

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Dire warning

Councillor Norm Elliott's warning that Acton will lose "big time" if the provincial government forces the four regions in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) to downsize has an ominous ring. And it's true, based on the policy now being spearheaded by Ontario Municipal Affairs Minister Tony Clement.

Mr. Clement said that amalgamation and reducing the number of politicians in the GTA is on the radar screen and regions like Halton will have to reduce the number of politicians and develop plans to reduce service overlaps.

Wonder where Tony Clement has been in the last two decades? It has been downsizing, downsize, downsize. It's all being done in the name of savings but as Regional Chairman Joyce Savoline says, amalgamation in Halton won't produce any savings. There is no fat left to trim.

What it will do is substantially reduce the voice this community has in town and regional affairs if Clement goes ahead with his threat. As if we don't have enough problems in a town where policies are already decided by those who pander to outside interests. Acton, in particular, has lost out every time. When will it end? - when we have one man (or woman) running the town and region?

The centralist policies of the Province are starting to strongly suggest that power will end up in the hands of fewer and fewer people, all professional politicians. The part-time politician who picks up a few thousand dollars for endless hours of time will be as rare as the passenger pigeon.

We're all in favour of reducing costs but not at the price of homogenizing and fitting every community into the same mold. That may find favour with some but it leaves a bad taste in this neck of the woods.

How much is it going to save by eliminating an elected representative from Acton, for instance? And the burden it would put on the remaining councillor would probably mean hiring another employee to field complaints. If you're allowed to complain, that is.

Queen's Park made a good move when it reduced the number of MPPs so they would fit into the federal ridings. It eliminated a lot of confusion. But when you start fooling around with the grass roots you're asking for problems and loss of popularity.

Parade Committee says thanks

To the Editor,

The Acton Firefighters' Association would like to thank everyone who helped to make the Acton Santa Claus parade a huge success again this year.

Impact Aero Interiors,	Knox "R" fund,
Daughters of Knox,	McIntyre Fuels,
Dan Dolliver,	Legion Ladies' Auxiliary,
Godfather's Pizza,	The olde Hide House,
CIBC, Acton,	Superior Glove,
Acton Cleaners,	Commerical Intertech,
Nellis Construction,	Achilles Motors Ltd.,
Mark's Auto Repair,	Acton Terminal Warehouse,
Bruce Hood Travel,	Bank of Montreal,
Acton Home Hardware,	Rotary Club of Acton,
Georgetown Volkswagen,	Galvcast Manufacturing,
Eagle Ottawa,	Denny's Insurance,
Wetherby's,	Acton Welding,
Holly Industries,	Family Barber Shop,
Tuitman's Garden Centre,	Station Hotel,
St. Joseph's Catholic Women's League	The Clowns,
ReMax Blue Springs Realty,	Royal Jug City,
ReMax Blue Springs,	Dave Braida/Janis Garel,
Blue Springs Flower Shop,	Lois Turkosz,
Acton Agricultural Society,	Royal Canadian Legion Br. 179,
Tim Horton's,	McNabb Printing,
The Float Judges,	The Float Entrants,

Thank you all for your time, donations and participation.
Wishing you a very happy and safe holiday season.

Acton Firefighters' Association,
William R. Spielvogel, Parade Chairman



PRETTY SCENE: Some Canadians may hate ice and snow but the first good snowfall and freezing temperatures which bound Fairy Lake in ice present a picturesque photo along the Elizabeth Drive park.

Megacity air pollution a growing problem

Smog is a big problem in Canada's major cities, but in the megacities of the developing world air pollution has created a health crisis, especially for children.

In the past few decades there has been a massive migration of populations from rural areas to urban centres. In 1950, there were just two "megacities" in the world with populations of more than nine million - London and New York City. Today, there are 21 megacities and 16 of those are in developing nations.

As the populations of these cities increase, the number of vehicles skyrockets and so does fossil fuel consumption. Not surprisingly, air pollution levels also rise dramatically, and health suffers. Children are particularly at risk because their lungs are still developing, they breathe faster than do adults, and they tend to absorb pollutants more readily.

According to the World Resources Institutes, as many as 85 per cent of all children under the age of 15 live in developing nations, and half of them live in big cities. Lack of basic health care, including immunization, as well as poor nutrition and poor sanitary conditions leave these children more susceptible to respiratory diseases that are aggravated by air pollution. According to the World Bank, air pollution in developing nations is responsible for at least 50 million cases of chronic cough in children under the age of 14. And the World Health Organization (WHO) says that respiratory disease is now the leading cause of death among children worldwide.

Key air pollutants include sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, and tiny particles suspended in the air collectively known as Total Suspended Particulates (TSP). All of these pollutants are byproducts of fossil fuel combustion, which also produces the greenhouse gases that scientists say are building up in our atmosphere and

Science Matters

- by David Suzuki



changing our climate. In cities that burn coal extensively to generate electricity, such as Delhi, India and Beijing, China, TSP levels routinely exceed recommended maximum levels by as much as 500 per cent. The number of motor vehicles in these cities is also on the rise, largely using old, inefficient technologies that further add to the levels of TSP.

In more affluent areas such as Mexico City, the predominant air pollutants are oxides of nitrogen and their byproduct, ozone - pollutants that result largely from automobile exhaust. Annual concentrations of oxides of nitrogen in Mexico City are more than two times higher than WHO's maximum allowable guidelines and 50 per cent higher than levels found in Los Angeles. Mexico

City has recently taken steps to help reduce air pollution, including eliminating lead for their gasoline in 1997, which as greatly reduced the blood-levels of that toxin in the city's children.

Although 80 per cent of all deaths attributed to air pollution-induced lung infections occur in children under the age of five in developing nations, air pollution-related health problems extend to most other countries as well. A new study from the Czech Republic published in the latest edition of the journal *Epidemiology*, for example, found a direct association between air pollution and infant deaths in that country, regardless of economic status. In Canada, federal government statistics indicate that up to 16,000 Canadians die prematurely every year due to air pollution.

The urbanization of developing countries is a trend that shows no signs of slowing, as 250,000 people in these nations continue to migrate to the cities every day. No doubt urban air pollution will become an increasingly pressing problem in the coming years. And unless we start reducing our consumption of fossil fuel, Canadian children will suffer more too. Greater Vancouver, for example, is expected to see its TSP levels increase by 60 per cent in the next 25 years if current trends continue. Thankfully, our air pollution levels are far less than in developing countries, but don't we owe it to our children to make sure it doesn't get any worse?

RR2

If you need the snow cleared off your drive call the Town.. It's your business what you call them.

THE
NEW
Tanner
Hometown news
that people read!

THE
NEW
Tanner
59 Willow Street North
Acton, Ontario
L7J 1Z8
(519) 853-0051 Fax: 853-0052

Publisher

Ted Tyler

Editorial

Hartley Coles

Frances Niblock Mike O'Leary Ellen Piehl
Maggie Petrushevsky Angela Tyler

Advertising and Circulation

Marie Shadbolt

Composing

Karen Coleman Karen Wetmore

Distributed to every home
in Acton and area as well as
adjoining communities.

ADVERTISING POLICY

Every effort will be made to see advertising copy, neatly presented, is correctly printed. The publisher assumes no financial responsibility for typographical errors or omissions in advertising, but will gladly reprint without charge that part of an advertisement in which an error may occur provided a claim is made within five days of publication.