

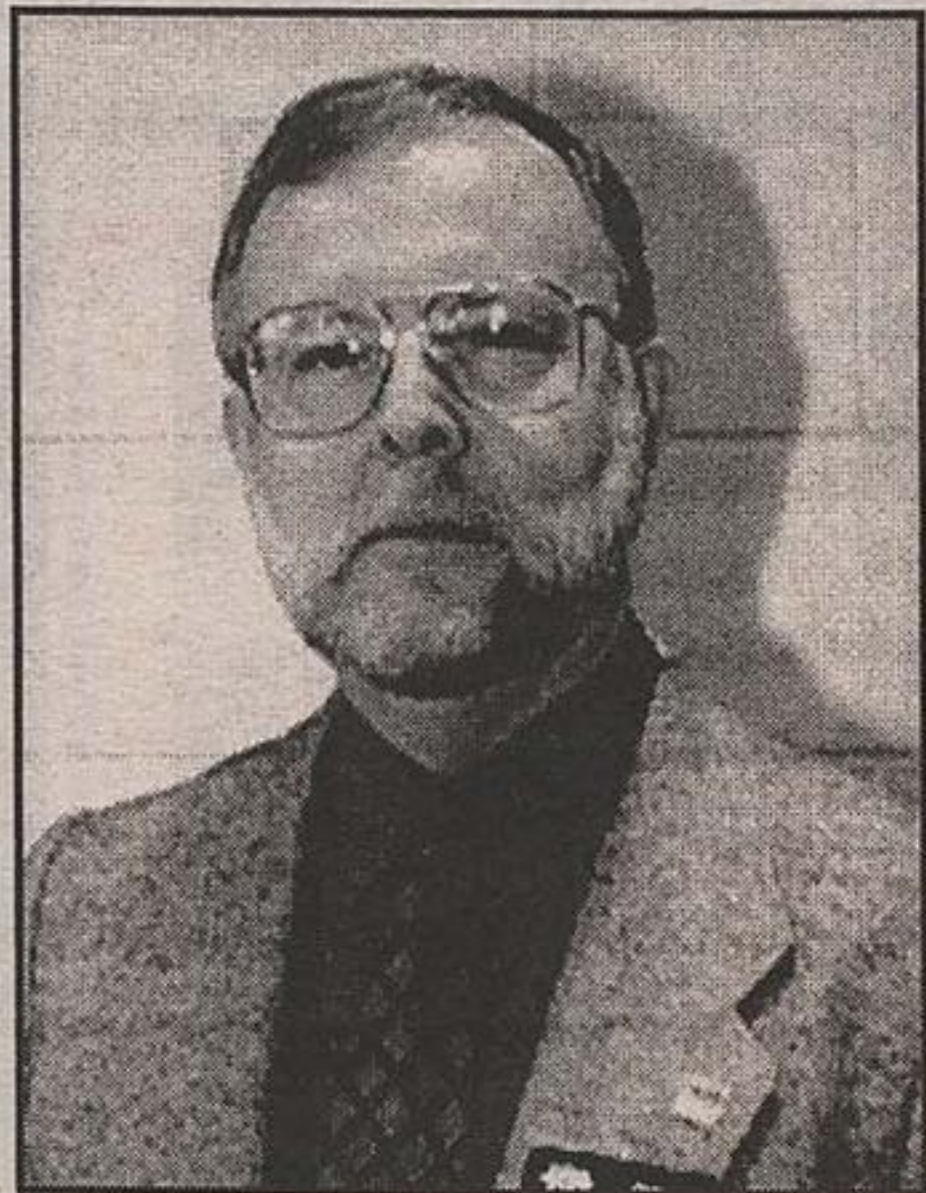
EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Recognition overdue

At last, a consultants' report has recognized that Acton's industrial area on Commerce Court is not appealing to prospective business and needs improvements to make it attractive to potential customers. The consultants' draft report also points out the former Beardmore property is environmentally contaminated and needs a major clean-up.

Councillor Norm Elliott points out that a draft report for a long range Town strategy is fine but existing problems with Acton's industrial area need attention now. Elliott notes that the town has never had the money to get in and clean it up and had left it up to business to do its own housecleaning.



NORM ELLIOTT

Some of the 29 businesses located there responded positively. They have tried to keep their premises looking attractive. However, others have done little or nothing. The result is a mélange of the good and the bad. Inaction by the Town has helped create a scene that looks like an industrial slum in parts.

