

# EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

## Big Town budget

As Halton Hills Council debates the biggest budget in the Town's 26 year history, one Ward 3 (Georgetown) Councillor tried to derail the proposed reconstruction of Poplar Avenue and Crescent Street in Acton.

Councillor Jane Fogal suggested that instead of fixing Poplar and Crescent the Town should remove them from the proposed capital budget and use the money to reconstruct the "hill" on the Eight Line, which has been a source of concern for rural residents for years. Fogal said she'd taken a tour and found the hill, which is routed up the Niagara Escarpment, "frightening."

She said the problem there was of such magnitude that it should take precedence over the Acton streets which are "so much better" than McNabb St. or Mill St. in Georgetown. She said that Poplar Avenue looks like it's been freshly paved.

It was a cheap shot for a problem that would pit those who use the Eighth Line or one of the Georgetown streets, against those who reside on Poplar and Crescent, who have lived with flooding over the past 14 years. Hopefully council, surely won't fall into this trap and pit one bad road against another, as Cr. Fogal suggests. Her suggestion keeps alive the perception in Acton that projects here are second fiddle to those in Georgetown.

Councillor Norm Elliott said it well suggesting there was a "vulgar name" for that type of contest. He noted there were other projects he would remove from the budget faster than the \$300,000 proposed for phase one of the Poplar Avenue - Crescent Street project.

Eighth Line residents got some relief when council added \$200,000 to the proposed capital budget to fix up the hill which takes an "S" turn on its way up the Escarpment. The Town does not plow the road in winter months so it does pose a hazard. No doubt a passable road would attract more traffic than it does now.

But anyone who has seen Crescent Street and Poplar Avenue after a heavy rain would not compare them with street that have good drainage. There's also a problem with drinking water at the east end of Poplar where debris collects in the pipes. It needs improvements to make the water potable. The street needs work and so far it is still in the capital budget as well as money for resurfacing John Street from Bower to Church and \$170,000 for reconstruction of Brock Avenue. There's also money for improvements to the Fifth and Sixth Lines north of Highway 7.

The capital budget goes before councillors at the general meeting on Jan. 10 and should be approved by Jan. 17.

## Christmas all year

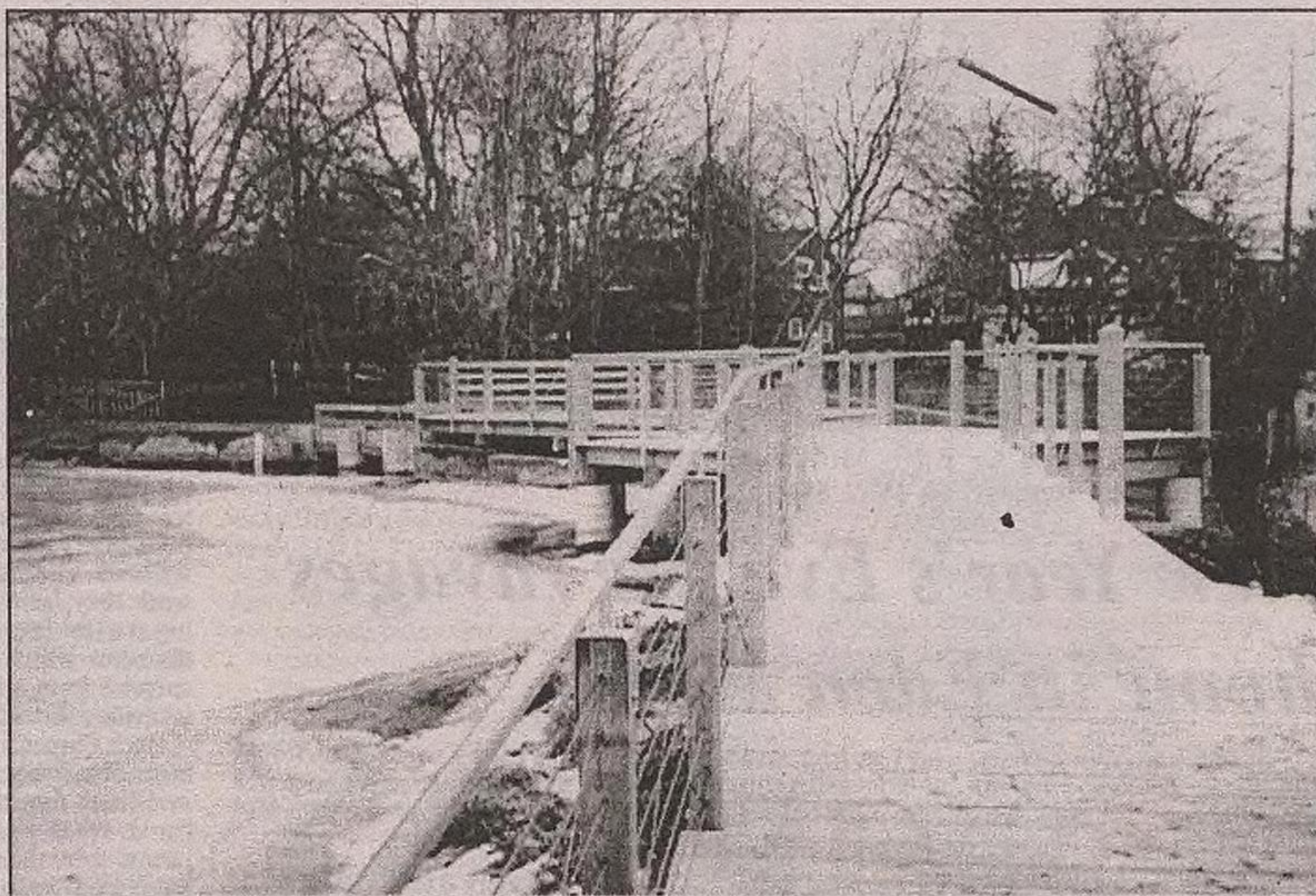
The generosity of the people in this area during the Christmas season is well illustrated by the number of families who received food hampers and gifts. Acton, Rockwood and area have always been generous to those in need either through individuals or agencies such as HHCSI and the Salvation Army which acts as the clearing station for others such as the IODE, the Rotary club, St. Vincent de Paul and the churches.

