

EDITORIAL

Over-reaction or justified caution?

Some may say that the Halton Regional Police response to Friday's "gunman" may have been too much.

For about two hours, police had the core of Georgetown sealed off as members of the Tactical Rescue Unit sought out the armed man. Traffic was cut off from the core and residents of the Park St. apartment buildings, curious about the commotion, were ordered off their balconies — for their protection.

As it turned out the public was being protected from a man armed with a pellet gun trying to get pigeons off the roof of the old post office.

The question is: Did Halton Regional Police over-react to the situation?

The answer — without question — is: Yes they did.

Now before you start writing a letter to the editor in defence of our fine boys and girls in blue let's look closely at what happened — and give us a chance finish our train of thought.

Sometime late Friday afternoon, someone called police to report a man had been "seen with a rifle on the roof" of the old post office. The former home of Canada Post has been converted into apartment buildings.

According to a police media release: "Initial investigation revealed the suspect may still [have been] in the building. As a concern for the safety of the citizens in the immediate area the police Tactical and Rescue Unit was called out and a safe perimeter was established."

In their media release, police do not mention if the first officer on the scene looked out the window to see if indeed someone with a gun was running around the area, but based on the report of one person the "safe perimeter" was established.

So what we had was a situation where someone *may* have seen a person who *may* have had a gun on the roof of the old post office. That person *may* have still been in the area and police *may* have needed the skills of the Tactical Unit to flush out the suspect.

By the way, a dictionary meaning of *may* is "to be likely, but not certain."

It based on the uncertainty of the situation, police swept into the area, blocked traffic for a couple of hours, ordered people off the streets and off their balconies and general caused a huge — mostly unnecessary — commotion.

But with hindsight it is easy to criticise police for their reaction to the situation.

What if the gun had been real?

Letter to the Editor Thank you, Acton

Dear Editor:

On behalf of the Georgetown & District Red Cross I would like to take this opportunity to say "Thank You" to all of the people who took part in the recent Acton Blood Donor Clinic. Once again the people of Acton showed their concern and willingness to help others. 128 units of blood were collected at the June 26th clinic. Blood supplies can fall seriously short in the summer months when everyone seems to be away on vacation. For those people who couldn't make the clinic, we encourage you to make your donation at any other clinic, as the need for blood never decreases.

A special thanks to Denny's

Insurance who sponsored this clinic. And of course the clinic could not be such a success without the many volunteers who helped run it, including the continued support of the Acton Legion.

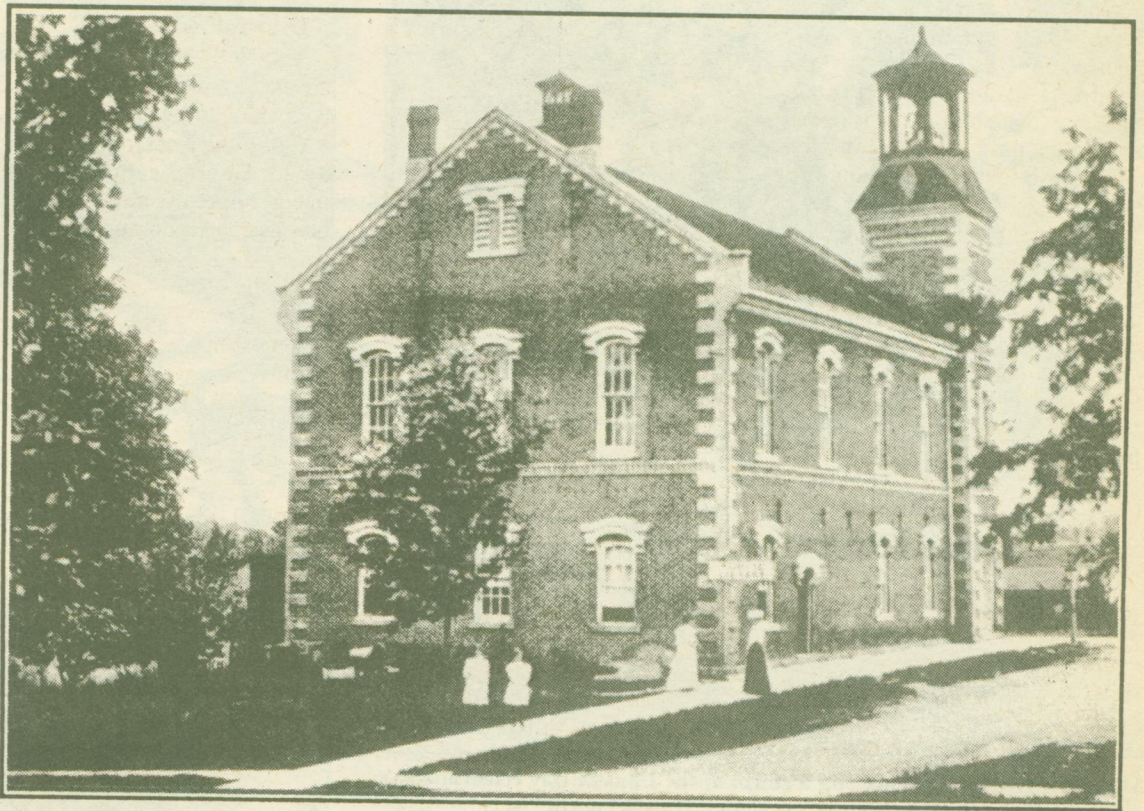
Thank you to all of the great donors and volunteers from Acton and the surrounding area. Through your efforts you have made it possible to give others the gift of life!

