

# The Acton Free Press

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## Stone School purchase possibly a no go in '84

The question of whether or not Halton Hills will buy the Stone School is a long way from being settled yet, however in light of comments made by a couple of councillors last week Acton shouldn't feel too comfortable about the prospects of the municipality acquiring this historic building.

A veteran and highly influential councillor, Harry Levy warned "nobody should hold their breath" waiting for the Town to buy the Stone School or help fund completion of the town hall restoration. He predicted what funds have been set aside for these two projects might well end up in the Town's general account. Levy further stated that 99 per cent of all items referred to budget committee by council never wind up in the final budget the committee brings to council for approval.

Mike Armstrong, another influential long-time councillor, said he'd "consider" funding for the Stone School purchase or the town hall restoration, but not both, and expressed the hope his colleagues would think the same way.

Incidentally, while the town hall restoration project has less political support at council it is substantially cheaper for the municipality to back than the Stone School acquisition, a situation we view as worrisome because it could result in a majority of councillors backing neither project.

And, just because Armstrong says he'll "consider" one project or the other, that's a long way from a commitment to definitely support an Acton project.

Normally we wouldn't find comments from just two councillors all that alarming. To be sure Levy and Armstrong are influential, but if they were powerful enough to sway the majority one would be the mayor and the other a regional councillor today.

However, when their comments went unchallenged by their colleagues it was further reason to be concerned.

It's true the debate last week centred on the town hall. The Stone School project was pulled in because a number of councillors have been viewing the old restoration fund of \$24,000 as the foundation of a Stone School fund which must be boosted to \$68,000 just to buy the building. Really the town hall and Stone School shouldn't be related topics, but they have been tied together by some councillors.

So, with the Stone School purchase tossed into the discussion, no other councillors rose to defend this important project against the dire warnings from Levy and Armstrong. Those who remained silent may have had good political reasons for so doing, those reasons weren't explained though to anyone and they missed the chance to show Actonians there are some votes around the council table for the Stone School.

There may be considerable support for the Stone School purchase, possibly a majority of councillors back the project.

However, Acton shouldn't feel confident. They've heard few words of support for it in the past and, one strong supporter, Peter Pomeroy, is gone.

With Levy and Armstrong hinting they'll be saying no to the Stone School purchase and the rest mum, Acton will now have to wait until the spring and the unveiling of the budget to hear the fate of the purchase plan since budget committee deliberations are generally held behind closed doors.

We'd suggest, in the interest of keeping the people informed, that the budget committee meeting when the town hall and Stone School are discussed be open to the public and press. That way public input can be heard before the issues are closed with the passage of the '84 budget.—G.M.

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## From the editor's desk Nuke free zone ridiculous

Undoubtedly the comments which follow here will produce a flurry of letters from members of Halton Hills Action for Nuclear Disarmament (HAND) and possibly others, but I've got to say I agree with Ross Knechtel and some of his council colleagues. Declaring Halton Hills a nuclear weapons free zone is a futile and ridiculous notion.

Already one reader has commented that so what? They don't want a bomb dropped on the town, who does?

Well, HAND's informal proposal goes beyond not wanting a bomb dropped on us.

They also don't want any parts for warheads or warheads made here or transported through Town. And of course they don't want any silos in Halton Hills.

If council were to pass a nuclear weapons free zone bylaw it would be a gesture and nothing more.

How is council or staff going to know what's being transported or trucked through the Town?

If any firm is making any parts for warheads or missiles, and I suspect there might be one in Georgetown which in fairness I won't name because I can't prove it, they'd be ridiculous to ever admit it, they might be bombed like Litton was.

But a bomb's all they'd have to worry about, even with a bylaw there's nothing the Town could do about it. I haven't committed the municipal act to memory (I bet Ross has though), but I can't recall a single mention of being able to get rid of an industry once it's here on the basis of its product. The Town might be able to keep future firms making such products but only through zoning, and I doubt they could be that selective or discriminatory through zoning.

Besides, can you imagine what the unemployed of our community would say, or the business people crying for growth would say, if a firm was barred just because it made a somewhat undesirable product. All such a bylaw would accomplish would be to discourage some firms from even considering Halton Hills as a home, not because of legal problems but simply because of a bad local attitude.

I'm all for the people sending letters to world leaders and papers; marching and protesting; and trying to make the public more aware of the nuclear weapon menace.

But for crying out loud, take the issue up with the levels of government where something, anything, can be done about it.

It's not a local issue. If it is a local issue then our council had best start meeting nightly to deal with all the other national and provincial concerns like the nuclear weapons issue which will wind up in their laps.

