

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Save \$5 million by fixing old arena

At the risk of being repetitious and boring we're boring in on the old arena in Prospect Park again. We still think it's an asset to the Town. Tearing it down will be a disservice not only to the fall fair but to many other events which could be held there.

Even if it does cost the inflated \$665,000 to bring the arena up to standard it certainly would be much cheaper than spending another \$5 million on a new structure somewhere in Halton Hills. And, let's face it, with the growing population and the pressures on ice time, it makes sense to have another arena in the Town of Halton Hills, especially since it has been made clear that all sectors of the Town would be sharing the facilities at the new Acton arena.

Unless our math is wrong, sharing the facilities with the other parts of Town cut back on the ice time Acton Groups had in the old arena. Since we're sharing everything it certainly wouldn't be an imposition to bring the old rink up to standard with ice surface and all.

Yes, we know! The pipes underneath that floor have sprung leaks and are drifting. Simple solution: put new pipes on top of the concrete floor and pour another floor. Voila! No more drifting pipes and an ice surface the Town could use. And we'd be saving \$5 million.

Think it over. A few hundred thousand dollars to fix the old arena up. Five million to build a new one.

It makes sense to save the old arena, both for the expanded recreation and saving of taxpayers' dollars.

Pegasus a fragile link

This is a time of cut-cut-cut. The latest casualty is the Pegasus bus service, the only north-south public transit link in Halton.

The service started a year ago on August 5 for a 12-month trial period, following the cancellation of another pilot project of Halton Region's for the physically disabled.

The new service connected all of Halton with public transit for both the physically disabled and ambulatory persons. It was a joint effort funded by the Region, managed by Oakville Transit, operated by Tyler Transport Ltd. in vehicles maintained by Halton Hills. It originally went north and south four times a day connecting Acton, Georgetown, Milton, Oakville and Burlington, but in January of this year it was changed to meet the needs of passengers. The new routes left Acton for Georgetown, Milton and Oakville which included Sheridan College, a great help for students in this part of Halton.

Pegasus was the only public transit between the two ends of Halton, a psychological link as well as a practical one which helped narrow the barrier between north and south. We suspect the traffic generated would flow north-south instead of the other way around since thinking south of 5 Sideroad generally is to Toronto or Hamilton rather than north.

Cutting Pegasus is akin to destroying part of the fragile link that unites north and south Halton into one Region.



Low water levels on Fairy Lake are apparent at the end where water crosses Mill Street West from Beaver Meadow. However the algae, exposed logs and bullrushes create a natural scene to please a conservationist's heart, all reflected in the placid water. — Ted Tyler photo

Small Town Quirks — by Angela Tyler

I'm not sure if life is simpler when one is younger or whether ones memory just fades and remembers the pleasantries. My memory seems to remember the pleasantries of how my family and I used to shop in Acton.

I can hear the uproar now. "What do you mean you don't shop in Acton?" With the closing of another two businesses in town (Sweet Dreams Café and the craft store beside the Royal Café) I started to remember how I used to shop in Acton. Let me explain. I fully try to support local businesses, however I don't shop in Acton like I used to. Now, some of the things I need, I can and try to buy in Acton. What's the difference you ask? The difference to me is approximately 25 years.

When I was growing up, I remember my mom taking me when she did her shopping. It was very rare things were not bought in Acton. I'm not just referring to groceries either. The other day when I went for a walk with a friend, who recently moved here, I was telling her about all the stores I remember. I fondly told her the story of my first pair of jeans. It was a momentous event in my young life. Until I was around 10 years old, I didn't have a pair of jeans. My sister bought me my first pair. I have this feeling it really was my parents who bought them. They came from one of the clothing stores, Nielson's.

Yes, you heard me correctly; we had more than one clothing store. Not only did we have family clothing at Nielson's, we also had Toddlers to Teens. Life was complete. A clothing store just for kids. Toddlers to Teens was in the east half where Sweet Dreams Café was. I also remember in my early teens there was a very 'hip' jeans and young persons store on the south side of Mill Street near the Towne Friar. The store even sold records. When you needed

shoes, there was only one store to go to, Sweatman's Shoe Store. Once again, one-stop family shopping.

I remember many times riding my bicycle downtown to the Book Nook where I would spend endless hours listening to Mrs. Fudge tell me about the new books for 'young adults' they just got in. Thankfully, we now, once again, have a bookstore.

What did Acton do for household items or gold fish before mega malls? We went to Hinton's. This five to a dollar store (not literally in the end) was situated where Halton Hills Furniture and Appliance is. It's strange, but when I go into this store now, I still remember where each type of merchandise was and expect to see Mr. Hinton somewhere in the store.

