

# The Acton Free Press

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## Fowl issue settled?

It was good to see the Fairy Lake swans moved to open water quickly last Tuesday after Councillor Rick Bonnette raised the matter at council. It was also heartening to hear from Mayor Peter Pomeroy Monday night that a permanent solution to this annual problem is close at hand. We'll be waiting to hear the solution in detail.

For too long matters involving our fowl have been treated as a joke or some matter too trivial to worry municipal minds.

It's long past the time that council nailed down a policy dealing with the care of the swans as well as other fowl. Staff certainly need the guidance in these matters, as evidenced by the fact the recreation director seemingly wasn't aware even if the birds weren't fed they couldn't fly south and displayed such an unsympathetic attitude towards a subject near and dear to many Acton hearts.

It was hard to capture in print the light hearted, jovial manner in which Bonnette raised this issue. For a rookie politician he showed great forethought in approaching it in the way he did. While he gave everyone in the council chambers a good laugh, he was still able to convey his deep concern for the birds to his colleagues and it resulted in prompt action. Our congratulations, Rick.

The birds have been a pain Halton Hills inherited from Acton for some time, a problem they have never permanently come to grips with because too many held the false hope that if one well known resident quit feeding them they'd generally disappear in winter. It hasn't happened because the simple truth is that many, many Actonians and visitors feed the birds, not just one person. A photo recently in this newspaper showed a whole family feeding the birds.

And why must the birds leave in winter? They bring pleasure to many people here year round, and some Actonians have formed strong attachments to the fowl. They are also a plus, albeit a small one, in efforts to make Acton a tourist centre. It's true they can be a bother and something of an expense, but for what they provide the community they are well worth the fuss and cost.

Wisely, Halton Hills seems to have made little effort to enforce the bylaw posted on warning signs at the lake advising people not to feed the fowl. Hopefully this attitude will continue.

So, as long as the fowl winter here we might as well care for them properly.

The fowl may not seem important to some outside Acton, but then there are a few things people in other areas of Halton Hills hold dear to their hearts which might tickle Acton's funny bone too.—G.M.



## From the editor's desk

### Rumors of my death exaggerated

by Gord Murray  
Free Press editor

I think it was Mark Twain who wrote or said, I'm not sure which, "reports of my death are greatly exaggerated."

Well, I have the same message for all computers which happen to have my name stored in their memory banks.

The reason I'm mentioning this is I just saw a mildly humorous movie about the reams of information computers have about all of us, as well as the revelation from Helen that she's told a major magazine/book publisher that I'm deceased, at least she thinks that's what she told them, to get my name off their lists.

Let me digress a bit. Like many people I wound up on a mailing list and have found myself deluged with junk mail.

I ignored the stuff, always threw it out, but then one day my wife got a hold of the junk and decided she wanted to enter some magazine sweepstake as well as subscribe to the publication.

While I was sure I wouldn't find the time to read the magazine much, I didn't care if she took it, as long as she paid for it and it was in her name.

That's when the problems started. Pretty soon our mailbox was stuffed with lots more offers to subscribe to this magazine's other products, books we hadn't asked for began arriving. Helen enjoyed the books and was more than willing to foot the bill.

The problem was this junk continued to come in my name.

No big problem, as long as Helen continued to foot the bill, and the firm would be willing to take back publications she didn't want and not charge me for them.

This was something I suspected wouldn't happen though. I had visions of Helen returning these things, and with help from Canada Post, the products not arriving back at their source on time. Bills, bills, bills, all to me for things Helen didn't want.

I insisted Helen make every effort to have my name scratched and hers inserted.

And she did try. Every time she had to return something she stroked out my name and replaced it with hers. Besides all the cheques were signed by her on her personalized cheques, which makes no mention of Gord.

Now I figure these subscriptions are run by computers, and the computer was either unable to read the label change or wouldn't.

Anyway, the company and its computer didn't get the message. Despite ample evidence that I had nothing to do with their products, everything kept coming with my name on it. For months and months and months, this went on.

Then last week two packages arrived with Helen's name on them.

I asked her how she finally got it changed and she laughingly informed me she marked the last label deceased. At least she's pretty sure she marked it deceased. She also recalls considering marking it divorced, anything to get the message across without going to the bother of writing a letter which wouldn't likely have been read any more than the previous label changes were.

It hadn't occurred to me there'd be any problem with having some computer think I'm dead.

Then we rented the movie Improper Channels over the weekend and I was reminded how the computers can all talk to each other and assemble lots of bits of unrelated information about a person and then put it all together to make a perfectly inaccurate picture of you.

Mariette Hartley and Alan Arkin starred in this film about how computers put together an erroneous picture of Arkin and the subsequent humorous dilemmas the machines put him and his family in.

A comedy of errors, human errors initially, resulted in his losing his job, having his credit cards revoked, his child taken away from him and assorted other problems.

In the end Arkin fixed the people behind the machines but good. He made the computers go wild. The results damaged the reputations and credibility of the agencies and people working for them which owned the computers, and he even succeeded in wiping himself and his family completely out of the memory banks.

