

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Neutered newspaper

We don't want to engage in any arguments about the quality of news in The New tanner. A recent hostile letter writer labelled much of our news and editorial "garbage", suggested this newspaper had it in for Halton Hills, and generally gave us a bad report.

It's a free society where everyone is entitled to his or her opinion. Ordinarily we publish letters such as this and let the chips fall where they may. However, in this instance, it has generated so much public comment and calls in our defence we felt The New Tanner's news philosophy should be outlined for those who might find it offensive.

At all times the news columns contain the facts as we know them. The stories are written by seasoned, competent reporters who try their best to sift the chaff and present only the kernel of the story. When an error appears on occasion we are happy to print a retraction. Otherwise we stand behind the facts and the opinions.

Hostile to Halton Hills? Hardly. We have supported any positive and encouraging proposals from the Town as much as we can, especially when it includes Acton and area. However, again, when we think Acton and area is getting short end of the stick we don't hesitate to editorialize on the editorial pages where readers are also welcome to air their views. The news columns are for facts only.

In some cases we are aware that letters are not what they seem to be. They may mask an entirely different "grudge" by obfuscation. Or the writer may merely be throwing the snowballs which someone else has packed. Nevertheless we let them vent their spleen much like we do in the editorial pages.

If any reader thinks that because some government appointees or elected officials drew up political boundaries for a town or city that everyone is going to fall in line and join the chorus of Alleluias that emanate from Queen's Park or Ottawa, then they better think again. Ask most people in either Acton or Georgetown where they are from, and despite 25 years of being bound into Halton Hills, we'd bet over 80 per cent would say either Georgetown or Acton.

It's no argument against Halton Hills. It's a simple fact. And the conditions in both communities and in the rural areas are often strikingly different despite efforts to homogenize them.

Our understanding of progress is improvement. For instance, when we editorialize on the lack of a vehicle licencing office in Acton we were not aiming darts at anyone, simply stating a fact. There had been one in Acton since the days licences were first issued, when the population was 2,000. Now it has gone. Is that progress?

Once we had a customs office in town, well used and busy. Now it has gone. Is that progress?

Once the trains used to stop here and a busy freight business kept several people working. It has gone. Is that progress?

In most cases it had nothing to do with economics. It was merely policy that was driven by people who had no interest in this town or area and didn't give a fiddle whether we lost a service or not.

When we feel that happens we yell - loud and long. And intend to keep doing so.

Those who want a neutered newspaper with little interest in events and happenings in this area should read the phone book. Or write us a letter.



AWARDS AROUND: Students who received Acton Achiever awards for their work on the school year book turned tables on Acton High school principal Greg MacPherson by presenting him with an award at a breakfast ceremony on Friday at the school. The students Nicola Garwood (left), Gareth Lichty, Mark Prier and Nicole Duncan gave MacPherson the Amazing Principal Award - mainly for getting them a computer. - Frances Niblock photo

Small Town Quirks - by Angela Tyler

I don't think anything in a young mind is looked forward to as much as the end of the school year. Then again, for many adults who work within the education area, they too feel the same way (four more days, but who is counting?).

I don't know why, but with the end of this particular school year I have been thinking about my former teachers. Especially the ones that were so called 'fixtures'.

In Acton, it seemed to me, that there were always certain teachers that were a fixture in the community. Most lived and even grew up in the area and most knew your family and not just by name. I think that is one of the great things about a small community. Then again, if you weren't doing to well in class or were maybe causing some problems, it could backfire as well. I'm not sure why, but for me it is those teachers I remember most. Maybe it has something to do with them being around even after you graduate.

I wish I could remember more about Mrs. Boycott's kindergarten class besides spilling paint on Jenny McDonald's dress the first day or throwing up after eating the apple sauce. The teachers I remember most start with Miss Cynthia Blades. I can't really remember much about her first grade class but I do remember her patience and insistence that I hold my pencil correctly. Although she tried (and I still have that plastic triangle thing that she put on my pencil), I still hold it incorrectly. However, when I see her in town she remembers me by name and always has a smile.

Teachers like Mr. Bradshaw, Mrs. Sanford, Mr. Coates, Mr. Sale, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Ellis, Ross McGill, Mrs. Usher, Mrs. Irwin, Mr. Black and Mrs. Penick are just some of the few that will never leave my memories.

Like Miss Blades' first grade class, it seems strange that only cer-

tain things from each teacher or class sticks with you. Especially when you might spend 190 days with them. And I guess the really weird thing is, it might not always be something they were trying to teach me and sometimes it might take years to actually 'get' what they were trying to teach.

Maybe it was Mr. Taylor's more than humanly possible positive attitude or Mr. Black's easy going nature. Sometimes it was some quirk or irk a teacher had. Years after I was in Mrs. Sanford's class, I now know her on a first name basis. It's an odd feeling referring to someone as Mr. or Mrs. and changing to a first name. However, when I was in her grade 8 class she had a strict policy on chewing gum or yawning. It was simple...don't do either. Sometimes in her presence, I still find myself stopping a yawn or a chomp on a piece of gum. Mrs. Pennock was a French teacher at the old middle school and many will remember her unique way. A rubber chicken aimed at you until you were speaking correctly. It worked. Bonjour...je

m'appelle Angela.

