

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Letter, not the spirit

Councillors are to be congratulated for ignoring the objection of planning staff and voting not to appeal a Committee of Adjustment decision that approved plans for an 8,000 square foot hardware store at the corner of Queen Street and Churchill Road.

An abandoned service station has stood on the site for several years, an eyesore, that would likely remain one under the stringent planning regulations. It makes sense for council to allow a minor variance and permit the erection of a new business building on that corner, which is cheek by jowl to the new fire hall.

Planning Director Bruce MacLean acknowledged that from an economic development point of view the proposal would be good for Acton's eastern gateway but warned council that they could end up with a development on the site they wouldn't like. The staff feels the site isn't large enough to handle the required 27 parking spaces and landscaping. However, council feels the issues can be resolved through the Town's site plan process. They noted Committee of Adjustment approval included the condition a site plan would have to be approved by the Town.

We think council's decision to override the planning staff recommendations is one they need to exercise more to erase the stigma attached to new business construction in Acton. For too long we have exercised the letter of the law without looking at the moribund business climate here. The number of regulations needed to renovate or construct business has helped put a stranglehold on construction and entrepreneurship. Proposals require such lengthy amounts of time to get approvals they are often abandoned as impractical when the letter, not the spirit of the law is exercised.

We know that good planning is the key to building an attractive community but there has to be an balance between planning and common sense. Requirements that strangle business must be looked at and changed. Business needs to be encouraged, not discouraged from expanding in Acton.

Lobster tales

Wonder why business gets upset by the collection of the GST? Then read this little item from the government about applying the GST to the sale of lobster:

"There are two common scenarios with respect to the sale of cooked lobster. In some cases, grocery stores or lobster pounds sell cooked lobster cold, where the lobster is kept in a refrigerated display counter. In other cases, grocery stores or lobster pounds sell live lobsters, but the lobster is cooked while the customer waits. The customer then leaves the establishment with hot cooked lobster for immediate consumption.

"In the first scenario, where the cooked lobster is sold cold, the sale is zero-rated. This is consistent with the tax treatment of cooked foods (e.g., roasted chicken) that are sold cold from refrigerated display counters.

"In the second scenario, where the cooked lobster is purchased heated for consumption (i.e., sold from a heated cabinet or sold hot from a separate take-out counter), the sale is taxable at 7% (15% in the participating provinces). GST applies to food that is deliberately heated or kept hot for consumption."

Confused? No wonder.

Wisdom

One can have all the degrees a university can bestow on one and yet not have wisdom. Knowledge and wisdom are two entirely different things. Some people have very little formal education and yet have wisdom beyond belief. I think, of the two, I would prefer to have wisdom.

A wise person knows enough to mind his own business and only give advice when asked for it. To be tactful and not open his or her mouth and put their foot in it; what I call "hoof and mouth" disease.

I know I was over forty before I had an ounce of wisdom, which is something you acquire along life's way. To this day I haven't much more; but even a little wisdom helps. I am not belittling education, for it is wonderful to know about many things and is very necessary in order to get ahead in this world of competition. But it gives you a nice feeling when someone thinks enough of you to ask for advice, even though they may not take it.

Nobody can be wise all the time but everybody can try to think before they speak and not hurt someone's feelings intentionally. And, I for one can plead guilty to this. A wise person is usually a kind person and with a little effort we could all acquire wisdom.

Granny

Granny is Marion Jean Patterson who published a series called *Meditations from an Old Rocking Chair*.



ISN'T ANYBODY HUNGRY? Kayla and Dillan Couture were busy making sure the Canada Geese and the ducks were well fed before the fireworks on Canada Day. — Angela Tyler photo

Bogus man sells horse, buggy to pay sewing machine mortgage

By SGT BOB ANDREWS
Halton Regional Police

In the early 1880's, William Hemstreet served as Chief Constable for Acton. Under his service, a peculiar incident occurred late in 1883.

