

EDITORIAL

With Hartley Coles



Election musings

Meet the Candidate's Night at the high school Thursday probably didn't settle the question about whom to vote for among the eight mayoralty candidates. It did, however, remind me of an election incident of a century ago as recorded in the pages of Acton's Early Days.

Matthews' Hall, a building which once sat on Mill Street and later moved behind the Four Seasons Restaurant, was the venue for the political meetings of the early days. In this instance D.B. Chisholm was the candidate attempting to unseat a Dr. Robertson for the County of Halton seat in Parliament. Both were from other parts of the county.

Mr. Chisholm, according to Acton's Early Days, was holding forth and endeavouring to impress the farmers of Acton and area of his interests in their welfare. He declared, "I'm a native of Halton County; in fact, I was born between two rows of corn."

A well-known local Irishman, quick with the quip, immediately retorted, "A punkin' head, be jappers."

The book relates that D.B. not only lost the crowd but eventually lost the election as well.

I suspect some of the candidates at Thursday's meeting, all from out of town, also lost the crowd and the election not by what they said but by what was not said. Most of those who attended probably still don't know where they'll put their "X" for mayor. They know where they won't put it, though.

This has been a fairly tame election so far. There was a burst of fire in the Acton meeting over allegations about a phone call Robert Barlow acknowledged he made to former MP Garth Turner but that will be dealt with elsewhere in this paper. Candidate Craig Harrison's novel solution to increasing Acton revenue and improving the site of the 496-acre Beardmore property was to set up a brothel and operate a casino there, a project I suspect will leave MPP Noel Duignan torn between two extremes.

This suggestion ranks with one once made by a candidate for Acton council who proposed to run a municipal weight-loss clinic so sidewalks wouldn't wear out so fast.

My grandfather liked to tell the story of his first election in Acton after arriving from the old country about 1906. With no time to gauge the political philosophy of the Tories and the Grits, he noted his decision was helped by largesse offered by both parties.

The Tories, confident of success, offered only a dollar or two. The Grits, however, anxious to win, offered a \$5 bonus for a Liberal vote. Needless to say he became a lifelong Liberal.

This custom has been largely eliminated in Canada except in places such as the Eastern outposts where they still appreciate the value of a dollar.

The old Grit-Tory rivalry which once made the issues so clear-cut has branched off in a dozen directions. It also eliminated some of the dirty tricks they used to delight in.

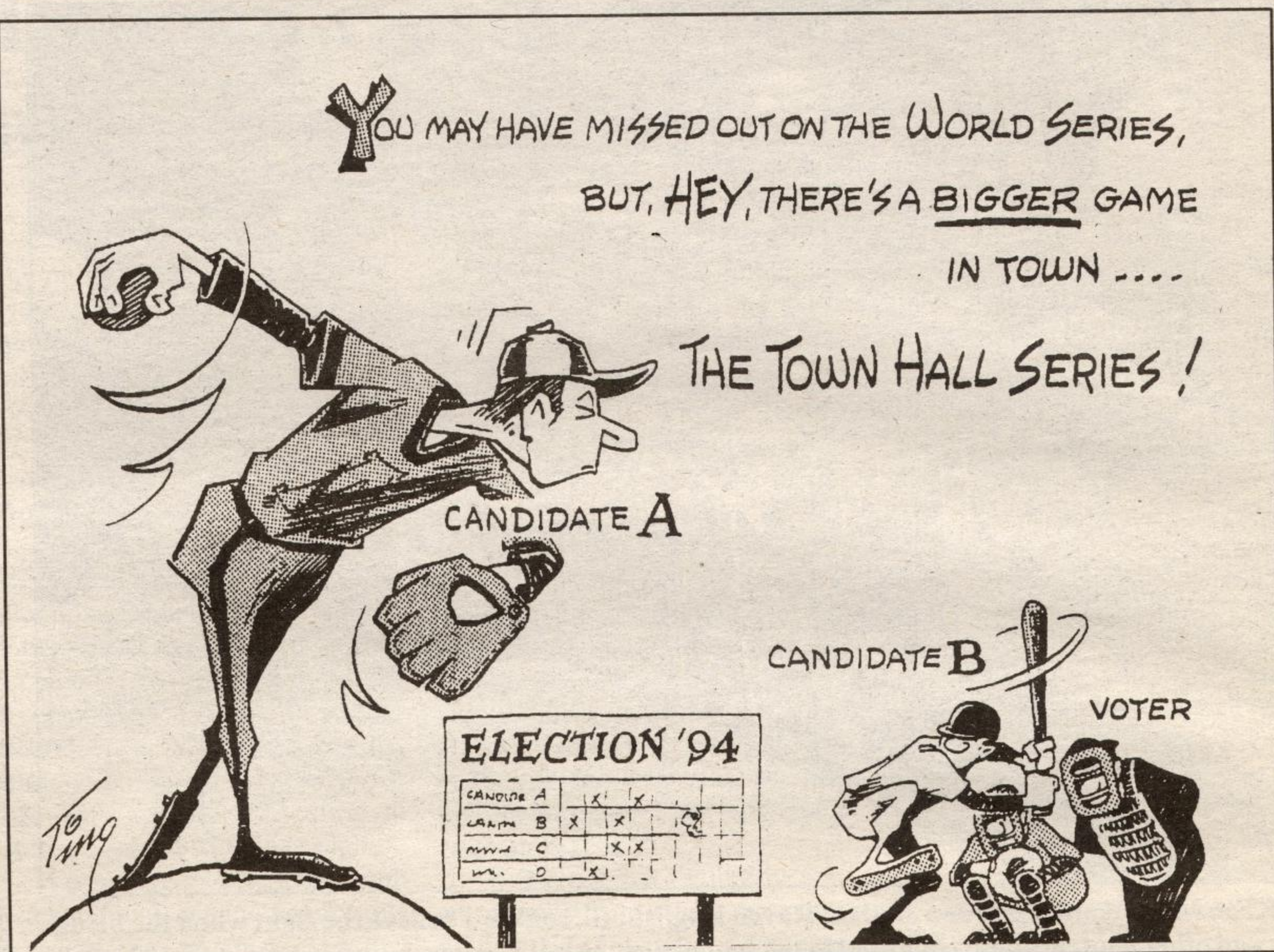
For instance, in one election not so long ago a Tory-victory party at one of the downtown Acton stores was observed closely by a local Grit. He noted the usual tea and cookies had been supplemented by what looked suspiciously like products of a distillery. His horror at this breach of etiquette was compounded by a desire to embarrass some of Acton's leading lights who were spiking their tea. Police officers, who descended on the party acting on the complaint, had no recourse but to charge the celebrants with having liquor in a place other than their residence. The revenge, if any, has never been documented.

