

The Acton Free Press

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Bad tax news coming

Local taxpayers had best brace themselves for a flood of bad news this spring.

Preliminary estimates from Halton Hills, Halton region and Halton Board of Education put this year's property tax hikes in the neighborhood of an average increase of about \$98.

Of course by the time the budget process is completed, reflecting various cuts and refinement of tax increases for all three levels in accordance with local mill rates, the average boost will have been slashed down considerably.

Probably the average tax jump in Acton will be somewhere in the order of \$60 to \$80 in '84.

Councillors and trustees are wasting little time in pointing the finger of blame for this situation.

Queen's Park is the culprit.

We agree.

Inflation may be down, requiring smaller increases in grants from the province to the municipalities and school boards, but what is happening here is ridiculous.

Provincial grants, at least in Halton, won't be even remotely close to the inflation rate. The increase over last year will, it appears now, be miniscule.

Because Queen's Park, which calls the shots so much on education and municipal matters, is trying to practise restraint on the backs of local taxpayers and hide behind councillors and trustees while perpetrating the crime, ratepayers can expect not only to not see services improved for their increased investment or even remain

at '83 levels, but in fact slip a notch or two.

This slip in services will be most noticeable where they hurt the most, Halton Hills. The most fiscally responsible over the past 10 years, the Town will be hurt the most.

Halton Hills desperately needs fresh revenues which only increased growth will bring safely. Growth is a long way off in the future. In fact, more new assessment would be good news for all Halton taxpayers.

It might not be so bad if our provincial taxes were going to reflect the fact we're paying for the same local services a different way now. But, that won't happen either.

Ontario Treasurer Larry Grossman has been issuing regular warnings that it will soon cost us all more to be residents of the 'Province of Opportunity.'

With the school board and region's budget meetings completely open and speculation that Town budget sessions will also be open to the public soon, there will be a flood of bad news for six to eight weeks this spring.

It will be of no comfort to Acton ratepayers to be reminded that their collective tax increase will be larger than necessary because a modern and fairer assessment system hasn't been introduced through Section 63 of the Assessment Act.

Instead of tuning out on the bad tax news this spring, Acton should prepare to vigorously back their councillors when the fight for Section 63 resumes this April.—G.M.

Changes confusing

Here we go again.

Proposed changes to provincial riding boundaries would see Halton Hills included in a new riding with part of Brampton and a corner of Mississauga. Milton and the northern end of Burlington above the QEW would stay in the present Halton-Burlington turf.

The proposal probably reflects demographic changes, as MPP Julian Reed points out, but they are another confusing change for an electorate, just informed last June that federal electoral boundaries would change after the next federal election.

Halton Hills is split down the middle now, federally with Acton and Georgetown in different ridings. The change in the federal electoral boundaries would reunite the Town with Milton and the northern end of Burlington in a new riding.

Now along comes the changes in the provincial riding boundaries. Milton and that northern arm of

Burlington will stay in Halton-Burlington and the whole of Halton Hills with part of rural Brampton and a sliver of Mississauga added form a new riding called Halton-Peel.

Why in the name of all that is sane and sensible couldn't the federal and provincial electoral boundaries be drawn so they are almost the same?

It is true the Town of Halton Hills will be reunited in both federal and provincial elections when the proposals are implemented, but in both cases they'll have different partners. Surely the community of interest does not switch when voters troop to the polls either federally or provincially.

The proposed provincial riding will be more compact and give the MPP easier access to his constituents, but only the core resembles its federal counterpart. Surely some day down the line we should be aiming at identical boundaries for both jurisdictions when demographics permit.—H.C.

