

The Acton Free Press

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New tourism body holds lots of promise

Over the years many bodies have tried to improve the business climate of Acton. The Chamber of Commerce, BIA, Acton Business Association, Leathertown are just some of the groups. Various government agencies such as the region's Business Development Department, have also made stabs at bolstering existing firms, attracting new investment and shoppers to town.

It would be wrong to say the aforementioned failed. It would be equally inaccurate to state that they have fulfilled all the promise and goals these bodies set for themselves, at least so far.

Now another business organization has been launched, the North Halton Tourism Association.

Just as we have welcomed other bodies enthusiastically, so we do now with this body too.

However, our hopes for success with the North Halton Tourism Association are higher than usual, for several reasons. Firstly this group has, by virtue of their regional approach to business development and promotion, greater resources to draw on. The base support for other bodies hasn't been as broad and hence their ability to achieve goals hampered.

Another reason for our optimism is this body has a budget as impressive as its goals. Funding has generally been a problem with other groups.

A third plus is this group's decision to hire a staffer, an executive director, from day one. A problem for most organizations, not exclusively

those involved in business development and promotion, is the struggle to make progress when all hands are simply volunteers. Volunteers can accomplish a lot, and have, but especially in business areas their commitment, particularly in time, is restricted. Burn-out also plagues volunteers.

The person selected to be executive director, Jo Lister, has an impressive track record in the marketing field. Her expertise and enthusiasm will be a big bonus for this group.

The executive and directors of this new body is also impressive. It seems that most of the big tourist related firms are involved already.

The fact the impetus for this venture has come from Acton and area and key positions on the executive have been filled by local people should assure that this corner of North Halton won't be ignored as we often are in other large area projects in Halton.

Tourism is this province's second largest industry, it is labor intensive, requires investment and creates fresh investment, can have tremendous spin-offs throughout the business community and benefits not just firms directly involved in tourism. Anything which can be done, especially these days, to improve the business climate must be welcomed with open arms.

There could be another big plus from the North Halton Tourism Association. It will no doubt be a boost to bodies like the Chamber of Commerce, BIA and Leathertown in achieving their more localized goals G.M.

Vote yes to no nukes

Now that it is settled and we're going to have a nuclear disarmament referendum in Halton Hills this November we'd encourage all voters to attend the public meetings on the issue which are planned for this fall, as well as read the information which will be printed during the campaign.

With the threat of a null and void election, and thus a huge cost to local taxpayers for a repeat vote out of the way, we support the referendum.

It's true that we are still dubious of the results produced by the vote, but it can't hurt the perilous situation the world now faces.

We remain unconvinced that there will ever be free votes in a

global referendum on the subject behind the Iron Curtain. We also don't think Canadian concern about nuclear proliferation will prevent unstable regimes in places like Lybia or Argentina from developing the "bomb" or in fact using it.

But this issue, like so many others, requires some kind of protest.

So if the nuclear issue gets people upset enough to protest to Ottawa then maybe we'll stop taking things lying down from all levels of government.

A strong yes vote in Halton Hills this November may not help, but then again if we never try we'll never know what might have been. G.M.

Coles' slaw Miss Bennett, the epitome of a teacher

The lady they named the M.Z. Bennett public school after is dead. She shaped the minds and careers of thousands of Acton and area youngsters with a teaching career that started in Erin township. It ended when she resigned as principal of the old Acton public school, torn down to make way for the Robert Little school.

Minnie Bennett was allotted many more years than the three score and ten the Bible gives as the ordinary lifespan. She died on her 102nd birthday in a nursing home in Kitchener many miles from Acton. But she will always be remembered by those who had the privilege of studying under her guidance or were just marking time in the classroom.

Miss Bennett inculcated many of the values in her students which society today might find old-fashioned but which have stood the test of time. They are being rediscovered now under new labels but she not only taught them but lived them and earned the respect and gratitude of the many who graduated from that old school.

