

The Acton Free Press

TELEPHONE (519) 853-2010
Business and Editorial Office

Founded in 1875

Published every Wednesday by Metroland Printing & Publishing Ltd. at 69 Willow Street, Acton, Ontario, L7J 2M2. Telephone (519) 853-2010. Subscriptions: Single copies 30¢ each, \$17.00 per year in Canada, \$30.00 in all countries other than Canada.

Member of the Canadian Community Newspaper Association, and The Ontario Community Newspaper Association.

Second class mail registration Number 0615.

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Our representatives didn't grab a raise

We're generally not too slow in giving our local politicians the raspberry, or worse, when they do something we think's wrong. We've also been known to give them a pat on the back for an action we feel's right.

Here's a switch. We're giving them a bouquet for something they could have done, but didn't.

Recently Metro Toronto school board trustees took advantage of a one week lapse in the ending of one provincial restraint program and the start of another to give themselves hefty raises.

Actually considering the fact most school trustees there were only making around \$7,000 a year their raises of 100 per cent and more weren't as obscene in terms of dollars and cents as they were expressed by percentage.

It wasn't so much the raise they gave themselves that's enraged many people as the way they slipped it in through a loophole and demolished the spirit of restraint.

We won't get into the question of whether or not these trustees needed or deserve a raise.

However, we will acknowledge that our trustees and regional and local councillors are putting in a lot of hours for relatively skimpy pay. Increasingly their jobs are becoming more demanding and time consum-

ing. We doubt many are in this for the money, none are getting rich on their council or school board stipends.

The cynical voters will assume our local representatives, who have been following the wage guidelines, even freezing their wages in the last year, weren't aware they could slip through a raise for themselves during that one week gap in provincial regulations, or else they'd have done it.

We suspect that if Metro school board members knew about this loophole, so did some of our trustees and councillors. They simply preferred to do the right and honorable thing.

Like Provincial Treasurer Larry Grossman, we hope Metro voters remember how their school board representatives acted recently when they go to the polls in 1985. Of course it would be easier for voters to remember and councils and school boards might not be so bold and callous about voters' feelings and the political impressions they leave if the Ontario Tories hadn't added an extra year to their term.

In any event, we hope that when the restraint period ends voters will be understanding if our own representatives give themselves a reasonable, responsible and deserved raise. We also trust the raise question will have been settled well in advance of the next election. G.M.

An editor's beatitudes

Blessed are they who do not expect the editor to know everything—who tell him whenever an interesting event occurs—for they shall have a better newspaper for it.

Blessed are they who get their copy in early, for they shall occupy a warm spot in the editor's heart.

Blessed are the merchants who advertise regularly, for they have faith in their businesses, and their prosperity in their businesses, and their prosperity shall increase manyfold.

Blessed is the woman who sends in a written account of a party or wedding.

Blessed are those readers who pay their subscriptions promptly when they expire, so that the publishers can pay their bills when they are due.

Blessed are they who do not think they could run a newspaper better than the editor does—yes, thrice blessed are they, because there are so few of them in the community!

From the Buffalo Lake (Montana) News

SELF-INDULGENCE OR NECESSITY?



From the editor's desk

Goodbye Peter (Cole)



by Gord Murray
Free Press editor

Here I go again this week, saying goodbye to Peter.

No it's not the Peter who was our mayor and now is the boss of Halton region.

No, this Peter was just about as prominent, but he had Dr. and Cole in front of and behind his Christian name.

I'll miss Dr. Cole a lot. He had a habit of opening his mouth and trying to stick not one foot, but both feet, in it on a regular basis. He was great for copy and rightly or wrongly for controversial figures and their comments liven up a newspaper.

I'd have loved to have been able to have seen the look on Pomeroy's or any of the Halton Hills regional councillors' faces when they opened their agendas and saw the good doctor's letter of resignation. It would be interesting too to have the ability to read minds and know what our politicians are thinking these days about Dr. Cole's imminent departure.

I suspect it must be relief. I have no doubt that Dr. Cole must have accomplished some important things and done a good job during his three years as Medical Officer of Health here.

However, I suspect our politicians and Actonians won't be thinking of any of these when they recall him in the future. Dr. Cole should be the standard all civil servants in Halton are measured against when it comes to getting into hot water.

Even before coming to Halton he was the focus of a storm of controversy regarding his thoughts and actions on birth control and other touchy subjects.

His time here did nothing to quell the storm surrounding this man.

Dr. Cole's dealing with Acton always seemed to leave locals scratching their heads in wonder at the things he said, or else fuming in

anger. Physicians here seemed to wince at each mention of his name, councillors sat in fear awaiting each utterance.

Now, I only met the man a few times and talked to him on the phone occasionally. He seemed to me to be an agreeable enough chap.

But, I always wondered where he was getting his screwy ideas about us. It always struck me that he didn't seem to have a clue what we were all about up here.