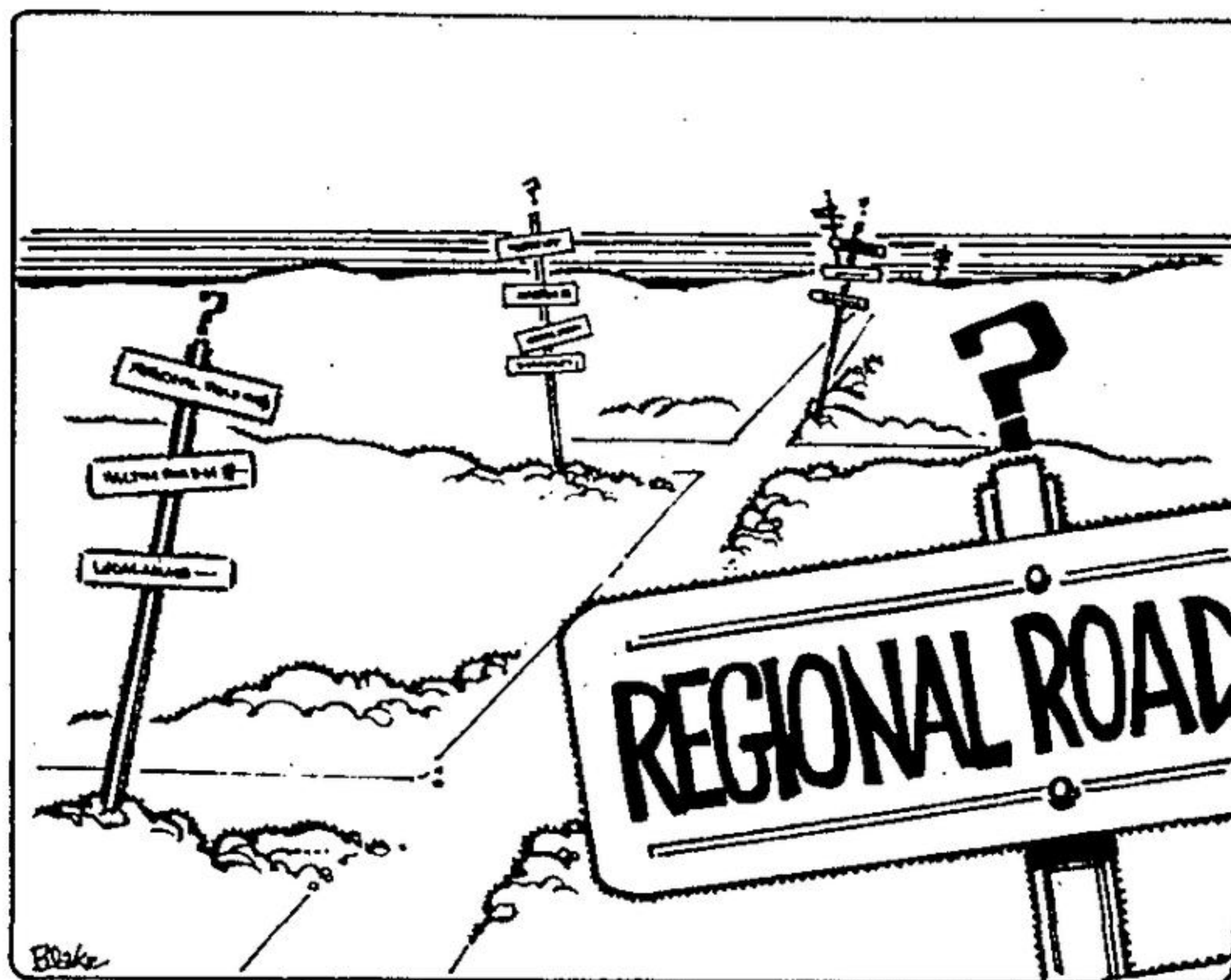
Wake up VIA

The following letter to Councillor Rick Bonnette was filed with the Free Press for publication.

Dear Sir:
Having read the report by Councillor Bonnette and the Chamber of Commerce about the VIA train stopping in Acton, my husband and I, along with many Actonians, do appreciate these efforts and hope they are lucky.

Not everyone has got a car and some people prefer the train anyway. The buses are not convenient to link with the trains at Georgetown and it is impossible to get to the CNE.

If VIA doesn't wake up soon they will be going back in time, not forward, so think about it VIA.
Yours faithfully,
Mrs. M. Wood



From the editor's desk

Fleeing for the south

As you're reading this your correspondent is heading for the (hopefully) sunny south to enjoy spring training, baseball style.

In fact if you are a Wednesday morning reader of the Free Press you're probably getting to this page at about the same time I'm warming up for the new ball season by touring the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

Those who know I'm going down to Florida keep asking why Helen's not going too.

Not long after I fill them in about my plans for the next 19 days, they usually know why Helen's staying here.

First off, with both of us working together in the news department here it is a little hard now for us to vacation together.

But even if she could go with me, there's no way she would.

She might be able to stomach a ball game or two, but not a minimum of 13.