Miss Bennett was principal of the school at a time when the local school board also expected them to teach Senior IV, which would be called Grade

Eight now. The principal was not only expected to set an example for the other teachers but was called on to exercise school discipline when it got beyond the scope of the other teachers, who were mainly women. That meant administering the strap to those errant youths, mostly boys, who dared to interrupt the routine of the classroom or did naughty things on the way to and from school.

It was an onerous burden but was the accepted procedure in those times when teachers were expected to be models of decorum, forbidden to frequent such places as beer parlors or pool rooms, unlikely to smile much and be paragons of virtue. It was a profession which demanded so much and gave little in the way of tangible rewards.

Recognition came usually only when a former student did well in provincial exams. Or set his university or college on fire with his or her knowledge. It reflected back on the teachers in the old alma mater, scant recognition.

I was one of those fortunate enough to have Miss Bennett as principal when attending the old Acton public school. We were in awe of her although she had never given us any cause to doubt that

she divvied anything but justice from the Senior IV classroom. It stood at the front of the school to the left of the porch in entrance. If she stood at the door we slowed down when we filed out of class and respectfully touched our hands to our caps or heads.

She always responded, sometimes just with a nod, knowing of course, that her presence had killed all the devilment we had planned for the moment.

Some of the bigger boys in the class reached as high or higher than she did and they sometimes would try and breach the discipline, which was strict. They soon found Miss Bennett was more than a match for their wiles. She knew all the tricks and there were few that got past her.

She knew just about everybody in that old brick two storey school. Some of the students' fathers and mothers had also been taught by Miss Bennett and she often identified us with our father's or mother's name. I was invariably called "Ernie", which was my father's first name and my second. She told me one day my Dad had been a pretty good student. I suppose she wondered why I wasn't showing the same characteristics.

Fortunately, I was never pulled up on

the rug when Miss Bennett dispensed punishment but I remember one day when several of the older boys in her class had done something during recess, strayed out of their boundaries or pounded some of the younger boys. She lined them up in front of her and gave them all a few licks with the strap.

It hasn't been lost on me that if a teacher tried that today there would be probably be a few law suits ensuing. There were no law suits then. Probably some of them got it again when they got home if the word leaked that far.

Many people in Acton who passed through her classes can tell better stories than I've got about the days in Miss Bennett's classes. She thought everyone was there to learn. If you didn't it was because you were either stupid, or too stubborn. Some of the real big guys in her classes were only putting in time until they reached the leaving age because times were really tough in those days and families needed extra pay packets to let them survive.

I am one of those who does not look back at those days with enthusiasm. There were few holidays from school, no recreation outside of a few minutes recess, morning and afternoon. Films

and all the other teaching aids came too late for me and for teachers like Miss Bennett. She could have used more time off and some other diversions to take some of the load off them. However, looking back at those school days and the dedicated teachers I'm glad they were there to pound some sense into my head and spelling and arithmetic into my brain. They were certainly the salt of the earth even if we didn't know it at the time.

Thanks to all those who have written or called saying they enjoy this column and are glad to see it back. Jeannie (Brunelle) St. Denis of Sudbury also wants to know if anyone in Acton has a copy of an old map of the old counties. "Remember the kind we used to have to draw for Miss Bennett..." she asks. She lives at 1165 O'Grady St. Sudbury, P3A 2V7.

Jeanne also mentioned she has been delving into the history of the Lasby clan and "even found a Noble one" right here, related to the Elora and Rockwood Lasbys. She finishes up with "There'll always be an Acton" and "PS-Where is Halton Hills..."

Our readers write



Little old ladies aren't vandals

Dear Sir:
How many little old ladies are on the prowl late at night or in the wee small hours?
How many little old ladies are heaving bricks through shop windows?
How many little old ladies are screaming, and shouting obscenities on the streets of Acton at all hours?

How many little old ladies are loitering to the point of being objectionable or threatening?
How many little old ladies are firing eggs at store facades?
How many little old ladies are putting the boots to the cop doing his duty?
Little Old Lady,
Acton

From the editor's desk

by Gord Murray

Last week's front page story about a plan to build nearly 300 homes on the east side of Acton has been taken as some kind of joke by a number of readers.

