

# The Acton Free Press

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## Services centre deserves additional region funds

It is indeed heartening to hear region staff has come up with a financial rescue plan to keep the Acton Social Services and Information Centre open.

This agency, the only one of its kind in Halton, provides invaluable services to many Acton and area residents, and in these tough economic times the number of people needing to use the centre is growing.

Welfare, health services, Block Parents, Meals on Wheels, to name a few, are services provided through the centre by the region staff and community volunteers.

We might not normally support the spending of more social services dollars by the region, especially considering the need to cut costs to keep taxes down for the many families struggling with high interest rates and unemployment.

However, there is no question the Acton Social Services and Information Centre is a cost efficient operation, despite the fact it now faces a \$5,000 deficit

and temporary closure if the new regional council, which takes office next month, isn't as sympathetic to the agency's problems as the present council seems to be. The centre has a good track record of coming up with a budget and keeping to it. However, increased operating costs and renovations for its move to a more visible new location threw a monkey wrench in its budget for 1982.

If the region opts for the staff plan of continuing yearly grants as well as now paying a fee for use of the offices in the centre by welfare, health and Children's Aid staff, it will cost the region more than in the past, but it will be less than if the region tried to provide its social services in Acton by staffing its own office.

With unemployment insurance benefits running out for many people in the winter ahead, the number of people needing to deal with welfare officials will climb and an increased investment in the centre will prove very wise. —G.M.

## Dogged endurance

All these hopefuls who are now knocking on doors as they try to capture a seat on Halton Hills council, may not realize just what they're getting into.

There are hours and hours of tedious boring meetings ahead, and lots of hard work.

The hard work comes, not so much in trying to answer rate-payers' complaints, but in trying to understand reports on subjects they may never have encountered previously.

Just such a subject is planning, a complicated one, which no newcomer should be expected to know.

The present council deserves words of praise for its many hundreds of hours spent on bringing the Official Plan to completion at this level.

Meeting after meeting was held, with one starting at one in the afternoon and continuing until 11 at night.

Clause by clause of pretty dry stuff was analysed while councillors had to keep alert. It is important since the Official Plan is really the of their decision on the future of the Town.

For dogged endurance in finishing a dreary job council deserves appreciation.

## Bail-outs are wrong

by W. Roger Worth

Can. Fed. Independent Business  
 Whether bailout or a sound investment, Ottawa has plunked down a cool \$500-million to prop up near-bankrupt oil and natural gas producer Dome Petroleum, at the same time letting four of the nation's major banks off the hook for the poor decisions they made in lending Dome billions of dollars.

While the Dome package is far from settled, the support follows federal government decisions to give hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to a trucking company, a farm equipment manufacturer and an auto producer.

It's not a pretty picture. Here we have the elite of Canadian business, men (there are few women) who are supposedly steeped in the free-enterprise tradition, virtually begging for cash to the bank interest on their company's sizeable loans.

The bankers, who will in many cases receive the money, have developed amnesia, completely forgetting those stirring speeches they used to give on the "right of a business to fail, as well as succeed," and the dire threat created by more government intervention in the private sector.

For these people, principles have become decidedly fuzzy.



## From the editor's desk

### This election is a cliff hanger

by Gord Murray  
 Free Press editor

This is the fourth election in Halton Hills I've covered, having missed only the first vote held late in 1973 when the Town and region were born. I covered that election too, though from Oakville where I was going to college.

Anyway, I think if there's ever been a cliff hanger in Halton Hills politics this is going to be it.

In the past at the close of nominations I've been able to call the winner in every race with confidence, and only one has been wrong. I just never saw Betty Fisher from Georgetown winning the Acton-Esqueving school board seat in 1978.

Everyone expects reporters to be pretty close to the local political scene, and we are, so everyone is asking us these days how the races shape up. Talking politics is a great pastime, and election time is the best time. It's sort of the world series of the whole game, the last two years of meetings and issues was the regular season. And politics can be all the more fun and fascinating to watch when you think of the whole thing as a game, though it is serious business.

Most of the time reporters talk about politics with politicians, you really only get to feel the pulse of the community by talking about specific issues with taxpayers. But now's the time when impressions or perceptions of candidates are crystallizing, now's the time to talk to Actonians, to talk politics and find out not who they're voting for, but who they think is going to win.