No, we didn't elect a local council to dabble in concerns better handled at higher levels. We haven't agreed with our Town fathers and mothers on many things in the past year, so we figure they have enough problems on their plates now without being pushed to stick their noses into things that don't concern them.

As for the peace movement, well while I'm not optimistic it will do much good with the yoyos running our tiny planet these days, their likes haven't shown much inclination to listen to many people in the past and I doubt the kind of people Pierre Trudeau called pipsqueaks recently are going to start now.

But, writing letters, demonstrating, etc. can't hurt and it undoubtedly makes those involved feel a tiny bit more secure.

Who knows, it may just help make us all a little safer. I'll admit stranger things have happened.

To Eldon and the rest in HAND, feel free to disagree and keep trying to ignite a public forum on this page on the issue. Just don't hold your breath waiting for councillors or myself to change our minds on making Halton Hills a nuclear weapons free zone, or the people who think you're wasting your time or the people who don't agree with you to come out and wage a battle of words.

We've addressed councillors' comments, or lack thereof, on the Stone School purchase elsewhere on this page so I won't rehash them here.



by Gord Murray  
Free Press editor

However, dire warnings of a tough financial year looming for council didn't go unnoticed by readers last week, a goodly number of whom commented to staffers here that it looks like our council has plenty of money for something they want, the Stevens' property, but not for something many Actonians want, The Stone School. A lot are scratching their heads wondering how our Town fathers and mothers can come up with \$600,000 to "speculate in real estate" but maybe not \$68,000 to preserve part of our past.

We understand that the monies councillors are talking about come from entirely different accounts. I even explained the difference between general accounts funded by tax dollars and a reserve fund coming from lot levies to same. I was told this was accounting double talk, it's all the citizens' money no matter where it comes from or what label is put on the account by politicians and bureaucrats. Seems council has a bit of a credibility problem in some eyes.

It was also brought to my attention that a lot of councillors have said they have never heard from taxpayers about the Stevens' land purchase or municipal complex issue. Councillor Marilyn Serjeantson's comment (totally out of character for a councillor who I always considered approachable and people oriented) that she was looking forward to the citizens' group probing the controversial land purchase and building issue making their presentation last week as planned because she "wanted to get it over and done with" isn't a new attitude from most councillors. People were saying they've been hearing the same kind of attitude on this issue and a myriad of others for some time, or else heard staff won't or can't do this or that so the councillors' hands are tied, so taxpayers have concluded there's no use talking to their representatives. Many feel, I've been told repeatedly in the past couple of months, the only way to get through to councillors is by going in large, angry groups loaded for bear.

## Back issues

10 years ago

December 27, 1973

No additional off street parking is required in Acton, according to the Traffic Operations Study commissioned by council. The report was done by M.M. Dillon Limited, consulting engineers and planners at council's request and was presented last week.

A \$14,000 Local Initiative Program grant has been recommended for the Acton Lions Club Centennial Pool project at the high school. The project will employ five people, drawn from local Canada Manpower Centres. The Lions will supervise the project.

Alan McNabb, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. McNabb, 47 Cobblehill Rd. has recently passed the Canadian Chartered Accountant exams and will qualify in June. He is currently a member of the Kingston branch of Thorne Gunn and Co.

20 years ago

December 26, 1963

Generous citizens, neighbors and organizations flocked to the aid of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Sparks and family of five children, two sons and three daughters, ranging in age from five to 11, shortly after they were made homeless by a fire which ravaged their home and ruined all their belongings. The family, who moved to Acton from North Bay recently, were living in the downstairs apartment of a home owned by Harold DeForest Sr. on Elgin St. and had just moved in the previous day.

The home of Mr. and Mrs. J. Lawrie, on Roseford Terrace, was picked as the winner in this year's Chamber of Commerce best decorated home contest. A group of out-of-town judges toured the streets of Acton Monday and picked the Lowrie home for the \$25 first prize.

50 years ago

December 21, 1933

Santa Claus visited the Legion club rooms, in the person of Comrade E.E. Barr, assisted by the committee of President J.M. McDonald and Comrades W.J. Gould and J.F. Salt. Every child of all ex-servicemen under 10 years of age received a gift.

The children of the United Church Sunday School gave their annual Christmas concert, with superintendent A.T. Brown in charge. Taking solo parts were Shirley Kentner, Kathleen Louttit, Gordon Ramsden, Bing Ramsden, Ethel Franklin, Jean Evans, Jean Fraser, Merna Rawson, Frank Holmes, Betty Gibson, Gordon Billon, Hector Lambert, Tom and Bus Nicol, N.F. Moore, Ernie McEnery, Eileen Johnston, Jack Holmes, Walter Lamb, Lyta Evans, and George Switzer.

