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Private purchase not solution

# Town hall efforts deserve applause

We share the sense of shock that must have enveloped one particularly ambitious group of Actonians Monday night when town council decided that public funds will not be used to restore the hundred-year old Acton town hall.

It was, after all, council's initial sanctioning of the restoration project that spurred the group to launch a massive mail-out campaign for public contributions and to conceive the impressive Actario lottery.

That was almost five years ago. Although cautious from the outset, council generally applauded the group's ambition to preserve a part of their community's heritage and said "Yes, if you can raise this much money for the restoration, we'll contribute this much from tax revenues."

It bothers us as much as it bothers these forthright, hard-working Actonians, then, that council would now throw up its hands because restoration is not as financially feasible today as it was five years ago. Surely the sharp increase in renovation costs could have been predicted when council gave that first tentative caution light to Actonians to proceed with fund-raising plans.

Now, unless the two citizens' committees involved can devise a plan to buy the hall privately, it would appear that all the money raised must be dispersed among the contributors, with some Actario funds probably going to charity.

We suspect that councillors who opposed the restoration Monday night may have had a harder time justifying their opposition had not some 400 Actonians signed a petition to stop council from spending public money on the restoration. There was no opposition to the project apparent in Acton when the restoration was initially proposed five years ago, and thus the building's refurbishment seemed that much more of a community identity project.

We wonder how much of a surprise that petition was for members of the Actario and restoration committees. We also wonder how much weight Coun. Harry Levy carries on council in view of his threat to quit as council's budget chairman if the restoration was approved. Apparently, Mayor Pete Pomeroy's whole-hearted endorsement of the restoration did not impress council members as much.

Right or wrong, council has decided to forget the town hall, at least until the restoration committee decides itself whether to pursue the matter further. Frankly, it seems absurd to us that private citizens would consider purchasing the building now, however noble their intention. Without a magnanimous benefactor in the form of some corporate sponsor, perhaps, the continued efforts to restore the town hall appear financially ludicrous.

We feel the project should now be abandoned and the hall demolished. Let's hope the demolition does not become a symbol of Acton's lost identity, as some have predicted.

But even if the project were scrapped tomorrow, let no council member nor petition signer forget what the restoration and Actario committees tried to do for them. Those opposed to the restoration may feel the idea was foolish from the start, but examined subjectively, the committees' undertaking has been as generous and community-minded as any project we've seen here.

We sincerely hope that the committee members will not be frustrated by council's decision to the point where they turn their backs on further community involvement. It would be an understandable reaction after five years' effort, but with the encouragement of their fellow citizens, we hope these people will now turn their attention to other worthwhile endeavors.



## Levesque's referendum bid will scar Pequiste party

Ottawa Report  
By Stewart MacLeod

It's even difficult to come to grips with the irony of it all — Premier Rene Levesque, in effect, holding a referendum within the Parti Quebecois on the issue of Quebec independence. You really have to think a bit about it, don't you?

But that's what is happening, and the 58-year-old premier is staking the remainder of his political career on the outcome of this forthcoming referendum.

I have absolutely no doubts that he will win the referendum that the 350,000 members of the Parti Quebecois will overturn those controversial resolutions passed at the recent Montreal convention and that Levesque will continue to lead the party. After all, to a great degree, Rene Levesque is the Parti Quebecois and with his threatened resignation hanging over their heads, the party members will do what the leader wants.

And one of the ironies is that Levesque wants this general membership to reinstate "association" with the rest of Canada back into the party's

platform on sovereignty. It was Levesque who, immediately after the other nine provinces and Prime Minister Trudeau reached agreement on a constitutional accord, declared that the next provincial election would be fought on unhyphenated independence. By referring to Quebec's federal MPs as traitors and other unpleasant things, the rank-and-file members of the Parti Quebecois could be forgiven for thinking the premier was asking for a militant mandate.

ANGRY REACTION

But after the 2,100 delegates to that Montreal convention decided to eliminate economic association from the independence platform, and decide that the election of another PQ government, even without an overall majority of votes, would constitute a declaration of independence, Levesque threatened to quit. The party, he declared, had just ordained its own defeat.

He said that agents provocateurs had infiltrated the party he founded and now he is planning to go over the heads of the delegates and tell the general membership what they, in turn, should tell him. I guess it's all democratic enough, but it's also very strange.

While there is little doubt that Levesque will get the message he wants, I can't see how the party can emerge from this without deepened wounds. Since the party was founded, the Levesque-led moderates have felt intense pressure from the more impatient militants who seek independence with no ifs, ands or buts. And two weeks ago, finally, these militants won the day.

How will they feel about Levesque going over the heads of duly-elected delegates for a reversal of policies? Not very good, I suspect.