No wonder it's difficult to attract new business.

Let's face it, though, the part of the area which is a mixture of swamp, bush and excess water has never been an attractive

industrial setting. Ditches with no drains fill up with water, piles of dirt grow weeds and the abundance of rock in the area creates a moonscape. Derelict machinery rusting in the open air makes it look like part of the rustbelt.

Even draining the ditches, cleaning up the weeds and levelling the piles of dirt would be an improvement and surely not that costly. We see it as a job for the town which, after all, benefits from new taxes when businesses come.

Perhaps, as Councillor Elliott suggests, a task force could be formed to recommend ways to make the area more viable, or to form an equivalent of the downtown BIA for Commerce Court. Council is being urged in the draft report to adopt an entrepreneurial approach. It would help launch an economic development strategy to generate new assessment and jobs, at relatively little cost in the long run.

In any event the first step in improving the industrial area has been taken—recognizing there is a problem. The former Beardmore property is another problem probably far beyond the resources of the town to develop. It's a job for the owners.

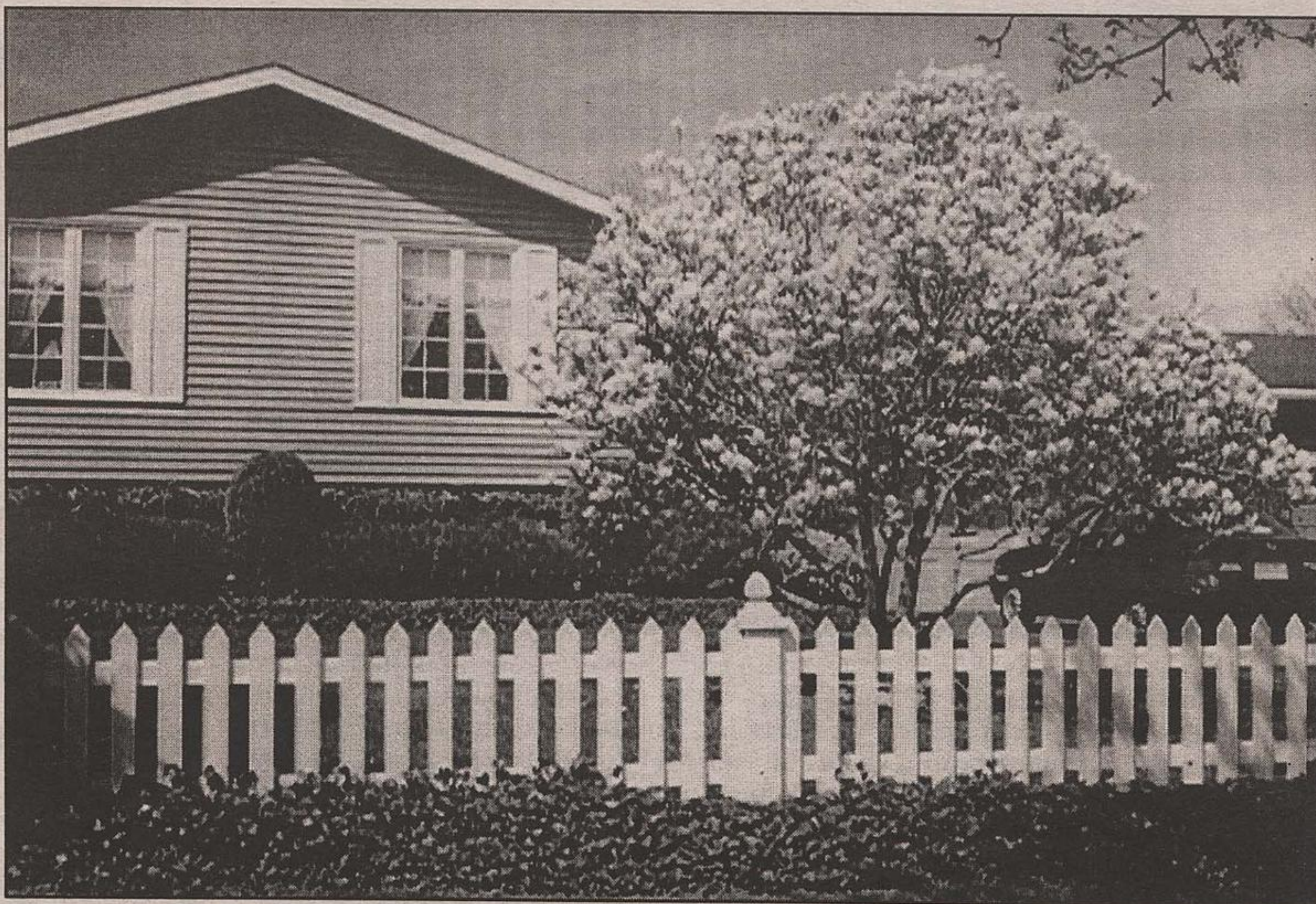
Congratulations

Fragrant bouquets and several tips of the editorial hat go to the Acton High School drama club, which presented the movie musical *Grease* for three sold-out performances last week.

