

Would you use VIA?

250 Acton homes to get questionnaire

Would you use VIA passenger trains if there was a stop in Acton?

That's one of the questions about 250 Acton households will be asked in the next couple of weeks as a marketing survey kicks off the local campaign to convince VIA to once again stop trains here.

Councillor Rick Bonnette and interim Chamber of Commerce president Steve Dawkins announced this week that Ian McGillivray's grade 11 Acton High School marketing class has agreed to conduct the survey.

Final approval for the survey and the associated costs is expected to be given tomorrow (Thursday) at the Chamber's board meeting. Bonnette will make a presentation to the Chamber board, which is meeting at 12:30 p.m. at the Station Hotel.

The students will be taking the questionnaire to about 250 homes or about one household in seven in Acton.

Since it is a household and not an individual questionnaire, it will be left at the home for a few days before students return to pick them up.

Bonnette raised the idea of urging VIA to again stop passenger trains here at a recent council meeting.

Both he and Dawkins reported they've heard strong support for the idea from the community. Bonnette described the response he's received as "overwhelming."

At Friday's council drop-in, Councillors Dave Whiting and Jake Kulken both said they too have heard support for a VIA stop here from citizens. Whiting noted one caller said he thought a VIA stop would be a good idea, but also urged GO institute express bus service from here to Toronto. Councillor Ross Knechtel said he's received no feedback on this issue.

Passenger trains stopped here for many years and then with few riders the service was stopped in the early 70s.

Since then, however, circumstances have changed, Bonnette says. He notes Acton has grown by about 1,500 people, much of the growth coming in the Bovis and Kingham areas where there are a lot of commuters who might use VIA trains to get to and from work.

Besides commuters, Bonnette and Dawkins believe a VIA stop here would be popular with seniors and others who don't have cars or don't drive who want to go to the city for shopping or entertainment. As well they believe people might encourage friends or relatives to come to Acton by train if there was a stop here. A VIA stop here would also be beneficial in the drive to bring tourists and shoppers here from east and west of Acton.

The survey is designed to give an indication of "how many commuters and other potential train users would use the train under the current schedule if there was a stop here," Dawkins explained.

Those at homes surveyed will be asked: 1. how long they've lived here; 2. where they work; 3. how they get to work (car, Go bus, GO train, etc.); 4. how often they'd likely use the VIA train for work or pleasure; 5. do they have friends or relatives who would use the train to visit here if there was a stop here. It will be a short questionnaire.

Anyone who isn't surveyed is encouraged

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VIA

If Councillor Rick Bonnette and the Chamber of Commerce have their way VIA trains like this one will be stopping in Acton instead of just whizzing through town.

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With the rain of late, you really have to wax up those cross-country skis if you're going to get anywhere on the snow base that's left. It has been a great winter in this area for cross-country ski enthusiasts. Here Jeanette Waeber gets ready to try out a trail. Jeanette is a former area resident, she and her family lived in North Nassagaweya for over 10 years before moving to Port Credit a couple of

months back. She used to work in the Metroland composing room at the Free Press as well as in advertising at the Georgetown Independent. Since moving to Mississauga she has taken up duties at another Free Press sister paper, the Etobicoke Advertiser-Guardian. Photo by GRAHAM PAINE, Etobicoke Advertiser-Guardian.

Reject appeal for Mercuri, McCristall

Appeals by two men found guilty of causing the death of Howard Gibbons in the Dominion Hotel blaze in August 1978 were dismissed Wednesday by the Ontario Court of Appeals.

Cosimo Mercuri was found guilty of second degree murder almost two years ago and sentenced to life imprisonment, with parole considerations in 10 years. Mike McCristall was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to two years less a day at the Ontario Correctional Centre in Brampton. He had been charged with second degree murder also.

The convictions came at the end of a sensational six week trial in March/April, 1982. Gibbons died of smoke inhalation during a fire which razed the century old Dominion Hotel August 19, 1979.

Mercuri, who has spent the past two years at the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre awaiting his appeal, has been taken to Joyceville Penitentiary near Kingston. McCristall, who has been out on bail since shortly after his conviction, is now in custody at the Hamilton

detention centre and is awaiting further assignment.

Roy Cornale, of Arthur Maloney's law office, and solicitor for Mercuri, told this newspaper there were a number of legal points argued last Wednesday, but the court of appeal indicated that each of the points were not in error and no error in law had taken place on the part of the trial judge.

Both men have the right to appeal this decision to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Also charged in the case was Leonard Cripps, who has been acquitted by the jury after three weeks of Crown evidence.

The 1982 trial brought forth a self-confessed arsonist who testified Mercuri, owner of the hotel, had approached him to torch the building. Also on the witness stand were two women with whom Mercuri had affairs, hotel staff, numerous fire-fighters, accountants, eye witnesses to the fire, and many more, totalling 52 witnesses. Evidence indicated Mercuri was in financial difficulty and a two week suspension of his liquor licence was pending at the time of the fire.

Councillors learn of more problems with ambulances

Councillors learned of a number of new problems with ambulances serving Acton from Guelph and Georgetown from a citizen at Friday's council drop-in.

This resident, a woman, was ill and couldn't attend drop-in, so she phoned the Acton Social Services and Information to pass on her comments on this issue.

Councillor Dave Whiting, who took the call, and colleagues Jake Kulken and Ross Knechtel, were quite surprised by some of her experiences with the ambulances.

The woman told Whiting she used the ambulances from Guelph and Georgetown about 10 times between last April and December and has found the service to be "generally terrible."

She has always been taken to a Guelph hospital by Georgetown ambulances, but on one occasion the trip took longer than it should have because the driver became lost trying to find the hospital.

Another time it took 45 minutes for an ambulance to get to her home, Whiting said.

The most "blatant" example of poor service was the time she was taking a Guelph ambulance and the shift was changed during the trip. The woman, who has severe heart problems, reported that one ambulance attendant was dropped off at his home and another attendant

picked up at home, during her trip to the hospital. She was asked if she minded, and of course said since she was quite ill that she did mind.

"I'd be a little upset too," Whiting said while sharing this resident's observations with his colleagues.

He said he has received more comments from taxpayers on this issue than any other he can recall, certainly many more

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Three area people get OPP awards for bravery

A Rockwood couple and a Milton woman are joint recipients of the OPP Bravery Award.

Stanley and Elizabeth Adamiak and Mrs. Susan Simpson, will receive their award March 7 at a special

awards presentation in Burlington. Deputy Commissioner C.A. Naismith will be making the presentations.

Mrs. Patricia Restivo, of Moffat, will receive a St. John Ambulance Award at the same time.

On Saturday, April 24, 1982, at 10:45 p.m., Mrs. Simpson and the Adamiaks stopped at a car accident on Highway 401. One vehicle was in the ditch on its roof, burning. The three helped remove four unconscious people from the burning car.

On July 18, 1983 at 9:40 a.m., Mrs. Restivo was at Erie Cove, Lake Erie, RR 1 Selkirk, when she helped two men take a woman from the waters of Lake Erie. Mrs. Restivo administered mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and revived the woman.


Inside

300 pigs were destroyed in a barn fire the past weekend in the Rockwood area. Turn to page 2.

Video stores say they're doing good business Sundays and that's why they remain open. More on page 2.

A teacher and two students at AHS came up with a special computer program. See story and photo on page 3.

Helen Hills RRA
councillors
cut in
over
\$100,000
last year.
Details on
page 7.



Doing a favour is working for the common good without an ulterior motive.