

The Acton Free Press

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Election brings new blood while retaining experience

It's nice to see there will be some new blood on Halton Hills council in the coming term, while there will still be voices of experience to keep things running relatively smoothly. The higher than normal voter turnout, while still poorer than it should be, was encouraging.

Halton Hills voters gave the many newcomers seeking public office more than a cursory look, but in the end opted to stick with the status quo. However, the strong challenges of a number of incumbents and the mere fact acclamations were down drastically should keep councillors, trustees and hydro commissioners on their toes for the next three years.

Mayor Peter Pomeroy successfully retained his spot at the top. He has now had a chance to touch base with many citizens during the past three weeks, so Glen McKenzie's challenge, while it was implausible that he would win, was very worthwhile.

In Acton incumbent Dave Whiting fended off strong challenges from Ed Wood and Vince Whelan. The biggest issue discussed in that race was restraint and it should be anticipated that the victor will be working hard in that direction. Whiting has been an energetic voice for Acton the past two years and will likely continue to plug away.

Acton gave an overwhelming endorsement to a young novice politician, Rick Bonnette. We would expect that Bonnette will now take some time to learn the ins and outs of municipal affairs before wading into the fray. He should be another strong voice for ward one.

Ross Knechtel, one of the brightest minds on council and a man with considerable financial savvy was wisely retained for a third term by Acton voters.

In Esquesing Pam Sheldon, who has really come on as a fine councillor during the second year of the current term, was given a mammoth vote of confidence to carry on her fight against the aggregate land freeze by her constituents.

A voice with considerable municipal experience, Tom Hill returns, in ward two. It is hoped he will be able to make the sometimes difficult transition from leader as a mayor to a councillor.

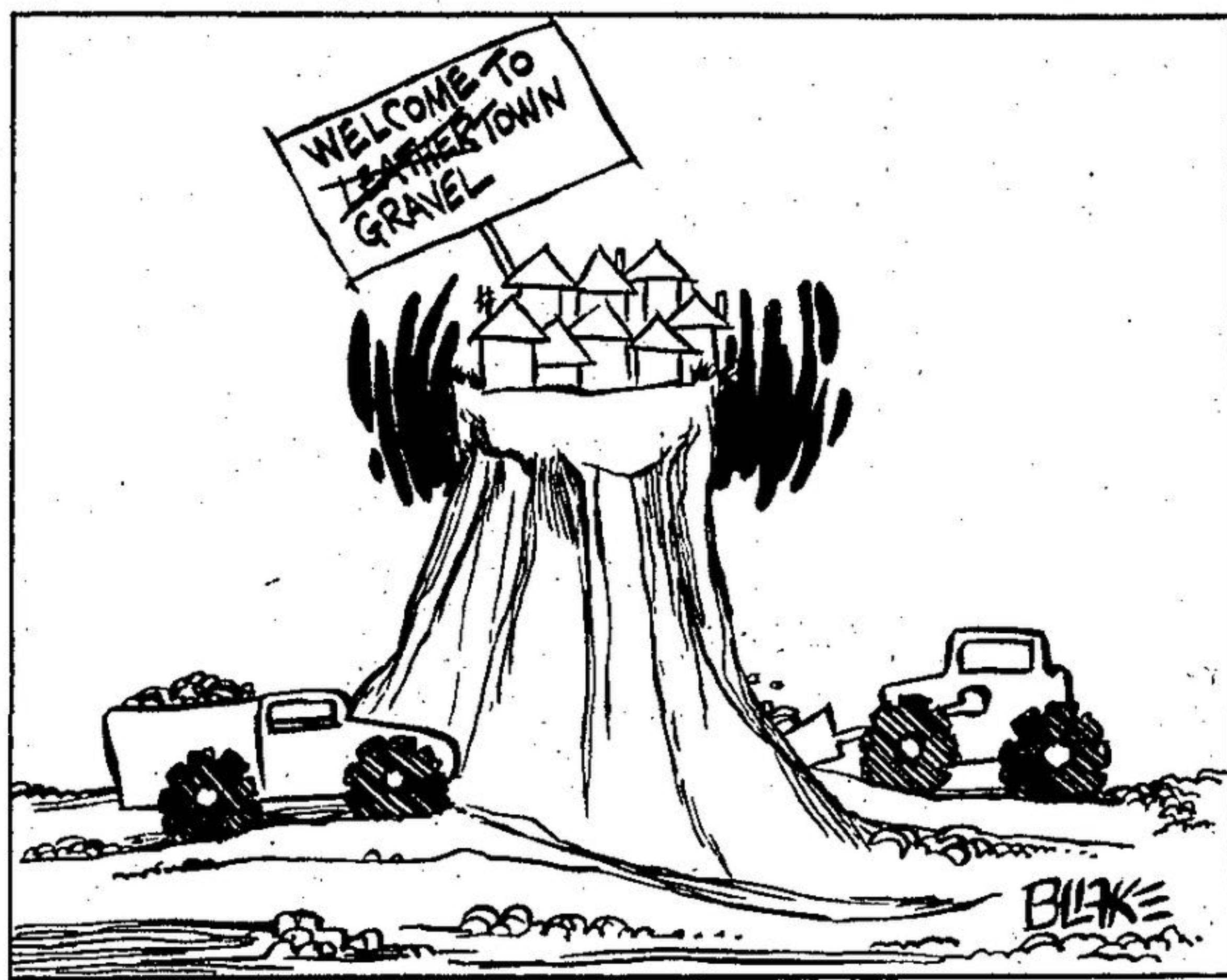
Arlene Bruce and Irene McCauley return as school board trustees, along with former councillor Dick Howitt from Esquesing. They all received big votes of confidence, but will no doubt be mindful of finding innovative ways to reduce the staggering education tax burden without watering down the quality of our schools.

