

The Acton Free Press

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Put up or shut up

Last year when the board of education announced there would be a hefty tax increase to keep the school system operating a wave of shock spread across the region.

This year when the board announced they would be able to keep their budget to an almost acceptable 7.6 per cent increase some parents are demanding the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) be lowered, even if taxes are higher.

The demand is being fuelled by the elementary teachers who have been working without a contract since September because they want the PTR of 20.4 students per teacher lowered. A salary settlement has been reached but the PTR still stands as the major issue in a settlement.

The board says the PTR has already been lowered between 1977 and 1982 as enrolment in elementary classes across the region declined by 10 per cent while the corresponding number of teachers fell by only one per cent.

The teachers say they will not allow school children to

become pawns in the struggle between board and pedagogues noting Halton has the highest or one of the highest PTRs in Ontario. Figures show Halton should have 1,250 teachers for elementary classes across the region but when everyone is taken into account (principals, consultants, etc.) it leaves only 856 teachers for classroom work in the region.

Too few, say the teachers.

However, in a view of escalating tax demands for education in Halton, and the recession, it is obvious we cannot have it both ways. We must either knuckle under and pay extra for more teachers, or put our collective feet down and say, look, our taxes for education are too high now.

If we must have a lower PTR we would suggest the teachers come up with a workable formula which would not increase the tax bill and lower the PTR at the same time.

If they can't do this then we would further suggest they shut up and settle.

Neighborhood Watch

This past week there were six break and enters in Acton as well as an attempted burglary. Considerable amounts of cash and possessions, such as jewelry were stolen. Also last week there were several cases of vandalism to private property, such as cars.

There's nothing particularly new and earthshattering about this news. They're just more in the endless stream of reports this paper carries about break-ins and vandalism in our quiet little town.

However, this week's crime reports do carry a bit more meaning than usual because today's Free Press also carries lengthy coverage about efforts to bring a new crime prevention program, Neighborhood Watch, to town.

Since the program was first announced earlier this month there has been some interest in it from Lakeview, Glenlea, Bovis, and the Peel St. areas of town. In all, counting both the people who initiated the effort to launch Neighborhood Watch here and the citizens who have responded, maybe a dozen people are now looking at this program as a way to reduce crime in Acton.

That seems almost unbelievable. One would expect every homeowner and merchant who has been victimized by a break-in or vandalism would have called the police, Councillor Rick Bonette or Pat Little of the Acton Social Services and Information Centre about Neighborhood Watch.

Neighborhood Watch does work. It helped reduce crime in Halton 5.3 per cent in 1982. It's operating successfully in Burlington and Oakville and now taking off in Milton too.

Some will think they can't be the victim of vandalism or burglary. Hundreds of other residents can prove them wrong.

Even if you're not overly concerned about this problem or shy about getting involved in setting up a Neighborhood Watch in your area, go to the meeting for Lakeview planned for next month and take the National Crime Test and view the home security presentation by the police.

You may just find out how much your street needs Neighborhood Watch and become quite passionate about the program. G.M.

Our readers write

Praise the Rockwood volunteer firefighters

Dear Sir:
On Sunday, March 13 at about 1 p.m. the Rockwood Volunteer Fire Department received an emergency call to the Eramosa Township hamlet of Barrie Hill.

As a result of a two car accident, one of the injured drivers was trapped inside her demolished automobile. Despite the efforts of the Ontario Provincial Police and the team from the ambulance, the driver could not be released.

This writer observed the arrival of, and the efforts of the members of the Rockwood Volunteer Fire Department to remove the injured driver.

