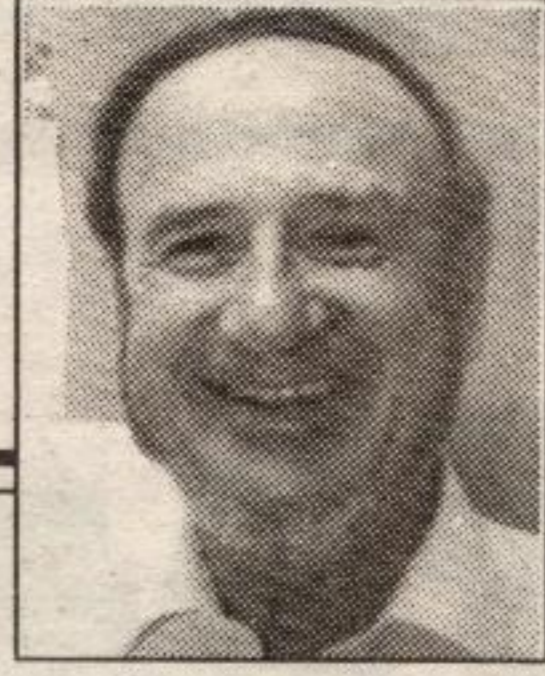


GUEST COMMENT

With Hartley Coles



Acton's baseball heritage

Just about everyone's talking baseball these days. So far be it from me to change that focus to something serious such as the national debt or the impending election.

When the "World Serious" beams out of the tube the emphasis is on Guzman's arm, Olerud's average or Robbie Alomar's spectacular fielding. To heck with those puny day-to-day irritants which follow us from the cradle to the grave.

Fans here, after all, have been following the World Series play 'way back when grandpa had to cup his ear to the old mantel battery radio. He'd catch the mellow tones of Mel Allan and the noisy Gillette commercials as the Yankees and the Dodgers squared off in far-away New York.

The game of baseball, or "hardball" as they used to call it in this neck of the woods, has been around Acton since the Adams brothers carved their homes out of the white pine which grew in this part of Upper Canada. Some of the first games here were played on the village commons, situated almost directly across from the Station Hotel in the block bounded by Mill, Willow, Church and Guelph Streets. This was much to the dismay of abutting gardeners whose produce was trampled when the moustached muscle men of the era hit one of the "lively" out of the park.

Believe it or not, the popular game here in those early days was cricket, played by men from the "old country," who must have thrown the odd game of "rounders" in when it suited them. In time, rounders turned into baseball, but the lively ball they used kept the high cricket scores. Acton's Early Days, the bible for early Acton activity, notes that "big scores were the pride of the players in those times."

The book records that sometime about 150 or so years ago the Nilş Desperandums of Acton (that's a baseball team) challenged the crack team from Guelph, the Maple Leafs, to a game on the village commons.

Managed by George Sleeman, who went on to fame as the proprietor of the city's biggest brewery, the Maple Leafs had made a name for themselves by playing most of the top U.S. teams of the day. Coincidence perhaps, but the week before the Acton challenge, Guelph had played the Philadelphia Yellow Stockings. And been soundly licked.

The writer wryly observed that the Leafs were looking for another club to "even up on." The Nils Desperandums were the victims by the handsome one-sided score of 127 to 26. Or it might have been 119 to 37. No one was quite sure.

In any event it must have been a scorer's nightmare. He had no modern scorebook to tally runs. He came to the game equipped only with a whittled piece of white pine and a jackknife. When one team scored he notched the board. When the other club scored he notched the board on the other side.

Those were the beginnings, with few organized ball leagues. We don't hear much about the evolution of the game here until the Halton County League was formed and Acton, along with Oakville, Milton, Georgetown, Campbellville, Burlington and teams from out of the county competed for the county cup. Fortunately, the Acton club was not saddled with the fancy Nils Desperandums label. It was known simply as the Acton nine.

Hartley Coles is in his 50th year in the newspaper business. The Acton resident presently is publisher of the northern group of NCC newspapers, headquartered in Listowel, Ont.



LETTERS

Make vote positive

To the Editor,

It is a sad state of affairs when polls show that as many as one in three Canadians will cast protest votes for either the Reform Party or the Bloc Quebecois.

It is a difficult job for any political party to run this country of ours and I am not sure if anyone has "the key."

As a voter, it is easy to be disheartened and easy to criticize, but when your party gets power — reality sets in. Just look at Bob Rae's government. They were largely elected on a protest vote and look what happened! Political agendas go out the window and those who made their protest vote,

Garth is choice

To the Editor,

There has been a lot of talk in this election about trust. Unfortunately, trust is difficult to achieve and sustain.

Surely trust does not come from just being a new member of an established political party. Let's acknowledge that each candidate will eventually make mistakes, change their mind, or be misquoted. These will happen to reduce our level of trust for any MP.

Perhaps accountability is a more realistic yardstick to measure our politicians. We should expect that our politicians will be accountable, should be visible, should stand up in front of us to listen and take the bad with the good, and to

join loudest in the chorus of criticism.

The other scary prospect with this election is that we could end up with a government elected more by default than by choice. The fact that this will be a Liberal government is not important. It is the principle that concerns me. As Richard Gwyn said, in Saturday's Star, "The Liberals will win all right, perhaps with a majority, but they will do so more by default than because they have really bonded voters to themselves" — kind of like being invited to the dance because everyone else was already taken.

My message is: vote for the person or party you choose, but make it a *positive* vote. Finally, when you vote for an alternate party, have a look at the end result to see who your decision will benefit.

Happy voting!

Brenda Sisnett
Acton

keep our interests ahead of the party. Garth Turner has, in my opinion, been this type of MP, and deserves consideration for another term.

Change is coming to our political system. Hopefully it will be change that better reflects the people of Canada, rather than those groups benefiting from the current system. However, to initiate sensible, rational change, we need MPs who can think for themselves — instead of letting the party do it for them, who are committed to sensible change, and who will be accountable to the voters more than just once every four or five years.

Phil Moddle
Knox Avenue

LETTERS

Another great success

To the Editor,

On Sunday, Sept. 19, the 13th annual Terry Fox Run was held at the Acton High School track, where almost 200 participants, volunteers and supporters joined together to continue their commitment and dedication to Terry's

dream of finding a cure for cancer.

Thanks to the efforts of everyone involved, total pledges and donations for the day amounted to well over \$24,000. Everyone involved should certainly be proud of this achievement, as Acton once again remains at the forefront in raising funds for cancer research.

We as Terry Fox Run Committee members are proud of the community involvement and spirit, and we would like to extend sincere thanks and appreciation to the following:

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