

*In My Opinion***Passive park is goal of town councillors**BY MAC SPROWL, N. Sch.  
(Continued from last week)

On Sept. 2, 1943, it was a big disappointment to many that the arena was not available for the fair: It was filled to the girders with wool. But the Fair Board announced that the big night show would go on as usual outdoors.

By the following summer, plans were being formulated to hold a grand concert in the Town Hall, with the fair's night performance to take place when the arena was eventually available.

And by January 29, 1945, it seemed that would happen before the next winter.

On July 5, 1945 a letter from the Wool Administration pointed out the wool stored there for the war effort had all been sold and the building would soon be available and free of storage. On July 12, 1945 there was still a million pounds of wool in the arena. It was done up in bales weighing approximately 800 pounds each in about 1250 bundles. The curling rink was covered with bales. Part of the ice surface and seating was piled to the steel girders.

The trucks plying between the arena and station carried about 10 bales per trip, with about 129 trips in one month. On September 14, 1945, there was wool that still remained. The arena had been occupied for almost three years. Finally on December 27, 1945, the first intermediate hockey game was played in the arena in three years.

A few years later, in 1953, carpenters rebuilt the park grandstand. Under the seating section there was need to reinforce the floor. I got word of where the Fair Board could get a long barn timber, which could be used full length of the grandstand to support the floor. One hot evening in July, Clarence Denny, who was also on the board and had a trucking business, and I drove to Speyside to get this beam, load it and bring it to Acton and put it behind the grandstand.

That night I will never forget a violent thunderstorm came up and on the way back to Acton we could see both to east and west a red glow in the sky, which indicated barns hit by lightning and burning. I learned later the barns belonged to Bill Gilbertson in Eden Mills and Howson Ruddell at Ashgrove. The board got the barn timber in under the grandstand and now decided to freshen up the appearance by painting it white with green trim.

The grandstand was painted by my brother Calvin and myself with two spray guns. We parked my father's car, a 1950 black Chevrolet, what we thought was a good distance from the grandstand. Unfortunately, some fine speckles were carried by the wind and settled gently on Father's car, which now looked like a speckled trout. The car had to be repainted and Father was not too pleased.

While my brother Calvin and I were painting the grandstand, Arlof Dills came by and gave me a good donation for the board, commenting on the improvement

on the grandstand. Mr. Dills was the owner of the Acton Free Press and both Calvin and I went to continuation school in Acton with his sons David and Jim.

The grandstand never looked better. I was president of the fair that year and was heartbroken when for two days the fair was rained out. Another disappointment was that the council of the next year decided to demolish the grandstand, which I could never understand. It never was stronger.

I went before council several times after it was demolished. Council said not to worry; they would build a new grandstand across the track. What was erected much later were two washrooms, which were supposed to be the base of the grandstand. And 45 years later, council have never finished it.

Now we come to the present. The Halton Hills Recreation Master Plan 1994, 79 pages, recommends that a new entrance be put into Prospect Park off Main Street, that the old Acton arena be "decommissioned," that the tennis court and poultry barn be relocated in the Park, the track be taken out and the cattle ties removed, as well as one or both ball diamonds.

Halton Hills Recreation and Master Plan states Prospect Park is over-used and should be made into a passive park. In council's six to five vote on October 26, 1998, council turned down a request for a six month deferment to permit Heritage Acton and the Fair Board an opportunity to raise funds to restore the building. But the Parks and Recreation recommendation passed:

1) that the Acton Agricultural Society request for funding from the Town of Halton Hills in the amount of \$150,000 to \$200,000 be denied.

2) that the proposal from Heritage Acton and the Acton Agricultural Society requesting the transfer of ownership of the old Acton arena to Heritage Acton be denied.

3) that the contract pertaining to the demolition works for the old Acton arena be awarded to Marrex Construction and Excavating Limited of Caledon for \$37,878, representing the lowest tender.

4) that the needs of the Agricultural Society be considered within the future Master Site Plan.

On November 16, 1998, after a presentation by the Acton Agricultural Society, council stated that they would permit the Fair Board to put up a \$350,000 15,000-square foot building with expansion for another 7,000-square feet, with many conditions. The town would pay up to \$20,000 to the Fair Board from the demolition budget, which passed by a six to five vote.

During the debate some of the councillors were opposed to giving anything of the demolition budget to the Fair Board, using the excuse they have three areas, Acton, Esquesing and Georgetown and, like having three children, you must treat all the same to be fair. Further studies showed this was all nonsense.



IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE area farmers, like Les Otto are plowing under corn stalks this past week at a farm on the Fifth Line east of Acton. - Ted Tyler photo

**Pepper spray the Furbys**

Don't you think this nonsense of having to have the "trendy" Christmas toy has gone far enough? Last year it was "Tickle Me Elmo." This year it's the Furby. If you need more than one that would be Furbums I suppose. Anyway, the point is that some parents are paying \$600 to \$1,000 for one of these grotesque little creatures. If you are one of these people - hello! - you're an idiot! If your kid is little enough to play with a Furby, they have the attention span of a newt. They'd rather have the box.

Now I must admit that "The Bride" did get caught up in one of the early manifestations of the "must have" gift. She once drove to Kitchener to get two Cabbage Patch dolls. At least she got them on sale. Know where they are now? Neither does anyone else. People, today's Furby is tomorrow's landfill. Enough with the conspicuous consumption already.

I'm glad we're past that stage. I certainly wouldn't go into a toy store and say to the saleslady, "Good afternoon - please show me your Furby." She might slap me. Ho. Ho. Ho.

It pains me to write these words, but I'm on Jean Chretien's side. What's the big deal about a few protesters getting pepper-sprayed in Vancouver? From what I saw and read they were trying to break through the police lines. They were warned not to but persisted in surging forward. Same thing last week. Protesters tried to break through police lines and enter the hotel where the PM was speaking. A few of them got a clout upside the ear. What did they expect? A time-out?

I'm usually suspicious when these screaming mimi's are described as students. Some appear to be pushing 30 and professional agitators.

I went to my fair share of protests in the 60's. I'll admit (blush) that I went to meet girls. But that's another story. I'll tell you one thing for sure. When the cops started to get antsy I got my butt out of there. My Momma drowned all her stupid children.

Rightly or wrongly, heads of state are afforded elaborate security

**The Way I See It**with  
Mike O'Leary

screens. The old days when Mike Pearson rode the bus to work are gone forever. Granted, Indonesian President Suharto is a despicable person. But once here we have a duty to protect him. Canada can't start picking and choosing who we afford diplomatic security to. We're part of the world community and have to abide by the rules. If any mistake was made it was in inviting Suharto here in the first place.

In watching the tape of the RCMP spraying the mob a question popped into my mind. Didn't you think it odd that the Mountie just happened to have the giant economy size pepper-spray at the ready? This wasn't the breath-freshener size most officers carry. I wonder if the police weren't advised that this group was planning to get unruly? After all, last week's event was publicized with posters as the "Riot at the Hyatt." Said posters advised the participants to bring guns and other weapons. And we're supposed to get all upset because a few rioters got bopped by the constabulary? Serves 'em right as far as I'm concerned.

I'm all for protest. Carry a sign, yell and scream, write letters to the editor or your MP, whatever. But if you breach security don't expect your actions to be without consequence.

South of the border, Joseph Stanley Faulder got a stay of execution and promptly thanked "all Canadians." Don't mention it! I really meant that. Please, don't mention it again. This Canadian had nothing to do with it. I don't even have an opinion as to whether or not the man is guilty. I suggest we don't know enough about it.

The proposition that we should rally to this man's defense because he is a Canadian doesn't move me much. Mr. Faulder wasn't a visitor in Texas. He lived there for a good long time. Long enough, surely, for

him to know that murder is a capital crime in that state.

Must we insist that everyone leaving the country sit through the movie *Midnight Express*? Not many other countries have punishment as toothless as ours. But a week before Christmas is no time to get into a debate on capital punishment.

I'm not sure that Lloyd Axworthy did Mr. Faulder any favours by bringing US secretary of State Madeleine Albright into the fray. Texas governor George Bush is widely expected to run for president. He's a Republican. Albright is a Democrat. He may not want to be seen to be backing down as a result of her intervention or from that of those other than Americans. The Yanks are funny that way and Mr. Faulder wouldn't be the first person to be grist in the political mill.

Obviously, Canadians expect their government to come to their aid if they get into trouble in a foreign land. I just wonder what would happen if Mr. Faulder was in jail in Cuba? This government has a pseudo-superiority complex when it comes to the States. I wonder how much of this is USA bashing?

And would someone please tell me why Sid Ryan is involved in all of this?

Is he there to give Mike Harris a break? Is his union so flush they can afford to pay his salary and expenses on this crusade? If national trade unionism should be involved at all, and that's a debatable point, wouldn't you expect to see Bob White down there? I don't want to seem heartless but if Sid is for this guy, I'm probably against him just on principle.

We have so many problems in our own justice system, Canadians are losing faith in it. Maybe we should get Governor Bush to come up here and suggest ways to fix it. I wonder what Axworthy et al would say about that?