I'll admit we have some real characters in Acton, some who find my head apparel odd would lump me with the characters, probably. I often thought Dr. Cole must only be meeting the slightly bent of Acton, not our general population.

Let me refresh your memory a bit about the man. He's the one who was the object of some scorn among parents regarding giving out birth control to teens. He's the man who carried on a running feud with some local rest home operators. He's the man who had some uncomplimentary comments about the way some turkeys were cooked once at the Acton Legion and at the same time also accused the employees of the Georgetown factory of over-indulging in spirits, before changing his mind.

In these cases there seemed to be valid points being made by Dr. Cole, as well as the people who disagreed with him. It was difficult to decide who was right and who was wrong in these rhuarbs, I always suspected both sides were right and wrong at the same time. That's common since imprecise language and not very well thought out comments can make the truth pretty grey, not black or white.

But the Dr. Cole stories that stick out most in my mind and I suspect will burn brightly in Actonians' minds for many years were the ones he made earlier this year regarding our education levels here,

our sexual habits and vices.

He raised the ire of Acton by saying he "suspected a well educated, high income population in every Halton municipality but Acton had contributed to the overall decrease in venereal disease in Halton." He had mentioned south Halton and Milton and Georgetown specifically as having higher socio-economic levels than most communities in Ontario.

He also set off a time bomb by announcing a study to compare health levels of people in Georgetown compared to Acton. He said the study interested him because it would show if "certain assumptions are true."

Those assumptions included his suspicion that there were lower levels of health in Acton compared to Georgetown. He thought researchers would also find Actonians are heavy drinkers and smoke more than most. In addition he suspected the fitness and nutrition levels were lower on this side of Halton Hills.

Acton doctors fired back that Dr. Cole's comments had prejudiced the study and made any results invalid and also countered that they believed VD was less prevalent here than in the south.

Dr. Cole, as I said earlier, seemed to have some strange notions about us. He rarely seemed to be able to back up his assumptions about us with facts.

Anyway, I wish Peel luck. They've got themselves a real pistol, someone with strong opinions who regularly fires both barrels from the hip.

Back issues

10 years ago

December 12, 1973

June Jansen's family watched with delight Sunday as she triumphed over a set of challengers to one of the top prizes in the TV show Eye Bet. June, as a previous winner, was back to tape the challenge match and came out with a dishwasher this time. She appeared on the show before and won a one week trip to Pompano Beach, Florida. Along with her to the studio on Friday went daughter Laura, son David and sister Kathy. Her sisters Kathy Hall, Maggie Given, Pat Kenner and Lorrie Ryan and brother-in-law Eddie Ryan have also appeared on the show.

Satisfactory results of the drilling program for water at the west end of Prospect Park were reported by Councillor Bill Coats at Tuesday's council meeting. He said he had visited the site during the testing on Tuesday and the well was producing 900 gallons a minute without appreciative drop in the volume of water in the well.

20 years ago

December 12, 1963

Acton OPP Corporal Ray Mason this week issued a warning to merchants to keep an eye on strangers who enter their places of business as Christmas time is an opportune time for shoplifters.

North Halton OPP issued a stern warning to hunters to be more careful with firearms following a weekend incident in which an 18-year-old Oakville hunter was shot in the leg by his companions.

Acton council members were greeted with open arms and promised full co-operation by the Ontario Municipal Board on their request for approval for a high school addition when the delegation met with the board in Toronto.

50 years ago

December 7, 1933

Acton Oddfellows gave a supper, dance and entertainment in the Parish Hall. Taking part in the program were ex-Warden A. Mason, R. Spielvogel, V. B. Rumley, J. Smith, Miss Beattie Rawlings, Ernie Coles, Chas. Landsborough, Mrs. Worden, Velma Blair, M. Locker and Ruth Gibson with accompanists Mrs. L. Worden, Miss J. Young, Miss Brown and Mr. Landsborough.

The marks of all high school students were given. Top pupils were Dorothy Phillips, Amy Anderson, Mary Young, Hazel Wilson, Kathleen Chapman, Jean Beattie, Bella Roszell, Margaret Arnold, Jean Bennie, Azenia Gibson, Jesse Cross, Mona McGeachie, Vera Coxe, Audrey Chalmers, Norman Braida, Elma Braida, Mary Papillon, Vera McEachern, Marjorie Near, Hugh Fraser, Dorothy Clarridge, Ada Sprawl, Marguerite Roszell, Velma Blair, Helen Campbell.

Skating at Acton arena ceased with the advent of mild weather this week.

75 years ago

December 10, 1907

Mr. John Ross, who was principal of Acton School from the retirement of Robert Little in 1872 to the appointment of Thomas T. Moore in 1879, has died.

The glove works is crowded with orders and the staff is working overtime.

The train service to Rockwood has been considerably improved, with two more trains stopping there each day, the 9 a.m. going west and the 8.23 p.m. going west.