Doug Mason will have to learn to think like a member of management and not one of the workers as he embarks on his new career as hydro commissioner.

Along the way Monday night Acton and Esquesing lost some very able candidates, people who would have been tremendous assets to our council, school boards and hydro commission.

It was a credit to the community that so many fine people put their names forward and just unfortunate that some talent will be wasted.

-G.M.



From the editor's desk

It was the wildest campaign ever

by Gord Murray
Free Press Editor

This has to go down as the wildest election campaign in Acton's brief history since regional government was born.

I wrote this column Sunday morning, before the election results were known, so it is strictly a comment on the total campaign, not on what worked or didn't work, who won and didn't.

It was unusual in the mere fact there were so many candidates. There were 19 people running, mostly running full out, for eight jobs for which Acton voters cast ballots. It must have been the three year term that brought them all out of the woodwork.

And, as I said, generally they ran flat out.

I can't recall ever having seen so many candidates out door knocking before, at times you'd go through a neighborhood, say Bovis, and see three or four going door to door.

The mounds of political material was astounding. There were four page brochures on different colored paper, there were single sheets of assorted colors, there were small cards, there was even a plastic type card which mysteriously stuck to windows. There were letters in brochures, and letters separate.

Some candidates sent out nothing to voters. It seemed half of the vote seekers sent out two, in a few cases three or more pieces of literature. With one candidate it was hard to tell how much he sent out or how to count it since one brochure had two inserts. Another candidate canvassed for support by phone.

And signs, there were plenty, though it seemed less than in the past. Before the campaign started there seemed to be a loose agreement between candidates running for council not to use lawn signs because they become scattered all over town and kids rip them up. Two candidates called the Free Press to say there seemed to be an agreement, even the mayor mentioned he had been told they weren't using lawn signs.

But the pact was reached before everyone was in the race, and there seemed to be so many exceptions, (large wooden signs appeared OK, so were posters or bumper stickers), that there appeared little way the deal would hold or that anyone would ever be able to definitively rule which types of signs were outside the agreement and which were permissible.

We decided since the rules of the game seemed to loose and would be so confusing to readers that it wasn't worth reporting.

In the end it appeared a lot of posters were employed as lawn signs, though they didn't seem to sprout up on lawns, but on roadsides and vacant property; so maybe they weren't lawn signs at all.

Issues—there were dozens discussed. Policing, the town hall, recreation, the need to communicate, aggregate, restraint—and numerous variations on this topic, council drop-in etc. Some people talked about things they will be able to do nothing about even if they're elected, a few contradicted themselves somewhat in discussing the issues, other will accomplish only what they suggested needs to be done (if there are people elected in the rest of Halton Hills and Halton who think the same way).

And then there were the slogans and catch phrases. I know it is hard to come up with something simple, yet catching, to headline a brochure or advertisement, but it was incredible still to see what they came up with not just in Acton but throughout Halton Hills and the areas around here.