Reporters don't often have to initiate these conversations. In just about any conversational situation the election races come up, people want to know how we think it's going to go, when in fact the only way we're going to get a handle on the races is by listening to what voters are saying.

Of course I have my personal preferences, candidates I intend to vote for, and while in a casual conversation with someone I will indicate my preferences, there's no way I'll reveal them in print.

We won't be endorsing candidates and in the news columns we're trying to be so fair that I'm even measuring type and photos trying my darndest to give every candidate in a race as close to the same amount of space as possible.

So while I have my own opinions, and will verbalize them, they aren't the position of the paper and shouldn't be taken as such in any circumstance. They're just the views of someone who is a little closer to what's happening in this election than the average citizen.

Getting back to the way the races are shaping up, I'm not going to get into naming names or picking winners. I couldn't anyway, my reading is that it's going to be that close in Acton for several races.

There is still a lot of apathy, but it sounds like there's a bit more interest than usual in a municipal election so I think the voter turnout will be above 40 per cent.

And the vote is pretty soft. In other words, people's preferences changed continually throughout the weeks leading up to nominations as more candidates entered the field. And as the campaign has gone along voters have changed their preferences as they've heard the candidates and read the flood of literature.

The campaign has probably been more important in this election than in other campaigns. People are listening and reading because they just aren't firmly behind any candidates.

As for the issues, there don't seem to be any big, controversial issues in this election, but there are lots of subjects being raised, many of which the candidates can't really do much about anyway even if they're elected.

Things like the police, recreation, taxes, communications, gravel pits and quarries are being discussed by candidates and voters. But the biggest issue I think in the minds of citizens is the need for more businesses in Acton and the need for jobs. And this is the issue candidates are addressing the least, because it's the one they can have the least impact on if they are elected, due to current economic conditions.

There may be a few things which can be done say to encourage business, or keep the tax increase down, but not a whole lot and fortunately the candidates generally realize this and aren't making a whole lot of promises they won't be able to keep.

I'm always somewhat sympathetic to elected, and unelected, councillors and school board trustees, because I can see from covering their jobs week in and week out over the years that they have very little manoeuvring room what with provincial edicts for services and required costs which keep going up. Being a local politician really is a thankless task, and it's pretty hard for an individual, or group of politicians say from Acton or from north Halton at the region or board, to make that much of a change. They can get some things done, to be sure, which are beneficial to us all, but the really big things like creating new jobs or bringing a lot of new businesses to Acton can't be done overnight or very easily.

And they are so dependent on the staff for guidance on decisions. The staff are the experts, that's why they are hired. They know the province's reams of rules and regulations, they know the mechanics and technology of their fields. This is a situation we will likely continue to live with too, the staff appearing to run the council or board, because we don't very often elect directors of education, or school program specialists, or engineers, or municipal finance experts, etc.

This is the last column I'll be writing before the election, though we do have an election special being published Friday, so I'd just like to encourage everyone to vote, but not just for the usual reasons. I can't tell you how many times I've heard voters say they were sure someone was going to win a race because they were going to vote for the person and all their friends were too. Their candidate lost because you and your friends were so sure they were sure winners you skipped voting. Don't, because your vote really does count, it's your ticket into the game.

## Back issues

### 10 years ago

November 1, 1972

The Tory Broom swept two Halton seats as Terry O'Connor defeated incumbent Rod Whiting by 2,000 votes in Halton and in Halton-Wentworth it was Tory, Bill Kemping.

On Sunday, October 29, Acton Baptist Church celebrated its 130th Anniversary. The original roll book is still in use by the church.

After 50 years of married life, Mr. and Mrs. James Alfred Thompson, known as Alf and Georgena, were treated to a gala night on Saturday, October 28, by their sons, daughters and grandchildren at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bud Anderson, RR 3, Acton. Mr. and Mrs. John Glynn attended the convocation of their son Peter when he received his Ph.D. degree in chemical engineering at Waterloo College on October 20.

Mrs. George Green is a patient in St. Joseph's Hospital, in Guelph, best wishes of friends go to her.

### 20 years ago

November 1, 1962

Friday's freak snow storm landed over a foot of snow in this district. There were several accidents on the roads.

