

EDITORIAL

With Hartley Coles



Charlie's French fries

Charlie Farquaharson, the rustic autre persona of Canadian actor and comic Don Heron, hit the nail on the head when he implored Canadians to "exercise their French fries" when it came to politics and politicians. However, if politics and politicians keep going as they are now, we soon won't have any franchise to exercise.

The continual mindset for downsizing, restructuring and boundary alignments that have accompanied the recent recession, are certainly going to achieve one objective: reduce the number of local people who represent you at council tables. We are getting further and further away from participating democracy and closer and closer to autocratic decisions from far fewer people.

Not convinced? All you have to do is look at the most recent case right here in the Town of Halton Hills. Council last week, pressured by Halton Region to restructure, voted to reduce the number of wards in Halton Hills from four to three. Each new ward would consist of only two elected councillors, one local and one regional representative, and the new wards would have urban and rural components.

The result for Acton would be one less seat at the council table while the mayor of all Halton Hills would be reduced to sitting only at the Town table. Her seat at the Region would be gone, kaput, vanished, lost and any other term you want to employ. The irony is that quite likely the mayors of Halton's other three municipalities will continue to sit at the regional table.

Well, if this tinkering with the democratic structure is progress and good economics I'll be a Grade 2 dropout. If they really want to keep us from exercising our French fries then why not just have one ward for all of Halton Hills and let the mayor represent us at the Region. Extreme? Certainly, but if things keep going the way they are now it could happen down our bumpy, pot-holed highways.

Maybe, in their wisdom, councillors are trying to get rid of some of our more exasperating elected representatives: viz. Rob Heaton, whom the people of Glen Williams and their affiliates keep electing despite his maverick approach to politics. Fed up with his "disgraceful antics," his fellow Acton arena steering committee members dumped Heaton from the committee last week.

Acton councillor Norm Elliott summed up the committee's feelings saying Heaton contributed absolutely nothing to the committee but dissension and controversy. And, he said, it's going to get worse because no one knows what his plans are. I hold no brief for Rob Heaton and some of his antics and clearly understand the exasperation that Norm and his colleagues feel, but that's what democracy is all about, suffering those who march to a different drummer.

Anyway, do you get my point? The architects who play at continual downsizing would suffer no fools or political mavericks in their power grabs because fewer and fewer of us would be able to complain with any clout at the ballot box. We are being maneuvered closer and closer to rule from a few, in the name of economics and efficiencies.

Regional government has been with us now for almost 23 years and it has been a big change from the older county system which still operates successfully in most of Ontario, without the added cost. But each time the architects of change succeed, the tighter the noose becomes, the more our voices are muted.

Remember when this was the Town of Acton and we had six councillors and a mayor - seven people to look after the interests of the town and its residents. That was reduced to three when regional government was introduced in 1973, plus the mayor who was elected at large. The chance of anyone from Acton, unless they were exceptionally talented, of being elected mayor was reduced to almost nil.

Now they would reduce our representation to two people, increase the size of the ward and further tighten up representation.

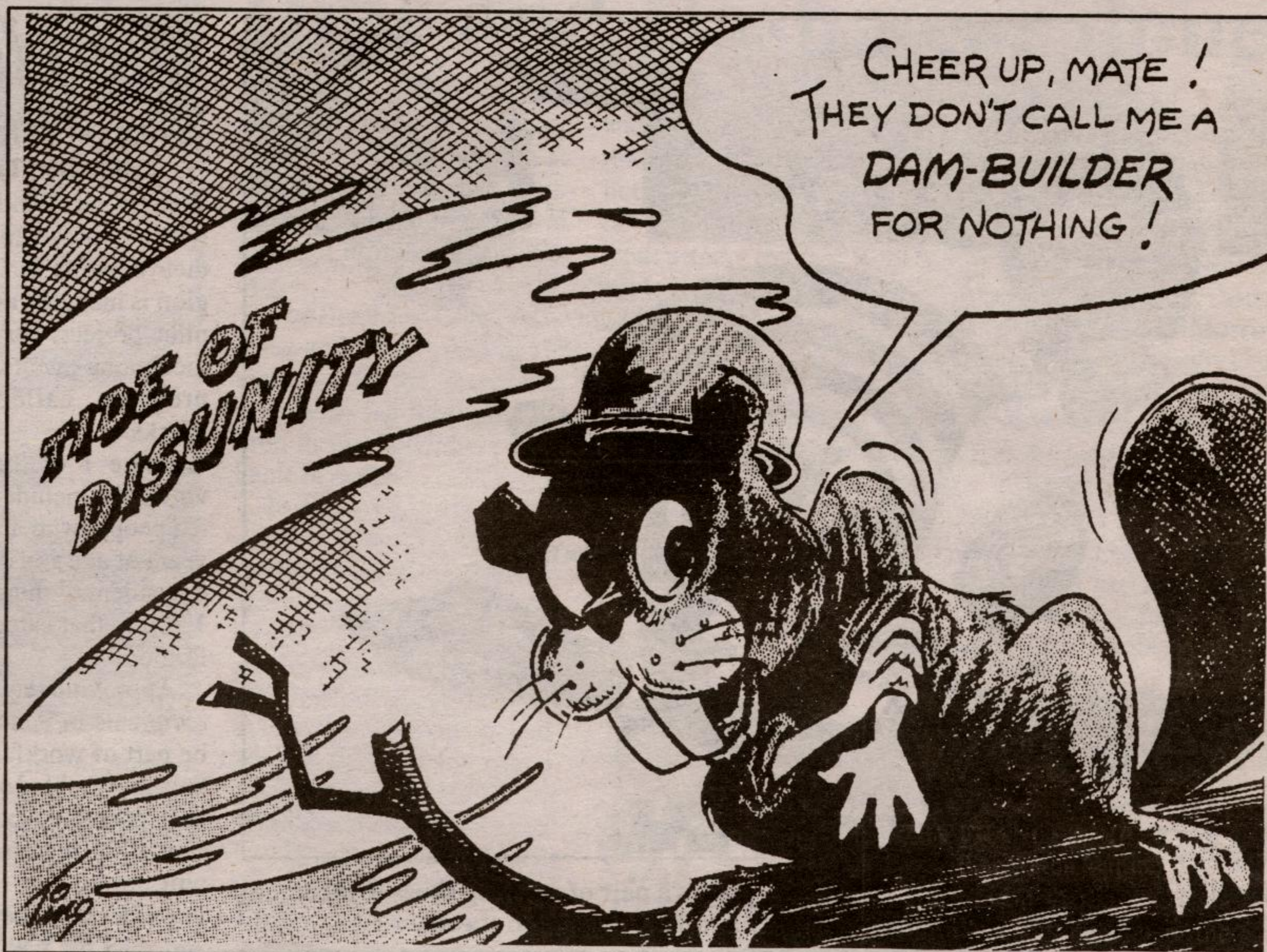
And unless we have a further large swelling of population it is quite likely in another decade or two the architects of change and efficiency will be clamouring to reduce that voice to one.

