

GRAPEVINE

New BIA member

Diane Biggs, owner of the former YMCA building on Mill Street, has been appointed to sit on the Acton BIA (Business Improvement Area) to replace Paul Nielsen, who is selling his building at 37-39 Mill Street East and is no longer eligible to sit on the BIA. Nielsen, who operated men's and ladies' clothing stores on Mill Street for 34 years until he retired in 1990, was one of the founding members of the Acton BIA which works to promote and beautify the core.

Oh, baby!

Fifty babies and toddlers - the smallest field in 20 years - strutted their stuff for the judges during Saturday's Baby Show at the fair. As anxious, proud parents and grandparents looked on the cutest of the cute were awarded ribbons, books, gift certificates and gift baskets - all donated by local businesses.

Jason Saunders, of Mississauga and Acton's Cassandra Magno-Palmer took first places in the 13 to 18-month-old class. The cutest seven to 12-month olds were Becky Sparrow and Kyle Walker while Samantha Burton and Reilly Constable, both of Acton, grabbed first places in the four to six-month-old class. Acton's Hannah Hewson and Daylon Jung of Georgetown captured the birth to three-month class.

Shopping spree

Acton's John Pereira will be going on a \$500 shopping spree at Acton IGA after winning the bonus prize in the Rotary Club of Acton raffle at the fair.

"I've never won anything before

so this is great. I've been buying Rotary tickets for years," Pereira said on Sunday night, laughing that he was working on his shopping list.

Acton's Ray Vorne won the 200-pound pig. Acton Rotarians raised \$6,600 through ticket sales at the fair and after expenses, the money will be used for community projects.

Fox Run fun day

Students at McKenzie-Smith Bennett raised \$213.54 for cancer research during a Terry Fox fun run at the school on Thursday. Students were asked to bring \$1.41 last week - a penny, nickel, dime, quarter and loony - to donate to cancer research. Races were held for each of the classes in what physical education teacher Steve Morrison described as a school spirit

Knox youth in charge

Knox Church youth are organizing and conducting church services on Sunday as a way to say thanks to the congregation which helped send eight of them to a week-long youth symposium at Perdue University in Indiana in July. The invitation-only Presbyterian Church program is designed for 15 to 18-year olds who qualify and are recommended by their churches.

Shuttle success

Free, fast and frequent - Tyler Transport really was the better way for a lot of Acton fairgoers on the weekend. Tyler shuttle buses moved 622 happy passengers between the Legion and the Fairgrounds - the bulk of them on Saturday. Tyler's free shuttle is a long-standing fair weekend tradition.



CROWNING GLORY: Acton's Tanya Tonkovich (seated) was named Miss Acton during the 26th edition of the pageant on Friday. Tanya's sister Sonya (left) Miss Acton 1996, poses with, left to right: first runner-up Steph McKay, outgoing Miss Acton Jennifer Aitken, Tina Peterson, Janette Jensen, second runner-up Kelly Soutiere, 1997 first runner-up Tabitha Feenstra, Milton fair ambassador Amber Clark and Georgetown fair ambassador Sheena Butler. - Frances Niblock photo

Drill hall has colourful history

The three day Acton fair has packed up and left Prospect Park for another year. Beautiful weather, record crowds all made the three day blowout another outstanding success for the Fair Board, which started working on next year's Fair before this year's was finished. There were so many events and so much going on one could only pick them according to their likes and dislikes.

This year's Fair had one of the biggest midways we've ever seen with the largest variety of rides and games ever to camp in Prospect Park.

Of course, all the kids in town and district think the midway is the big thing. If there wasn't one it would take much of the flavour from the fair. And there have been years in the past when the midway was almost non-existent or merely a couple of rides for small children. They were bleak. Fortunately the Acton Fall Fair Board has been one of the most energetic and progressive boards in the province in the last three decades and they ensure the midway is always one of the best.

Acton is fortunate to have the arena and the old drill shed on the fairgrounds to house exhibits and for the arena show Friday night. The old drill shed has been in the park since being moved there from the corner of Bower Avenue and Elgin Street where it was the home of No. 6 Company of the Halton Volunteers.

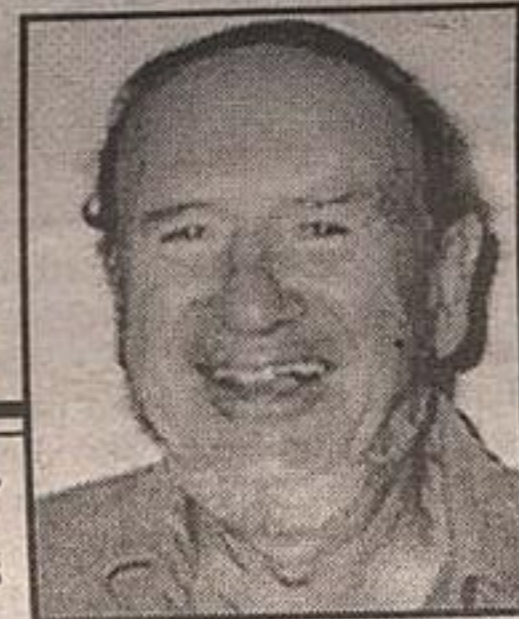
The "shed" was built either in Confederation Year (1867) or 1868 and according to Acton's Early Days was a "great building for those days, 60 x 100 feet, larger than any barn at that time."