Now I have to admit I haven't had a lot of problems with computers fouling up my life, though they have sometimes been a bit of a pain.

But I have heard an awful lot of horror stories about the damage to people's lives which computers and the information agencies feed into them can cause.

It's incredible the amount of information the government, financial institutions, companies and agencies compile and store about us.

I think the worst story I've heard is that some company puts out a directory about everyone living in Acton, and of course people living in every other community as well, which is used by sales people. This directory is supposed to contain your name, age, the closest intersection to which you live, where you work, how much you owe, how much you make and lots of other things which are none of anyone's business other than those you have authorized to know such things. I've never seen this directory so I can't prove it exists, but I've heard about it enough times to feel certain it's no pipe dream.

So, I can imagine the problems I may face if some computer spreads the word that I'm dead.

Sound far fetched? As I thought about this column I thought it was, then I remembered someone pointed out to me recently we're now just a year away from 1984.

I read the book about 15 years ago, and began thinking about all the improbable things in the book which have come true in the succeeding years.

Yup, telling a computer I'm dead might just open a real can of worms. I expect I'll soon see how close to Orwell's 1984 we really are.

## Back issues

### 10 years ago

January 24, 1973.

The Ontario government has proposed a joint North Halton municipality composed of Acton, Georgetown and most of Esquesing and Nassagaweya in four unit Halton.

Diane Spielvogel was elected chairman of the joint Acton Parks and Recreation Committee at the inaugural meeting Monday night.

Junior Farmers from this district joined over 1500 more from all over Ontario at the Talent Festival at the Royal York Hotel, Toronto, on the weekend.

Acton Delicatessen proprietor Ed Bendicks was named to succeed Roy Goodwin as president of the Acton Chamber of Commerce at the annual meeting Wednesday night.

New condominiums at Kingham Hill Estates are continuing to rise even though winter weather hampers construction.

The Acton Youth Council is hoping to stage a Winter Carnival in town February 14-19.

### 20 years ago

January 24, 1953.

John H. Goy was named first chairman of the newly-formed recreation committee during the second session of the year.

Acton Firefighters brought honors to the community this week when it won second prize in the Fire Prevention scrap book competition.

A popular grade 10 student, Anne Bennett brought honors to Acton High School when she won the Industrial Accident Prevention Association's public speaking contest at Guelph, Monday evening.

Mrs. Gordon Green and her nephew Mr. Frank Holmes are home from a 17-day visit with relatives in London, England.

Max Storey was elected President of Branch 197 Acton, for his eighth term.

Water from the new reservoir system on Churchill Road, North, began flowing through the town mains last Wednesday.

Ken Hardman was appointed chairman of the Acton Planning Board at its inaugural meeting last Thursday evening.

### 50 years ago

January 19, 1933.

A good crop of splendid ice is being harvested at Corporation Pond now.

On Tuesday evening Ted Hansen had the misfortune to fall from his bicycle and fracture his ankle. He is in Guelph General Hospital.

Sleighting has been rather unusual this winter.

Specials this week at Nelson and Company on Mill Street are: 10 lbs. of granulated sugar for 25c, small oranges 1 doz. for 29c, 1 pkg. of Super Suds for 8c, Heinz beef broth 1 tin for 15c and tea with Tea Plate 1 lb. for 46c.

Hog shipping on Saturday, January 21, Price \$3.25 and grade. We have trucks for service. Cattle shipped to stock yards 20c per hundred. Call F.E. Holmes, Acton.

### 75 years ago

January 23, 1908.

The attendance at the High School is over 40 this term.

Bark is coming in very plentifully for Beardmore and Company at present. There are 65 cars in the G.T.R. yards on Tuesday.

Half a dozen more Russians arrived in town last week and joined the colony here. Mr. Morris Saxe is looking after their comfort.

A hockey match between the juniors of Georgetown and Acton, on the rink here on Monday night, was won by the home team 4 to 1.

During the fall and winter Mr. Wilds, Main Street, has been more than usually successful in trapping.

Mr. John Davidson, son of Mr. Chas. Davidson is now an agent of the Canadian Northern Railway at Humbolt, Sask.

February 1, 1883.

Scotch, English and Canadian Suitings in great variety, at East End Clothing store. J. Fyfe, Acton.

Have you seen the new skating rink on Main Street yet?

Miss Eliza Cameron left on Friday last to spend a month or two with friends in Walkerton.

Mr. A.W. Green has disposed of his grocery business to Mr. Howell, of Waterdown, who takes possession on the 15th.

Mr. Thomas T. Moore, Principal Acton Public School, has purchased three lots on the corner of Young and Mill Streets, near the Driving Park.

The ice men are busy. The ice here is first class and in splendid condition.

The G.T.R. employees are having a big time keeping the several tracks and platforms clear of snow this past month.

## Our readers write

### Post office impressive

Dear Sir:  
As a supplement to Ben Rachlin's letter to the Free Press, re: the old Post Office, a few facts.

The price to the town was \$10,000. The then town clerk told me that the council thought it would take \$10,000 more to alter for their use.

