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## Individual impact

We're all used to thinking the only way to move government is to be part of a big, vocal group. In most cases that is the case.

But, every once in a while along comes an example of an individual having an impact.

Recently there was a shining example that an individual can move big government.

Lorne Doberthien's crusade to have the province improve the lot of the handicapped reserved parking and institute a disabled licence plate paid off.

He didn't have a large lobby group, all Lorne had was his own hard work and conviction that it shouldn't be too hard for Ontario to follow other provinces and states in developing a system for handicapped licence plates.

Anger at the way he was treated when he wanted to park in reserved handicapped parking at the CNE in 1981 prompted Doberthien's campaign.

He wrote letters to politicians and bureaucrats at both the federal and provincial level. He also enlisted the aid of Halton Hills and regional councillors. He thoroughly researched what is being done in other jurisdictions to help the handicapped park.

Doberthien hooked up with MPP Julian Reed and eventually had an audience with Minister of Transportation and Communications Jim Snow.

His presentation must have been impressive. Queen's Park virtually went for every idea Doberthien proposed.

Handicapped people across Ontario owe Lorne a vote of thanks for his efforts.

The entire community should be proud of his accomplishment, and thankful of his example for just what one person can still get done prowling the corridors of power—G.M.

# Short shots

The price for beer has almost tripled in the last 10 years, rising from \$5.50 for a case of 24 to \$15.30 in December of this year. This most recent increase which comes tomorrow (Thursday) makes the fifth one this year and the second increase in Ontario in less than three months. If prices keep on rising beer will no longer be the poor man's drink. Only the well to do will be able to afford the suds. Those who like to sip their suds will either have to start brewing their own or switch to water. Beware, however. The Region has plans to increase water bills, too. So what's a guy to do caught between two draughts.

Friday and Saturday's warm, sunny unseasonable weather surely had to be the real Indian summer when the Great Spirit gave Indians time to prepare for winter blows. This scribe got his leaves raked, windows cleaned and pots inside during the balmy interlude perhaps a trifled different than native Indian would have done but important these days anyway.

Some weather prophets who profess to know what's in store for us this winter are predicting one of the coolest winters on record. And indeed they may be

Coles' slaw

right. However, if the signs this writer reads are correct we may have a mild winter. Signs?: Spiders still weaving webs. Grass growing. Buds peeping out. Dew worms crawling around. Need more evidence?

Federal Conservatives are again trying to snatch defeat out of victory. The polls show Joe Clark and the Tories are away ahead of the Liberals in popularity but they turned on Clark in another example of knifing leaders that has marked the party in the last two decades. How can they sell Canadian unity when they can't agree among themselves?

There's a recount in Ward Three this Thursday to settle who will fill the two vacant seats. It was precipitated by the losing candidate who trailed second place by 38 votes. There may be no change in the order but the recount may straighten out some loose election practices.

If you haven't looked lately, there are only 14 shopping days left until Christmas. And if you have your shopping done there are only about 300 shopping days left until the 1983 celebration.



### From the editor's desk Council stumbled out of starting gate

by Gord Murray Free Press Editor

If the municipal complex isue was an entry in a horse race, the nine incumbent members of council responsible for jockeying the nag around the track have managed to allow their mount to stumble coming out of the starting gate.

To use another analogy, they fumbled the ball on the kickoff.

We've by no means stopped asking questions about what some in Acton are affectionately calling "Pomergate," but the simple truth is the whole story may never be uncovered or there may not be much more to find out. There doesn't seem to be much documentation and councillors are understandably a little confused about what they said, when. There's a very real danger here that the baby could be thrown out with the bathwater because of the way council has handled this long steaming hot potato.

We don't know if a municipal complex is needed or not, now or in the future. There are a lot of theories—that it is costly having the municipal operation spread all over, that staff cuts can be made if the Town is housed under one roof, that the Town can make more money buying this land as an investment than it's making in interest on the reserve fund, etc.

