

# The Acton Free Press

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Business and Editorial Office

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## Town budget benefits Acton

Except for the tax increase, \$28 on the average assessed home, Acton has very little to complain about in this year's Town budget. In fact there are a number of projects to cheer about.

Council committed to buying the Stone School; with the local BIA bought an old building downtown which once demolished will give us space for a parkette as well as a busy corner easier to navigate; a new soccer field and initial development of a new park on Elizabeth Dr.; continuation of the Glenlea reconstruction and some other less significant goodies.

It's really quite amazing that any of these projects can be done this year, considering the fact the province is bailing out on its long time duty to help municipalities fund an adequate level of service and facilities for their citizens.

This year's tax increase for Town purposes only isn't

really that much larger than others the past couple of years, it barely makes up for what has been lost in provincial grant and subsidy cutbacks.

Budget committee meetings were, as usual, held behind closed doors so we can't say for certain who deserves credit for a project like the Stone School making it through the chopping and trimming exercise. However, one doesn't need a crystal ball to know that the debate must have been a spirited one, so the Acton councillors' ability to argue on our behalf must have been tested severely, as was the level of goodwill towards Acton of Georgetown and Esquesing councillors.

Any tax increase in distasteful to many taxpayers, a severe hardship for a minority. But considering how bad the news might have been and how little we could have had to show for it, Acton should be smiling a bit about the Halton Hills '84 budget. Well done councillors.

## Readers will report drivers who leave keys in car ignition

Dear Sir:  
I find it necessary to start off with an apology to all those for whom this letter will offend or bring up painful memories, but I feel someone should bring this to the attention of all drivers and pedestrians alike.

There are few people in this town who won't remember the tragic accident when seven of our young people were killed in an accident on Highway 25 because someone neglected to remove the keys from the ignition of their vehicle. Figuring only moments would pass before they returned to their car—instead they must live with the horrible memory of what happened. Being unable to change history we must all learn from mistakes—be it the hard way but we must learn.

The point of this letter is this, last week coming out of a store, I was in the parking lot and there was only one other vehicle in it. This car not only had the keys in the ignition, it was also running.

I had a good mind to go over and take the keys out myself and give the driver a blast and report it, but I did not.

Only three days later, walking home from work I turned a corner

to see exactly the same thing again.

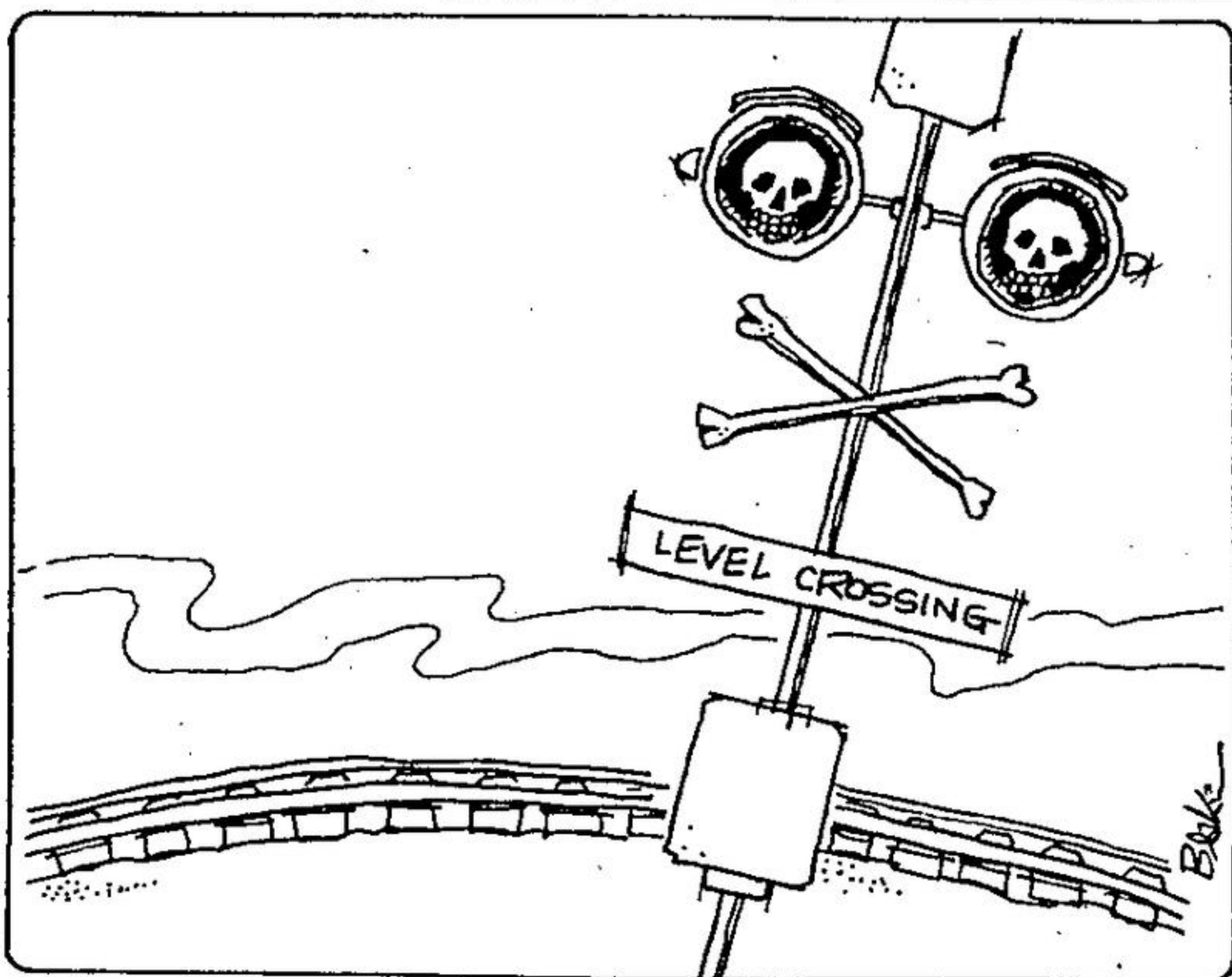
I was sickened with the thoughts of what may have come of it. Especially when I thought about my 7-year-old son walking home from school at that time of the day along with hundreds of other innocent kids who could just be in the wrong place at the wrong time, as were seven others not long enough ago to ever forget.

