



With all the discussion now about Bill C68, the new firearms legislation, it's interesting to note that gun clubs used to be a feature of Acton and area before the turn of the 20th century. In his search for material for a Halton police history, Sgt. Bob Andrews contacted Martin Hassard of Oakville and this photo was loaned. Among those identified, are left to right a Mr. Stark, extreme right, from Storey Glove Co., John Harvey (Martin Hassard's grandfather in a checked shirt) who was once an Acton constable, Charles Taylor the black man, Dr. Lowery (sitting on barrel?), Jay J. Pearson, Mitch Cobban, George Agnew, a Mr. Wiles, a Mr. McGrail and Hiram Warden, the barber. - Submitted photo

'Bullied students' revisited

As a rule I dislike responding to letter to the editor. I have the chance to put forward my opinions and encourage others to do the same. A community newspaper should be the voice of the whole community and not just those privileged to have space on a regular basis.

Last week The New Tanner printed a letter from B. Pryslak regarding my comments about the booring of Premier Harris at the Skydome event honouring president Nelson Mandela. There are a few points I want to clarify.

Mr. or Ms. Pryslak was upset by my "insinuation that teachers are responsible for the outburst of booring aimed at Mike Harris." Excuse me. But that is not what I wrote. "Some teachers" (not all teachers) claimed that this was a "spontaneous demonstration." What is mind-boggling is that these teachers expect us to believe that codswollop.

This was a widely covered event. There were many reports of adult supervisors (one surmises some were teachers) encouraging the kids to be boo-birds. There were also more than one report of adult supervisors stopping other students from cheering for Mr. Harris. While encouraging the disrespectful display of boorishness (sic). I'm not trying to insinuate anything so let me make myself crystal clear. At the Mandela reception some adults (not all, but many) used the children of this province as shills in a labour dispute. To me that is totally unacceptable. Others have tried to rationalize this fiasco by saying it was the kids' idea - caused by the passage of Bill 160 and its ramifications. I don't believe that for one minute. I do, however, understand ground dynamics and understand why those kids joined in. The whole exercise was bush league and an embarrassment to all Canadians.

B. Pryslak writes that "students are not the stupid individuals that Mr. Harris constantly implies they are." Excuse me but isn't that playing fast and loose with the truth? I don't go to the premier's speeches but I'm positive I would have heard if the premier had ever

The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



called Ontario's children "stupid". As for the premier saying our kids know very little grammar, well, that's the truth.

Three of my children have gone on to post-secondary education. The first formal event in their university life was a literacy test. All three failed. I guess it could be a coincidence, or a Tory plot, but I doubt it. The fact of the matter is that they were not taught spelling or grammar in elementary school. I used to plead with the teachers to mark spelling and grammar. With few exceptions my requests were ignored.

Last year our youngest daughter was doing poorly in French. I asked the teacher why? "Her vocabulary is fine but her French grammar is terrible," I was told. "What can I do?" I asked. "Not much - the problem is they were never taught English grammar so how can you expect them to do French grammar?" the teacher said.

The real blame for this situation is not the individual teacher but rather the local board and provincial dept. of education. It was they who foisted asinine programs such as Whole Language training and finger counting on our kids. In many cases, though, teachers were willing accomplices to these trendy programs which, in the end, proved to be worse than useless. I know. I was there.

I don't see myself as being anti-teacher but some will try to portray me as such. The Bride and I have dealt with a couple of hundred teachers over the past twenty-odd years. We have always tried to be supportive of the teacher but we wanted our kids to learn grammar, math and sciences. In most cases it was administration and educators who stood in their way. I have no time for those people. Here are a few examples.

I was part of a group of parents

who stopped a discipline policy from being instituted that would have left it up to the discretion of the principal if your child was caught with alcohol, drugs or cigarettes on the first offence. This was for elementary school children.

I was told that because "The Bride" and I were involved in our child's education and the school community we had an obligation to share our social skills. So did our kid. And, if our child's education had to suffer in order to pass on these undefined skills that that was "a sacrifice we had to make." My answer is unprintable.

I sat at the board office and listened to a union official discuss how many tens of thousands of dollars would have to be spent on P.R. This money was to offset a greater amount being spent by the public school system unions. The whole exercise was each union trying to convince the public that their system was superior. Most people paid no attention to either campaign.

Remind me to tell you some time how \$500,000 of your money was flushed down the toilet on a social engineering program called "Building Better Bridges." I called it "Big Brother Comes to Acton."

Our children had many fine teachers. They have also had some real turkeys. If criticizing some makes you anti-teacher, so be it. That's not the way I see things, though. We will never accept less than the best we can get for our children. If that means fighting the board and the teacher, then that's what will happen. With school councils that will probably happen more often. The educators have had too much control. Their initiatives have too often proved to be hair-brained and our children have suffered. Change is not only necessary, it's overdue. The new curriculum and report card look good.

B. Pryslak says that "people like yourself" (I wonder what that means) believe students are a "captive audience". No, I don't, Mr./Ms. Pryslak. My question is - do you?

GRAPEVINE



Successful seat sale

The last seat - number 416 - has been "sold" at the Acton Arena and Community Centre wrapping up a very successful fundraising campaign that helped pay for arena upgrades, including comfortable individual seats and not bum-numbing bench seats. Sponsors paid \$200 for each seat, marked with a plaque identifying the donor.

Acton Councillor Rick Bonnette, chair of the Acton Proud fundraising campaign that raised \$200,000, said all of the seat name plaques should be installed within weeks.

Book babies

If you hurry to might be able to grab one of the few spaces left in the very popular preschool reading programs at the Acton library. Fridays at 10:45 a.m., beginning tomorrow, two-year-olds and a parent are invited to a 25-minute story time featuring songs, stories and crafts. There are several spaces left in the Wednesday afternoon preschool storytime program for children between 3 and 5 years of age but there

is just one spot left in the Thursday morning program. For more information call the library at 853-0301.

Cleaner opens

Acton's newest dry cleaner promises good, friendly service and great prices. Manjit Bhullar, owner for 20 years of Bronte Cleaners in Milton, opened a store at 39 Mill St., East on Saturday.

"A lot of my customers are from Acton and I thought that it would make sense for me to come here," Bhullar said, adding that he's taken a five-year lease on the building.

HHSCI staff thanked

Staff and volunteers at Halton Hills Community Support and Information (formerly ASSIC) will be special guests at Trinity United Church on Sunday as the church focuses on how the Community Support workers make Acton a better place to live. On October 25, Trinity marks its 154th anniversary with guest preacher, the Reverend Don Parr of Guelph. Both services begin at 10 a.m. and all are welcome.

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