

# The Acton Free Press

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Business and Editorial Office

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## Our readers write

### Council leaves reader disgusted, disappointed

To the Editor and my Fellow Taxpayers:

Reading of the activities at Halton Hills council meetings in November and December of 1983 left me feeling extremely disgusted and also very disappointed. Many of you must share these feelings and must also be asking where democracy has gone.

"Government by the people" is one description of democracy. The right to vote. I will never cease to wonder why a person with great expertise and a willingness to work for the people should be overlooked in favor of a rookie. Perhaps she is not in a commercial business?

As you all know our downtown streets are not only a mess, they are a hazard to pedestrians. Not all of our citizens are agile—bless them. Many of them find it too difficult and dangerous to walk over ice and mounds of snow. As a result our local stores must be experiencing some loss of business.

It would appear that we cannot afford efficient snow removal and yet there must be other people as well as myself who have seen town trucks throwing sand on dry roads. And at time-and-a-half, no doubt! It would be nice to see our 13 councillors putting some time and effort into running Halton Hills in a more efficient manner—thereby lessening the tax burden.

First: Efficient snow removal.

Second: More efficient use of town equipment.

Third: Equal taxation. Attention to these matters could help them earn their keep, and perhaps get back some of the faith and respect they have lost through their irresponsible actions. Or will they now vote themselves a hefty raise?

Of course they now want a multi-million dollar complex to have their little meetings in. Heavens! Think of the joy of the taxpayers in paying for these same councillors' dreams.

Personally, I'm very thankful for the efforts of our "Citizens' Group" who are battling on our behalf. Many of the group are long-time residents of Halton Hills. One I know is a fourth generation Actonian. They really care about what is happening to us. Please write in—give them your support. They are working for you—the taxpayer—the little guy who is going to pay for the dreams of our councillors. One thing we could do is hold our taxes in a trust fund until this matter is settled—the way we people want it settled.

Should we fail to support our citizens' group now, we could very well find ourselves paying taxes to walk down main street. Come on, guys and dolls—band together.

Mary Waterfield  
48 Storey Drive,  
Acton

### Supports nuclear free zone issue

Dear Sir:  
As an occasional visitor to the Halton Hills area, I have had, though infrequently, the opportunity to read and enjoy the Acton Free Press. It was particularly gratifying to see an article on the nuclear free zone issue, and I find it quite impossible to disagree with many of the points presented.

I would like to take this opportunity to enlarge on two of the points you made in your editorial—one regarding the role of local government and the other, the continuance of an open forum on the issue of nuclear disarmament.

Firstly, while in general the point you made regarding the role of local government is valid, both municipal and provincial governments have assumed the role of "foreign policy" on occasion—the condemnation of the Russian invasion of Afghanistan was one example—a posture which technically these levels of governments had no "right" to take.

Many municipal government have, in fact, actually seen fit to pass just the sort of legislation that you describe in your article. I understand that Halton Hills supported the referendum on nuclear disarmament by a significant majority and therefore it is likely that a nuclear free zone

"bylaw" would also receive considerable support. It is not quite as difficult as you suppose to prevent undesirable industrial land use and municipalities have in fact been using "selective or discriminatory zoning bylaws" for this purpose for many years. Civic governments have successfully prevented toxic-waste disposal plants for instance with the active support and encouragement of their citizens, and I would suggest that certain support already exists for the adoption of nuclear free zoning bylaws in Halton Hills.

Secondly, I am reassured by your support of attempts to "make the public more aware of the nuclear weapon menace." Surely then you would encourage the adoption of nuclear free zone status, as it serves as yet another method of "igniting a public forum" on this issue. As you say, this sort of thing "can't hurt" and I appreciate your encouragement of the ongoing debate. Adoption of nuclear free zone status is a method for continuing an open forum on the nuclear disarmament issue and I am glad that in your article you supported this type of activity.

Sincerely,  
N. Taylor  
Edmonton, Alberta



### Get behind Chamber

As is the case from time to time with most voluntary community organizations, the Acton Chamber of Commerce found a period of rebuilding and revitalization necessary in the last half of 1983.

Now with the reconstruction job completed and an ambitious future program set for 1984, it is time for the community, particularly the business community, to get behind the Chamber.

Getting behind the Chamber means much more than just paying 1984 membership dues, though to be sure this revenue will be important to the Chamber's work in 1984 and subsequent years.

No, getting behind the Chamber means active involvement. The Chamber will only be as strong and accomplish as much as its membership decides to devote energy, time and expertise to the organization.

Besides continuing its traditional functions, such as the Citizen of the Year program, the Chamber plans for 1984 include a much needed start on a blueprint for industrial development in Acton. The job of luring new firms to town to enhance the tax base as well as provide jobs for residents obviously can't and shouldn't be left

solely to Halton Hills, Halton region and Queen's Park. Past government efforts haven't proved that successful, so a fresh aggressive approach is needed.