I guess I am writing this to clear my conscience, some of the guilt feelings for not doing something about it when I saw it. I know I will not hesitate to report the plate number of a vehicle I saw left unattended like this ever again.

I hope others will feel the same and use caution and good sense with all aspects of the law pertaining to the privilege, and it is a privilege, of being a licensed driver. Observe the law and use your own common sense where yours and the safety of others is concerned.

If this letter makes even a few more aware then it has served its purpose. Let's not give crime an inch.

Louise Townsley.



## Our readers write

### Must pay for education we want

Dear Sir:

It's budget time and along with it come the headlines about taxes going up again. I want to talk about education taxes, which are also going up. It probably will be just enough to keep what we've got, but not nearly enough to make it significantly better. You read it right. We had better be willing to pay for the education we say we want our kids and adults to have.

I include adults because there is an increasing number of adults who are returning to day schools to upgrade their education or get a diploma. These are people who went to school in the "good ol' days", to which we often compare present education and find it wanting. It was also wanting in the "good ol' days". It's time we recognize that today's educational system is no worse than it was, and as far as offering opportunities for learning, it is a lot better. This costs money.

I speak of "offering opportunities for learning", rather than how much people are learning because there is a difference. The difference is where the responsibility lies. The schools are, by and large, meeting their responsibility for offering opportunities. This, of course, is limited by finances since much of the equipment necessary is expensive. Walk into any high school and you'll find computers, technical shops with modern tools, business education rooms with word processors and class sets of electric typewriters; science labs with electronic scales, ripple tanks and the most up to date microscopes. Some private computer schools charge 1-2 thousand dollars to teach what is being offered in a computer studies course in High School. If kids are not learning, it's not for lack of opportunities. It is the job of teachers to teach, and they do. It is not, nor should it be, their job to run after students to get them to attend class and complete or hand in their assignments, or to get them to behave. That is the

responsibility of the students, especially in high schools. A student who does not want to learn simply does not learn. Teachers spend a lot of time on them, only a few change their mind.

Taxpayers have the responsibility to promote education and that is not done sufficiently. We need to spread the idea that education is more than training, it's learning to identify and solve problems related to living. Going to school is only a beginning in education.

We need to stop dumping on the educational system, and especially on teachers because if we don't value them, neither will our children and a lot of time and money will be spent on disciplining and "politicking" and less on teaching.