Last year, with the exception of two days spent at the White Sox camp in Sarasota, I devoted my time to catching games at Atlantic coast camps.

I saw the famed Dodgerstown in Vero Beach, as well I visited the Expos and Braves at West Palm Beach, Astros in Cocoa and Yanks at Fort Lauderdale.

This year I decided to save myself some driving concentrate on Jay watching.

Toronto and the Phils were supposed to start their exhibition season with a three game set in, of all places, Panama. Well, that fell through, and now they're playing

the games in Clearwater and Dunedin. I'll see Jays face the NL East champs four times in all. In addition Toronto will meet the Mets, Pirates, Red Sox, Tigers and Cardinals at games I plan to see. A couple times I skip Toronto to see the White Sox.

Using Dunedin-Clearwater as a base, I'll be visiting camps in Winter Haven, Lakeland, St. Petersburg, Bradenton and Sarasota.

As if that wasn't enough of a reason for Helen to bid me fond adieu without any regret, there's an added bonus for this trip.

I'll be in Florida in the midst of a presidential primary.

I've always been fascinated with American politics. It's such a complicated process which leads to the White House.

Where else does a person go through roughly 30 warm up heats before getting to the main event.

I've often thought the American system of picking a president is sort of like the NHL. Dozens and dozens of mini-elections to whittle the field down. Then there's the playoffs (conventions) and finally just two people vying for the crown.

Anyway, I'm hoping some of the campaign takes place in the Tampa area so I can get out and watch Mondale, McGovern, Glenn, Hart, etc., do their stuff.

I expect Reagan will even make a visit to the sunshine state while I'm there.

Baseball in the afternoon, politics at night.

Now do you see why Helen thinks



by Gord Murray
Free Press editor

I'm crazy for planning this kind of vacation?

She figures she might as well go to Florida alone as go on a trip like this with me, they'd both be the same, she'd be alone.

Now, not to worry about the little woman being on her own all that time. She'll be busy doing her work, and a lot of my regular work too, and besides her Mom and Dad are coming down separately for long visits. She won't have a chance to get bored or lonely.

Guess I'm not the only person fleeing to the south, either.

Will Duval told me the other day a pile of local folks are going to Florida and good many of them are going to visit the Jays training facilities.

Considering I see someone from here on just about every other vacation I take, I expect I'll run into a few Actonians in the stands.

Anyway I'm not planning to write mounds of copy about spring training again this year (I can hear sighs of relief). But, I am going to stick my neck out and handicap this year's baseball races, as well as fill you fans in on how high our Jays will be soaring this season. See you all when I get back.

Back issues

10 years ago

February 27, 1974

For 70 years there has been a shoe store on Mill St. in the same mid-block location. This week ownership changes again—for the fifth time—but the commodity and friendly service remain the same. Bill Benson is selling his business after 17 and a half years to Alma and Dave Sweetman of Elizabeth Dr.

The second highest award in Guiding, the all around cord, was presented to Arlene Wilson at the Guide and Brownie Mother and Daughter banquet last week. She is a member of the Second Acton Guides. What does a full time fire chief do in a town where during the normal week there was only one minor fire? Mick Holmes has established his new office in the former town offices and is finding plenty to do.

20 years ago

February 27, 1964

For the second time the name of Elizabeth Force has appeared on the "All A" honor roll at Michigan State University in recognition of the highest attainment of scholarship for 1963. She is in her junior year in Social Science.

Robert Little public school will display a large pennant presented by the Recreation Committee Wednesday night. They placed first among five of eight schools scheduled to compete in the first public school ice carnival held at the arena. Close to 1000 people including children taking part paid admission to the arena.

Many fond memories were recalled by Mr. and Mrs. Alex Fringle, RR 1 Acton, a bride and groom of 50 years when they held an anniversary party at their home Saturday afternoon.

50 years ago

February 22, 1934

Ice has been shipped by Wm. Evans from Acton to Churchill, Ballinafad, Stewarttown, Milton, Norval, Rockwood and Guelph. This ice was all removed from Corporation Pond a week or so ago, and it is now being taken off Fairy Lake.

The Continuation School literary society met in the First Form room. The school orchestra played and principal Herbert spoke. On the program were Velma Blair, Barbara Taylor, Lillian Woodhall and Norman Braida. Prominent citizens of the town will be attending meetings to speak on their professions. Dr. Buchanan was the first speaker and gave a very interesting account of dentistry, with drawings. Veterinarian Dr. De Bruyn is next.