Using special equipment which had only been acquired by the

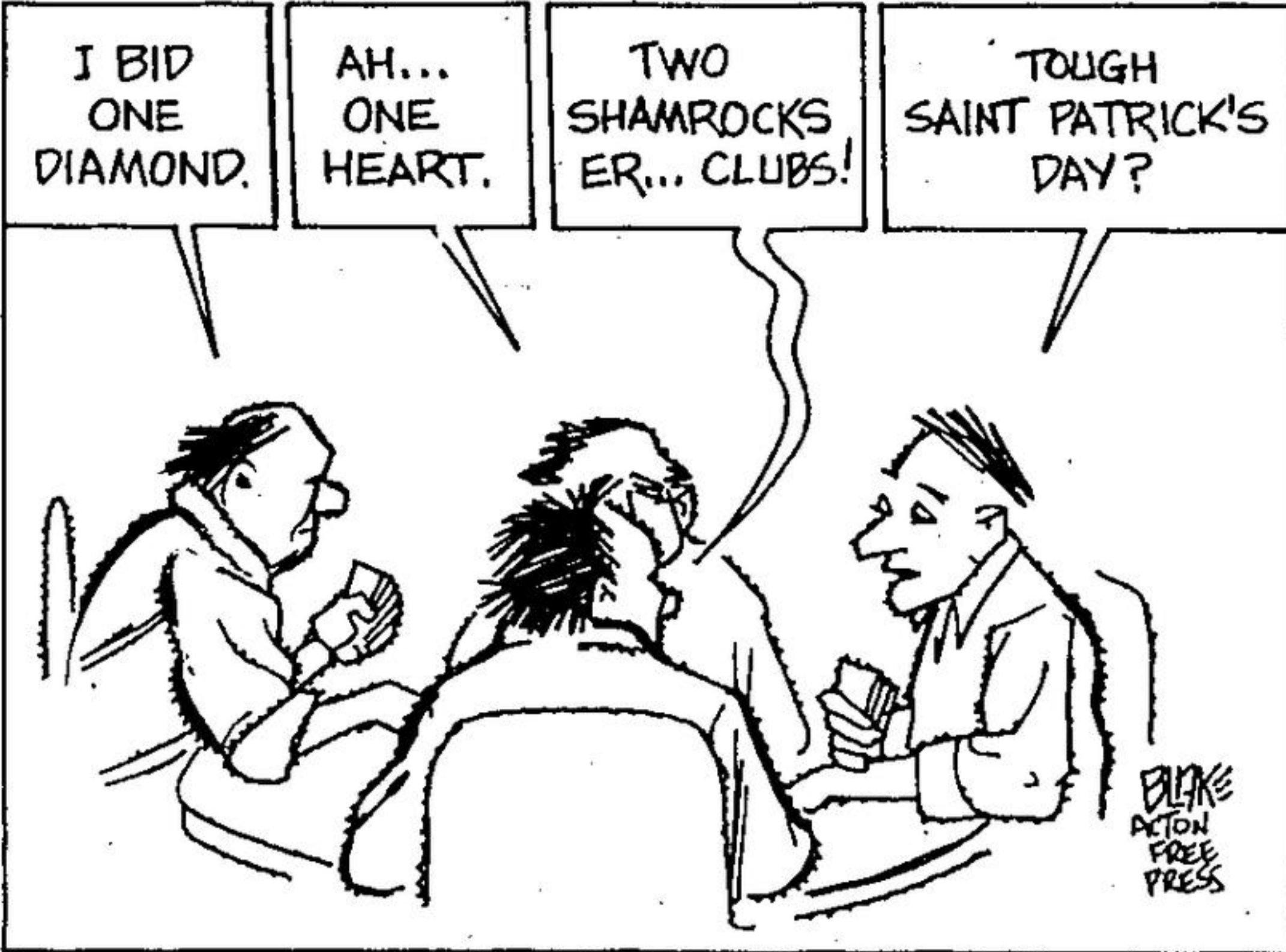
Fire Department a short time ago, they were able to remove the injured driver with a minimum of delay. Following her removal from the car she was taken by ambulance to a Guelph hospital.

What was impressive was the well organized and professional manner in which they handled a difficult and dangerous situation.

Those members of the Rockwood Volunteer Fire Department who responded to this emergency call did their job, and they did it well.

From your fellow residents in Eramosa Township, congratulations—We're proud of you!

John Clark
RR 3 Rockwood



Back issues

10 years ago

March 21, 1973

Acton's Centennial Commission announced it would dissolve in favor of a larger centennial committee with representation from all service organizations in Acton. During its existence, the commission has planned a large number of activities to celebrate the town's centennial year in 1974, chairman Jack Carpenter told Acton Chamber of Commerce last week.

Acton high school students bound for Spain were delayed en route before ever leaving Toronto. The 36 high school students and chaperones missed their Montreal-to-Madrid flight due to an overloaded aircraft at Toronto International Airport.

Bert Hinton, a former Acton Reeve on the board of governors at Sheridan College, objects to a planned appearance of prostitute Xaviera Hollander visiting the campus to promote her book.