Through the efforts of the Chamber early in this decade a fine start was made on the huge task of giving Acton an identity in keeping with the community's leather heritage. Acton's identity as Leathertown has been entrenched in the minds of both Acton and area residents as well as outsiders.

Some work has been done to develop the theme and there has been some success, mostly because of the Hide House and North Halton Tourism Association, in attracting tourists and their dollars to the community. Some special events, such as the Winter draw and Leathertown Market and Ciderfest, have also attracted attention to Acton.

A small foundation has been built for Leathertown, now is the time to come up with an overall game plan stretching into the future which will bring more people to the area as well establish more attractions for them to see when we get them here.

As a forum for the exchange of political thought, particularly about the local level, the Chamber also has an important role to fill. A lot of taxes are paid by local industry and business, the Chamber should be that sector's voice to council.

Nobody should be looking for instant results or waiting for the tourists to come and then find the dollars for development of the community.

The proper course of action on tourism and industrial development is an overall plan devised locally using local resources, and then investment by the business community to realize the game plan.

There have been numerous business oriented organizations in Acton in the past and can be in the future. But the most effective way for these organizations to function is through a broadly based, strongly supported Chamber of Commerce.

Interim president Steve Dawkins is absolutely correct when he points out generally when you see a progressive, vibrant community, it has a gung-ho Chamber.—G.M.

## Back issues

### 10 years ago

January 9, 1974

Mick Holmes, long time Acton Fire Chief, turned down the job of Halton Hills first regular council meeting. After a bustling debate the job was offered to both Holmes and Ken Buikema (a former Georgetown Fire Chief) and Holmes refused the job leaving the position open to Buikema.

Grace and Elmer Lucas of 192 Church Rd. were surprised to learn they were the parents of the first baby to be born in Acton in 1974.

The swans and ducks at Fairy Lake will soon be walked over to the other side of the lake for the winter, according to Harold Townsley. So far the birds have been keeping a patch of water open with the warmth of their bodies but they will be moved to the south arm of the lake where a bubbler is being used to continue to keep open water and food available to the birds.

### 20 years ago

January 9, 1964

Thieves left a trail of broken glass and littered classrooms after smashing through two double glazed windows and stealing a record player, an electric tea kettle and four pennies from Speyside School.

Halton County Council will hold its inaugural meeting Tuesday afternoon in Milton and a three way race for the honored position of Warden should be the highlight of the evening. Reeve H.H. Hinton of Acton, Reeve Herbert C. Merry of Oakville and Reeve Gordon Gallagher of Burlington will try for the position.

The newly formed Acton and district figure skating club will have five of its members journeying to Fort Erie to compete in the Western Ontario Sectional Championships. The local competitors are Wendy Dempsey, Lynda Wickham, Linda Braida, Sally Wilson and Sharon Bradley.

### 50 years ago

January 4, 1934

Reeve Thetford forwarded a list of 24 names to county engineer Smith, requesting that employment be given to them as soon as the work on the second line is started. The urgent cases were marked for special attention.

Acton Juniors showed some class when they swamped the boys from Burlington 11-2. Cecil Gibbons, who is new to the team this year, and Norm Morton, another new member, were hits with the fans.

At the first meeting of council, Messrs. W.K. Graham and F. Salt were appointed auditors; R.J. MacPherson assessor and tax collector. Named to the Board of Health were Henry Awrey, E. Thetford, with Dr. A.J. McNiven as Medical Officer of Health, and R.J. McPherson as sanitary inspector, milk inspector and weed inspector. R.M. McDonald was appointed chief of the fire brigade.

### 75 years ago

January 7, 1909

The Sunday School concerts, the Methodists on Christmas night and the Presbyterian on New Year's night, were both gratifying successes. The Methodist entertainment was under the direction of Miss Amy Doty, London, for the fourth successive year. Seventy-five scholars and the Sunday School orchestra took part.

The splendid local talent of the Presbyterian church was re-inforced by a quartette from Galt.

H. Swackhamer was re-elected Reeve in an exciting contest with Dr. Gray. Mr. Swackhamer's appeal for support was almost exclusively on the ground of his strong expectation of securing the wardenship of the county.

### 100 years ago

January 10, 1884

Mr. James Moore was elected Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Acton Public School for the present year.

It is important to remember to put bells on the horses or on sleighs as accidents can occur if people can not hear oncoming traffic.

The semi-annual Convention of the Halton Branch of the Temperance Alliance will be held in the town hall in Milton to consider the position of the Temperance Act in the county, to more thoroughly organize, to more perfectly secure united, prompt and efficient service and to prepare for any emergency that may arise.