Unfortunately, the needy do not just subsist during the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Their needs go on.

Yes, there are government and local agencies who extend a helping hand but often it is bare bones. Families especially often find it difficult to manage. We're not just talking about the unemployed but those who work for the minimum or low wages, the working poor.

Some of us are blinded by the fact that there are people, fairly well off, who work the system and receive help intended for the real needy. However, in trying to punish them, we also inflict damage on those who, through no fault of their own, are having a difficult time subsisting at a time when the economy is supposed to be booming.

Generosity is not just a Christmas season phenomena. It is a year around affair. Keeping that Christmas feeling alive all year would benefit all of us.



**PROJECT COMPLETE:** Halton Hills has finished a new walkway over the dam at Fairy Lake opposite the Halton Flour Mill on Mill Street West. The walkway will provide access to a new parkette by the lake. - Ted Tyler photo

## This family picked Canada

The New Tanner asked Karen Coleman to write an article on the anniversary of her first year in Canada. Karen is on The New Tanner staff.

BY KAREN COLEMAN

A year ago today, January 6, 1999, my family, the cat and I emigrated from England to start a new life in Canada.

Two and a half years previously we'd vacationed in the Ottawa/Carlton area instead of our intended destination, Spain, to attend the wedding of my best friend from school, Johanne. She had moved to Ontario five years earlier on a one-year contract and had loved Canada so much she decided to stay. She met her future husband on a return trip to England Christmas 1996. A drinking buddy of her dad, he knew almost all there was to know about her and they got on like a house on fire.

Coincidentally, that January he was going skiing in Ontario and they agreed to meet. During a meal at the top of the CN Tower, he proposed and she eagerly accepted; she had fallen madly in love. So, when the wedding invitation came, how could we refuse a chance to holiday in Canada?

We had a wonderful time. The weather was glorious, the scenery spectacular and the Canadians we met were so warm and friendly. Shortly after returning to the UK, my husband, Dave, and I were both keen to make Canada our home. We had often thought of emigrating but had never found the right place. Language barriers, lack of employment prospects and culture differences had always put us off.

Despite having some reservations about leaving our family and friends behind, we set the wheels in motion to obtain our Immigration Visas. Of course, the money left to me by grandpa, who died the year before,

helped. My mum had said to save it for a rainy day - and there were certainly plenty of those in England.

In June 1998, the Visas arrived, much sooner than we had anticipated, and we had the inevitable prospect of telling the family our news. Naturally, many tears were shed, but everyone wished us well, and some even thought of themselves - they'd have a cheap holiday destination!

Although we'd intended to live near Ottawa and find jobs and a house after emigrating, Dave's company offered him a position in their Mississauga plant. By September we sold our house and in October, we fell in love with a house near Acton. Everything was falling into place. We arranged to stay with family for Christmas (quite a harrowing experience) and fly in the New Year.

We said most of our good-byes at an enjoyable, but sad, leaving party. But a few close family members drove to the airport to see us off. We spent so long saying goodbye, we almost missed the flight - it wasn't till later, we realized we caused an hour delay!!



After more than sixteen hours of travelling and waiting around in airports (we had to connect at Newark), our plane finally landed on Canadian soil, or rather snow, at around 9.30pm. An hour or so later, travel weary but excited, we stepped outside to be greeted by breathtaking, freezing air and four foot high banks of snow. The warmer than normal weather, a friend in Oakville had told us about before Christmas, had suddenly disappeared.

Loaded up to the hilt with luggage and last minute Christmas and leaving presents we looked around unsuccessfully for a vehicle large enough to fit everything in. My husband remembered the hotel we were staying in, had a courtesy bus. Luckily, the driver had not gone home yet. Unluckily, he arrived 30 minutes later, not in a bus but a minivan. We managed, however, to cram everything in, just, and soon arrived at the hotel in Mississauga. The desk staff, who remembered us from our last visit, warmly welcomed us.

The cat, who had, by now, been in her basket for twenty hours, was finally set free, only to find herself in a strange room. She wasn't too amused and immediately hid under the bed covers - something she only did back home when the window cleaner appeared unexpectedly at our bedroom window. She remained there for most of our stay - except, of course, when the maid stripped the bed - then she would scarp underneath to hide till she thought the coast clear.

The deal on the purchase of our house closed Friday, January 8, but the container with our furniture wasn't expected till Friday 15. The following Monday, the kids were due to start school at MSB. We decided to hire a 4x4 so I could take them without worrying too much about the snow, which of course I wasn't used to - the most we ever had in England

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