This election hasn't been marked by any public venom other than the attempt to embarrass Robert Barlow over the fish-versus-people debate. Thursday's meeting showed that public opinion largely believes Acton is getting the short end of the Halton Hills stick. All eight candidates for mayor have vowed to improve the situation. My vote will go to the one I think will really do it.

I was disappointed in some of the meeting's rhetoric which suggested Acton's role as a place for new industry to locate was subordinate to Georgetown and that tourism was the wave of the future.

Led by the Hide House, tourism certainly has a big part to play here — but there must be a place for new industry and business. We have a direct highway route to Hwy. 401 (something Georgetown lacks) and with better housekeeping on our industrial sites, companies desiring to relocate could well be interested.

My vote again will go to the candidates whom I believe haven't written Acton off as a place to grow — and do business.



LETTERS

POWER responds

To the Editor,

Does *The Tanner* want readers to have all the information? Would *The Tanner* correct misinformation it has published in the past?

Back in June of 1993 *The Tanner* reported that, at one of his Acton "Town Hall Meetings," MP Garth Turner said that he had been urged by a POWER executive to not meet with Acton councillors to discuss the position of the Department of Fisheries concerning the town's development.

This account was wrong! At the time that Rob Barlow called Garth Turner's office to say that affected citizens should be involved in the discussions of what might happen to the fish in Black Creek, Turner, coincidentally, was on his way to meet the Acton councillors at the Region. *The person receiving the call assumed there was a connection.* Rob Barlow had no idea that a meeting was scheduled.

Rob made his point forcefully, that the affected citizens downstream should be involved in the solution (his property is drained by Black Creek). The staff person

in Turner's office jumped to the conclusion that if the citizens wanted to be involved then Turner should not discuss this with the councillors.

That was the message that Turner received. The message was ridiculous! Garth Turner was justifiably angry at any suggestion that someone was objecting to his meeting. Turner was right to be angry — if someone had objected to his meeting, *but that never happened.*

Rob Barlow was a director of POWER. Because POWER's name was involved, as in: "POWER objects to Garth Turner meeting with Acton councillors," we were baffled, and I was determined to get to the bottom of it.

Garth Turner admitted to Rob and me that there was an error in the message relay. He was in a political campaign and later called back to say that he would not attack a member of his staff to get the facts out. Perhaps he felt that it was not politically expedient at the time.

The facts remain: Rob Barlow never did, nor would he, ever suggest that an elected representative not meet with any councillors.

In his work with POWER Rob has shown himself to not only be very capable but to have a high level of integrity.

*Barbara Halsall
Past President, POWER*

Thanks!

To the Editor,

I would like to congratulate Tom Ramautarsingh, Dave Kentner and other members of the Organizing Committee for a job well done at the "Meet the Candidates" event on Oct. 30 in Georgetown. I was very proud to be part of the panel in the Ward 1 (Acton) segment.

Regarding this segment, the only negative was the way in which the candidate for Regional Councillor, Jean Hilborn, attacked incumbent Regional Councillor Rick Bonnette in such a personal way

— she would have been well advised to have spent more time on her platform and less on personal attack.

Unfortunately, this was an example of American-style politics and not that traditional here. Bonnette is to be admired that throughout the debate he did not stoop to the negative level.

Thanks again to the Committee and candidates for giving us this opportunity and helping us to vote in an educated manner next Monday!

*E. Carmichael
Limehouse*

MORE LETTERS!

You can find more Letters to the Editor on Page 14

THE ACTON Tanner

Publisher & Editor
Paul Nolan

Office Manager
Georgena Petty

Reporter-Photographer
Doug Harrison

Copy Editor
Joanne Stevenson

Advertising Staff
Jim Addario
Roselle Le Sarge
Cindy Owen

Distribution Manager
Irene Birrell

Regular Contributors
Mike Albano
Hartley Coles
Lori Frechette
Pat Giguere
Frances Niblock
Mike O'Leary

THE ACTON TANNER is published weekly on Wednesdays by Wicklow Hills Publishing Co. Inc. at 12 Church St., E., Acton, Ontario, L7J 1K4. Mailing address: P.O. Box 150, Acton, Ont., L7J 2M3. Telephone: 519-853-5100. Fax: 853-5040. Reproduction without permission is prohibited. Ideas expressed herein are those of the author only.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Rates are: \$28.80 for one year (52 issues for price of 48) and \$4.80 for two months (eight issues).

AD SALES: Publisher is responsible for errors in advertisements to extent of cost of that portion of the space occupied by erroneous item.

PHONE:
519-853-5100
FAX:
519-853-5040