I'm not buying it, nor the mayor being excluded from the regional council table either. It's important that the mayor has a grasp of what is happening not only at the local level but at the Region as well. And it is also important for Acton to have a voice at the Region's table, or risk once again being ignored by the clout from Oakville and Burlington.

Maybe, after all, there's a case for dividing Halton into two Regions - one south of the Dundas Highway (No. 5) and the other north of it. The chances of being swallowed whole then would be minimized, and the north could deal with its own problems and let Oakville and Burlington fight it out for southern supremacy.

Same time last year ...

Acton Councillor **Rick Bonnette** describes the site of Acton's recycling igloos as a dumping ground for hazardous wastes ... High tender bids create doubts regarding the linkage of **McKenzie-Smith** and **M.Z. Bennett** schools ... Business teacher **Roy McMillan** retires after 21 years at Acton High and 32 years of teaching.



Your LETTERS

\$3,700 raised

To the Editor,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the special hands that were involved in organizing and making the fundraiser for Sean Sears, at the Kri farm, such a phenomenal success.

All cash donations have been greatly appreciated, and without the following companies, this event could not have taken place or raised so much in terms of the donations received.

They are as follows: Acton Bowling Lanes, *The Acton Tanner*, J.C.

Duff, Four Seasons, Fred Anthony Farms, The Georgetown Independent, Goy Cartage, Halton Flour Milling, Halton Pools, Halton Rental, K.T. Taxi, McIsaac Concrete, Molson Breweries (Bruce Wright), Pallets, and the Kri family, who organized the fundraiser.

On behalf of the Kri family and the Sean Sears Trust Fund, we would like to extend our thanks to the Halton Regional Police, who cooperated with us and worked hand in hand with the organizers of this event to make sure that we all had an enjoyable and safe time.

Without people like the above-mentioned who reached far within their hearts, and the general public who donated to this cause, we would not be able to raise the funds for Sean Sears as well as we have.

The funds raised totalled \$3,700.
Ken McIsaac
McIsaac Concrete

Acton foils mosquitoes at blood clinic

To the Editor,

On behalf of the Halton Hills Branch of the Canadian Red Cross, we would like to say "thank you" to all 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. 118 units of blood were collected at the clinic on June 20. Blood supplies can fall seriously short in the summer months when everyone seems to be away on vacation.

For those people who can't make the clinic, we encourage you to make your donation at any other clinic, as

the need for blood never decreases.

Special thanks to *The Acton Tanner* for advertising the clinic in this paper. Of course, the clinic could not be such a success without the many volunteers who helped run it, and the continued support of the Acton Legion.

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

We look forward to seeing you again at the next clinic, scheduled for Sept. 19. We appreciate your continued support.

Joe Graf, Chair
Julia Roehrig, Co-chair
Halton Hills Red Cross Blood

Seat should be kept

To the Editor,

Re: Major restructuring and boundary realignment

Having read the report in *The Acton Tanner*, I became both saddened and furious to learn of Council's proposal regarding the above. The fact that Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson will lose her seat at Regional Council is pure rubbish, but Acton representative Rick Bonnette voting to remove her is sheer lunacy.

Milton, Oakville and Burlington mayors are to continue as regional representatives, allowing more voting power to these communities. Acton is plenty weak enough now

with our local regional representatives, without losing the only person with a positive outlook for Acton at the regional level.

The newspaper also indicated Acton would lose a seat on Town Council. Make it two, as the local regional representatives won't be missed.

When a councillor suggests raising the mayor's stipend to compensate for the \$18,000 regional salary she will lose, this indicates to me the deck is missing a few cards.

Let our mayor continue at county level and rid ourselves of those whose incomes increase and times are consumed at other ventures.

Don Ryder
Bower Street

THE ACTON Tanner

'Neighbourhood News' from Acton's Award-Winning Hometown Newspaper

Publisher & Editor
Paul Nolan

General Manager
Hartley Coles

Advertising Manager
Elaine Petkoff

Advertising Sales
Lynne Buscher

Editorial Staff
Karen Wetmore
Frances Niblock

Copy Editor
Joanne Stevenson

Office Assistant
Linda Hayes

Distribution Manager
Irene Birrell

Regular Contributors
Eve Martin
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: \$28.80 for one year (50 issues for price of 48); \$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.

Publications Mail Registration
Number 10457

PHONE:
519-853-5100

FAX:
519-853-5040



Member of the Ontario Community Newspapers Association and of the Canadian Community Newspapers Association