The Free Press is delivered to any address in the British Empire for a year for one dollar.

The literary ladies of the Town are organizing a Shakespeare Society.

100 years ago

December 13, 1883

Business is dull, work is going to be very scarce, wages low and the cost of living high. Those who can occupy only what are called genteel callings are likely to be in a bad way.

At the meeting of County Council the question of Women's Suffrage came before the council. The resolution to petition the Ontario Legislature in its favor was carried by a good majority.

Our young men are advised to re-organize their debating society for the winter season. A room can be had in the town hall.

A Guelph boy played truant from school, sold his watch and bought whiskey with the money, and was afterward found hopelessly drunk. Still Parliament will grant license for the sale of this cursed beverage. And whose boy is not liable to ruin in the same manner?

Mr. Thomas Cook cut four cords of hardwood on a saw horse one day, and wants to know who can beat it.

Coles' slaw

As one who gets around to many other communities in this area during the festive season I have to say Acton and district is one of the most attractive in this season. Both municipal and residential outside lighting add a fairy tale dimension especially when there's a mantle of snow adding to the setting.

Larger places have more sophisticated lighting and decorations but they often lack that warmth and folksy appeal we see in small towns and villages of Ontario.

People from larger centres whom I meet in the course of my work sometimes ask why people like me stay in Acton, when larger places offer bigger and better attractions. It's a hard question to answer because I've never really thought it out. Besides I have never given much credence to the suggestion that geography can make any difference in the way one lives. As that old saw maintains, You may take Jimmy out of the country but you can't take the country out of Jimmy.

Certainly many Acton natives have left the old home town to carve careers for themselves in other places and done well both socially and financially. Most still have a place in their thoughts for Acton and area. Many of them sub-

Small town living has its advantages

scribe to The Free Press to keep abreast of what's happening. Many still have relatives and friends both here and in the district and still consider Acton "home".

Acton and district has its drawbacks as those who have lived here most of their lives know. I've done my own share of complaining about the lack of this and the lack of that, knowing at the same time if we want to improve things the first person to start with is oneself. And the first place to start is at home. And as you can see I haven't even got the festive Yule lights hanging yet.

There are also a lot of advantages to living in Acton we probably don't appreciate because we live with them each day and they are so familiar. Since we are relatively small it is still possible to know many of the townspeople, to walk the main street acknowledging waves and greetings from scores of townspeople and area residents. It gives a sense of belonging that people in the larger centres, unless they are in similar neighborhoods, very seldom experience.

Those of us who grew up here know that the community has gone through growing pains. It is no longer the tightknit small town it used to be but we are also aware



by Hartley Coles
Managing Editor

that although things change they also stay the same. That may be a confusion in terms but it is true.

Acton has never been identified as an affluent community like Oakville or Markham, for instance, but people here live relatively well. Loyal industries have supplied steady work. Although the wages may not be as high or benefits as many as in other places they have been adequate in most cases for the material well-being of employees. There are other advantages, such as being able to walk to work, if desired, knowing you don't have to fight heavy traffic, morning and night.

There are others who commute back and forth to work in larger

places. They fight the traffic daily but know they'll have a quiet haven to come home to in the evenings and weekends. We're only a hop, step and jump away from the serenity of the countryside which is virtually unspoiled in this neck of the woods. It is likely to stay that way for some time to come if the report just released by the region is correct. Consultants maintain Halton Hills should set less ambitious goals for rural industrial land use because much of the land is prime agricultural. Good.

It has never been my desire to live in a large centre anyway although circumstances, rather than likes or dislikes can change and it could become necessary. In that event, like many others, I would have to live with it. In the meantime there are no compelling reasons to believe the greener grass on the other side of the fence is any more than imagination.

Not everyone can live in a small town. I realize people born and raised in the city, for instance, often find small town life dull and repetitive. They don't have family ties and are used to entertainment at their fingertips. They sometimes try small town living for a couple of years commencing back and forth to the city. Some love it. Others move back to the city and

close that chapter in their life as good experience.

I've always maintained that the best feature of small town living is its people. There are so many good and generous people in places like Acton. Once you know them it is difficult to leave. Sure, we have our apples, disagreeable and cranky men, women and children, here as many or more than in other places. Surely all of us are afflicted with foot and mouth disease at times and moods are not always sunny.

I started out explaining why I like living in a small town, in this case Acton, and probably it is no clearer now than when I began. I have a cousin who lives in New York City. He says he is exhilarated by the flow of traffic down Fifth Avenue, the hurly burly on the streets of Manhattan. There's nothing he likes more than to feel the ebb and flow of the big city, and he never hopes to leave.

My views are the exact opposite. I'm attracted by the serenity and lack of traffic in Acton and the fact I know something about its roots, the personal stories and tragedies of many of its citizens, and feel I have roots of my own here.

I'm not peculiar. Many feel that way. It takes all kinds to make up a world.