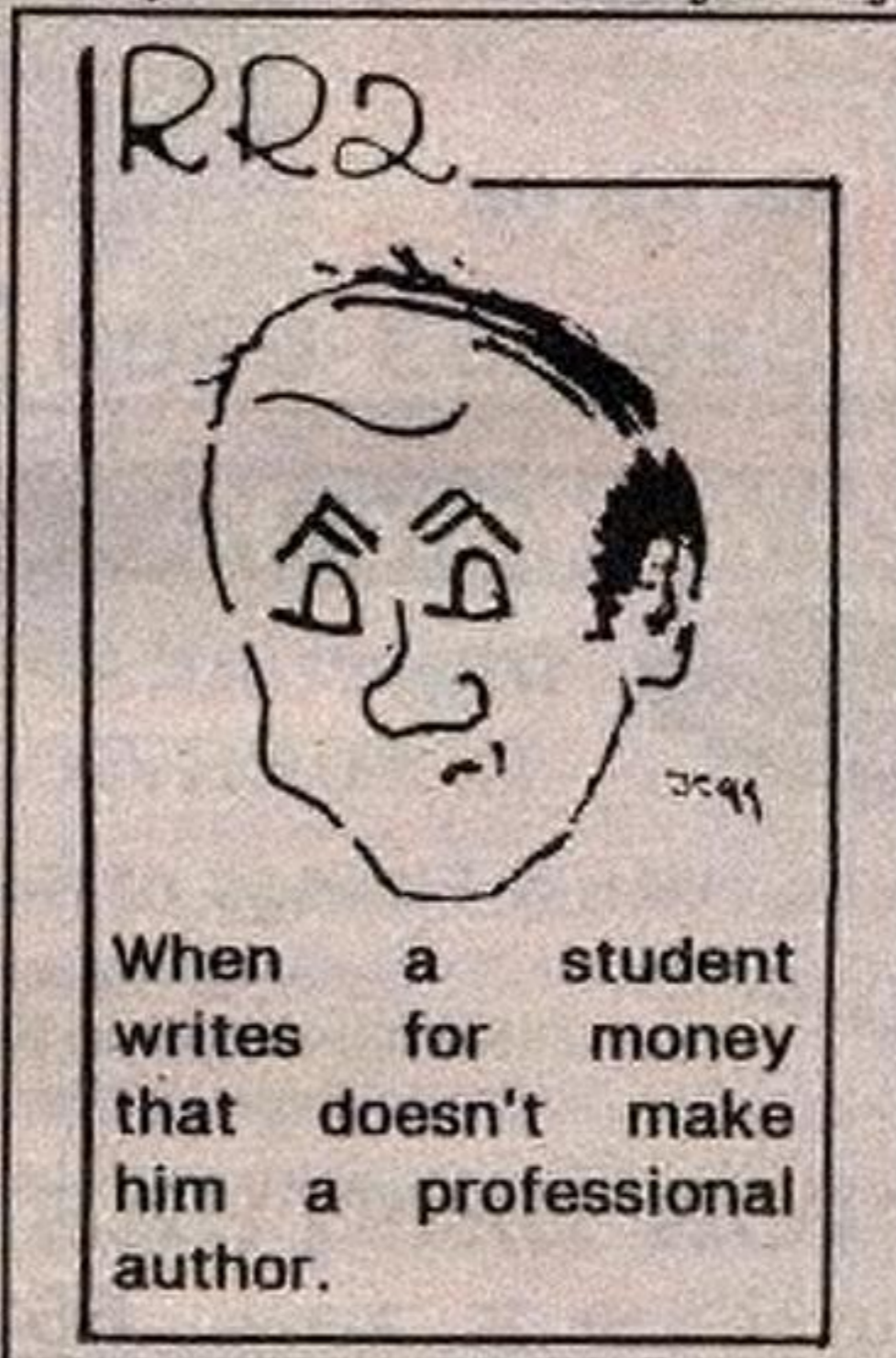
Then there were the certain things that were taught and you always remember. Mrs. Irwin's grade five geography class, Canadian geography more specifically. Let's just say, I think I know it pretty good. Shakespeare's Othello a mystery to you? Not if you took Ross McGill's class. He had this way to make it understandable.

Although each of my teachers were special in their own way, there is always one in your life that means more than all the rest combined.

I was very fortunate to have Jan Penick as a teacher. A kind hearted teacher with a fun gentleness about her. I was very saddened when I heard a few years after I graduated high school that cancer had taken her young life. However, I also hope she would be pleased for what I remember of her class.

She told the class one day (and this is a direct quote), "If you only remember one thing from this class, remember this. It is never due to, it is as a result of." Such as, due to (should be as a result of) the hot weather there is a water ban. She told us that newspapers were notorious for using this grammatical error. I think this itself is a little ironic as I reiterate this in a newspaper column. Well, all I can say is, Mrs. Penick, you got it. That is all I remember learning from that class and I preach it to all who dare to make that grammatical mistake in my presence, especially at the newspaper.

Now as I go forward into another chapter of my life, many of these teachers are also changing their life with retirement or changing schools. I suppose for them it is a new adventure in their life, but it is sort of sad in a way because a lot of Acton students are going to miss having them as a teacher.



When a student writes for money that doesn't make him a professional author.

THE NEW TANNER

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