20 years ago

March 21, 1963

Acton Town Council is debating how to replace the town's mayor. George Barbeau resigned Tuesday to accept a promotion with his employer, A.P. Green Fire Brick Co. A new mayor will be chosen next week from council members, and Hughie Lowe, who received the next highest number of votes in the last council election, will fill the vacancy on council.

Five Acton high schoolers marched into town Saturday evening after a 50-mile walk from Richmond Hill along Highway 7. The walk resulted from a student challenge. John Goy, Allan Hall, Gerry Murr, Boden Dyc and Keith Ranney made the walk. Two other participants dropped out along the way.

50 years ago

March 23, 1893

Last Saturday Jimmy Marshall, the seven-year-old son of Mr. Earl Marshall, narrowly escaped losing the sight of his right eye. The little chap was playing a game and running with a sharp stick when he fell.

On St. Patrick's Night the three-act play "My Irish Rose" was presented in the Town Hall here, under the auspices of St. Joseph's Players.

Mr. Harry Gibbons celebrated his 81st birthday on Tuesday. Owing to the illness of Mrs. Gibbons, the day was quietly observed and in the evening a few close friends gathered to wish him birthday greetings and spend a social half hour with him.

75 years ago

March 19, 1908

In view of the increasing duties of Mrs. Graham, the Librarian, her salary was increased to \$75 per year.

After 14 weeks of continuous sleighing Beardmore and Co.'s teamsters have returned to wheels again.

An electric wire with imperfect insulation threatened to fire the roof of Beardmore's leather warehouses at the G.T.R. station.

A couple of young men have been seen throwing dice for money in the smoking room of the G.T.R. station. Several others were playing a game with quarter dollars for stakes on the bar at one of the local hotels with the consent of the bartender. Surely the offenders are unaware of the fact there are heavy penalties for such offenses.

100 years ago

March 28, 1883

Council agreed to exempt from taxation the tannery property and stock of Messrs. G.L. Beardmore and Co. for the term of ten years. The town hall bell will now be rung at six a.m. every morning except Sunday.

The annual report of the village auditors is published in full. Receipts from taxes, licenses, clergy reserve fund, grant for lock-up etc. totalled \$10,381. Town hall expenses: contractor W.A. McCulla \$3,272; J. Mallory and Son architects \$200; court of chancery for site \$500; J.E. McGarvin, duty on bell \$68; painting of roof and tower \$57; flagstaff \$1.50.

Salaries J.E. McGarvin clerk \$122, Wm. Hemstreet constable \$50, Abram Matthews collector \$25, L.R. Fox and A.E. Matthews auditors \$10, H.P. Moore returning officer \$6, C.S. Smith was paid \$10 for tramps.

From the editor's desk

Baseball — great spring tonic

by Gord Murray
Free Press editor

In spring a young man's thoughts turn to... baseball!!!!

At least mine did for the past two weeks.

I've just returned from touring six baseball camps in five Florida cities and taking in 10 games involving 13 teams. I'd long planned this trip and it turned out to be just as much fun as I'd always imagined, though it would have been better if the sunny south had been a little more sunny and a little less damp. All and all though, I was pretty lucky, I only lost one inning of ball to the showers.

I plan to write a couple of columns about the teams I saw and the prospects for the rapidly approaching season, combining my own observations with everything I gleaned from pouring over four ball magazines and the daily papers in Florida which cover the camps like a blanket.

This week though I'm just going to deal with general impressions of spring training and some highlights of camp and Grapefruit League activities.

First off, it's a myth that all you see in the early stages of spring training are the reserves, rookies, and no-name fringe players.

It's true in the first two weeks you see a lot of guys you won't hear about in April, may never see or hear about again.

But the stars are out too, as well as most of the regulars and the rising stars of the grand old game of summer.

In the first week I saw starters for three or four innings and by the second week most clubs were letting their regulars perform at least five or six frames.

I visited Sarasota (White Sox), Vero Beach (Dodgers), Cocoa Beach (Astros), Fort Lauderdale (Yankees) and West Palm Beach (Braves and Expos). Besides seeing the home teams I also caught a number of visitors whose camps will have to wait until next spring's Journey: Kansas City, Detroit, St. Louis, Minnesota, Boston, Baltimore, and Texas. Save the Rangers, Houston and Twins they all look like contenders, though the Expos, White Sox, Yankees, Orioles and Dodgers appear the most promising.