A \$6,000 offer to purchase by the town of Acton for approximately 50 acres of land was accepted Monday by the Wool Combing Corp. of Canada. The property adjoins Fairview cemetery and fronts of Cobblehill Road and the extension of Mill Street, West.

Friends were very sorry to hear of Mr. Stewart Russell's eye operation and hope for a speedy recovery.

Acton's gift to Seton Hall University, South Orange, N.J., Bruce Andrews is one of two Canadians greatly responsible for the success of the schools Cross-Country team. Bruce has won all four of his races.

Work on the new Ballinacree Hall started this week after a brief layoff.

### 50 years ago

October 27, 1932

The eighth anniversary of the United Church, Acton, and the eighty-seventh of the old church, will be observed next Sunday, October 30.

Mr. and Mrs. Joel Leslie observed their fifty-fifth wedding anniversary on Monday night, October 25. About thirty guests were present on this occasion and a most enjoyable evening was spent.

High School costs in Halton County: Acton High School, 63 town pupils and 20 county pupils; county's share of cost \$1,240; per pupil \$51.68.

Specials this week at Carroll's Ltd., Mill Street are: Campbell's Pork and Beans 1 lb. tins 4 for 25c, 3 cakes of Calay Soap for 19c, mixed nuts 17c a lb., Popping corn 3 lbs. for 25c and Jelly Powders 5 pkgs. 25c and an animal shaped jelly mold FREE.

Little Lorraine Pallant observed her first birthday on October 22, with customary party to mark the occasion.

### 75 years ago

October 31, 1907

Mr. John Denny has purchased the farm of Mr. Brock Hamer, Acton, fifty acres at lot 32, con. 4.

Mr. Albert Marchmont, who moved to Toronto Junction some time ago, has just moved into his own home at 60 Edmond Street.

At the meeting of the Rural Deaneys recently held here, Rev. Matthew Wilson, M.A., was appointed Secretary-Treasurer for the Rural Deaneys of Halton.

James Carnahan has sold his property on Church Street to Mr. Joseph Hall, of Chinguacousy.

Arnold's livery has been removed from John Street stables to the stables at the Station Hotel.

For Sale: 12 farms in the county of Halton ranging in price from \$2,500 to \$6,000. Apply to W.H. Denny, Acton, Ontario.

### 100 years ago

November 9, 1882

Mr. Thomas Perryman, Sr. has disposed of his property in the sixth concession, and taken up his residence in our village.

Suits and Overcoats at extremely low rates and made in the latest styles. Be sure to call and see them, J. Fyfe, Acton.

Mr. James Goodall's coal storehouse is now completed and open for business. The new grain warehouse of Messrs. E. Nicklin and Son has been completed at the G.T.R. station.

We notice by the Guelph papers that Mr. J.W. Mann, formerly of this village, has gone into the grocery and dry goods business in that city.

Mr. James McLellan has purchased the building on Mill Street, formerly used by the G.T.R. as a tank house, and intends removing it to Young Street for a stable.

## Coles' slaw

# My grandfather's log a travelogue of the world

Sometimes readers have asked me what motivation propelled me into the newspaper game, either out of awe that anyone with so few qualifications should attempt it or from an earnest desire to know. In any event I have always replied it was due to my two grandfathers. They both had a literary bent. Despite what anyone might tell you I still believe any talents we might have are partly inherited. The rest comes from hard work.

This comes to mind this week because I just received a copy of my grandfather (on my mother's side) Log Book, written from memory in his later years. He lived his last years with his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Colin MacColl.

He wrote the log in the 1960s and although there was always talk of it being published it took a cousin in Sarnia to finally arrange for the publication and distribute it to all the relatives.

You may remember James Gibbons, or Jimmy as he was called. He and his wife lived on Cameron St. in Acton when it was the boundary of the town in a cottage built after the first Great War for employees of Beardmore and Co. and later bought and renovated by the occupants. The one my grandfather lived in was bought by Harold and Doris Townsley and they have turned it into a very comfortable, spacious modern home.

Jimmy Gibbons was an old sailor and it was evident when one visited his

home his heart was still on the sea. In his later years he took up oil painting as a hobby and turned out a prodigious amount of canvases, most of them reminiscences of voyages he made to exotic places such as New Zealand or the Falkland Islands. Most of the paintings were of sailing ships because he spent years before the mast and went to school on one of them.