This has to go down as the year of the strong voice and action in Acton, though there were others. Right off the bat I must say the most memorable was "elect E.T." as well as Esther Taylor's two homemade posters showing her friends, dogs and cats and ducks.

The list of slogans and catch phrases was lengthy, it must have been hard for voters to figure out who was who and what was what.

Here's some of the slogans and catch phrases: "vote your town, your choice"; "your concerns are mine"; "a

strong, forceful voice for Acton"; "I think like a taxpayer when in council"; "vote for leadership"; "a strong voice for Acton"; "it's time to control the high cost of education"; "vote for continued fearless representation"; "re-elector" (for re-elect in French); "a strong voice, a clear voice"; "the full time, all the time strong voice"; "for action in Acton"; "for solid, consistent leadership"; "most important vote is for X"; "let's keep the rural area rural"; "a vote for X for council means something to you"; "Acton must be heard"; "let your concerns be mine"; "An Acton man who recognizes Acton's needs"; "like you a concerned taxpayer"; etc.

I guess the wildest I saw was separate school board candidate Irene Wood's sign, it may have been on her literature too, I didn't see it. "Would? Wood? I Wood" was memorable.

There were a number of firsts too, at least they were firsts in my mind.

A friend ordered a pizza the other night and when it arrived, stapled to the top were a couple of plastic cards with 1983 calendars on the back from Vince Whelan.

Candidates take zingers at the positions of their opponents in just about every election, but rarely are they very precise and I can't recall seeing a candidate name his opponents by name before. So, Ed Wood's stinging attack on Vince Whelan and Dave Whiting's positions, calling them by name, in both the insert in his last piece of literature and at the high school all-candidates meeting, was I believed a ground breaking campaign technique for Acton.

Then there was Tom Simmons, separate school board candidate, using Whelan signs from the same race in 1980 and just sticking his name on them, that was certainly different.

Yes, it was a wild election, and loads of fun to boot.

I can hardly wait for '85, though I doubt many candidates and voters can hardly wait.

Back Issues

10 years ago

November 8, 1972
Congratulations are given to Mr. and Mrs. Archie McEnery, on the occasion of their 53th wedding anniversary which they are celebrating this week.

Mrs. Anne MacArthur, Reeve of Nassagaweya, announced this week she would contest the election for Warden of Halton County if she is successful in being re-elected reeve in the township.

Desire for GO Train service from Acton to Toronto prompted council's ready acceptance of a suggestion to have an Acton representative at a meeting.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Farr, formerly of Brampton, are newlyweds who are now living in the Winston Apartments, on Churchill Road.

Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Landsborough and Ralph visited with Mr. and Mrs. Robert Landsborough and family at Newmarket on Sunday.

There was a large crowd at Root's Hardware in Guelph for their grand opening.

20 years ago

November 8, 1962
Fire of unknown origin endangered the downtown business section Monday afternoon and gutted the front interior of Frank Toth's Shoe Store on Mill Street.

Sunday, November 11, marks the 30th year since the custom of wearing a poppy on Remembrance Day was inaugurated in Canada.

Public skating on Saturday brought 550 paid skaters to the Acton Community Centre. There were 245 eager youngsters on Saturday afternoon and 305 adults on Saturday night.

Gord McKeown gave a talk on the Rotary magazine, prepared by Dick Lee, at the club meeting on Tuesday.

Several groups of hunters are off to the north. Likely getting away from the routine is just as important as getting a deer.

50 years ago

November 3, 1932
A dance will be held in Eden Mills on November 9. Admission 25c. Frank's and Black's Five-Piece Orchestra will furnish the music.

Specials this week at Patterson's Meat Shop are: sirloin roasts 18c a lb., wing roasts 16c a lb., fresh hams 12c a lb., side pork 10c a lb., 2 lbs. of shortening 23c and homemade sausage 25c a lb.

For Sale: One Oil Stove, 3 burner, with oven. Nearly new. Apply, G. Ryder corner of Agnes and Guelph Street.

Miss Etie Dills spent the weekend visiting at the home of her sister and brother here.

For a limited time Coleman Lamps will give you \$1.50 off any new lamp bought so hurry while supplies last and get a new lamp for \$9.25 with your trade in.

75 years ago

November 7, 1907
Dr. Hore has moved his office from the Perryman block to his residence on Willow Street.

Interesting All Saints Day services were held in St. Joseph's Church by Rev. Father Feeny.