What the referendum can do is to allow Rene Levesque to carry on with personal dignity. But the scars from this incredible exercise will never be entirely eradicated.

And that's another irony of immense proportions. If there is one thing the Parti Quebecois is supposed to be it's a truly grass-roots organization, perhaps the most democratic political organization in the entire country — at least until that recent convention. All 2,100 delegates at that meeting were duly elected by their riding associations to represent the general membership. And judging by what the premier said prior to the convention, the general membership, in many cases, no doubt instructed delegates to become more militant. And that they did.

But they went too far for Levesque and now he is planning to go over the heads of the delegates and tell the general membership what they, in turn, should tell him. I guess it's all democratic enough, but it's also very strange.

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## Canada faces quandary deciphering native rights

Queen's Park  
By Derek Nelson

Anyone following the verbal war over aboriginal rights must have trouble guessing what the real battle involves; that is, who owns the land most of us live on.

Listening to "native peoples" (why are they more native than anyone else born here?) spokesmen over the years one slowly gathers an understanding of their definition of aboriginal rights.

Simply put, it is that residual ownership of most of the land in Canada lies with the Inuit, Indian, and Metis. The "rights" they demand are, at base, property rights.

Former MPP Morton Shulman, who has an interview show on Toronto television, once managed to pin down a spokesman for the local Mississauga Indians to the effect that the tribe's aboriginal rights include ownership of most of Metro Toronto.

Now what happens if the vague, undefined term "aboriginal rights" is entrenched in the constitution, thus automatically taking precedence over all federal and provincial laws?

First the courts would have to make clear what aboriginal rights are.

If the justices confirm the Indian view that ancient possession of land is one of those rights then all who've immigrated here since Indian settlement could (in theory) be dispossessed.

At the very least enormous sums of money (billions) would be required to

rent or buy land that people think they own now.

There is the possibility that the courts will take a narrow view of aboriginal rights, excluding residual ownership of land (or at least excluding those Indian bands who've signed treaties).

This, incidentally, is why some Indian groups opposed the wording of the aboriginal rights section. They wanted their title to Canada clearly spelled out, and then they wanted a veto over changes to that clause.

But even a narrow decision leaving out claimed land still leaves large areas of federal and provincial land from which Indians might be exempt.

HUNT AND FISH

For example, the Ontario government and various Indian bands have been in continual struggle over what limits should exist on historic Indian rights to hunt and fish as they please.

Some Indians consider commercial fishing a legitimate right, and that such conservation pressures as bag limits and seasons don't apply to them.

Or take a highway that passes through Indian land (such as Highway 17). It could be blocked from widening by the band, something no other

Ontarian could legally get away with.

Attorney-General Roy McMurtry summed up the general principle at stake in a controversial letter he sent to his federal counterpart Jean Chretien last May.

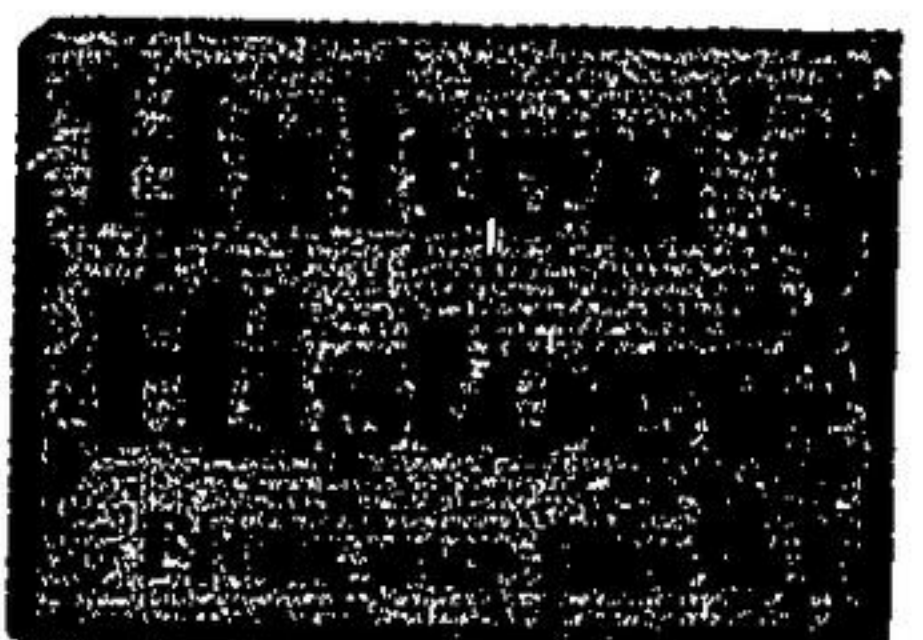
"I would be surprised if there is any nation in the world in which any private property right enjoys under the national constitution the absolute immunity from law apparently contemplated for aboriginal rights."