We look forward to seeing you again at the next Clinic on September 24, 1992. We appreciate your continued support.

Sincerely,
Sandra L. Moon
Acton Red Cross
Blood Donor Committee

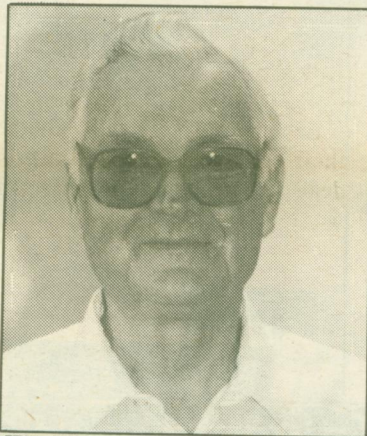
or as a result of space limitations.

Send your letter to:
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The Town Hall about 1900. It was destroyed by fire in 1968. - Photo courtesy of The Esqueving Historical Society.

Have you got a Minute?



Wheldon "Steamer" Emerson

Halton Hills This Week is thrilled to have Wheldon "Steamer" Emerson writing a weekly column. Steamer's anecdotes are always entertaining and usually full of insight into life's lighter moments. Look for Steamer's "Have You Got A Minute" every week in this space.

I took \$87,634.57, right out of "Ma & Pa" Kettle's kitchen cookie jar. The devil made me do it, the Department of National Revenue, and my boss the sheriff "Mac" Sprawl. Ask "Mac," he wouldn't lie to you. "Ma and Pa" Kettle looked exactly like the characters in the old-time movie series, "Ma and Pa" Kettle on the Farm.

Marjorie Main was the actress who played "Ma," and the morning I drove in her laneway I thought I was looking at the real McCoy. She was wearing old boots with no laces that I'll swear were World War Two army surplus. The rollers in her hair looked electrified. Above the boots she wore a large denim-type apron. She looked tough, acted tough, and talked tough. Why, she had a tongue that would clip a hedge. I was face to face with the Bride of Frankenstein. "Pa" wasn't home, but I figured his chances of winning an argument with her were slim or none.

The farm was in Halton County, separated by a road from Peel County in the Town of Oakville. All the surrounding farm land had been sold for big, big money. "Ma and Pa" were in the money till I arrived on the scene.

It was one of those, "What is so rare as a day in June, days. Goodness gracious, I'm willing to bet after my visit they never recognized the month of June again, ever. From May, right into July, no June for them Let's put it this way, if they had kids, they probably frowned on June weddings.

"Ma" invited me into the kitchen, went to the phone, dialled, and when she heard her husband's voice, said "Howard, that man's here," and hung up. In a couple of minutes, Howard pulled in behind my car. I'll swear to God his old white Chevy had been rescued from a demolition derby.

He wore dark green coveralls stuffed into his rubber boots with red buttons. He was chewing on an unlit cheroot. Lordy, Lordy I nearly brought up. Here in front of me was the other half of the kettle. This kettle was definitely in hot water, and I was about to turn up the heat, then add a dash of lemon to their tea.

I had a writ of fieri facias in my pocket. Writ of fieri facias, simply put, gives the sheriff the right to turn you upside down and shake the living daylight out of you.

"Pa" decided he needed legal advice and phoned a lawyer in Toronto. The lawyer asked to speak to me and I could tell by his voice this guy was important, he called me "Sir" and not an expletive idiot. He was most courteous, and why not — "Ma and Pa" would be paying the shot. His instructions were to "Pa" pay the money.

"Ma and Pa" threw ten to fifteen bank pass books on the kitchen

table, "honest Indian" and checked them to see from which accounts they would pay me. There was money in every one. One book had \$50,000, another had \$14,000 and change, \$38,000 in another. By George, my little old pass book of

\$177.00 looked pretty slim. The bride of Frankenstein and "Pa" Rockefeller were loaded.

"Pa" insisted I ride in the back of his dirty car to the bank to get me the money. My wife had turned me that morning spotless. Wide, white belts were all the rage, so I had baby blue slacks, white shoes, wide white belt, short-sleeved blue shirt, clean underwear, the works.

Sheriff Sprowl was pleased when I showed up with all this money. The income tax people were pleased. I was expecting a call maybe from the P.M. or perhaps a letter congratulating me. No way, José.

A few weeks went by, and I had accepted the fact there would be no congratulatory phone call, or letter. When a letter did arrive from the Department of National Revenue, naturally I was excited, and opened it quickly to read of the glowing praise of my work. It wasn't exactly what I expected. It read, "We have reassessed your tax file submission, and you owe a further \$2,654.00. Please remit."

No pat on the back, just a swift kick in the — as the French say — "derrière."

Halton Hills

THIS WEEK

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Letters Welcomed

Halton Hills This Week welcomes your letters. Letters must be signed and include your full name and address. Names will be withheld on request.

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