After hearing for so many years that Acton couldn't grow because of limited sewage treatment plant capacity they didn't view this proposal for development as being serious.

Since December of last year we have written a number of stories regarding the urban boundary study. The result of that study, in a nutshell, is that Acton can grow by up to 3,000 more people. So this and other developments which will undoubtedly be proposed are serious.

Most of the readers who mentioned the front page story to me last week remembered the stories explaining Acton can grow once their memories were jogged a bit. They'd been hearing no growth for so long though they didn't really take the prospect of growth as gospel.

Maybe some further explanation, hopefully without too much jargon will clarify this situation.

Raw sewage moves through pipes to the sewage plant on Churchill Rd. south from washrooms all over town and is treated there. The plant is designed to handle a million gallons of water and sewage a day. Acton's present population of about 7,000 people should, according to a complicated formula set down by the province of Ontario, fill the plant.

Another governing factor is the Black Creek's capacity to accept treated waste. Again following Queen's Park's formulas there are enough people living here that the Black Creek shouldn't be able to accept more effluent.

However, this kind of issue is always a bone of contention between developers and councils.

In an effort to settle the question of growth in Acton once and for all the Region and Halton Hills had an urban boundary study carried out by a consultant. This study may have been

more properly named the Acton water and sewer service capacity study, since it determined if the sewage plant could accept more sewage from new homes built in Acton and hooked into the system. It was the same with water. What the consultant came up with was that there is sewage capacity.

The reason for the capacity is simple. A lot of people from Acton work out of town, therefore they use washrooms where they work. Thus they aren't contributing to filling up the Acton plant as they would if they both worked and lived in town. The result was Acton's sewage plant wasn't handling as much sewage and the Black Creek wasn't receiving as much effluent as they can.

The province went along with an adjustment of their formulas to reflect this situation, so Acton can grow by 3,000 more people as well as have some more industrial development.

There are three areas where housing can be built. One area is north of Highway 7 and east of Churchill Rd. North, about half-way over to the Fourth Line and south of the high school. That is where the plan we reported about last week would materialize.

Another area is Mill St. West between where the new St. Joseph's School is being built and Duby Rd., right across the street from where houses already exist. The third area is south of Highway 7 and east of Churchill Rd. South.

However, it will take time for these developments to be approved by both the region and Halton Hills.

While our sewage capacity problem has been solved, Acton must secure more water before development can take place. It is expected once a sure-fire way is found to treat the water from the Prospect Park well, which readers will recall turned out yellow-brown water last year for a week, Acton's water problems will also be solved.

In short, we're going to grow a bit sometime in the next five years I would think.

I hope this explanation clarifies the

situation and isn't clear as mud to residents.

On another front, I received a rather interesting press release from our MP Otto Jelinek last week. In it he notes he and his Tory colleagues have set up a number of special economic development committees which will work through the summer, "with a view of developing further detailed and comprehensive alternatives to government policies which obviously, but unfortunately, are not working." Undoubtedly they'll also be looking for things to embarrass the ruling Grits, thereby assisting them in maintaining their huge lead in popularity.

Anyway, Jelinek is sitting on a committee called Burden of Government and they'll be looking for areas where spending can be cut and hunting down examples of government waste. His committee has already come up with a list of really incredible wastes of tax dollars. They are so wild they'd be funny if it wasn't our own money. Here's the list.

1.) Taxis are taking taxpayers for a ride. Between March 1 1980, and May 31 1981, the Government paid out \$3.5 million in taxi fares. The largest single bill from any government department was, perhaps, appropriately, from Transport Canada—\$422,000. At current Ottawa taxi-rates (\$1.20/mile), this is enough to go around the world 120 times.

2.) Between March 1980 and June 1981, the Government spent \$18.7 million on telegrams, cables, and other wireless communications. Even the Post Office does not trust the mail, as it spent \$260,000.

3.) We've got a very hospitable government. In fiscal 1981-82, 11 government departments spent a total of \$10.4 million on hospitality—i.e. food, booze, and entertainment. That is the equivalent of 700,000 bottles of liquor. It is also only the tip of the iceberg, as it

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Back issues

10 years ago

August 9, 1972
H.H. (Bert) Hinton of Acton, vice-chairman of the Sheridan College Board of Governors, was elected vice-president of the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario.