The federal MPs who defeated a qualified right of us all to own property by refusing its entrenchment on the other hand were "willing to support this unprecedented elevation of one particular private property right," he said.

And I see a further worrisome aspect.

Inuit and reserve or status Indians are easily defined, but aboriginal rights are to include non-status Indians and Metis too. (Why they exist is beyond me. As a people they exist as a consequence of European settlement. They are hardly aboriginal.)

How do you separate them out of the general population? What percentage "blood," and what type, makes you an Indian or Metis?



THIRTY YEARS AGO—Tough John Payne and trim Rhonda Fleming find romance, adventure and plenty of trouble on a perilous voyage through the South Seas in Paramount's film "Crosswinds", coming to the Roxy Friday and Saturday.

Sequestering Township will have its first election in five years next Monday. Ratepayers will go to the polls to choose a new deputy-reeve and three councillors. George Leslie, deputy for three years steps up into the reeve's shoes by acclamation, succeeding George Currie who has relinquished the post but is seeking a council seat. Wilfred Bird and H. Craig Reid, district farmers who both have sat in council for five years are opposing each other in the election for deputy reeve. Walter Linham is again a candidate for council, as is newcomer William Schenk of Glen Williams, proprietor of Credit Valley Bottling Works. Another nominee, Spencer Wilson, didn't qualify for election.

Reporting on his year's administration, Reeve George Currie said that Halton at present has no debenture debt but in 1952 there will be \$350,000 in debentures for the new home for the aged. Both he and deputy reeve George Leslie had opposed the building of the home and Mr. Currie said he was still opposed to it. "I have always stressed the advantages of being free of debt," Mr. Currie remarked, linking this with the fact that the Form Motor Company had chosen a site in the county to build what will be one of the biggest plants in Canada.

THIRTY YEARS AGO—Norval's Riviera dance hall will open New Year's Eve. The entertainment for the evening has been hired already, and arrived to try out the sound system this week. They pronounced the acoustics excellent.

The Herald learned this week that motorists who take a wheel after taking enough alcohol to even slightly dull their alertness will be charged on the spot and taken to jail in Milton. Chief Hales explained the crackdown. "It takes only a couple of drinks for a motorist's reactions to become sluggish and tardiness in applying the brakes or turning the wheel could easily cost someone, perhaps even the driver himself, their life or injury and would cripple him for life. Our officers have been instructed to take the drinking driver off the road so other people may get to their destinations safely."

The Georgetown Police Department is within three days of another fatality free year and a new safety record in the number of accidents. The points system and stricter enforcement of traffic laws have been credited with the drop.

Transportation minister Rowntree announced today that the new 1982 drivers licences and motor vehicle permits would go on sale at all issuing offices Jan. 2, 1982. "In the interest of the department's continuing accident prevention program, we have had imprinted in red across the face of all licences and permits the words 'Safety Pays'," he said. The minister warned there would be no extension of the deadline for the purchase of new licence plates. The deadline is March 14, 1982.

Tri-County minor hockey officials huddled last week in a general meeting which included in the agenda the question of classification of teams. It's felt that some of the teams in the league are considerably stronger than others. The thinking is that certain teams should be classified as to their ability.

TEN YEARS AGO—Snow or no snow, Georgetown High School is planning a Winter Carnival again this year. The Carnival will run from Jan. 31 to Feb. 5. There will be a variety night with local groups, and a Toronto group, euche tournaments, ping-pong tournaments, snow sculptures if the weather co-operates, a car rally and a Snow Queen Pageant. Girls will be nominated well before the event and gradually eliminated until the night of the pageant when only the finalists will appear.

Rick Dowling, one of the pros at Georgetown Figure Skating Club is training an Oakville brother and sister for the Canadian Championships to be held in London in January. Debbie and John Dowling succeeded in coming first in the senior dance section to earn the right to compete in the championships. Georgetown will be fortunate in having them as part of the show at the Skating Carnival planned for Feb. 12 and 13 at Georgetown arena.

The Credit Valley Conservation Authority received approval Monday for the purchase of 168 acres of Niagara Escarpment land for the Silver Creek Conservation Area in Esquewash Township northwest of Georgetown. This property is in addition to 56 acres already purchased this year in the same Silver Creek Gorge area. The land will be bought for multi-use conservation purposes. The Ontario government assists the conservation authorities with 75 per cent grants on the purchase of Escarpment land. The Authority now owns approximately 3,000 acres in the Credit River watershed.