We're willing to be convinced by some kind of external study of space needs for now and the future. Maybe new Councillor Rick Bonnette's campaign call for an efficiency study would answer not just the question of efficiency of staff and procedures, but also the efficiency of the building set-up of Halton Hills.

I firmly believe before proceeding council should and will produce facts and figures to back their contention it will be cheaper in the long run to build a new administrative centre than keep everything decentralized.

So if we haven't given the idea of a complex a black eye, then what has got local journalists in such a lather?

Well, before we were able to jump on the bandwagen in print, we had readers asking us two questions—was it legal for a lame duck council to spend \$10,000 from the reserve fund? And how could councillors go through the campaign without ever mentioning this political football? We're still puzzled.

We checked with the province about what a lame duck council can and can't do. A Ministry of Municipal Affairs lawyer suggested we ask the clerk for the "justification" of such an unusual step by a Halton Hills council. After learning from Ken Richardson that the Town had a legal opinion saying it was all right to spend money from a reserve fund, even it less than three-quarters of the councillors will be back for the new term, we got back to the lawyer at Queen's Park. We filled her in on all the background we had, but she countered she couldn't confirm the council had

we were as surprised as anyone to discover that the Ministry's legal branch doesn't enforce its own Act. We were informed that citizens enforce the Municipal Act through court action or a petition for an inquiry by the province.

At least one councillor has told me it was a cheap shot on our part to explain to people how they could find out if the Town's legal opinion was correct. I naturally don't agree, and I can't seem to figure out what I was supposed to do when the province left council's legal opinion dangling. Just because we didn't take council's word for it that the legal opinion was correct doesn't mean

we think it wasn't.

Personally I don't figure council did act illegally. The Town has smart lawyers, Mayor Pomeroy and clerk Richardson aren't dummies either.

So it all comes down to a question of ethics. Was it proper for councillors not

to mention this iron they had in the fire prior to the November 8 vote?

We don't think so, but we aren't convinced yet that this was completely intentional, that they actually all sat down and plotted to keep everything quiet on the municipal complex until after the election.

It seems a majority at least simply stumbled into this mess.

The timing is the problem. It appears that when it was hatched at such an unopportune time, a mere two weeks after the election, most councillors were aware the timing was awful and there'd be questions and probably some squwks.

They were faced with rejecting what

they seem to sincerely believe is a good proposal, or making a political blunder.

And to hold off the announcement of this proposal until January or February wouldn't have solved this dilemma that much, either. There would still be questions because their own written agreement with their agent, Longmore Construction, indicates as one councillor put it "we've been messing around with this since June."

Further, the agreement also indicates that the die was cast in September. They hadn't taken an official vote, but they'd had a straw vote behind closed doors in which they all agreed they should replace Longmore's deposit and pay him interest, so they could take a closer look at the site. They weren't legally committed at that point, but they had reached a gentleman's agree-

I don't think this subject was something which should have been raised suddenly in campaign literature, at local doors or at the all-candidates' meeting. That would have changed it into a real political football. Once the cat was out of the bag it would be hard to put the press and public off in their quest for every tlny detail.

(Continued on Page 5)

# Back

#### 10 years ago

December 6, 1972
Council decided Tuesday night shoppers in Acton will have a free bus service for 10 days before Christmas. The service will be provided by Tyler Transport Ltd., Acton.

General Fireproofing Co. has announced it will shut down its George-town plant which manufactures steel office furniture. About 40 Acton employees will be effected by the plant closing.

Birthday greetings are extended to Mrs. Martha Jackson who observed her 92st birthday on Tuesday.

The Y's Men's Grey Cup dance in the music centre Saturday night was enjoyed by the crowd attending.

Halton Fire Prevention Bureau's annual awards night honored Craig Gordon of M. Z. Bennett School in Acton and Nora Summerfield of Brookville Public School in Nassagawaya for their fire prevention poster.

#### 20 years ago

Election fever hit more Actonians this year than any time since 1957. Monday 54 per cent of eligible voters cast their ballots at the polis. George Barbeau and Edward MacDonald were vying for the Mayor's position. Mr. Barbeau won by 402 votes. John Goy was the former mayor.

