

EDITORIAL

Why Victoria Day?

It wasn't that many decades ago when the school kids used to chant:

*"The twenty-fourth of May
Is the Queen's birthday
If we don't get a holiday
Then we'll all run away."*

Most knew it was Queen Victoria's birthday, a queen who ruled over the British Empire from 1845 to 1901. Classrooms had huge maps showing the British Empire in red embracing the world. Most communities, including Acton, had Victoria streets.

We still celebrate Victoria Day, and have been since 1845, when Parliament of the United Province of Canada declared May 24 a holiday to celebrate the Queen's birthday. After Victoria's death in 1901, the Parliament of Canada fixed the 24th of May as a statutory and official holiday. Later the date was changed to the Monday in May preceding the 25th which is why Victoria Day is celebrated this Monday.

Is it an anachronism that Canada among all the parts of the former British Empire is the only country that celebrates Victoria Day? Perhaps. But it is uniquely Canadian even though it celebrates the birthday of a queen who never set foot in this sprawling Dominion. But why celebrate?

Hugh Segal, the Conservative Senator from Ontario, said it in an unique way in an article in the Toronto Star. He wrote:

"In war and peace, the best part of Victoria's legacy, economic modernization, parliamentary reform and opening the world to trade and commerce, the spreading of British laws and administration, all took root and acquired a Canadian identity between 1837 and now.

"Our civility, freedom and relative prosperity emerged from these roots, remarkably strengthened by all who have come since," Segal concludes. "It is vital that we retain the dimension of our political and historical identity that sets us apart from all others."



Queen Victoria

Looking Back

Ten Years Ago

- Still no word from Magna International if it intends to locate its 500-job truck plant in Acton. Local officials say no news is good news.
- High-speed Internet was a huge determining factor in TVM (Total Vision Marketing) Building Product's decision to move to Acton from Erin.
- Acton Councillor Rick Bonnette said Town and Regional politicians should butt out of the debate over a Halton-wide smoking ban.

Five Years Ago

- Several Halton Hills political veterans – including Acton's Clark Somerville – have thrown their hats into the ring for the fall municipal election.
- Gary Crowell was named chief of Halton Police Services, replacing retiring Chief Ean Algar.
- Members of the Acton Agricultural Society are feted as the Acton Citizens of the Year at the annual Rotary Club of Acton dinner.

Letters

Sanford feels honoured to be Paul Harris Fellow

Dear Editor,

RE: Rotary Honour

I would like to publicly thank the Rotary Club of Acton for naming me a Paul Harris Fellow for involvement in the community. I was so surprised the evening of the presentation, that I didn't say much and I didn't properly thank them. Most of my community activities are done with committees and I

couldn't manage without the help and support of other people, especially my husband Bill.

I feel privileged to be recognized by the Rotary Club which itself does so much for our town. Many thanks for bestowing this great honour on me.

Sincerely,
Kathy Sanford
Acton, ON



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Distributed to every home in Acton and area, as well as adjoining communities.

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