It costs an average of \$3,500 a year to school a child or adult in the public system. It costs two times

that much in the private system and private schools don't spend significant time on discipline and they have smaller classes.

In a probably futile effort to please the public, the government has just spent in the millions of dollars revising the educational opportunities for the intermediate and senior schools. This raises the price tag of education even more. And it's not going to make any difference unless taxpayers can first convince themselves, and their children, that education matters and that it's worth money to have the schools continue a process that should have started at home.

The educational system is not perfect by any means, but we get what we pay for. Welfare, unemployment and prisons are much more expensive alternatives!

Eva Sansom

## We share the grief

This community shares the grief felt in our neighboring Town of Milton in the terrible car-train crash which took the life of six teens and severely injured another. Following so close on the heels of a double fatality involving two well known men from that community the previous week it sent shock waves across the Province and country.

We don't know how the crash happened or why, but what we do know is the terrible grief that accompanies tragedies such as the one in Milton.

There have been the usual recriminations about how to avoid another tragedy of this kind. There is already agitation to have arms installed on the railway crossing, there maybe some for an underpass and indeed there should be. One accident like that is enough for any small community. And if another tragedy can be avoided by all means let it be done.

For the present all we can do is express our sorrow and shock at the snuffing out of so many young lives.

We send our sympathy and share the grief of those families who lost sons or daughters in a tragedy we hope and pray will never be repeated anywhere.

## Coles' slaw

# Corner renovations can be help to downtown

The announcement last week that the Canadian Style Donut shop at the corner of Mill and Main Streets has been acquired by the Town of Halton Hills and the dilapidated old yellow brick building will be torn down was greeted with enthusiasm by this writer. Especially the news that the Town and the Business Improvement Association (BIA) intend to construct a parkette on the land.

The parkette should make a big improvement to that corner of Mill and Main which has been an increasing eyesore over the years. Bill Yundt has moved into his new drug store across the street and the parkette should help the image of the downtown business section which has suffered in the last two decades. Bricks have fallen off the building exposing the board and batten underneath and the corner is a hangout for all types of casually dressed youth, some of whom had a reputation for vulgar language and garbage dispensing.

It doesn't give this community a very good image with people who drive through and form their impressions of the Town by the condition of the downtown. "The

armpit of Ontario" one hospital nurse described Acton to me recently.

The presence of a decaying building in the heart of the downtown doesn't help the image of other merchants either.

That corner used to be one of the showpieces of Acton. Remember when William Cooper had his gent's furnishings store there and the immaculate fashions in the window? When Mr. Cooper retired Gord McCutcheon bought the business and ran it for a few years keeping the reputation for sartorial splendor of his predecessor. He was followed by Bud Nicholls, from Guelph, I believe who operated one of the cut rate men's clothing stores. Then Syd Lamb's real estate business was located there for many years before he closed up and moved out of town. The building has had several occupants since, finishing with the donut shop.

I remember LeRoy Agar had a coal office upstairs. My grandfather, unable to do manual work because of a gassing in the trenches of WW1, took orders and kept Mr. Agar's books there. A frequent visitor was E.E. Harrop, the



by Hartley Coles  
Managing Editor

village constable, the epitome of spit and polish. Both of them British Army, and very impressive for a boy used to more casual ways, as they played cribbage and swapped stories.

The door leading to the coal office now leads to an upstairs apartment. There's a old anecdote about that door about a zealous firefighter. He, so the story goes, broke down the door with his axe only to discover the blaze was elsewhere.

Acton's Early Days noted that this corner has always been a busy

place starting with Mrs. Sarah Augusta Scord and her three sons John, Fred and Percy who came to Acton in the mid 1800s. Mrs. Scord, the book maintains, was a "woman of many excellencies with the advantage of a good education and a remarkable ability for business." The family started in business in the store and residence now the site of Alec Johnson's real estate office. When that building was destroyed by fire the lady and her family proceeded with the erection of a better store and residence on the opposite side of the street, a frame building, "neatly constructed and painted white," says Acton's Early Days, now the target site.

After 35 years in business the Scord store went to Ward Howell who came to Acton from Jerseyville and was for years the head of the silk department in Murray-Kay's, Toronto. Eventually that building, too, was destroyed by fire and the present store was built and first occupied by the tailoring establishment of Cooper and Atkins, and then Wm. Cooper.

Now, if plans work out this busy

corner will be like extension of the interlocking brick sidewalk with plants, trees and park benches. A sort of oasis in the heart of the downtown.