On the program at the World's Day of Prayer service in Rockwood were Mrs. D. McNabb, Mrs. Robert Williamson, Mrs. Wm. Dumbar, Mrs. Fred McArthur and Mrs. J. Ayles. Large crowds enjoy skating at the arena on band nights.

75 years ago

February 25, 1909

Mr. George Tubby, who has held an important position on the engineering staff of the Panama Canal the past three years has severed his connection and taken a position with a large firm with headquarters in San Francisco Cal. Mr. Tubby is one of the most successful of our Acton boys. Old residents will be glad to know of his continued success.

A number of dogs in town have been poisoned lately but on Sunday morning the poison took effect in a somewhat wholesale manner. Mr. W.S. Chisholm's well-known, pure-bred pointer "Sport" came home in great agony and died in a few minutes. Mr. John Clark's spaniel and Messrs Smith Brothers' collie also died about the same time. Mr. W. Gimson's was poisoned on Saturday.

100 years ago

February 23, 1884

Forty or 50 of our citizens attended the opening of St. John's church in Rockwood last Sunday.

The measles are now following up the scarlet fever among children in town. There are several cases reported.

Petitions were circulated in town last week praying Parliament to enact more stringent laws for the observance of the Sabbath.

Where can I find a good house to rent is a question frequently asked in Acton. The only answer to the question is, "Every house in town is occupied."

A 25 minute race took place in the Georgetown rink last Wednesday night, between Messrs. W. Spelght, of Acton, and J. Langan, Georgetown, resulting in an easy victory for the former. The Acton boys begin to think that their man, with a fair chance, could take the championship of the county.

Our readers write

Reed backs VIA study

Dear Sir:
It was with great pleasure that I learned through the kind offices of Councillor Rick Bonnette that the Acton Chamber of Commerce is commissioning a study on the potential viability of renewing rail service in the Town of Acton.

When Acton's population was about 3,000 there was an active railway station with traffic in both

passenger and freight service. The population of the town has now nearly tripled and access to Metropolitan Toronto by rail is becoming increasingly attractive. Anyone who finds it necessary to drive into Toronto during rush-hour must naturally be in wholehearted agreement.

It is, therefore, my sincere hope that the results of this Chamber of

Commerce study will provide a basis to bring pressure on VIA Rail to once again include Acton as a stop, and to perhaps look a little farther towards the future when GO-Transit may be expanded. Acton should not be cut off from any form of access which will enhance its long-term viability.

Julian Reed, M.P.P.
Halton-Burlington

Bring back the trains

The following letter was sent to the Chamber of Commerce and filed with the Free Press for publication.

Acton Chamber of Commerce
Re: VIA Rail Stops in Acton

Being a resident of Acton for many many years, I certainly would be one of many Actonians who would use the train service if we got it back again. I have family living in Toronto and with the heavy road traffic these days I prefer not to drive to the city. I also have a son who lives in Acton but works in Toronto and must commute either by car or by GO train from Georgetown daily.

Parking in the city is a problem and very expensive. On top of that the cost of gas and the high cost of vehicles now is another reason why many Actonians would be glad to use the train if it stopped here again. All we need is a few stops a day going east and west. With this

it would service all of those using the GO train from Milton or Georgetown to get to work or for those who wish to shop in the city. With Acton being so close to so many big cities with good shopping in the bigger stores our own downtown has suffered as people prefer to go where there are large department stores.

Many tourists would be attracted to the "Olde Hide House" and to their newly acquired Jack Tanner's Table to spend a part of a day browsing through it. The train stop would be so convenient for this

alone. With the 401 being closer to Milton and Georgetown for industries to establish this is another reason why Acton needs VIA to stop in Acton and encourage more growth here. Many people still prefer to live in small towns where it is safer and quieter than in the busy cities.

I am pleased to learn that the Chamber of Commerce and Rick Bonnette are trying very hard to get train service back to Acton.

Sincerely
Mrs. Stella Brunelle

Thanks for support

Dear Sir:
On behalf of the Parent Advisory Committee of McKenzie-Smith Middle School, we would like to thank all local businesses including the Acton Free Press, which supported our recent Tunes and

Talents evening. Your co-operation in the selling of tickets and window advertising was very much appreciated by all concerned.

L. Johnston
Co-Chairman