

# The Acton Free Press

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## Acton councillors come out on short end of stick

1981 will be a year Acton's three councillors, Dave Whiting, Ross Knechtel and Terry Grubbe won't soon forget.

It might be best described as so close, yet so far.

To be sure there were minor triumphs around the council table for all three on dozens of issues and problems brought to their attention by constituents.

But on the two issues they battled longest and hardest to see passed they came out on the short end, a very short end, of the stick.

Those two issues were, of course, property tax reform through Section 86 of the provincial Assessment Act and municipal restoration of the town hall.

But, they should take solace in the fact that while they began on both fronts as voices crying in the wilderness they wound up being able to persuade three of their colleagues from other wards over to their points of view.

After Knechtel and his investigation committee came in with a neutral report on Section 86 the ward one trio began lobbying for support for tax reform through Section 86. During a span of a few months, while council delayed the vote repeatedly, they campaigned for their view. When the vote finally came their motion lost on a tie vote, six to six. Esquesing's Pam Sheldon was absent, though she indicated later she would have been opposed.

It was the same result on the town hall. The Acton councillors lost by a single vote, 7-6, though they had convinced two Georgetown councillors and the mayor to back their position.

In neither case was their stand easy to take, or universally popular in Acton.

They had to vote their gut feeling, their personal view, their conscience. There were many citizens for and against Section 86 and the same was true of the town hall. On both issues theirs were persuasive, yet conflicting, arguments from their constituents.

They could hardly be expected to simply parrot the community view because there was no consensus. They were forced to weigh the pros and cons and make their own decisions, something we expect of our elected officials.

So, while they were undoubtedly disappointed by the outcome of both battles they can take comfort from the fact they learned something and proved something.

Acton will never be able to exert its will at council by force of numbers.

But the councillors did discover that with effective well prepared presentations at council, and laborious behind the scenes lobbying with their colleagues, Acton's influence can be felt.

While they won't get another chance at the town hall issue, the Section 86 cause will live another day, maybe even this year, and maybe that time around they'll prevail.



## Back issues 10 years ago

**December 29, 1971**

A spectacular two car crash Christmas eve on 7 Highway at Crewsons Corners resulted in an estimated \$3800 damage and sent 10 persons to a Guelph hospital. Nine were treated for minor injuries, one child was admitted to intensive care and is expected to be released from hospital today (Wednesday).

Deputy-Reeve Pat McKenzie thinks Acton Council should make a New Years resolution to conduct their meetings on a more orderly fashion. Chairman for the committee of the whole session of this year's final regular meeting, the deputy-revee suggests meetings could be improved if councillors took more care to direct their remarks to the chairman. He also mentioned the possibility of having councillors stand whenever they wished to speak. Speakers always stand at county council meetings. Veteran councillor Jack Greer saw only one disadvantage to McKenzie's suggestion. "Peter might get flat feet," he chuckled in obvious reference to Councillor Marks who usually doesn't hesitate to speak up.

### 20 years ago

**December 28, 1961**

A Toronto man learned just how accurate a woman's intuition can be. When Toronto resident John Jong used a false name and gave a Rockwood address while returning goods for a cash refund at Simpson-Sears office in Acton, store manager Miss Jessie Coles became suspicious. The goods were not purchased from the Simpson's Sears company. She trailed the man to his car, took down his license number then notified police. After an investigation Jong was arrested at his home and lodged in Milton jail. He was later released on \$50 bail.

Mrs. H. Lasby was \$60 richer when her name was drawn from a large drum during the final merchant's "Free Living" draw at the post office. Mrs. Lasby received vouchers redeemable at participating merchants stores to a value of \$60. She was presented with her prize by merchant Paul Nielsen.

### 50 years ago

**December 24, 1931**

Just before six o'clock the fire alarm called the Acton Brigade to a fire that had gotten under way in the attic at the Rectory of St. Joseph's Church on John Street. The blaze had made considerable headway before being discovered by Miss Mulholland who is housekeeper at the Rectory and father McBride was summoned from the church. It is estimated the entire damage to house and contents will run in the neighborhood of \$800 which is covered by insurance.

The most accurate man in town at guessing weights would appear to be Charles Holmes for he guessed the exact weight of the big candy cane in Wilkes' window to the fraction of an ounce. The cane weighed 14 lbs 9 3/8 ounces and that was Charlie's guess.

### 75 years ago

**December 27, 1906**

Rather a serious accident took place at the corner of Mill and Elgin Sts. which resulted in the loss of a rather valuable horse belonging to Mr. Arch McPherson. Mr. Hugh McKay, driving the delivery wagon, was turning the corner when he met the team being driven smartly in the other direction by Arch McPherson Jr.

Councillor Robert Harrison of Eramosa died at his home near Rockwood. His fifteen children, though widely scattered, were all gathered at his bedside and he was able to say to each an affectionate farewell. He was born on the farm where he died in 1838. His father was one of the pioneers of the district having emigrated with his young wife from county Antrim, Ireland.

Homestead regulations for the North-West are published.

Nominations next Monday at noon. Election matters are exceedingly quiet.

### 100 years ago

**December 29, 1881**

The nominations for reeve and councillors took place on Monday and owing to the fact it was a public holiday the attendance was much bigger than usual. There were three candidates nominated for the reeveship and 27 for council. Due to Messrs. Henderson and Storey declining, C.S. Smith was elected reeve by acclamation. For council there are in the field M. Speight, D.W. Campbell, James Moore, Richard Hamilton, John Kenney, Benj. Nicklin and Chas. T. Hill.

Running in Esquesing: for reeve W. Clay and N. Lindsay, first deputy is J. Warren, councillors, David Cook, John Brain, James Early, Stephen Elliott and David Cross.

