

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Public spirited project

Rockwood and area people are doing their part in relieving the affordable housing problem by organizing a Habitat for Humanity project in the village.

Land has been purchased at the corner of Inkerman and Alma Streets with the intention of building two duplexes there. The group is now seeking a severance in the hope of starting construction on the first duplex next summer. They are also looking for applications from families who qualify for a home.

The idea for a Habitat for Humanity program started with Rockwood's four churches whose representative got together last year to decide on a Millennium project. At the suggestion of a minister they investigated the Habitat program and found it challenging.

The churches of Rockwood have already made substantial contributions to the project as well as several individuals. Contributions have also been promised from service clubs, tradespeople and construction suppliers.

Habitat for Humanity is a public spirited project and a credit to those who initiated and are supporting it.

Arrive alive

The warnings are out - Don't drink and drive during the Christmas holiday season.

Ontario Provincial Police noted that in the first week of the five week R.I.D.E. holiday season in Ontario they have doled out 230 12-hour suspensions and 138 persons were charged with alcohol-related offences, an increase of 10 over the same period last year.

Drinking and driving are no nos all year but they receive special significance over the Christmas and New Year season, when so much temptation is prevalent at office parties and other holiday-related events. Bon vivants at a party should make sure they have an alcohol-free designated driver to take them home, not only for the chance of being stopped by police but for the danger they pose on the road.

The OPP remind motorists that tragedies caused by drunk drivers are preventable.

Danger on the roads is also compounded during the Christmas season by wintry weather that causes slippery roads and other poor driving conditions. Drivers need all their faculties to avoid collisions or winding up in roadside ditches. It can happen so quickly. Exercising caution on treacherous roads is not only sensible it's healthy.

The OPP motto: Arrive alive: Don't Drink and Drive!! is one we should all take seriously but responsible driving applies as well.

Ads pay the freight

The staff of The New Tanner get many requests for free publicity for events local and otherwise. Many of them are simply attempts to get free advertising. Some of them are for charitable causes, others are simply trying to slip one over on us.

The publisher and staff of The New Tanner are not averse to free publicity for community and non-profit charitable events. It's part of our reason for being. However, it does set us on edge when free space is given and then it's discovered an organization pays for advertising in another newspaper.

There's only so far a newspaper can go with free publicity - and survive! Advertising pays the cost of publishing and circulation. Any newspaper that does not adhere to these simple rules of payment for advertising won't last long. Besides it is not fair to regular advertisers who pay, if others get space gratis.

If organizations want to guarantee their coming events get published, then an advertisement is the way to go.



An early view of Acton probably taken from the Beardmore tannery water tower.

From plaques to 'crappers'

Because the historical plaque in Memorial Gardens at the corner of Main St. N. and River St. in Acton has faded, the Esquesing Historical Society wrote to the Ontario Heritage Foundation suggesting it should be considered for restoration or replacement.

The Society also suggested the wording be changed to more accurately "reflect the reality of the town's history," if replacement was considered.

The plaque's first sentence reads: "The first land grants on the West Branch of the Credit River were made in 1829 and among the earliest settlers in this vicinity were Ezra, Zenas and Rufus Adams." The Society suggested it be changed to: "The first settlers near this place were Ezra, Zenas and Rufus Adams who first arrived in 1823 to establish a community on the West Branch of the Credit River (Black Creek)."

The Society also suggested a change for the fourth sentence which reads: "The railway stimulated growth and the following year the first village plot was laid out." In its letter to the Heritage Foundation the historical society noted that Acton was a good-sized village before the railway came, so naturally there were many village lots that were built on. "The first village subdivision may have started about the time of the railway, but the line is misleading," the society notes. They suggested it may be better to explain why the "main" street

Coles' Slaw

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is Mill Street, rather than Main Street, because business was attracted east by the position of the railway depot. Their suggestion: "The railway stimulated the village to grow towards the station, along Mill Street."

Mark Rowe, former Actonian and archivist with the Esquesing Historical Society, faxed a copy to this scribbler for my comments on a draft for a new plaque from the Heritage Foundation. In an accompanying letter, Paul Litt of the Foundation noted that "space constraints prevent us from add any more words, but we are willing to revise the draft required to accommodate local interests."

The first draft read:
ACTON

"A grist mill established downstream at Limehouse in 1821 attracted the first white settlers to this area. Ezra, Zenas and Rufus Adams, brothers (?) from ..., took up land here in 1823. They were soon followed by other pioneers. Nicklin's saw and grist mill and Nelles' tannery, both operating here by the early 1840s, formed the nucleus of a hamlet first

named Danville, then Adamsville (after its first settlers) and finally, by 1844, Acton. In 1856 the Grand Trunk Railway arrived, stimulating growth eastward along Mill Street from the river to the railway station. By 1869 Acton had some 700 inhabitants and boasted woodworking mills, tanneries, glove makers and a carriage works. It was incorporated as a village on January 6, 1874.

Mark acknowledges he does not like the first line but knows he's trying to say there were settlers here before the Adams. I agree with him. The historical society's suggestion was much clearer and reflects the reality of the town's history better. The reference to Limehouse would suggest settlers were breaking ground there rather than here.

In any event the Esquesing Historical Society's penchant for accuracy has to be admired since much of the earliest history of this town and area is based on official records which are often sketchy.

There is evidence there were settlers in what is now Acton before the Adams brothers arrived but it would be difficult to make a case in a court of law.

From our roots to a lighter subject - the water closet - is not much of a jump is it?

Jack Carpenter brings in a British newspaper which notes a new

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