And as I said I saw the top names these clubs boast. I saw Carlton Fisk catch, and Floyd Bannister (this year's big free agent catch) LaMarr Hoyt, Jack Morris and Vida Blue (old and tired) pitch while he was in Sarasota for two games. I also saw guys like Willie Wilson (last year's American League batting champ) hit and run, George Brett, Ron LeFlore, Harold Baines, Lance Parrish, Kirk Gibson, Greg Luzinski, Frank White, Hal McRae, Alan Trammell, Lou Whitaker and Larry Herndon.

Payne Park, winter home of the White Sox for the past 14 seasons is a real incentive to top performances. It's an old, decrepit light green structure that looks just like any of the faded minor league parks guys like Jim Bouton have bemoaned in books. One look at the place should be an inspiration to work hard to make a club.

Dodgertown, L.A.'s complex across the state in Vero Beach is just the opposite. Numerous well-kept playing fields surround Holman stadium. There's also a golf

course and a luxurious looking housing complex.

Besides seeing the Expos four times and the Yanks twice, including crazed owner George Steinbrenner twice, I'd have to say my two afternoons at Dodgertown were the highlights.

It's quite a place. There's no outfield wall, palm trees with yellow bands around the trunks about half-way up mark the outfield boundary beyond the warning track. It's a very comfortable stadium to watch a game in, not a bad seat in the place, though that wasn't a problem for me since one day I sat in the first row behind the Dodgers' uncovered bench and the other day I was six rows back of the Expos' bench.

It was the best time for star gazing too. I saw Jerry Reus pitch; Andre Dawson smack a homer; Pedro Guerrero look uncomfortable at his new position; third base; Steve Sax and Bill Russell turn double plays like it was second nature to them (which it is); Dusty Baker and Rick Monday; Tim Lincecum steal second and then third; Ozzie Smith dazzle with his play at shortstop; Willie McGee streak around the bases, Keith Hernandez, Al Oliver (last year's National League hitting champ) and Chris Speier, Ken Landreaux and other top players star.

But the off field activities were the real highlights of these two games.

Because I was sitting so close to the Dodger bench I could hear a lot of what was being said, except when they whispered. Tom Lasorda and the coaches giving the rookies, like Steve Garvey's hair apparent Greg Brock, instructions and advice; Lasorda shouting across the diamond to give Whitey Herzog some jibes, Lasorda arguing with the ump after one of his hurlers was called for a balk for the third time in one inning, etc. Lasorda is quite a guy, always cheering his players on and warmly congratulating them for doing any little thing right.

I was there the day they marked the 30th anniversary of the Brooklyn Dodgers making their winter home in Vero Beach, as well as the day old manager Walter Alston was named to the Baseball Hall of Fame. They had a ceremony with Alston and other

surviving members of the last Brooklyn club to win the world series. In addition I sat just a few seats away from Walter O'Mally, the Dodger owner, and listened to him chatting it up with the bench.

Ball broadcasting great Joe Gargiolla was sitting right behind me and it was interesting listening to his observations. He also enjoyed debating recollections with other veteran fans, and disputing their points. I didn't talk to him, I didn't feel I knew enough about the game to discuss it with someone who has seen as many games as he has.

I visited Cocoa Beach, home of the Astros on a cool blustery day when they opened their spring season against the Twins. I really hadn't planned to go to this game, but I heard on the radio Nolan Ryan was to pitch so I figured it would be worth the drive to see a future hall of famer and fireballer who is expected to break some strike-out records this season, even though neither club will likely do much this season.

Ryan did something to his arm warming up and was scratched. There wasn't much in the way of stars on the field either. I did see free agent Omar Moreno stink in the Astro outfield and at the plate, he sure didn't earn his fat contract that day. He even dropped an easy fly.

The Cocoa stadium was even worse than Payne Park. Dull and drab colored, the wind was blowing hard and the metal roof clanged away. I really wondered if we were going to make it through the afternoon. No wonder the Astros want to move by next year to a new town further south, Stuart, if the community will build them a new park.

In West Palm Beach I saw the N.L. west champs Atlanta Braves and Expos. They share a modern park with great seating, the Expos having moved there from Daytona Beach a couple of years ago.

I saw the rest of the Expos starters there: Tim Wallach, Terry Francona, Gary Carter, Doug Flynn, Warren Cromartie, as well as Dawson, Oliver and Raines again. I also saw the bulk of their pitching staff, Jeff Renshaw, Ray Burris (who looked awful in three appearances) Dan Schatzeder (the guy Montreal

(Continued on Page 7)

