

# EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

## Road network dissolving

Aren't you getting a little worried about the highway system in this Province? In their zeal to downsize everything, Queen's Park has handed over Highway 25 and parts of Highway 24 over to Halton Region and Wellington County respectively. The network of highways that have been built up over the years is eroding into a bunch of super highways centering around the metropolis of Toronto.

John Root, the Progressive Conservative Member of the Legislature for Wellington for many years, must be turning over in his grave at the treatment of Highway 24. He worked for years to have that road established as part of the provincial highways system and in one fell swoop his own party has erased it and handed responsibility to the county. It was one of the works he was most proud of during his years in the legislature.

Halton Region, meanwhile, has been saddled with Highway 25, "gateway to the north" for many and gateway to 401 for truck traffic coming of Highways 7 and 25. The Province, in its wisdom also unloaded Highway 5 (historic Dundas St.) onto the Region which is appealing to Queen's Park for \$3 million in interim funding to help pay for the upkeep of the roads which they have been downloaded with.

Halton has not budgeted for the costs associated with owning the roads, including \$450,000 in policing, so it needs help with the short term financial shortfall. It may ask for more money once a Highway 25 and 5 corridor study is complete.

Acton councillor Rick Bonnette, a member of the study committee, thinks some of the shortfall might be made up by increasing or redistributing money the aggregate industry pays each year to help pay for road maintenance, citing the number of loaded gravel trucks which use these roads and the wear and tear they contribute. Currently aggregate producers pay six cents per tonne they haul, four cents of that goes to the Town, only one-half cent goes to the Region, and the Province takes one per cent to administer the program.

Naturally, the roads need repair. Why else would the Province want to get rid of them? Some work has been done on either side of Highway 401 along 25 mainly for the convenience of the trucks, but 25 needs a lot of work both north and south of Acton to bring it to standard. Halton Region is to begin detailed pavement testing to determine the work that needs to be done from Acton south to 15 Sideroad at Speyside. The road north from the railway tracks to what was Highway 24 is to be resurfaced in a joint project with the Town of Halton Hills, Halton Region and Wellington County which joins the road only a kilometre or so from the tracks.

The upshot of all this besides the Province shedding its responsibility for the highways is that it is quite likely that down the road (no pun intended) we'll experience different road conditions depending on which county or region we're driving. The well heeled may well keep these roads up to standard and beyond, while the less fiscally solvent regions and counties may well be pressed to do so.

In any event we are seeing the network of highways which opened up Ontario dissolved while the super duper highways are extended. It may indeed suit the Province but we suspect we are going to be short changed. Meanwhile, we'll watch with interest to see how much money the Province is willing to spend on what was 25 Highway when it carries so much truck traffic from 24 and 7 to 401.



**WORKING TOGETHER:** Royal Canadian Legion Branches 197 (Acton) and 120 (Georgetown) along with the Acton Ladies Auxiliary, donated \$10,000 for the Halton Hills Fire Department to purchase this new trailer for the Hazardous Material Response Team. Members of the two Legions and the Fire Department gather at the Acton Legion. Left to right, John Martin, Bill Barber, Mac McLean, Shell Larr, Paul Yates, Carl Fisker, Fern Schultis, Bill Cunningham and David Ford. —Angela Tyler photo

## Destructive winds nothing new

By HARTLEY COLES  
The New Tanner

This area has escaped relatively unscathed again from the wind and twisters which left their mark on other parts of southern Ontario. Last week we experienced a little of the destructive capabilities of these storms when trees and hydro wires were brought down and power cut off by punishing winds but nothing like the destruction in places such as Norwich where a twister hopscotched through farms and village.

Acton's location on the Niagara Escarpment and the hilly topography may have something to do with our escape from the most destructive winds which seem to start and end on flat farmland. Nevertheless there have been some bad storms in the past which have lifted roofs and devastated barns in our neck of the woods.

The first windstorm recorded in this part of Ontario came in 1792, some 200 years ago. It started around Lake Huron and swept across the province in a south-westerly direction, cutting a swath a mile wide through the dense forest. The pine and hardwood forests of Halton were devastated. Trees were uprooted and an Indian settlement along Lake Ontario was swept into the lake, tents and people alike, with considerable loss of life.

While pioneers of this area rejoiced as the wind made clearing trees easier, scrubby growths of poplar sprang up replacing the valuable pine and hardwood. Gwen Clarke, author of *Halton's Pages of the Past*, says the next destructive storm to whip this part of the province didn't strike until nearly a hundred years later—in 1890. Then a twister roared through the gap in the Escarpment which Highway 401 follows now, striking Esquesing Township along the 1st, 2nd and 3rd con-

cessions. It left a trail of damage 150 feet wide.

The same year, 1890, says Clarke, a storm described as a tornado struck Acton and district on July 8. It demolished the grandstand in the park and littered the area with building and barns dismantled by the force of the winds. Four people were known to have been hurt including William Carroll, John Williams, George Hynds and 14-year-old George Agnew. "Scores of trees were blown down in Alex Lasby's bush," the book records.

There wasn't another bad blow for over 30 years but it shows this area is not immune to savage winds as many of us perhaps thought. In 1923 chimneys, barn roofs, flooded basements and uprooted trees were testament to another howling wind which roared through Halton. Since it coincided with a contentious election the same day in which the Drury government was defeated, triumphant Tories trumpeted the Drury government was "blown out of office."

A few months later Halton experienced an earthquake which shook everyone up but it had no political

significance. However, it did collapse a new barn nearing completion near Acton.

The next devastating wind to ravage the Region came in the form of a twister again, hitting the Hornby area with a fury that sent barns belonging to Russell King and Albert Marchment to the barn burying grounds, where ever that is. There have been others since including Hurricane Hazel which is called the "100 year storm," presumably because they only occur every 100 years or so. Hazel, of course, hit this area with high winds and about eight inches of rain but did comparatively little damage. Its fury was unleashed on Toronto where scores were drowned by the torrents caused by raging rivers.

What was believed to be a tornado hopscotched across Georgetown in the 1970s causing some damage and more than a little excitement. The sports editor of *The Georgetown Herald*, now defunct (the paper, not the editor) was sitting downtown in his sports car with his girl friend when the storm struck. It lifted the car up and turned it completely around to the astonishment of the occupants.

The high winds on two days recently were destructive but they didn't pack the punch which levelled places such as Grand Valley and Barrie in recent years. The winds which swept through on Pentecost Sunday, of course, coincided with the liturgical calendar. Those familiar with their Scripture will recall on the first Pentecost a wind swept through the room where the apostles were gathered to receive the Holy Spirit. It was accompanied by tongues of fire.

Rev. Bob Matton, minister at Trinity United Church, chortled that they had the wind at their service but the tongues of fire didn't make it.



# Tanner

59 Willow Street North  
Acton, Ontario  
L7J 1Z8

(519) 853-0051 Fax: 853-0052

**Publisher** Ted Tyler  
**Editorial** Hartley Coles  
Frances Niblock Ellen Piehl  
Mike O'Leary Angela Tyler

**Advertising Sales** Maggie Petrushevsky  
Bob Rutter

**Circulation** Marie Shadbolt

**Composing** Christine O'Leary  
Karen Wetmore

Distributed to every home  
in Acton and area as well as  
adjoining communities.

#### ADVERTISING POLICY

Every effort will be made to see advertising copy, neatly presented, is correctly printed. The publisher assumes no financial responsibility for typographical errors or omissions in advertising, but will gladly reprint without charge that part of an advertisement in which an error may occur provided a claim is made within five days of publication.