this year.



Kevin Fabian received a Halton Safety Council award for pulling a friend out of partially frozen Fairy Lake in 1980.