

# Acton Celebrates Seniors' Month

The New Tanner is proud to feature seniors each week this month



*June is Seniors Month in Ontario – a chance to honour and recognize those whose talents and volunteering make Acton a nicer place to live. This week the focus is on Acton's Mac Sprowl.*

**By Julie Conroy**

Mac Sprowl was born November 5, 1927. His parents, John and Beatrice Sprowl, lived a farm on the Third Line Esquesing (now Churchill Road South) and he and his brother Calvin, were both born there.

Mac attended a one roomed school house, S.S. 13 Bannockburn which was on the Fourth Line, Esquesing. It is still there but now is a residence. One teacher taught Grades one to eight. When he graduated public school in 1941, Mac went to Acton Continuation School for four years. The school was located in the old stone school just behind the present library.

Mac said he used to walk to the railway line near his home and get a ride on the railway "Jigger" to and from school. While he attended school he was in the Army Cadets for two years, and due to the war he was allowed "Farm Leave", which meant he had a shorter school year finishing in April and returning in October. The farm was a mixed farm, and they had dual purpose Shorthorn cattle, 200 laying hens, and 100 acres which produced grain, corn and hay. His father also owned Sprowl Well Drilling for 40 years. His brother Calvin and his father drilled most of the 1,200 wells but Mac helped too. His mother Beatrice was well known as a water diviner.

While in junior school he loved to sing, and his choir entertained at churches and various halls in the area. Margaret McCullough taught him to play the piano. Mac also enjoyed acting and played the part of Reverend Collins in *Pride and Prejudice*.

He was the President of the Acton Halton Junior Farmers for 12 years and in their choir. During their performance in London, Ontario, the stage collapsed. Luckily he was not hurt but several other people were.

Mac went to Georgetown High school where he studied politics through McMaster University, Lon-

don, Ontario. In 1954, he won a six-month scholarship, so he sailed across the Atlantic on the *Empress of Australia* to England where he spent six months visiting various farms. His return journey was on the *Empress of Scotland*. On his return to Ontario, he made 100 presentations over a two and a half year period, to various farmers and agriculture groups covering a wide area ranging from Sarnia to Owen Sound to Ottawa, showing his slides and talking about the various farming methods in England.

He was very interested in politics and was nominated twice as a candidate for the Conservatives Party in 1957 and 1963, but he failed to get elected.

In 1964 he married Joyce Leitch, whose home was in Erin Township. They had a house built on the home property and moved in October 1965. In fact, Mac and Joyce and my family were neighbours for six months. We had moved to Canada in September 1965, and moved to Acton in the December. I vividly remember seeing Mac up on his roof shoveling snow. I wondered what I had let myself in for.

Mac tells me he has had two careers. The first 19 years in agriculture, and the second 28 years in the Attorney Generals office, first as Deputy Sheriff and later Sheriff. He was presented with the Quarter Century Award for his time in government office. He retired on March 31 1992.

He was a member of the Acton Fall Fair board for

20 years and President in 1953. He was on the board for both the Halton Federation for Agriculture, and the Ontario Federation for Agriculture.

From 1959 – 1964 he was School Trustee for the Esquesing Board and during this time they closed 24 one room schools and built three new schools. They tried to locate them in the center of each cluster of schools they were closing. The new schools were built at Speyside, Limehouse, and Pineview.

Mac has been proud member of the Rotary for 55 years and twice President. He was presented with the Paul Harris Award in 1983, which is the highest award presented to a Rotarian and also the William Morris Society U.K. from Nuffield, Canada.

Being a Nuffield scholar has taken Mac and Joyce on trips in Canada from coast to coast, and also to Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and France.

In 1993, Mac was appointed to the Citizens Committee on Property Tax Reform and was on the committee for 12 months. His committee studied taxation methods all over the world. He is the president of Halton Hills Home Owners Association and helps assist home owners with taxation appeals.

Mac and Joyce are members of Knox Presbyterian Church, Acton and Mac has been an Elder for 54 years. For the past 18 years, he has been a member of the Esquesing Historical Society.

Mac and Joyce have

been married 47 years, and have two daughters. Dianne lives in Bellville and has two children. Amy is employed by the Federal Government and Leslee who graduated in architecture but now is considering a career change. Their second daughter Marie, lives in Perth and has Travis who is in his third year nursing at Trent University, and Jennifer who is completing Grade 12 and hopes to study pharmacy.

Now he has lots of time for his hobbies. He is an avid curler (as his many trophies will attest) and he says a poor golfer. Mac loves to read and had a library of over 400 books in his study. The walls of which are lined with various awards and photo's in recognition of the many volunteer hours he has given to the community.

He was founding member of the Acton Seniors Recreation Centre. He worked for many years and attended many meetings (28) from 1991 until 1996, until the Acton Seniors Recreational Centre became a reality. He was on the original Finance Committee for several years when the Centre opened.

He still pops in every week to add his Loonie to the 50/50 draw, and he and his wife enjoy the various social evenings at the Centre.



Mac Sprowl dressed in his regalia as Sheriff in the Attorney Generals Office in Milton for the last time at his retirement in 1992.



Mac Sprowl, 18 months, dressed in a hand knitted outfit



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