The exuberant staging of the musical, which drew rave reviews from audiences, is a tribute not only to the students who were involved but to the staff at the school, especially Dr. Paul Tamblyn the director, and producer Wendy Beriault. The work they put into the production was certainly appreciated as the standing ovations proved.

This writer had the pleasure recently of attending a Guelph concert in which Dr. Tamblyn was a principal. The same enthusiasm he showed in that presentation was apparent in his direction of this musical.

Congratulations are due to all 80 students and staff who made *Grease* such a success.



MAGNOLIA TREES are blooming everywhere as the warmer days of spring brings out blossoms and turn our bleak wintry landscapes into a flowery wonderland. — Ted Tyler photo

Small Town Quirks — by Angela Tyler

Nicknames are weird!

Itch; scratch. Action; reaction. It seems rather simple, unless you are from Acton.

In Acton, Scratch and Itch could be your name, or should I say 'nick name'. Once again, this town has dumbfounded me with its small town quirks. I have a difficult time believing some of the names people in Acton were called 30 or 40 years ago, some still today.

Many people have 'nick names', this is not uncommon. Some are given short forms of their given names by friends and relatives. Others may have another name that has nothing to do with their given name, but the new name seems to stick with them for years.

When I listen to my 'elders' discussing 'old' Acton and days gone by, I often find my head shaking and thinking 'you're kidding, right?' Then I listen to the names of the people they are including in their stories.

Who on earth named their child Itch? Then I discovered it wasn't their given name, it was their 'nick name'.

At first I thought some of the people I was listening to were 'pulling my leg'. Apparently, they weren't. I have found, through arduous research, these unusual names were not uncommon and accepted by those to whom they were given.

I have many favorite names from the past. Topping the list is Twitter Holmes. Following close behind are Itch Marzo and Scratch McCutcheon.

There are many more; Tinny Masales, Slug Allan, Minute Walters, Dew Worm Duvall, Digger McMullen, Scratch's brother Scutch McCutcheon, Beaver Baxter, Weep Masters, Dude Lindsay, Red Lindsay, Red Anderson, Bing Ramsden, Dang

Kentner, Did Price, Duke Arbic, Ducky McIntyre, the Professor Elliott, Frenchie Morrisette, Dutchie Veldhuis, Uke Zajac, Tubby McIntyre, Weepy Taylor, Tink Leishman, Bunk Holmes, Sonny Townsley, Babe Allan, Wobble Robinson, Tiny Miller, Spike Marshall, Corky Evans, Duffy McLean, Dooney Evans, Bunny Bonnette and Junior Rowsell. Whew! These are just a sampling.

Many of these people I know, but not by these unusual names. I've known Ab Robinson for years, but I could never imagine greeting him with "Hi, Wobble", at least not without being put in my place.

Sometimes there is a great story to how a 'nick name' evolves. Sometimes it's a form of their given name or a name handed down from generation to generation. Not in Acton.

During my research I wanted to know how some of these people got their names. Minute Walters had a

great name. He was an aggressive hockey player for Acton who also lived and worked here. Why did they call him Minute? He wasn't very tall, barely big as a minute; hence the name.

What about the McCutcheon brothers, Scratch and Scutch? There has to be something really interesting there. Sorry. Scratch (Jack) used to scratch his forehead and Scutch (Gord) rhymed with McCutch (eon).

Itch Marzo, fortunately, did not get his name because he had an itch. People had difficulty pronouncing his given name Ezio and it was transformed into Itch.

Let's try this logic with Slug Allan. Baseball player; maybe. Or did he have a fight with someone and slugged them. You decide.

Digger McMullen had a great name. It almost sounded like a famous sports person. In Acton, Digger got his name because he was a local contractor and with his business he would dig holes.