75 years ago

December 24, 1909

Good sleighing for Christmas. The congregation of the Disciples church having disbanded, the church is offered for sale by tender.

The closing exercise of the Public and High Schools were held on Tuesday. A number of parents and friends attended. The fire drill was part of the proceedings and was much admired.

Next Sunday will be the last for Rev. Wilson as rector of Acton and Rockwood. He says that during this three years here about \$1,500 has been expended in remodelling St. Alban's Church, renewing the interior, putting in a new furnace and new seating for the choir. At Rockwood between \$300 and \$400 was expended for church improvements.

100 years ago

December 27, 1883

The skating rink was opened Thursday evening and has been pretty well patronized since. We think the present manager should follow the example of past years, and close the rink on those evenings when any church entertainments are being held.

A complimentary supper was tendered Messrs. D.D. Christie and George Tolton by a number of our business men and citizens. The gentlemen have recently removed from Acton. Various members of the company made short and pithy speeches.

Mr. W.H. Storey was elected reeve by acclamation at the meeting in the town hall for the nomination of candidates. All members of council made speeches relative to their proceedings. There will be an election for four councillors.

Remember to blanket your horse when you leave him standing on the streets these cold days.

### THEY SUCCEEDED DESPITE THE ODDS

Lock him in a prison and you have a John Bunyan.

Cripple him and you have a Sir Walter Scott.

Bury him in the snows of Valley Forge and you have a George Washington.

Raise him in abject poverty and you have an Abraham Lincoln.

Subject him to bitter religious prejudice, and you have a Disraeli.

Strike him down with infantile paralysis and afflict him with asthma as a child, and he becomes Fraanklin D. Roosevelt, the only president of the U.S. to be elected to four terms.

When he is a lad of eight, burn him so severely in a schoolhouse fire that doctors say he will never walk again, and you have Glenn Cunningham who set the world's record for running a mile in four minutes and 6.7 seconds.

Deafen a genius composer who continued to compose some of the world's most beautiful

## Rising above adversity

Some of the greatest men and women of our times have been saddled with disabilities and adversities, but have managed to overcome them. Perhaps you know of someone who is at the end of his or her rope and needs encouragement. Pass this along—it may save a life.

music, and you have a Beethoven.

Make him the first child in a poor Italian family of 18 children, and you have an Enrico Caruso.

Call him a 'slow learner' and 'retarded' and write him off as ineducable, and you have an Albert Einstein.

Label him "too stupid to learn" and you have a Thomas Edison.

Have him born of parents who survived a Nazi concentration camp, paralyze him from the waist down when he is four, and you have the incomparable violinist, Itzhak Perlman.

Have him born black in a

society filled with racial discrimination, and you have a Booker T. Washington,—Harriet Tubman,—Marion Anderson,—George Washington Carver, or Martin Luther King Jr.

Blind him and you have a Ray Charles, George Shearing,—Stevie Wonder, or—Alex Templeton.

Tell her she's too old to start painting at 80 and you have a Grandma Moses.

Afflict him with periods of depression so severe that he cuts off his own ear, and you have a Vincent Van Gogh.

Call him dull and hopeless and flunk him in the 6th grade and you have a Winston Churchill.

—From Rotary Voice

## Flyers wanted

Dear Sir:

A world reunion, to end all wartime aircrew reunions, will take place Sept. 6-9, 1984, in Winnipeg, Canada, for all nationalities who have ever flown in an air force of the British Commonwealth.

The purpose is to reunite comrades who have a special bond between them, by virtue of their unique experiences and recognized contributions to the peace and freedom we have enjoyed for almost four decades.

Four days of activities are on the program, including Command reception rooms, a banquet, concert and ball, a visit to a flying training station, an air show, gala luncheon, static displays and a cenotaph parade and memorial service.

Previous reunions were held in 1970, 1976 and 1980, each one being larger and more spectacular than the others.

Special air fares and charter flights are being arranged to bring former airmen from other Canadian provinces and abroad. Registrants will be kept informed.

Write now, or phone (804) 489-9256, either to register or get further information. Registration is \$105 (Canadian), plus \$95.00 for wives. A hotel deposit of \$50 is also required for each person. The address is Reunion '84, P.O. Box 2639, Winnipeg, Canada, R3C 4R3.

Reunion Committee