During the past few weeks no less than ten little ones in this vicinity have succumbed to diphtheria. Yesterday an operation was performed on the throat of a child of Mr. W. Williams by Drs. Lowry and Forster, a tube being inserted in the windpipe, which promises to be a successful experiment.

## On the Leavell

With Helen



Best wishes and good luck go out to St. Joseph's Separate School teacher Sharon Bradley who is heading next month to South Africa on missionary work.

Sharon, who is in her third year in Acton, has signed up for two years with VICS (Volunteers in Christian Service). She finished her teaching job in Acton last week and heads to Africa on January 5.

Farewell is also extended to Jenny Numan, Acton Rotary exchange student from Australia. Jenny left today for home, but will be spending a few days in Kamloops, British Columbia with an aunt and uncle and then a few days in San Francisco before actually getting home. She's been in Canada a year, living with Terry and Ken Grubbe, Rae and Lynda Nellis, Doug and Janice Fread and Jack and Anita Meinen.

A story in this paper last week said Jenny was disappointed by the shortage of snow since her arrival last January. There was only a skiff of snow on the ground when Jenny said that. I hope she is satisfied now.

Best wishes to Jenny in her future.

I see Acton's shortest street, Burbank St. in Lakeview subdivision, finally has a street sign so everyone can find it. Seems everyone was having trouble finding it except the tax assessor.

Dave and Heather Whiting: George and Sue Paulsen: and Keith and Jane Smiley: travelled to Sudbury recently for the wedding of former Acton baseball player Rob Cameron.

Rob playing Condo ball for three years here, communting from Brampton to do so.

He married Betty Fiesh and will live in Fort McMurray, Alberta.

Rosemary Cook, of Churchill Rd., headed west for Christmas to visit with daughter Betty Ferguson and family, and son George Cook, all in Whitecourt Alberta. Also on the same flight was Acton resident Don Ryder who visited his son David and family in Edmonton.

George Cook is readying for a month-long stay in Saudi Arabia in the new year as he stands in for another oil company employee who is coming home for a visit.

Holiday visitors this week with Terry and Ken Grubbe and son Kevin are Terry's parents Mr. and Mrs. H.W. Jackson from Sarnia.

University and college students are pouring home for the holidays. Janice Thornhill is home from school in Peterborough and Laurie Pierce is home from North Bay. Sister Julie is home from Thunder Bay.

Nancy Shoemaker is home from her nursing post in northern Ontario and Rick Rocher, now a teacher in La Pas, Manitoba, is spending the holidays with Acton family and friends.

Steven Dills, grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Hilton Elliott, Bower Ave., made it home from Drayton Valley, Alberta,

## Clergy Comment

by Pastor Jean Stairs

"Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people." (Luke 2:10)

We live in a very sophisticated age. Our world is advancing scientifically and technologically at a pace which is faster than the average human being is capable of keeping up with.

Advances have been made in all areas of life. Rather than playing "hide and seek", children spend hours upon end with electronic and video computer games. Television documentaries describe 12-year-old children who, by playing on their computers at home, can patch into computer systems of major banks and companies and withdraw large sums of money.

Medical research has enabled us to extend the length of normal life expectancy. Recent strides in fields such as genetic engineering produce debate over the moral ethics involved in predetermining the breed of people who could make up our future world. This year we have seen a new escalation of the arms race, the decision to deploy the neutron bomb and hints of the possibility of a "limited nuclear war".

Scientists used to say, "Give us time and we'll build the world." Now, realizing that technology is spinning out of control, scientists are saying, "Give us time so we can keep ourselves from destroying the world." Our world is caught in a web of its own spinning, and it is a very sophisticated web indeed.

In the midst of that sophisticated web, perhaps we can be reminded of the fact that Christmas is hopeful. In spite of all the world's endless spinning, we can live out the Christmas season and all our days remembering that God never forgets us. God knows the state of our world and He cares about it.

God has always cared for our world. Sometimes we wish God would demonstrate that care by removing the "spinning web" and lifting us out of our helpless and seemingly hopeless situation.

But, instead, God demonstrates His care by coming into the midst of it and sharing it with us. Over two thousand years ago, God cared enough to provide the birth of a child, His own Son, who became the Savior of the world. This child was a vulnerable expression of just how much God does love us.

The message of Bethlehem is clearly that God is with us. Unmistakably God has revealed his compassion for our world situation and has declared in His coming to us that He will be our constant companion. Even in the apparent hopelessness of our age, the message of Christmas is that we can be hopeful.

"Be not afraid," for God in Jesus Christ has declared: "I couldn't care more".

## Life in a wheelchair

(Submitted by Mary Daigle)

Author Unknown

So few care for those in a wheelchair who sit at the bottom of the dandruff chair and wonder how to get up there. "Certainly not, in this old wheelchair"

Today the visiting hockey team came. We'd like to go to see the game, But we must stay home, tho' it's a shame, They forgot to build the ramp again!

The church, the bank, and even the store, We can't get in, there's a step at the door, Across the street is the barber, Herb, We can't get a haircut, no ramp at the curb.

The Post Office too, we'd feel much better  
If we could get in to mail a letter  
And pick up our mail or buy a stamp,  
But we can't get in, there is no ramp.

To enter the coffee shop's a mighty big chore,  
The step's even worse than the one at the store,  
So there at the door our coffee-break ends -  
The only way in, is with help from some friends.

So down the street we'll merrily go,  
I guess we'll just take in the show  
But when we get there, we find in despair,  
Yes, you guessed it - another big stair!

And when we come to the great golden stair,  
We'll sit and gaze away up there,  
We'll never make it, we know very well,  
So we'll just give up, and roll down to hell.