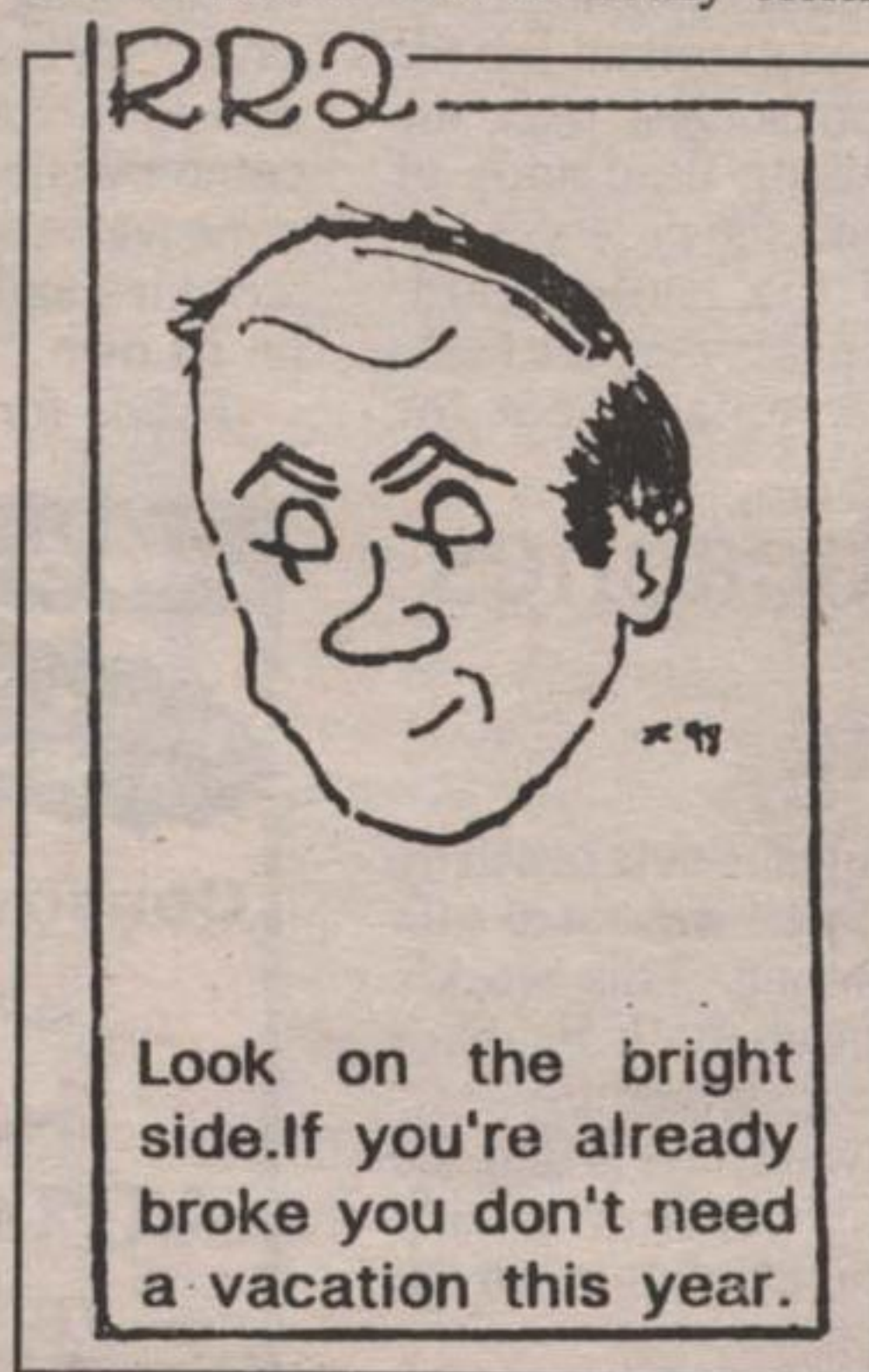
Years ago Acton had many stores including a fabric store, a shoe repair, the old Canadian Tire store and two hardware stores. The creaky floor panel in Home Hardware was still there 20 years ago. Perhaps it was a predecessor to the modern door chimes stores have to notify clerks

when customers enter.

Of course, grocery shopping was the primary shopping that was done. I can remember the old A&B Grocery store; it had this tilt in the floor, right in the middle. A&B was where Flight Line used to be or the pool hall/arcade was. Acton also had Hotchen's Bakery. Situated behind the Toronto Dominion Bank (or now the Four Seasons Restaurant), they had the best chocolate chip cookies in the world. Or at least to a 5 year-old they were. Although, speaking of cookies, when my mom had to pick up some meat for dinner we would stop at Lovells, The local butcher sold a variety of things in their store, where Paintin' Friends is now. I wasn't particularly fond of seeing all the meat in the displays, but if I played my cards right, my mom would buy a package of these chocolate and white striped mint cookies that they sold at the cashier.

Now I realize many goods and/or services are still available in Acton. The other day I actually counted more than 135 businesses in all of Acton. It's a little less now with the two businesses closing, but it's not the same sort of downtown as it once was. Acton's downtown used to be alive. Merchants seemed to be more aggressive. Effort in trying to shop locally and supply the demands of the customers was present. Many people, including myself, do a lot of shopping at malls or out of town, but not all downtown cores have this problem. Many towns in Ontario have thriving downtown areas.

Acton has such potential to become a bustling town once again. If we need examples of such transformations, we don't need to look very far from here. However, we need to look at Acton as a whole if we want to change. A little ingenuity, a lot of hard work and cleaning the town's appearance up will do wonders.



Look on the bright side. If you're already broke you don't need a vacation this year.



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