

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Free Needles

At the risk of being labelled reactionary and a dinosaur, here's one person who isn't afraid to challenge the assumption from local officials that giving free needles to drug addicts and others who want to shoot up is a good thing for a community.

We've had reason in the past to distrust health officials, and others of their ilk, who trot out statistics to buttress their case of free services to protect a community.

This writer likes the comments of William D. Gairdner in his book, *On Higher Ground, (Reclaiming a Civil Society)*, when he writes:

"Meanwhile, the great embarrassment is that our modern liberal democracies have lavished more money on murderers, thieves, assaulters, rapists, teen pregnancies, runaway husbands, illegitimate births, drug and sex abusers, and pedophiles (all of whom have offended against morality) than has been spent on their likes in the whole prior history of the world, only to produce vastly more of these things! Lavishing money on immoral behaviour creates as much of it as we care to tolerate."

We see no valid reason to change that view.

Briefly

The federal government look at gasoline pricing has to be the laugh of the week. The report issued last week which gave the big oil companies a clean bill of competitive health with no serious sign of higher prices for holidays and weekends, obviously was done by people who never buy gasoline. Or use someone else's money when they do.

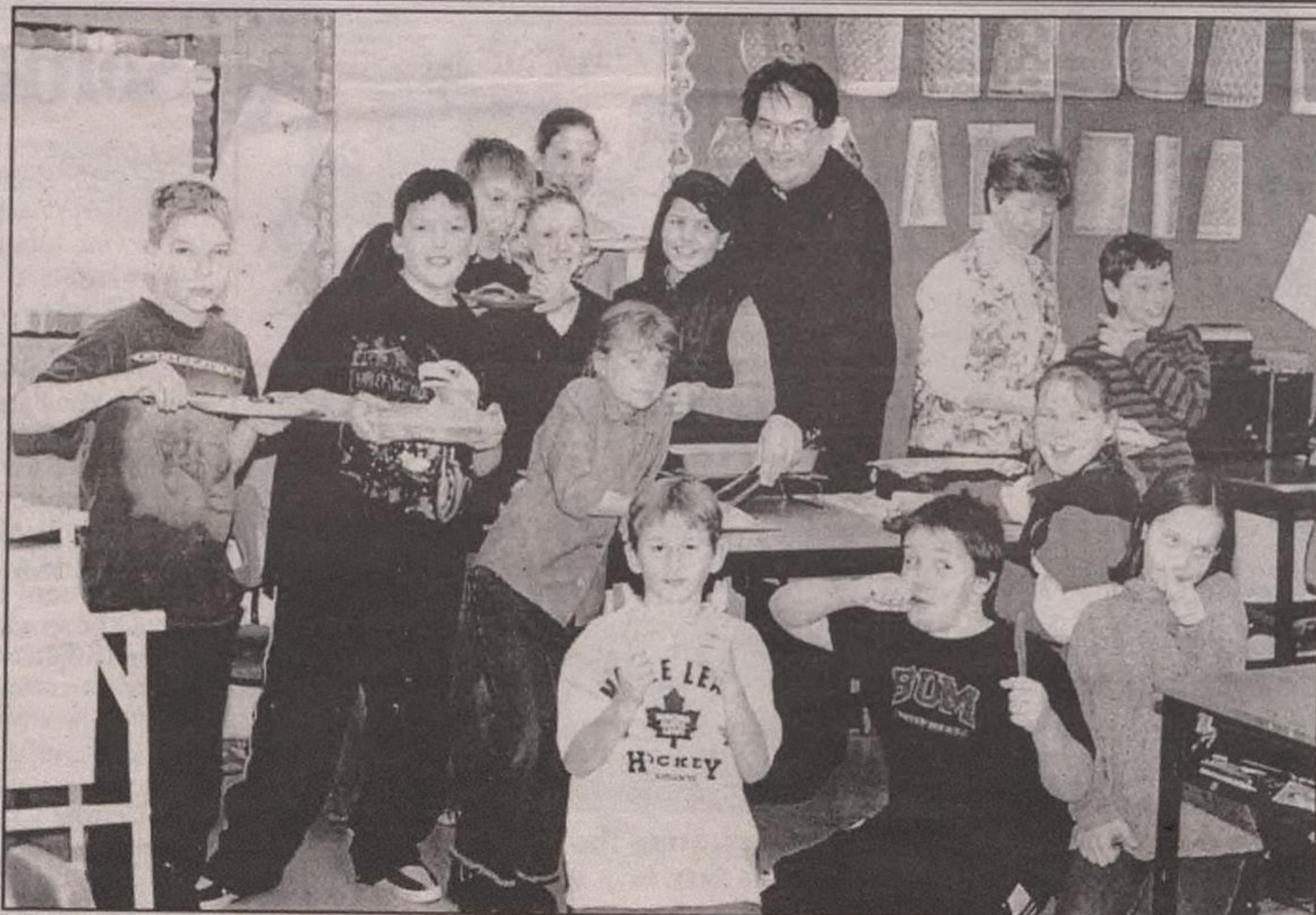
When the Province downloaded Highways 25 and 5 onto Halton Region the reason given was they were mainly used by local traffic. Judging by the numbers of large trucks that rumble through Acton on what is now Regional Road 25, those who made the recommendations to the Ministry of Transport were blind. Trucks seem to be using 25 more and more on their way to Hwy. 401.