An avid local fisherman, George Lazenby of Arthur St., had a two hour battle on his hands off Acapulco, Mexico, with a 110 pound sailfish before he gaffed the eight foot, four inch fish at the side of the fishing boat Apollo XL.

Specials this week at the IGA are: cantaloupe 3 for a \$1, butt pork chops 69c a lb., breakfast sausage 55c a lb., spare ribs 85c a lb., beef steaks 59c a lb. and a 9 oz. pkg. of french fries 10c.

Mayor Les Dudy cut the traditional ribbon to officially open the brand new Glenlea Drug Mart and medical centre last Thursday morning.

A Musky, 19 lbs. and 42 inches long was hauled in by Merv Barber, RR 1, Acton, during a weekend fishing trip to Peterborough. Also on the trip were, Charlie Barber and Harry Hooper of Acton and Ken Ellis of Georgetown.

20 years ago

August 9, 1962
Eight year old Margaret Slaven, RR 4, Acton, topped Scottish dancers from Canada and the United States to carry home first place trophy when she competed in the Highland Dancing Association at Maxwell, Quebec, on Saturday.

Balfinad is to have a new \$21,000 Community Hall. The site has been chosen, plans completed and the contract awarded.

Specials this week at the IGA are, 2 loaves of IGA bread for 39c, Kraft cheese slices 1 lb. pkg. 49c. Clarks soup 10 tins for 99c. Navel oranges 2 doz. for 89c and 6 qt. basket of field tomatoes for 85c.

After spending the month of July at Bruce Beach, Mr. and Mrs. E.A. Hansen and the boys are back at home.

Four weeks after the ground was broken for the new home of Superior Glove Works at the eastern limits of Vimy Street, production began on the manufacture of gloves.

50 years ago

August 4, 1932
A mighty fine specimen of black bass was captured in Fairy Lake by Master Jack Davidson, the seven-year-old son of Mr. J.S. Davidson, Lake Avenue. The beauty was on display at Patterson's Meat Store, it tipped the scales at 4 lbs. 2 1/2 oz. and measured 18 1/4 inches.

Playing this week at the Gregory Theatre, Friday, "Behind the Mask" starring Jack Holt, Saturday, "Cheaters at Play", starring Charlotte Greenwood and Thomas Melghan and on Monday "Sky Devils", with William Boyd.

Fire on Sunday, completely destroyed a large farm house occupied by Frank Miller, about half a mile from Erin, the loss being estimated at between \$3500 and \$4,000.

This week's specials at Patterson's Meat Store are, shoulder roasts 15c a lb., fresh side pork 10c a lb., sirloin roasts 18c a lb. and rib boil 9c a lb.

75 years ago

August 9, 1907
The Jubilee birthday of Mr. James E. Snyder was fittingly celebrated at his home, "Fine Lawn", Mill Street, last Friday.

In a football match between Acton and Brampton on Saturday evening, Acton won by 1 to 0. It was a closely contested and very rough game.

Mr. G.C. Price of Hamilton, spent Civic Holiday with his brother Mr. T.H. Price.

Ground was broken last Thursday for Mr. D.M. Henderson's new residence on Bower Avenue, and the work of excavation for the foundation is in progress.

Mr. John Morris returned home Saturday from a two-months' trip to his former home in Yorkshire, England.

100 years ago

August 3, 1882
About 50 went from Acton on the Church of England excursion to Burlington Beach.

Farmers are now willing to pay from \$2 to \$2.50 a day for harvest hands and say they are finding it difficult to get men. They are finding the unpleasant effect of the exodus to the North-west. The province has been drained of a large number of farm laborers who before assisted the farmers.

The band think of introducing reed instruments, and thus swell their ranks to 20 musicians.

The house fly is now a nuisance almost unbearable.

Some of the boys of the village, who are throwing stones through windows, will see the interior of the big stone house in Milton if they are not careful.