

Former councillor, reporter, Esther Taylor retires

By MAGGIE HANNAH
Herald Special

Esther Taylor, the forthright lady who loves animals and tolerates children, may have retired from the Acton branch of the Halton Hills library after 27 years, but that doesn't mean she'll be bored.

Acton residents have known Taylor as a politician, a reporter and photographer, a library staffer and now as a crossing guard at Robert Little public school.

She expects retirement from the library to give her time to do some more photography for herself, feed her ducks and

other fowl, pamper her dogs and cats and catch up on some housework. There was just a hint in an interview that she might even try writing a book instead of just reading them.

Ms. Taylor came to Acton with her parents at age five and her early memories are of the terror of the crossing in a former troop ship during such bad North Atlantic storms that the ship almost sank.

"I remember the waves lashing the porches on that crossing," she said, "and I was so terrified of water after that I wouldn't go near it."

When she was about eight, "some idiot" cured her by taking her out in a raft on Fairy Lake. They went out so far Ms. Taylor got terrified, jumped overboard and started swimming for shore. She has been a keen swimmer and loved water ever since.

Ms. Taylor said the library became so much a part of her life over the years being around it was just as natural as breathing. She took her turn at story hour like all the other library staff in the early years, but she didn't mind when she was exempted from working with the young children of later years as the Georgetown librarians and the Acton junior librarian took over that service.

"I've no maternal instincts at all," she quipped. "Generally speaking I'm not a great lover of children. They're like horses. I don't mind them from a distance."

But despite that, she has been a crossing guard at Main Street North and School Lane for what "must be five years now," she said.

Librarians have changed a lot in the years she's been with the Acton branch. Where she once knew members and their

tastes that's no longer possible. Computers are one of the future changes Acton's library will face soon and Ms. Taylor doesn't regret missing that. She hates them and gleefully admits to enjoying it when she hears about one breaking down.

"But they're with us and there isn't much you can do about them," she said.

Her big hope is that Acton will retain its homey atmosphere. That's the things members say when they visit, Ms. Taylor said. They enjoy the homey atmosphere where they can stop for a moment's chat with staff and feel relaxed as opposed to the sterile atmosphere they encounter in bigger libraries.

Ms. Taylor spent a couple of years on council in 1951 and 1952. The town was getting sewers installed at that time and she recalled councillors spent all their time either fighting each other or fighting the public.

Town residents don't get as emotionally involved in issues any more and she feels modern councillors don't know how easy they have it. In her time, there were no committees and council had to do everything.

Meetings used to go until 3 a.m. and they'd send out for meals during the meetings. While politics was a real education, it didn't do anything to improve her faith in human nature, she said.

"Thank God there wasn't full press coverage in those days," she said. They very seldom quoted a councillor. In fact they sometimes didn't even cover the meeting. They just got their stuff from the council minutes."

Ms. Taylor began her writing career as a stringer for the old Toronto Telegram during World War II. When that fizzled out she began stringing for the Globe and Mail.

On May 20, 1957, she began working for the Guelph Mercury on the condition she be free to continue stringing for the Globe, working for the library and freelancing for the Family Herald.

She did a lot of feature work for the Family Herald and eventually wound up doing many covers for them.

While her school principal Minnie Bennett encouraged her writing, she taught herself what she knows about photography.

As a Mercury reporter she developed her own films because she never trusted other people to develop her work. It wasn't until just before she gave up writing for The Mer-

cury on Aug. 18, 1977, that she sent undeveloped film to Guelph for processing, and then only occasionally.

The worst part of reporting

was covering the same meetings and events month after month, year after year she said.

"You really get stale and

you reach a point where you're sure you just can't write another word. You dry right up. Fifteen years of that was enough."

Doberthien's appeal for disabled works

In response to Acton businessman Lorne Doberthien's recent letter to provincial and federal officials concerning parking for physically handicapped drivers, both governments say they are trying to make things a little easier for disabled citizens.

Margaret Birch, Ontario's secretary for social development, says that the province's transportation ministry and the ministry of intergovernmental affairs are drafting a model bylaw for municipalities to consider, outlining parking privileges for handicapped drivers.

Correspondence received at Halton regional headquarters from Janice Tait, the federal government's director of transportation for the handicapped, says that Ottawa is also planning a federal parking policy designating special parking facilities at federal buildings for handicapped drivers.

However, in Ms. Tait's letter, much of the problem surrounding car parking for physically disabled citizens must be cleared up. In Ontario, by the provincial transportation ministry. Ms. Tait claims that motor licensing boards are afraid to issue special logos identifying vehicles own-

ed by handicapped drivers, fearing that non-physically disabled drivers may cheat the system.

Fees may rise for LDC bid

The costs of processing applications through the Halton land division committee (LDC) will likely go up if regional council approves a recommendation by its administration and finance committee Wednesday.

Shortfalls have been showing up in the LDC's annual expense sheet indicating that it actually costs \$251 to process applications. Fees are now set at \$100.

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