

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Ban non-residents?

Because Acton is only a few hundred yards from the border of Wellington County and rural Milton, boys and girls from neighbouring townships, the village of Rockwood and Milton register in Acton hockey leagues. In fact, Halton Hills estimates that up to 20 per cent of players and skaters registered with Acton hockey leagues don't live in Halton Hills and consequently aren't contributing any tax money to help pay for operating arena facilities.

Because, surprise, Halton Hills is facing a prime time ice shortage, town staff wants to ban non-residents from playing or skating in Acton. The ice shortage problems originates in Georgetown, where, according to town staff, no non-residents play or skate, and they need 71 more hours of ice time next year. They want to use the Acton arena.

"We have an obligation to service our ratepayers, the people who pay the taxes," the Town's manager of facilities has declared. "It would be hard to staff and council to see (Halton Hills) kids not be able to participate if they can look out on the ice and see someone from another community using to sport," Stover said.

And, of course, he's right. Unfortunately, the kids who are going to suffer because of political boundaries, just don't have any alternatives. Where can they go? Whether through neglect or compassion, Acton has always accepted kids from out of town to play in its minor hockey system without demanding any form of compensation other than the usual fees. At least one NHL hockey player has come out of the system, Mike Hudson, of Rockwood.

It would be a shame to deny these kids a place to play organized hockey or figure skate. Far better to give them an opportunity to pay a surcharge, probably something they should have been done years ago. It's an argument supported by the vice-president of the Acton minor hockey, Bob Collins of Rockwood, who also noted "the economic reality" that players and their families spend a lot of money in Acton and the community would lose a fairly significant number of spending dollars if a ban on non-residents was pursued.

Probably the hardest pill we have to swallow on this issue is that we could have all been avoided by the simple expedient of keeping the old Acton arena on stream, instead of demolishing it. After all if groups from Georgetown are going to use the new Acton arena more it means less time for people here. And it looks now as if Acton minor hockey is going to have to put a cap on registration in Acton for the 1999-2000 season. That means a lot of kids are going to be denied the opportunity to play hockey, no matter where they live.

Spring at last!

We've been anticipating it for weeks. By the time most of you read this Spring will only be a couple of days away. On the calendar at least. Now if the weather will only co-operate with the date.

The sunny days of the last week have certainly been welcome. However, the wind has sometimes driven the mercury well below the freezing mark and kept a wintry chill, perfect weather for making maple syrup maybe, but disconcerting nevertheless.

Snow is rapidly deteriorating under the rays of Old Sol. He (always a male) is melting it gently, allowing meltdown to gradually top up the water table depleted by the drought of summer and fall.

Although it has not been a severe winter, it's been a long one. We've had a snowy ground cover most of the season in this neck of the woods with episodes of bone chilling cold. So when Spring (always a lady) make an entrance we welcome her with open arms and embrace the warmth she's expected to bring.



LOCAL PRIDE: Musicians of all ages strut their stuff when the Acton Citizens' Band participate in a parade.

By the left... quick march!

BY ANGELA TYLER
The New Tanner

There is nothing like a parade. Good or bad, long or short, it feels good to watch a parade. Some people think the start of a parade is the endless line of emergency equipment like fire trucks and police cars. For me, a parade isn't a parade without a band and the parade hasn't begun until the hometown band starts to play.

Acton has many great things, such as Prospect Park (even without the old arena). However, I think our best-kept secret is the Acton Citizens' Band. Started in the early 1940s, the Acton Citizens' Band has kept our town with music in our hearts. Soon after World War II started and many local men were sent overseas, the band became the Acton Boys' Band then the Acton Boys' and Girls' Band. After the war, it resumed as the Acton Citizens' Band. The members of the band do not receive money for their performances. They play with the band because of their love of music.

The history of the band is rich with interesting stories, players, tales of the building of the band hall and many awards throughout the years. Many Acton residents have been members of the band and their children, perhaps even grandchildren as well. Some members may have stopped playing their instruments over the years, but there have been many more that have moved onto larger endeavors. I can probably name one musician from each instrument that has either gone on to play in larger bands or taken their musical talents onto post-secondary education. The knowledge gained from learning how to play a musical instrument will never go a miss. I was told this when I was younger and joined the band and it was definitely true.

In some ways the band has truly changed over the years, yet in other ways there are certain things that remain constant that keep the band focused. The band has their own rehearsal building. Its members built the Acton Music Centre on Wallace

Street. Years ago the Centre, known as the band hall, was the home to band socials and social functions such as weddings and Christmas parties. Now, the band and the Acton Parent and Child Resource Centre share the facilities. Concerts put on by the band were once staged in the band hall or in the once lush backyard. Now, the band's concerts are staged in different locations in town like the high school. Even though some things have changed, things like the style of uniform, certain members, some pieces of music and direction of the band have remained pretty similar over the years. It's familiarity like this, which is comforting.

Our band is a concert band and a marching band. This alone is unusual. Most small town bands are one or the other. In my opinion, the band is at its best when all its members are on parade. With their distinct red coats and black pants, the members are lined up, row by row. Then you hear "By the left, quick march". The translation to this is, after you hear the drums, we're going to get moving and start with your left foot. The drums pound out the command and the band is off. Upon the approach of the first group of bystanders, the instruments are lifted and the music soon fills the streets with marches such as 'Sonnes de Triumpho'. Ah,

there is nothing like a good marching band. You can tell the people watching feel good. Their feet are tapping and they applaud as the band marches by. The band feels good; after all a little applause goes a long way.

When people comment there is nothing in town for young people to do they usually don't think about joining the band. When I was growing up, I distinctly remember one year the band played at the former band competition at the CNE. My sister and many of her close friends were members. The band won the competition and their group picture is still displayed at the band hall today.

I suppose it was memories like these and stories my father told me about his days with the band that made me want to join. I have many fond memories of my musical days. Along with my friends Andrea and Sean, we would take our bicycles to the band hall on Tuesday nights which was beginner night. Along with many others, we would squawk out simple pieces in hopes of being invited to join the band, which eventually we did. I took my musical interest onto the high school band, learned to play three instruments and I even tried a small stint with the Lorne Scots Band. With the Lorne Scots, I really learned to appreciate our band. The Acton band has fairly people friendly uniforms. A golf shirt, pants and straw fedora in the summer, a warm coat with toque in the winter or a seasonal spring/fall coat. The Lorne Scots is a Pipe and marching band. After wearing a kilt with knee socks in Christmas parades and that huge, black hat that is probably made from a deceased creature and the whole traditional Scottish regalia, I quickly realized an unusual benefit of our band.

The next time your child complains there's nothing to do in town, give our band a call and ask when their next beginner class is starting. And don't forget this summer when the band is playing at the Trunk Sale or in a parade, give them a round of applause; they work hard for it and they deserve it.



Apparently some people believe that good driving is keeping a safe distance between you and the car behind.

THE NEW TANNER

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