At the election on Monday there was but one spoiled ballot and there was no doubt it was spoiled intentionally. In this case a voter failed to mark in favor of any of the candidates but wrote across the face of the ballot, "They are all big-boss".

## Coles' slaw

### From brick laying to the old town hall

by Hartley Coles  
Managing Editor

Here's a note from Morley Allen who is now living in Tavistock. Morley says he enjoys the stories in this column about living in a small town but advises me not to take up painting or paper hanging as a project, advice I have no difficulty in accepting. Morley also says he enjoys Bill Smiley especially his column on the "Bucket of Bricks".

Morley, who describes himself as "the last of the old gang of Acton bricklayers" asks if anyone especially Jess Coles can tell him where Ernest Walford is now. He says Mr. Walford came out from the Old Country with my grandfather Fred Coles and Frank Benton (who had the store at Limehouse), and also Gus Clifford and Bob Cross, all well known names in Acton.

Morley says he visited Ernest Walford in Los Olis, California in 1972 and hasn't had any word from him since. Morley would welcome any information anyone has about Mr. Walford. He can be reached by writing him at 50 Woodstock St., Tavistock, Ont. N0B 2R0. And if you're in the area he'd appreciate a visit.

It was a coincidence perhaps but some of us were talking last week about the tradesmen who lived in

Acton and were masters of their job. They've left visible testimony of the skill they practiced in the homes and businesses here and in the district.

If you wanted bricks laid, blocks placed and other work done around your home you were always sure of a quality job when you got someone like Morley to do it. People of his ilk are not the type to raise a new home in a few days with cardboard and sticks. They used quality material and were always around in the event anything went wrong, a highly unlikely event.

There are still some of the old breed and their offspring around but those who know where these treasures are often keep the information to themselves, aware that if everyone knows of them, they won't be available when they want them. Good tradesmen don't need to moonlight to keep the wolf from the door.

Well, they rang the bell at the old town hall again to usher in 1984 and Tom Watson said I should have been there to join in the festivities and recall the last time that bell was rung conveying a message to the community.

When I was the proverbial

moppet and later when age crept up and I went through the teen years, the old town hall bell was rung for important occasions in the community such as fires, New Year's and the nine o'clock curfew. The latter made sure everyone under 16 years of age was off the streets unless accompanied by an adult. And it was enforced.

Chief enforcer in my growing up years was E.E. Harrop, the village constable (yep, Acton was a village then) and once the commanding officer of a rajah's army in India. It was said with justification that Mr. Harrop only had to enter a room where there was a brawl, let the sparks fly from his eyes, twirl his moustache and the participants would break it up. I saw it happen on one occasion and the respect his presence engendered was transmitted to us juvenile delinquents.

Needless to say there was more than one occasion when we managed to outwit parents and ignore the nine o'clock curfew. We kept an eye peeled for Mr. Harrop and his patrol car, which unlike today's cruisers was his own vehicle. It had squeaky brakes and you could tell he was coming blocks away.

I suspect he knew his brakes gave him away and kept the streets

clear of delinquents. But one would never know it from his attitude. He always looked the epitome of the British army officer. Split and Polish, perfectly correct and unswerving in his dedication to law and order. Underneath that military bearing was a sense of humor and typical British politeness.

One Hallowe'en evening, I recall, several of us walked along Bower Avenue, bent on mischief. We spotted a studio couch on one of our party's parents' verandah. We slipped up on the verandah, lifted it and started down the sidewalk with the lounge tippy-toe unclaw just what to do with it.

At about this juncture who should appear on the scene but Mr. Harrop in his car. He stopped directly opposite us.

He wound down the window while our group stood frozen, the evidence still in our hands. He smiled. We smiled back. And then we scurried to put that couch back in its place.

He smiled again, rolled his car window up, and started down the street again as if nothing had happened.

There was an immediate feeling of relief. Not a word was exchanged but we were all thankful

we hadn't ended up in those old cells in the town hall.

Somewhere along the line I lost the thread of this story... the last time the old bell was rung. Jimmy Robertson, who looked after the old hall for years, was missing. The bell was rung, the boy scouts called to help in the search for Jim, who invariably dressed only in a ragged cardigan over his shirt even in the coldest weather. But no trace of Jimmy could be found. It was a mystery.

But somehow in the exchange of information which accompanies any bearer of news in small towns someone mentioned that Jimmy was missing to Dr. Doug Garrett, who lived and had offices at the corner of Willow and River Streets, not far from the town hall.

"No wonder you can't find him," he obviously said. "I had him checked into Guelph hospital today."

The word soon got around and the bell never pealed after that, according to Tom.

Appealing story, what? Maybe even apocryphal. But just one that can be told of the old hall which was the hub of Acton when I was young.