A \$90,000 proposed Christian Education building addition to Knox Presbyterian Church received the approval of the majority of those present for a congregational meeting on Thursday.

Max Storey was named president of Branch 197, Royal Canadian Leglon / during the annual election night on Monday.

Down from the west for the Grey Cup game a group from Deloraine; Manitoba, visited with Mr. and Mrs. John Sprowl and family on the weekend. The United Church Women (UCW) at

a meeting night presented a life membership to Mrs. Fred Kentner, Sr.

#### 50 years ago

December 1, 1932

Everyone on the Voters List is entitled to a vote on the Daylight Saving

Don't forget the Shooting Match on Saturday afternoon, December 3, at John Black's.

A meeting of Acton Hockey Club was held last Thursday evening, Mr. J. S. Davidson, manager of the Bank of Montreal here, was appointed Manager for the Intermediate team.

Specials this week at the Red and White Store are: 2 lbs. of seedless raisins for 29c, 2 tlns tomatoes 23c, 6 lbs. parsnips for 10c, 2 tins Heinz pork and beans 23c, and Maple Buds 1 lb. for 25c.

Mr. David McGuire, formerly of Acton was manager of the bank in North Bay which was held up and robbed of \$5000 on Saturday.

The General's Cup was won by "D" Company, of Acton and Georgetown at the annual inspection of the Lorne (Scottish) Rifles at Burlington on Saturday.

#### 75 years ago

Mr. D. A. Dickson is making prepara-

tions for opening a wood yard in town.

The Oddfellows drama and concert tonight. The "Social Glass" and Eddie Piggott, humorist, will be the attractions.

Auctioneer Hemstreet had a busy day last Saturday. He had one sale of stock at one o'clock and another of furniture at three o'clock in the Council Chamber.

Mr. G. A. Black has decided to let his farm on shares and will announce an auction sale next week sometime.

Miss J. Drummond of Guelph, is giving lessons in voice production in Acton every Tuesday.

The ground is well covered with snow and a few sleighs are already running.

#### 100 years ago

December 14, 1882 The new town half bell w

The new town half bell will arrive today. Custom's authorities imposed a duty of 30 per cent on the bell.

Howard Clifton's New York Church Choir Company gave interesting entertainments here on Saturday and Monday evenings.

Mr. John Lawson, of the 4th Line, Esquesing, sold a pig on Tuesday to Mr. T. H. Harding, which weighed almost 500 pounds.

The old G.T.R. tank house has been removed to a vacant lot on Young Street, and will be converted into a stable by Mr James McLellan.

The regular quarterly examinations at Acton Public School will take place, in the First Department on Thursday afternoon and the Second and Third Departments on Friday afternoon

# Business site once had beautiful garden on it

A sold sign went up on the stores which are collected under one roof and called Leathertown Village indicating this business spot, which is in the hub of Acton's downtown, may become active again.

The site has long been a busy place and when Mr. Pryhitka renovated the former hardware store into a collection of three stores it looked as if it would become another fine addition to the Acton shopping centre.

For a while it was. Then the economic recession hit some occupants and others moved elsewhere. All the stores were vacant when it was sold last week.

Since the building will be situated next to the new parking lot created by the demolition of two houses on Church Street, the tenants would have first shot at the pedestrian traffic generated from the lot. I'm hoping it will be another shot in the arm for the downtown where boarded up empty stores have not helped merchants to make it more attractive.

As long as I remember the building was occupied by a hardware store. The first one I remember, of course, is the one owned and operated by Bill Talbot, who was a community minded man long active in sports and other organizations. He sold to the Gordon family who operated the hardware for years before they in turn sold to the Roos

family. There was another owner in the store before Mr. Pryhitka bought the building and turned it into a complex.

The first occupants were Joliffe Shoes and Acton Photo and Camera and The Pine Shop. Acton Photo has moved across the street, the shoe store left and the furniture store closed, leaving the building vacant.