ONE YEAR AGO—A Christmas day fire which gutted a Glen Williams house and left a family of four homeless could have been much worse—they might have been home at the time. Believed to have started in a basement stairwell, the blaze spread up the walls of the Confederation Street home, quickly engulfing the wooden frame, and aluminum siding.

Mayor Pete Pomeroy predicts things at the region will get worse before they get better in 1981. The mayor, who will be heading up the region's finance and administration committee this year, said he hopes to convince council to reevaluate the region's capital expenditure program in an attempt to hold the line on expenditures until the region organizes its finances.

Halton region is reasonably buoyant economically when compared to the rest of Ontario but Halton residents are going to have to fight to keep it that way. Halton-Township MPP Julian Reed says. Mr. Reed said that although unemployment is technically in the federal jurisdiction, his office is increasingly being called upon to assist the unemployed people in the riding.

While the Ontario Labor Relations Board sits through almost 400 grievances filed against Norval's Maple Lodge Farms Ltd., a supervisor at the chicken processing plant faces a charge of assault against an employee. The supervisor, a Brampton resident will appear in court Jan. 28, charged with assaulting Helena Moniz, 23, of Brampton. It is alleged that Ms. Moniz was struck on the legs with a piece of steel used to sharpen knives. The union filed a grievance with the company but it was rejected.

## Bible's 'hit' song

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased" Luke 2:14

"There is no heaven above and no hell below". So sang John Lennon, the rock star murdered a year ago. Lennon's world often appeared to be very empty, bleak and meaningless. Many of the songs we listen to express hopelessness, bitterness and cynicism.

The song quoted from the Bible is the one sung long ago by the host of angels as Christ, the eternal Son of God, was born of Mary in Bethlehem. This song was not a hit then and it is not today. In all likelihood, it will not ever become a hit in this world.

Why not, one may well ask? Is it because we have to believe in angels and what they do? Is it because we have to believe in God the Lord and what He does? Undoubtedly, this is so.

I have to believe in the Lord and fully trust Him for his promises before I can really sing this song and it becomes part of my life. Or, I have to conclude that this is an old song, and along with most songs it has become a collector's item. Now, once a year we take this beautiful old song and some other ones and we play them again.

There is something about this song. Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, it says. I may have a praising heart all the time. I may have a life to the Lord. I may be captured by him in whose honor this song was sung.

This songwriter is not dead. He is the ever living God! Christmas is more than just a song at this time. It is much, much more. It is truth...and life...and peace!

—By Rev. John De Jong  
Christian Reformed Church

## Happy holiday!

With the last story sent down to our typesetters and Brian, our press foreman, having switched off his mammoth machines for the last time before Christmas, Herald staff members have settled into a comfortable, nostalgic reflection of the yuletide season.

One can't help but feel the touch of Christmas joy in the air — especially for our typesetters, who have been busily proofreading Santa's letters of reply to his thousands of avid Halton Hills admirers.

Greeting and helping citizens at our front desk, our office staff have seen the glowing faces of youngsters when they've been given a candy cane off our little white Christmas tree.

Our reporters have felt the true meaning of the Christmas spirit in many ways as they attended a

multitude of Christmas shows and watched service clubs and charity groups sharing their happiness and help to the less privileged. But through it all, we've seen the community at large pull together cheerily to provide for their families and the less fortunate for this special time of year.

We at The Herald feel very fortunate to be supported so well by the community towards our goal of providing the best possible news in Halton Hills. Contributing writers, letters to the editor and criticisms of articles help us to improve and realize the type of community newspaper the residents would like to see.

To our readers, contributors and advertisers, we wish you all a very pleasant Christmas season and all the best in the New Year.

### POET'S CORNER

### Christmas Party

The tree trimmed a thrilling sight  
And all the room in luscious light,  
Candy and presents under the tree  
The young boy hoping, something for me.

The concert was thrilling a happy place  
He didn't know what he had to face,  
Then Santa Claus appeared on the scene  
Christmas that night to him just a dream.

Santa called out the names, one by one  
Walled and waited, for him there was none

All the children had candy and toys  
Silence then ended with laughter and noise

All he wanted to be like one of them  
But somehow he was missing out again  
As he left the room, sore with disgust,  
Heid back the tears, thoughts of distrust.

Headed for home, a cold frosty night  
What he wanted was to hide out of sight  
It wasn't the first time, it happened to him

Was he the black sheep, his chances were slim,  
When as a child, the life that you get  
Though you grow older, you never forget  
Remember at Christmas, no name will you miss  
Or some poor little soul, will end up like this  
Up in his manhood, he prospered a lot  
Some one and some place he was never forgot.

—By Albert Brooks  
RR3 Acton