

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Housing soon?

Preliminary work has been done, now apparently all it will take to put new housing in Acton's east end is about \$6.2 million in water and sewer system upgrades. The money, the developers' share, must be up front.

The six main Acton developers met on Tuesday to discuss the Region's proposed financing plan for their share of the \$6.2 million. That could run anywhere from the 25 per cent - \$1.5 million - Andrew Hope of the Region estimates, or the Fred Dawkins' estimate that it will run closer to \$3 million.

Mr. Dawkins disputes Mr. Hopes' mathematics maintaining that at \$4,000 per housing unit and with approximately 700 units the amount paid by developers almost reaches \$3 million.

In any event, Mr. Dawkins, the major Acton developer along with Ron Heller, said in an interview with The New Tanner on Monday that he intends to sign the agreement and hopes the other developers will as well.

Mr. Hope has reiterated that the developers need to cooperate with each other and the Region in order to send a "favourable message" to Regional Council that they are serious about their projects. As he says Halton Region has gone to "significant lengths" to accommodate the Acton developers because there's a need for housing in the community. He notes the Region has played a stronger coordinating role because in the past the "disparate interests" of the developers was self-defeating.

There's another premise, of course - water. Before any development can occur, the water situation in Acton must be favourable, as well as the capacity of the Prospect Park well. It's an item that makes us shudder because in the past any reason seemed to be good enough to delay Acton development. The situation certainly seems more hopeful now.

We realize there's a close relationship between the Black Creek, its capacity to assimilate treated sewage, Fairy Lake and the Prospect Park well. But in the past we're heard some astonishing "facts" from government sources that just aren't factual. An official from the Ministry of Natural Resources said the ministry's records showed Fairy Lake only occupied 22 acres (8 hectares). Our records show it's at least 88 acres and 65 acres was dredged in 1967.

And we're still trying to figure out where the 500,000 gallons of water a day Beardmore used to drain from Fairy Lake has gone.

So, if there's any holdups because of water we suggest developers pore over figures very carefully to make sure figures aren't "fudged" or mistaken.

Health Care squabble

There's an old proverb about Nero fiddling while Rome burned. Surely that maxim applies to the nonsense that went on between the provincial premiers and the federal government over money from Ottawa to be distributed to the provinces for health care.

In order to have the same level of health care across the country, the Liberal government wants to have a say on how the money is spent. Some of the premiers and their governments resent the federal government interfering on how they spend the money. So they complain and wrangle over an agreement.

Meanwhile, emergency rooms in hospitals are bursting at the seams, hospital beds are closed and there's a shortage of nurses caused either by the Feds cutting back on health care funds or provinces like Ontario cutting taxes. You can take your pick.

Talk about squabbling in nursery. Everyone wants it their own way oblivious of the fact the health system in this country is going to the dogs. In fact, dogs are probably getting better care than people these days because there's lots of veterinarians.

By the time this journal is distributed, Ottawa and the provinces will have come to an agreement that includes Quebec - and Ontario - and work can begin on finding doctors for places like Acton and nurses to look after home care. Meanwhile we're crossing our fingers - and toes - in the hope that all levels of government see the whole picture, not just their own fiefdom.

Is it too much to hope that politicians can fix the mess they've created?



AWARD WINNERS: These Halton Hills residents - including five Acton athletes - were honoured for the recognition their achievements have brought the Town at a municipal awards ceremony on Monday at the Civic Centre. - Frances Niblock photo

Wonder where the yellow went?

Ben Wicks, the diminutive humorist, cartoonist, author, humanitarian, a man who wore a multitude of other hats, died on Sunday at age 73. He could turn almost any occasion into gales of laughter, keep them rolling in the aisles with his Cockney accent and love of fun.

Remember when he visited Acton in the 1960s for the annual father and son sportsmen's night, which used to be a regular end-of-the-season feature? An acquaintance of Acton resident Jack Carpenter, Wicks showed up at the old Legion hall on Main street posing as the European pole vaulting champion. Hardly more than five feet tall his humour convulsed the overflow crowd which included sports celebrities such as Toronto Argos quarterback Joe Theismann, Angelo Mosca and the defensive ends from the Hamilton Tiger Cats, Garney Henley, NHL stars, etc.

Garney Henley, a real pole-vaulter fed Ben ammunition for his tall stores and he responded with tales of exploits Superman would have envied. Wicks, born close to the Thames River in London, England, grew up there the son of a printer and cleaning lady. He said his home was filled with newspapers and comic strips that left their mark on him.

Asked how he got started pole vaulting, Wicks said he started with a three foot pole, MC Jack Carpenter recalls, chortling. Said the hardest part of vaulting was coming down and landing with a thud. Nothing too going up but the landing ... yeow!

Coles' Slaw

with Hartley Coles



His approach? Sometimes he said with a straight face and full Cockney, he backed up outside the arena to get a good crack at it. Motorists, he said, were started to see him hurtling through traffic with this long pole...

It's length was a detriment when travelling. They had to fold it up when he travelled on trains, a mind bending exercise, Jack Carpenter recalls, still chortling.

He did this call with a straight face, all five feet of joyous fun wrapped up in a mischevous exterior. He'll be missed.

★★★

Anyone else noticed their tap water poured out with a yellowish twinge last week?

It happened at our house. Before the love of my life detected it she had washed a tubful of white clothes. They came out stained yellow. Alarm bells went off! "Something is drastically wrong with our water," she exclaimed. "What are we going to do?"

This guy immediately got on the blower and dialed the Region on our antique wall telephone. I was transferred to Milton office from where a

polite woman informed em they had an earlier call the previous week about the same concern.

It's iron, she said. Sometimes the flow of water gets detoured the wrong way when someone opens a hydrant or the wrong valve. She said it would clear up if I opened the basement tap for 10 minutes to clear the iron out. Which I did. And there was some clearance. However, the next day to problem reoccurred.

This time I dialed Regional Councillor Rick Bonnette whose answering machine was on. Rick wasn't long in getting back once he received the message. He contacted the Region and informed them our problem was ongoing. The polite concerned lady called again, asking if I had followed her instructions. She said the problem would clear up but in the meantime would send some kind of chemical that would clean the iron out of the stained clothes with another washing. Within half an hour it arrived at the house.

Eventually the water cleared, the clothes were washed in the Region's soap and stain removed. And outside of a dripping bathtub tap which I have failed to stop dripping on two tries, the plumbing at our house is OK.

The prompt action from everyone involved in the clearing process impressed me. Everyone was polite and obliging which says oodles about the region of Halton.

But, I wonder where the yellow went?



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