Borrowing a few excerpts from his log he noted he was born in the year 1875 in London, England "I came from seafaring stock. My father, also his father, earned their living at sea, so naturally I was born with that kind of bug," he relates.

At age 14 he joined a naval training ship named the Arethusa, one of the old-time three deckers, which in her time was part of Lord Nelson's fleet at the battle of Trafalgar. The ship was used to train boys for the Royal Navy or the Merchant service and Jim Gibbons noted if you came up to the standard height of five feet one inch "into the navy you went." At the end of his two year training period he was only four feet, 11 1/2 inches, "so it was the Merchant marine for me."

He tells of the homesickness felt when he boarded that vessel along with eight other boys, and life aboard it. Leave depended on your conduct during a four month period. If you had bad marks against you there was no leave. There was also some severe corporal punishment.

"On the half deck," he relates in his

log, "there were eight old muzzle loading guns, used when the ship was sea-gouging, and they used one of them for punishment."

If a boy was brought up before the commander for some misdemeanor or he thought it deserved a caning, the Master of Arms would lower the breech of the gun and lash the boy over the breech by tying his wrists and ankles—and lay the cane across his rear end. "It might be a dozen or two dozen and being a hefty man he sure put his weight into it."

The ship also had some cells, relics of Nelson's day. They were bare, 4 by 6 feet, and had a heavy oak door with small put into a cell during the day. When the rest of the 200 boys on board were in their hammocks, the unfortunate fellow was brought up by the master of arms and he would be allowed to sleep in his hammock, slung apart from the rest.

After he graduated from the Arethusa, Jim Gibbons took his first job on a sailing vessel, the Narwhal, commanded by Captain Wilson from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. The two lads, Jimmy and Billy, were put under the control of the Second Mate, "a big Swede," who said, "Well, well my little skipjacks and vot is your names."

When they told him he said, "Well, youse come wid me and I'll see what you is made of."

Their first voyage on the Narwhal took them to Montivideo, Argentine. "The ship had 300 tons of rock and

gravel for ballast, levelled out, and the ties were loaded on this, filling the holds; and they also put some on deck. There were 14 sailors and the two boys, who each had to take their time on Watch.

The log notes the ship washed out of the dock on a dull, rainy January day. The day it left the captain brought his wife aboard, hom the log notes later generously fed them. The log notes that "Nova Scotia ships fed better than the British ships, but they wanted more work out of their men."

"We were getting used to the ship now," the log relates, but if the boys didn't move fast enough for the second mate they were tendered a boot in the rear. They sighted the Cape Verde Islands and got into the Northeast trade winds but after that came the doldrums. Sometimes it was dead calm, with ra rain squalls. The crew had to trim the yards to catch all the light breeze going. They saw no more land until they raised the Argentine coast. They sailed into the River Plata dropping anchor about a mile from Montevideo, 78 days after they left London.

It was the start of a long career in the Merchant Marine and there were voyages to many parts of the world, all recounted in the log. But after voyages to Australia and New Zealand and marriage, Grandfather Gibbons decided he would switch to steamships. He found better food, and better wages—three pounds, ten shillings a month. "In the end," he says in his log, he got

tired of the life aboard ship and knew people who had gone to Canada and liked it. "My wife was willing to give it a try so in June, 1907, we left Liverpool with five children (including my mother). They landed at Quebec and went to Toronto arriving the day before Dominion Day.

He found a job at Fesserton, "up around Georgian Bay," working at a sawmill but later found a better one at a Bracebridge tannery. Wages at Fesserton were \$1 a day and working in the bush during the winter netted \$16 a month, "not much to keep a family on."

At Bracebridge he worked in the tannery for 17 cents an hour and was paid every two weeks, "My family at that time, was increasing," he writes with understatement. There were 10 of them he writes. But when war came he enlisted in the Muskoka Battalion and served in France along with two of his sons. Demobbed in March, 1919, he went back to his job in Bracebridge. When the tannery moved to Acton the Gibbons family, along with many others from Bracebridge, came with the firm.

He concludes, "I am in my 81st year and have nothing to regret." He died in July, 1968, in his 93rd year.

He and his family were typical of many who came to Canada at the turn of the century. They didn't have much materially but they lived full and sometimes hard lives, taking life as it came. There's a lesson there for all of us.