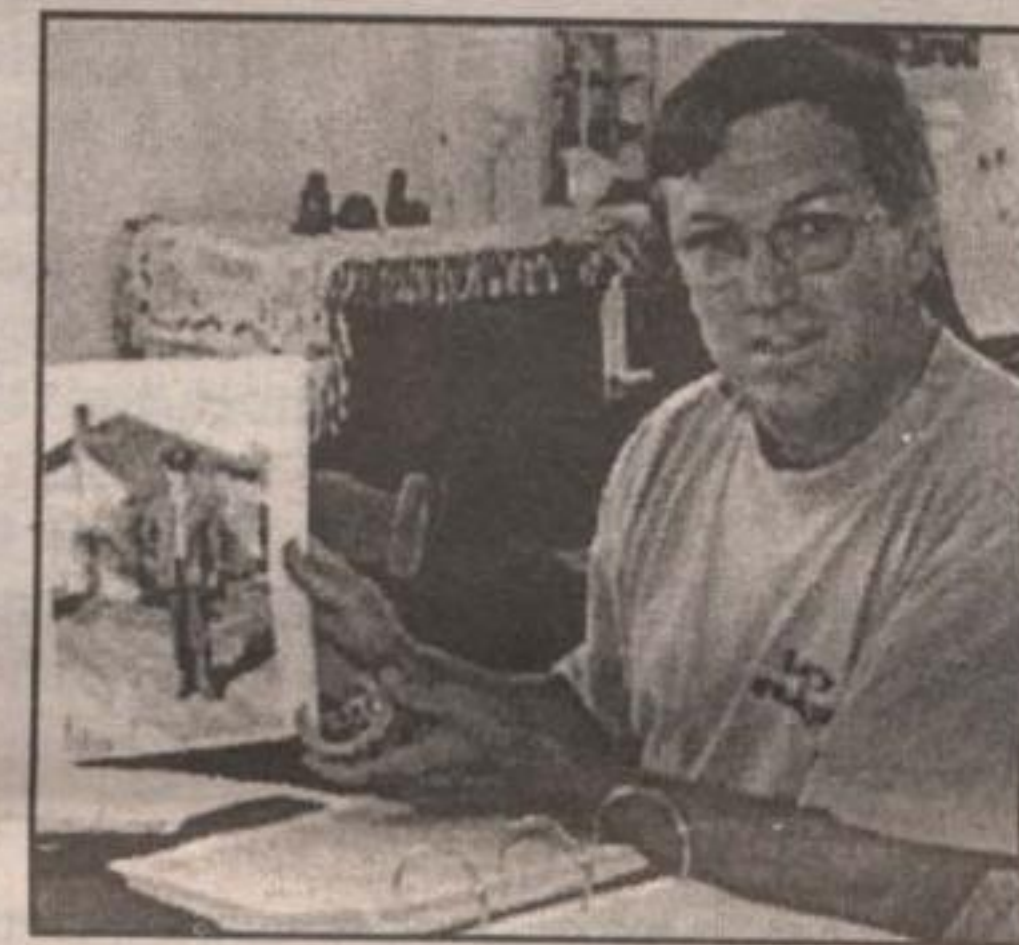
One Saturday morning, late in November, a man attended the livery stable of our former village constable Edward Matthews. The man hired a horse and buggy from Mr. Matthews and stated he was off to visit friend residing in Nassagaweya.

Later that day, Mr. Matthews received a telegram from the Chief of the Guelph Police advising him that the young man had been arrested in his town for trying to sell the horse and buggy for a ridiculously low price. To make matters even stranger, while questioning the suspect, the Chief discovered the young man had what appeared to be a very robust chest. When questioned, the young man stated that he had a severe cold and it was necessary to wrap clothing around his chest as ordered by his doctor.

The chief was not satisfied with this account and upon further questioning of the young man it was finally revealed that the suspect was in fact a 20 year old female by the name of Mary Bell.

The following Monday, young Miss Bell was brought before the local Guelph Magistrate, still wearing her male attire, and proceeded to plead guilty to the charge. In her defence, Mary Bell stated that she only attempted to sell the horse and buggy in order to pay the mortgage on her sewing machine. Without the machine she would not be able to continue her employment in a seamstress position which she had held for the previous five years.

After a few days in the local Guelph jail, Mary was finally bailed out by her mother. Ironically, but in



HISTORY BUFF: Halton police Sergeant Bob Andrews has been sifting through old records, photographs and people's memories to help compile a history of policing in Acton.

the spirit of the whole incident, the elder Bell had to rent a horse and buggy from Edward Matthews in order to retrieve her daughter.

★★★

First Motor Vehicle Fatality

In 1922 the local village council, concerned for the safety of pedestrians and motorists using the streets, decided it was high time the village implement a bylaw to control the speed of vehicular traffic using roadway. A bylaw was subsequently enacted to limit the speed limit on the streets to 15 miles per hour. It is interesting to note that the main arteries into the village were eventually converted from dirt to cement. The concrete roadway was approximately eight feet wide.

On Monday, June 7th, 1927, tragedy struck the community by way of the village's first fatal motor vehicle accident. Norman McLeod, the 7 year old foster son of McKenzie's Lumber Mill foreman Norman McLeod Sr., went fishing at the cement bridge on Main Street, North, after he had come home from school. While watching something on the

west side of the bridge, he suddenly darted across the roadway into the path of a motor vehicle driven by Mr. J.W. Payne from the City of Toronto.

Mr. Payne was driving his Ford coupe southbound on Main St., at a speed of approximately 15 miles per hour when he noticed the youth playing by a bridge. He honked the vehicle's horn twice to get their attention, but the boy seemed to be preoccupied with other matters and ran into the front fender or bumper of the Payne vehicle. Young Norman died instantly from a fracture at the base of his skull.

Mr. Payne was very distraught over the incident and advised authorities at the coroner's inquest held a week later that there was no way of avoiding the collision. Evidence showed that the vehicle had stopped within one car length of hitting the boy, indicating a very slow speed. Payne also stated he may have veered to the right to avoid the youth but he probably would have hit the children that were present playing with Norman McLeod on the bridge.

The results of the inquest found no fault with Mr. Payne and ruled the death of Norman McLeod purely accidental. This was not the end of traffic problems on the village streets however. Since two major highways intersected at the main junction of the village, traffic problems would prove nightmarish.

In July 1926, the Village of Acton enacted the bylaw to regulate traffic in the streets of the village. The bylaw was adopted in accordance with the Highway Traffic Act of Ontario and it regulated everything from erecting of stop signs, parking, pedestrian movement while crossing roadways, etc.

This document served as the traffic bylaw for many years changing or altering only when necessary.

This article is among a series outlining Acton's policing history.

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