I'm sure it will beautify the corner but there are probably others like myself who hope it won't degenerate into a hangout for some of the punks who hang around the streets day and night. I'm not talking about those who engage in social activities such as meeting friends on the corner, girl and boy watching and other activities but those who deface the buildings, smoke grass and scare shoppers and others from patronizing the downtown.

How are they going to keep it from becoming a hangout for disreputables? Maybe the police would like them all in one place so they can keep an eye on them since observers say many of them are from neighboring towns. Not me. Anyway the corner can now be restored so it will help rather than hinder the efforts of the BIA to enhance the reputation of Acton's downtown. Let's hope it does help make Acton a pleasant and pleasing place to shop.

## Back issues

### 10 years ago

April 13, 1974

Acton's last mayor, Les Duby, is Citizen of the Year for Centennial. Ontario Housing Corporation is very much interested in building a four or five storey senior citizen apartment complex on the site of the present Canadian Legion Hall, it was revealed at Halton Hills council Monday night.

Four hundred names were drawn Saturday night from a drum in the climax of the annual 400 club draw at the Legion. The crowd filled the hall for the elimination draw which ended with Bruce Barber, Mason Blvd., the big winner of the Maverick from L and L Ford, or the cash equivalent.

Kris Lindvik, of RR 2, Acton, sped to victory in the 19-29 age group to earn the Schlitz Gold Cup in the sixth annual Schlitz/Nastar finals, a recreational ski racing championship. A total of 78 skiers from all over the country competed in the event March 29-30 at Sun Valley, Idaho, and she not onlyaced out nine others in her age group, but topped all 48 women who competed.

### 20 years ago

April 2, 1964

Easter joy came early for three Acton Hydro employees last week when commission members approved a wage increase for superintendent Doug Mason (to \$5,700), secretary-treasurer Audrey Urquhart (to \$3,800) and meter reader Newt Hurst (to \$3,899).

The first carnival undertaken on a small scale by the newly formed Acton Figure Skating Club Saturday gave a promise of fine skating and many more carnivals to come.

Mrs. George Wallace and Mrs. Alex Orr attended the convention of Home Economics Teachers of the Ontario Educational Association which was held at the Lord Simcoe Hotel, Toronto, March 31.

### 50 years ago

March 29, 1934

The Midget Hockey banquet was held in the Legion clubroom. The Crescents were in charge of Ben Bayliss, the Three Stars under L. G. King, the Red Wings under E. E. Barr, the Majestics under Harry Holmes. W. D. Talbot took charge of the visitors at their table. Familiar songs were sung with Mr. F. J. Salt at the piano.

There continues to be much controversy on the best way to handle the bequest to the town from Mr. A. J. Murray.

All high school marks are published. Those who ranked on top are Hazel Wilson, J. Cross, A. G. Gibson, J. Binnie, Mary Young, K. Chapman, E. Braida, N. Braida, J. Graham, M. Papillon.

The Girl Guides are now meeting in the school. Mr. George Mason gave them a talk on camp.

### 75 years ago

April 11, 1909

Dr. J. M. Bell has sold to David Storey of Nassagaweya sixty feet off the rear of his property on Frederick St. adjoining Dr. Gray's property, the depth of the lot—sixty-six feet. Mr. Storey will erect a two-storey brick residence the coming summer thereon. He will then retire from his farm and take up his residence in town.

Rev. R. F. Kelleman, the newly-appointed rector of St. Alban's Church will arrive from Passaic, N.J. this week. He will be accompanied by his mother and two sisters.

Reeve Swackhamer, contractor, has been engaged the past week on a new entrance with double oak doors at the Acton. A fire escape has also been installed and a doorway leading to it from the third floor.

### 100 years ago

April 3, 1884

The Trustees of our public school have gone to considerable trouble in preparing a list of all children of school age, from five to 15 years, and will insist that all attend school for at least 55 days in each half year.

At Spring Assizes in Milton, Hon. Justice Oslar approved of purchasing farms and erecting poor houses for men unwilling to work and earn their living. They would be compelled to work and would not be a burden on society.

Householders must clean up their back yards and remove the filth, to avoid a large amount of sickness. The village lamp lighter deserves credit for keeping the street lamps so bright and clean. The lights should be turned up a little higher yet, though.

A number of townspeople talk about pulling the bell-ringer's ears for fooling them so badly with his six o'clock ring on April Fool's day.