After the council refused to buy and it was put up for tender, Ben Rachlin and I bought it for \$16,125.

The council then raised the assessment to \$19,000, which we appealed. Judge Elliott reduced it to \$10,000. The town then appealed that to the Ontario Municipal Board, where it was turned down. They had then to pay all the costs of two men from Toronto, a stenographer,

and pay for the transcription of the proceedings.

The post office was an impressive structure, cut stone for four feet above grade, pressed brick above that. There were three levels, each 2,500 square feet, and lots of headroom in the basement. There was also a good hot water heating system, which we converted to gas.

Ben and I had a fair revenue out of the building until 1969. We got an offer then which we accepted.

To sum up, one council thought that the building was not worth \$20,000.

The people of today seem to be going to spend \$200,000 to \$400,000 on a scrubby looking building on a side street.

George Robertson.

### Lorna's memory plays tricks

Dear Sir:  
I should like to thank Mr. Ben Rachlin for his good wishes on my retirement and offer my apologies for the remarks I made that the Town of Acton was outbid on the old Post Office property.

I admit that my memory is rather vague regarding the events surrounding the sale and I am happy that Mr. Rachlin still keeps in touch with Acton via the Acton Free Press and was able to set me straight on this matter.

Sincerely, Lorna Clarke

## Coles' slaw

Murray for Arlene Bruce who has decided she doesn't like the Playboy programming planned on Pay TV and wasn't afraid to come out and say so. No doubt there will be negative comments from some people but somebody has to come out and say enough is enough. It is always better when someone in public office has the intestinal fortitude to call a spade a spade and let the chips fall.

This scribbler is hoping that the presence of new TV channels and their upbeat marketing will improve programming on the regular channels so they can keep the audiences and the advertising. As I've said before in these columns a lot of the programs they are putting out for viewers now are about as appealing as last year's catalogues. It's not surprising considering the number of hours TV channels must operate but it is discouraging for ordinary viewers like myself who like to relax occasionally in front of the boob tube and see something worthwhile besides violence and sex.

What is surprising is that some of the smaller stations seem to be getting better programming than the giants of the industry.

## Go get 'em Arlene, let's have quality TV

If you are tired of the pap you are served on TV neighbor Jack Carpenter recommends you slip your radio dial to his Sunday afternoon radio program on CFCA Stereo FM where there's plenty of fun and lots of laughs. Jack's music hall has been a feature of the station for a decade and is becoming increasingly popular.

Jack says he is dedicating a whole program to St. Jacques, the patron saint of laughter, on an upcoming program. It's a new saint to me but Jack promises nothing but laughs and good music.

Motorists from Acton and district have been getting a bargain at the gas pumps in the last couple of weeks as a price war rages between oil companies. Regular gas went down as low as 33.4 cents a litre at some stations and not far off that figure in others.

It isn't hard to tell the stations with the low figures; they have line-ups at the pumps.

Prices aren't as low at this writing in Milton or Georgetown where they have been sitting at 39.9 cents per litre but that could change at any minute as operators will tell you.

## US compatriot, Paunxatawney Phil

US compatriot, Paunxatawney Phil from Pennsylvania. As a forecaster he is even more accurate, correctly predicting six more weeks of winter last year.

The story goes like this, believe it or not:

"In the Indian legends of the Grand River valley, around what is today the city of Brantford, there is a strange tale of Klionda, a venturesome brave of the Mohawk tribe, and how he was saved by Naweentuck, the groundhog, on what is, today, Groundhog Day."

"Klionda's tale refers to the 'Great hills and rivers of the beaver' which is thought by historians to be the territory around Mount Forest and Durham in Grey County; also to the 'great place of falling waters and long neck of water'; this is thought to be Inglis Falls and the Owen Sound Bay; while his 'great forests and stone cliffs and frozen bays and lakes' aptly describes the Bruce Peninsula.

"So, we may conclude that Groundhog Day actually originated in the neighbourhood of Warton on that fateful day many years ago."

And that's all folks!

Bill Cook, the enterprising retail

## Some of them have been manning their signs oftener than the pumps.

As a story in this family journal pointed out a few weeks ago it is the oil companies not the service station operators who set the prices, and the price war has been precipitated by the glut of oil and gas in the marketplace where two years ago they were telling us we could look forward to \$1.00 a litre gasoline.

What a difference a few months makes. If both the federal and provincial governments didn't benefit so much from price increases no doubt the prices at the pump would be even lower.

Isn't it odd, a year ago everyone was worrying that prices would soon be out of sight. Now the financial community is worrying that they may come down even further.

A similar situation exists with the glut of grain in the United States. Some countries have starving people but they are asking farmers in the U.S. to voluntarily quit planting so much grain so prices won't fall.

Why not trade the grain for products the starving countries could supply? Any answers out there?

Up in Warton they are again celebrating their annual Groundhog Festival February 4. They have a ceremony honoring Naweentuck, a Canadian groundhog, who is supposed to have started all this 700 years ago. His descendant Warton Willie, another hog from the old ground, has been compared to his