

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Championship year

Congratulations to the three Acton minor hockey teams who skated to OMHA and Tri-County League championships in the last two weeks.

Both the Minor Atoms and the Minor Novice Tanners won OMHA AE-3 Central Championships at a thrilling doubleheader in front of a sell-out crowd at the Acton arena on Saturday, March 23. The Minor Atoms defeated Prince Edward County Kings in the final series three games to none while the Minor Novices shaded Caledon Hawks 1-0 to take their best-of-five three games to one.

Then to add icing on the cake, the Minor Pee Wees defeated Woolwich, who play out of Elmira, on Wednesday to capture the Tri-County League championship.

It has been a banner season for the Acton Minor Hockey Association with three champions as well as contending teams in almost every category. Some just missed the brass ring by a goal or two.

The successful season is not only a tribute to the skill of the players, coaches, and managers but also reflects the enthusiasm and hard work of the president, executive and volunteers who contribute to the program. One volunteer, Dave Morris, coached three teams over the season, a task which would make most volunteers shudder. He's a worthy recipient of Coach of the Year award.

There's also the scribes who regularly sent reports of the games to The New Tanner for publication, a job which takes time and dedication. So many people with such enthusiasm certainly create a winning combination and a sense of pride in their accomplishments.

Economic devastation

Visitors to Town following old Highway 25 can't help but notice the economic devastation on Main St. from Mill St. almost to Knox Ave. When the former Acton Pharmacy closes its doors this week it will add another blow to the downtown, unfortunately where it is most visible.

Only two months ago this was the busiest part of Acton, with IGA attracting thousands of shoppers. Now IGA has left for the east end, the Pharmacy closed and Cogeco Cable moved to Milton; the whole area leaves an impression of economic stagnation. The few merchants left must find the loss of vehicle and pedestrian traffic in their pocketbooks.

Until the vacant stores are filled with new businesses the area paints a bleak picture of Acton.

It's ironic that this street was designed by the town's founders to be the principal thoroughfare where business would be located. It has a breadth almost double that of Mill St. which became the main business section because it led to the railway station where much traffic was generated.

We are of the opinion that too much attention has been lavished on the newer areas of town while the heart of the old town has gradually been neglected despite the best efforts of the Business Improvement Area (BIA). Little by little, beginning with the demolition of the old post office at Mill and Willow, and the loss of the YMCA, the influence of the downtown has been chipped away. The fact busy Highway 7 runs through its heart never helped restoration efforts.

There's not much ordinary citizens can do except support the remaining merchants downtown and hope empty but still very attractive stores are filled with new business and projects. Residents of the west-end of Acton particularly have lost their ability to walk for groceries and medicines unless they're fit enough to hike to the east end.

We should all be concerned that the historic heart of Acton is now almost an economic wasteland. The sooner efforts are made to restore its viability the more prosperous the whole town will be.



QUEEN MUM VISIT: As Governor General Vanier looked on, future reporter Frances Learment (Niblock) presented a bouquet of flowers to the Queen Mum, as she arrived for a June 1965 visit to Toronto as guest of the Toronto Scottish Regiment, whose commanding officer was Frances's dad.

My time with the Queen Mum

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner

The weekend death of the Queen Mum brought back a flood of special memories, as I was lucky enough to present Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, with a bouquet of flowers, (white orchids, pink carnations, sweet peas and stephanotis according to one newspaper report of the day) when she made her third visit to Toronto in June, 1965.

My dad, J.D. Learment (now retired in Guelph) was commanding officer of the Toronto Scottish Regiment, and as their Colonel-in-Chief, the Queen Mum was here for five days as the Regiment's special guest to celebrate its 50th anniversary, including the presentation of new colours.

I was a sweaty palmed, nervous pre-teen in a Guide uniform at Toronto International Airport when the Queen Mum arrived on a commercial flight (after reportedly chatting up startled passengers in economy) on June 23, 1965.

I'd practised curtsying for more than a month and had a tight grip on the flowers. I remember being more concerned about messing up in front of my school class that was watching outside the airport administration building, than all of the dignitaries that were there.

Some press accounts of the day in the women's pages focus on who was wearing what and The Telegram, after devoting columns of pretty prose describing what the wives of important people were

wearing, actually said I was best dressed in my Third Applewood Guide Company uniform. (I remember trying to convince my parents to allow me to wear anything other than that blue uniform.)

I don't remember what the Queen Mum said to me, but in an interview after she was whisked away to E.P. Taylor's Windfields Farm, I told a reporter that we had quite a conversation, as the Queen Mum questioned me about how old I was, did I like Girl Guides, and what my name was.

For my parents, the next few days were a whirlwind of English accents, dress uniforms, strict protocol and media attention.

I remember bragging at school that my mother had been interviewed on a lunchtime television show, and as CO, my dad, resplendent in kilt and medals, was prominent in the daily newspaper coverage.

I also remember my mother quietly urging my older brother and I to smile and nod when the Queen Mum looked over and saw us during a Sunday morning service at St. James' Cathedral.

One of my favourite pictures of that visit is of the Queen Mum as she prepares to enter a dinner hosted by the Empire club for the Toronto



REGAL MEETING: As the commanding officer of the Toronto Scottish Regiment, Lt. Col. J.D. Learment looks on, his wife (and mother of The New Tanner report Frances Niblock) curtsies as she is introduced to the Queen Mum during her 1965 visit to Toronto. The Queen Mother was the Colonel-in-Chief of the Toronto Scottish Regiment.

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