According to Acton's Early Days, which can still be purchased at The Free Press (\$15.) in hard cover, the two lots which occupied by the stores and what was formerly the Jack Kentner residence as discussed in an earlier column, were once unoccupied by any building. They were owned by Charlie Symon and the site of vegetable and flower gardens. The Symon store was across the street where the Bank of Montreal now stands. The Symon family were prominent hardware merchants in Acton for decades.

Apparently, Mrs. Symon was the gardener. The book says she super-intended the garden and was a "gardener of artistic taste and skill and loved flowers devotedly." Like many gardeners she had a rival, this one across the street at the corner of Mill and Main Streets, where Henry Stachyra has his First Line TV and Karen Shortill has Freezer Frenzy. The rival's name was Mrs. Second, no relation to Laura and her cow.

Mrs. Secord's garden was a riot of color in the summer but says Acton's Early Days, she paid little attention to order or method with her planting. Mrs. Symon, on the other hand, was as precise in the arrangement and formation of her flower garden as she was in her dainty parlor across the street, or in her personal attire."

The result was her shrubs and flowers showed to much better advantage. This was helped by the attractive low picket fence which enclosed the garden while Mrs. Secord's pride and joy was surrounded by a tight, high board fence which one son bored peckholes through so passers-by could see the beauty of his mother's garden.

The flowers in those early days in Acton were mainly perennials with a few
new annuals evolved by the gardeners
of the era. There were a number of
roses and lilacs but most of the flowers
were Sweet William, honeysuckles,
Johnny-jump-ups, bachelor builtons, a
few dahlias and English marigolds and
clumps of southern wood and ribbon
grass.

Acton's Early Days records that Mrs. Secord once secured an Oriental poppy which was rare and which she prized greatly. Popularly called Laura Augusta, Mrs. Secord was an unusual person herself. She and her three sons came to Acton from Lowville and

Johnson's real estate business is now. They called it Secord Brothers' Great Tea House. They bought in large quantities. Acton residents well remember the time they brought in a whole car load of salt herrings, whitefish and salmon just before the beginning of Lent, which then was a time of fish, fast and abstinence.

A whole barrel of the fish could be bought for a dollar and a half. Needless to say many Acton families subsisted on fish and potatoes that winter until the car load was exhausted. These enterprising merchants also brought in a carload of tea which they sold for 25 cents a pound and with which they also threw in a tea cup.

As I said earlier Mrs. Secord was a remarkable woman. It was she who christened "The Mill Pond" (as it was called for years) "Fairy Lake." She persuaded the people in Acton that such an expanse of clear crystal spring water with wooded hills around it, cultivated fields and attractive homes, should have a more attractive name than the mill pond. And she christened it "Fairy Lake," a cuphuism which has become increasingly popular as we

As boys we always used to call it "the pond." Now I live beside it, It has become "The lake," although I can't

see anything wrong with "The Mill Pond." I have to admit the noun "lake" conjures up a more appealing body of water than "pond", which nowadays are often weed-filled and muddy.

Before anyone suggests that aptly describes Fairy Lake they should recall

describes Fairy Lake they should recall what it looked like before it was dredged in a pilot project by the Credit Valley Conservation Authority. Much of the debris such as old stumps and branches were removed from most of the 88 acre body of water then as well as hundred of tons of silt and bullrushes.

Besides Fairy Lake has become more attractive over the years since Mrs. Second and family resided here. The park which juts into the lake is picturesque, the Royal Canadian Legion sits next to it, an attractive building on beautiful grounds. Recently the new St. Joseph's school was built near its shores and fine residential areas surround it.

This column has gone from flower gardens to Fairy Lake, which is enough of a spread for this week and besides. Ted Tyler tells me that most families with ties to old Acton enjoy these columns, but perhaps newer residents aren't so interested. Which could be true but I can't help reaching back to this community's roots and I hope you will bear with me in further columns from time to time.