In a rather insensitive 19th century move the drill shed, built of pine, nearly all clear, was erected just a few feet away from the Baptist Church of the time on Elgin Street. The imposing drill shed gave the church a "dim religious light," since it cut off most of the light on the north side of the building.

The Baptists of the time never offered any objection to the Government planting its drill shed and army there, says Acton's Early Days, even when it become em-

Coles' Slaw

by
Hartley Coles



graphs was: "I hope you folks won't be carried away with this Niagara of gush by this man from Ne-bras-kawh." At any rate, the Scott Act carried with a big majority, both in Acton and throughout the country. Halton was the first County in Canada to carry this early temperance measures, says The Old Man.

But there was other high drama there as well. On the 24th of May, 1877 Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly, was produced there with the "wonderful child artiste, Little Ollie Halford, in her great character of the gentle Eva," with a supporting cast.

And the drill shed was a temporary home for 10 families at one time when a block of three stores and as many houses on Main Street where the Village Rest Home is now, burned. The families were homeless and were housed in the drill shed for several months.

But how did the drill shed get moved to its present location? According to Acton's Early Days again a man named Alex Secord cast covetous eyes on the site occupied by the drill shed. He envisioned a two storey brick residence on the corner where it stood. He succeeded in persuading authorities to remove the shed to the 14-acre park on Fairy lake peninsula.

This action removed the eyesore on Bower to a "place where for real utility it is valuable," pontificated Acton's Early Days. "It answered well the primary purpose for which it was erected, and had adjacent an admirable parade ground." And in its place was built an attractive house which still stands.

The old drill shed is used only for storage now. At Fall Fair time it's a poultry buildings. It's got a dirt floor again just like it was when Captain Allan bellowed orders to the Militia. Few realized as they look at prize chickens and other fowl at this year's Fair that this old wooden building once was the centre of an early Upper Canada village with its militia, its quadrilles and fine entertainments.

barrassing to service on Wednesday nights. Often while a prayer meeting was in progress, the local company drilled next door to "stentorian" commands from Captain Allan. Or when the young folks were having a social and the "slow boys" were 'hoeing it down' with their long boots on.

When the building opened there was a grand military concert followed by a dance - on the earthen floor. Ever tried dancing on the ground? It didn't go too well and there was soon agitation to have a floor installed. Captain Allan was asked to show the powers—that-be a floor was needed.

"Well, I won't," he gruffly replied: "It's far better as it is for drilling, and I'm not the man to fracture my conscience in telling the military authorities this fine new drill shed needs a floor. Na, na, if you want a floor, put it in and pay for it yourselves; but mind you, I won't have a stick of timber nor a board put in there until you show me a permit from the Minister of Militia at Ottawa, and the Officer Commanding this battalion."

In spite of the captain's disapproval, the floor went in, but Acton's Early Days said it was an indifferent floor, even though lumber was plentiful - and cheap. With a floor the drill shed soon became the centre of the village. Concerts were held there and so were the first fall fairs. Imagine trying to put the current fair in the drill shed.

In the fall of 1878 a fiery debate was staged in the drill shed over liquor. Rev. F. W. Ware, a prominent minister from Nebraska whose mother lived in Acton, met E. King Dodds, of Toronto, editor of the Canadian Sportsman and a champion of the liquor interests. According to The Free Press, which championed the temperance cause, the minister worsted King Dodds badly.

One of King Dodd's closing para-

LETTERS

Former Miss Acton says thank you

To the Editor:

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the Acton Agricultural Society and the community of Acton for their support throughout this year. It has been fantastic.

We had a wonderful fair again this year, beginning with Education Day on Friday. I was so excited to be involved in this important day for the 800+ students who attended and had a great time.

Congratulations to all those involved - especially the youth who worked so hard all day in the heat,

running the field events. We are lucky to have so many young people taking on leadership roles within our fair.

Congratulations also to this year's Miss Acton, Tonya Tonkovich, and her runners up Steph McKay and Kelly Soutiere. I hope you all have a wonderful year and enjoy every moment as much as I have this past year.

Thanks again everyone for a great year and for supporting the Best Little Fair in Ontario.

Jennifer Aitken,
Miss Acton Fall Fair, 1997-1998

Kids are disappointed

To the Editor:

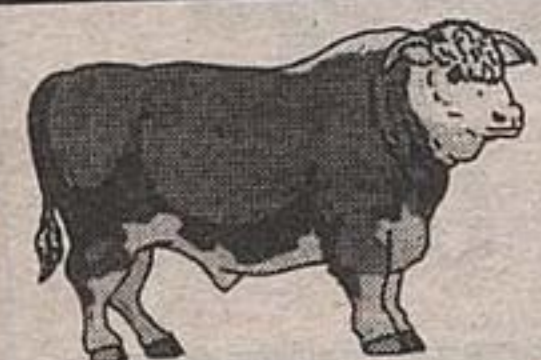
I am a student at Robert Little public school. I'm in Grade 5 and because the teachers have withdrawn voluntary services our school's Pizza Picnic has been postponed.

Thanks to Mr. Harris, schools have cancelled extra activities like cross-country running, meet the teachers night and other activities.

Why? Special classes have been cut off. If teachers and parents want the kids to become smart then let them have the activities back because a kid has got to have a little fun.

Lots of kids are very disappointed and hope that the teachers and their union will settle their fight.

Julia Niblock
Acton



WHAT'S YOUR BEEF?

Put it in a letter to the Editor!

Deadline is Tuesday at noon.