The street crossings will stand scraping off once or twice a week during the present muddy weather.

The new houses on Wellington Street, Messrs. Adam Stewart's and Jeremiah Bell's are nearing completion. They are a credit to the locality.

Mr. James Torrance, who has just removed from his farm in Eramosa, has taken over the express business recently purchased from Mr. John Harvey.

Mr. Wells, the newly-appointed ticket agent at the GTR, will move his family from Paris in a few days. They will occupy Mr. Tarzwell's new house on Frederick Street.

100 years ago

November 16, 1882
Mr. A.W. Green announces by poster that he will pay cash for any quantity of pork this winter.

If you want a nobby, durable and cheap suit, J. Fyfe's is the place to go. Georgetown bakers have reduced the price of bread to 11 cents. That's low enough.

We don't believe the new town hall will be completed by the first of October—as per contract, after all.

Mr. C.W. Marlatt, butcher, slipped the other day while getting out of his wagon, and fell, bruising his face pretty badly.

An Acton inventor has something new, simple and successful in the matter of telephones. Mr. J.E. McGarvin's Drug Store and his office are connected with the new invention, and there's a good deal of hollering sometimes, by those anxious to test the invention.

We learn with regret that three members of the family of Wm. McCraney, Esq., M.P.P., are dangerously ill with typhoid fever.

Coles' slaw

I told you recently of the crisis at our house when the slats of the bed gave away and this poor fellow lay sprawled amongst the ruins, embarrassed and penitent. This week a new crisis developed.

It happened Sunday while I was getting ready to attend Remembrance Day services in Halton Hills. There had been some trouble with the cold water tap in the kitchen. It dripped and balked when you turned it on. And when you finally managed to get the water going there was the unmistakable feel of a worn washer.

After several mute appeals from the other side in the marriage contract to "do something about that tap," I decided there was no time like just before parade time. I turned off the water, got out my only adjustable wrench, removed the tap handle and unscrewed the stem of the tap just as if I knew what I was doing. No problems.

Sure enough the washer was worn. I replaced it with another, screwed the stem back in, put the handle back on and turned on the water.

I expected a smooth flow of aqua. I got a squeak and a lot of bubbles.

If I had been smart I would have either called the plumber Sunday or no. Or barring that to have left the thing alone. Instead I took it off, tried another washer and went through the same routine again.

I tried it before turning the water back on. It wouldn't budge. I wrestled grimly with the darn thing. It finally let go—insides and all—and left me muttering.

I took a quick glance at the clock. It was time I got moving if I was going to be on time for the parade and service at the cenotaph.

In my haste I jammed the tap back into the hole, screwed in the handle and turned on the water. On the way out I mentioned to my wife that I hadn't been able to fix that datted thing and to be careful because she may not be able to shut the tap off, if she managed to turn it on.

With never another thought I drove merrily off with my camera around

my neck and the screwdriver still in my hand.

The sight of the screwdriver on the car seat when cenotaph services were over reminded me I still had to fix that tap. I made a mental note to leave until the next day when I could get either a new insides or the plumber, what ever was available first.

But I knew something was amiss as soon as I had cleared the threshold at our house. There were towels draped over the laundry tub. Wife was baby sitting a crying grandchild. There was the unmistakable air of frost in the air, although the temperatures outside were clearly unseasonably warm.

I won't relate the conversation that ensued. It is too horrible to bring up with anything but your breakfast. It developed by way of gestures and accusations that wife had turned the tap and couldn't get it shut off (as I had mentioned). In her anxiety to avoid a flood she kept turning the handle. It in a fit of exasperation had jumped right off the tap with the insides still hanging on.

Water spewed all over the kitchen like she had struck a geyser. Number one daughter was there with her two kids but the efforts of all four couldn't move the shut-off valve. They reacted instantly. They fetched the next door neighbor.

A kind soul, when daughter rapped on the door and told his wife what was happening at our house, he headed for the bathroom. Quick thinking.

However, there being a bond amongst housewives that we men will never fathom, his wife knocked on the bathroom door and summoned him to the rescue. He decided, I guess, that valor was better than discretion. He responded quickly.

Somehow amongst all the pandemonium he managed to get the water shut off and the tap reposing in its proper place. Daughter went off skating with her eldest and left youngest with wife to baby sit. She made strange without Mom there and that's where I again landed home in the midst of another crisis.

Dripping taps don't respond on Sundays