Those of us who thought winter was on its last legs suffered a relapse on Monday when this week's storm blew in. But take heart. Spring, on the calendar, is only a short 13 days away. And St. Patrick's Day, begorra, when green, artificial though it may be, sprouts all over the land.

What's the difference between the recession and a depression? One authority, forget who, said a recession is when your neighbour is out of a job. A depression is when you are out of a job.



Breaking Winter's bonds



SHROVE TUESDAY: The pre-Lenten celebration at St. Joseph's Catholic School included pancakes with Father Bob Bulbrook and St. Joseph's Church parish secretary Kathy Sanford last week. - Frances Niblock photo

Village Constables go back to the 1860's

With congenial Constable Bill Riddle reluctantly handing over the reins to Constable Garry George, it may be a good time to look back at some of the history of village constables in Acton. My recollection only goes back to the time of Bob Macpherson, the man who held the post when I was a kid during the Great Depression. His name was traded around with awe by schoolmates. His home on St. Alban's Drive was avoided by the guilty of mischief such as raiding orchards and gardens for fresh produce.

However, it should be noted that as long in the tooth as I may be, there have been village constables in Acton for about 150 years. Unlike the constables of today, their duties far exceeded police work. In fact, early constables were akin to the Old Lamplighter. Before the introduction of electrical power one of their duties was to light the oil lamps which dotted the business section of the village.

The first recorded instance this scribbler has seen in recorded history of village constables was in *Acton's Early Days*, the bible for Acton's history. The time? - 1865 - and this hamlet of 700 or so souls was in turmoil over the murder of 26-year old Martin Dromgole on Mill St. between the MacKinnon Funeral Home and The Holland Shop.

Coles' Slaw

with Hartley Coles



Dromgole "got Tilly Lozier in trouble." She died giving birth to a baby boy and a vengeful uncle, David Lighthouse, shot Dromgole as he walked across the lawn of the Lozier home to attend the funeral.

Sympathy was with the murderer, but two constables, Joseph Lasly and Horace Hall, were to guard Lighthouse until he could be transported to Milton and the county jail; like today, there was no lock-up in Acton. So W.H. Storey, Acton's first reeve, placed his parlour at the disposal of the constable, presumably in what is now the funeral home.

However, during the night, Lighthouse eluded the constables, made his way down through the Beardmore tannery yards and hid in a grain field on the farm on the east side of the Second Line (Hwy 25) at about where 25 Sideroad intersects. Concealed for some hours, he managed to escape. It was hinted that the pursuit was not very serious since sympathy was

with the Loziers and Lighthouse.

Probably, since Acton was part of the old Township of Esquesing until 1873, when it was incorporated as a village, there was no official village constable. So history of the post is hazy for this writer until the appearance of Bob Macpherson in my life in the dirty '30s. He was not only responsible for keeping the peace, he was responsible for just about everything in the village.

After Bob Macpherson retired the next one in my memory was the late E.E. Harrop who was on duty during the day while Jack Locker patrolled the streets at night under the title of Night Watchman. I recall Mr. Locker patrolling the streets with a punch clock, which he was able to punch at certain intervals. For some reason both Harrop and Locker were addressed as "Mister."

Mr. Harrop was certainly an interesting man. Once the commander of a rajah's army in India, he came to Acton with impressive credentials. Maybe only 5'4" in height, sporting a fierce moustache, he was the epitome of a British army officer. He had a commanding presence. He only had to appear to restore order into any ruckus which developed on this village's quiet streets.

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

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