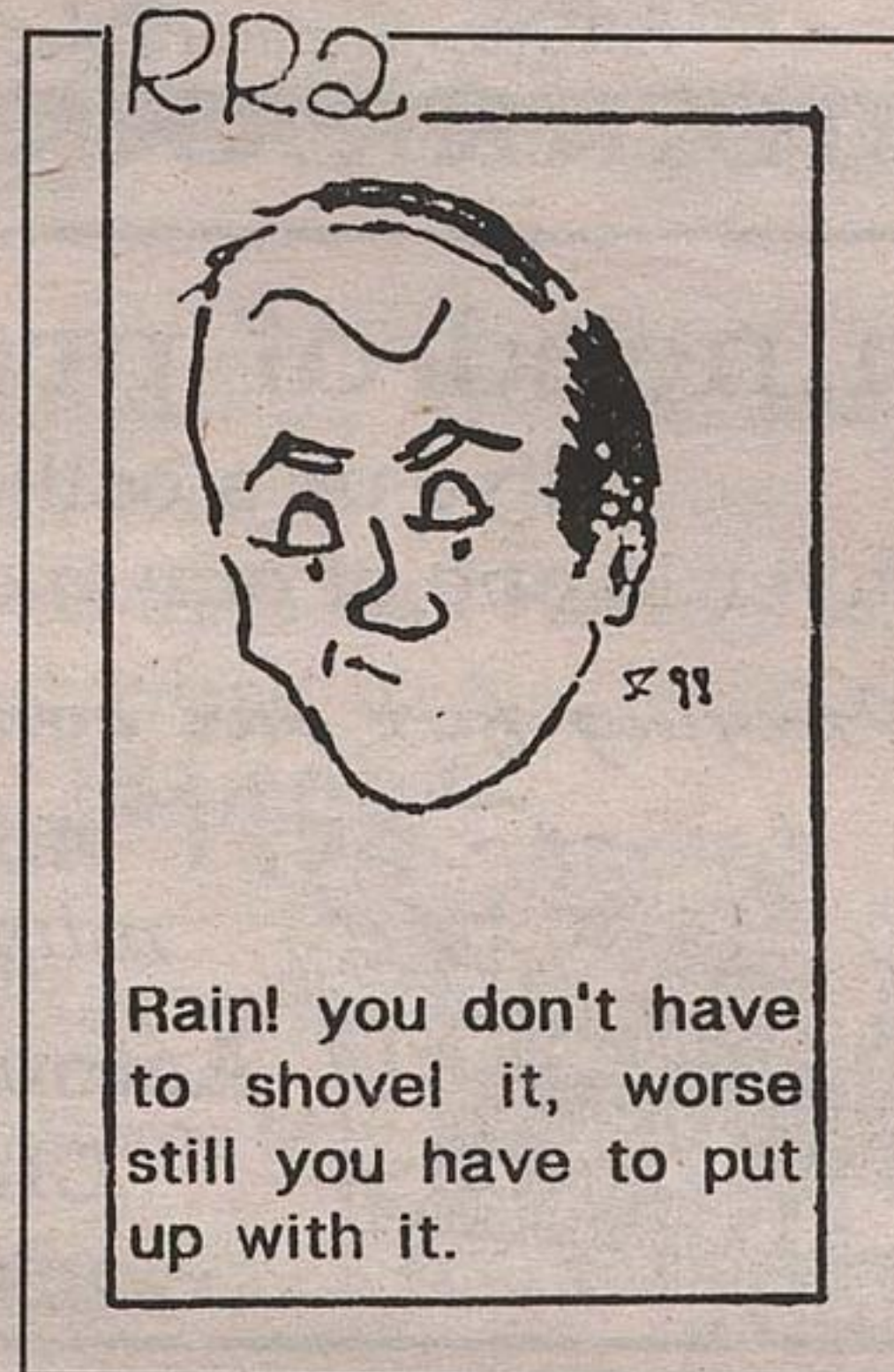
How do you think Dutchie Veldhuis got his name? He was Dutch.

Acton logic; you can't beat it.

These names have no rules. Some are titles and some may be verbs. If you add a few more words you can make sentences with these names and get completely mixed up with who you were talking about.

For example; Did Duke Weep after Dude Slug (ged) him? Or, Did Itch Scratch for a Minute when Digger Wobble(d) like a Ducky.

Children today may have shortened names and other children may make fun of others with cruel 'nick names', however, the names just aren't like they used to be. There is nothing like a 'old' Acton story with interesting characters like Twitter Holmes and Digger McMullen.



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