

OPINION

One good idea from taxpayers

BY MAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY
The New Tanner

The latest Guelph/Eramosa Taxpayers Association (GETA) update provides one positive note for GETA watchers. For the first time since its inception, group organizers have made a concrete and worthwhile suggestion. They are urging concerned citizens to consider seeking municipal office at election time this fall.

Increasing public participation in municipal races could do more for GETA and the municipality than anything they have attempted thus far. The key however, is to field candidates with reasonable intelligence and an open mind. Even so, new councillors are likely to face a rude awakening when they discover just how thoroughly provincial regulations tie their hands and limit their spending options by forcing compliance with provincial regulations.

Recent regulations on winter road maintenance is an example of how the province ordered municipalities to spend on plowing and sanding/salting in order to meet their rules but provided no cash to offset those expenses. Now the province has set down new rules concerning municipal water systems. Again, without any financial aid despite the potentially large costs to implement them.

Probably most potentially damaging is the notion that municipalities should hold a referendum in order to raise taxes. In Guelph/Eramosa, for example, holding a referendum would cost approximately \$10,000. If it considers a new fire hall a "nice to have" item, GETA will certainly object to the municipality including such a sum in its budget in order to pay for a potential referendum. That would

not be justified by zero based budgeting since it was never done before.

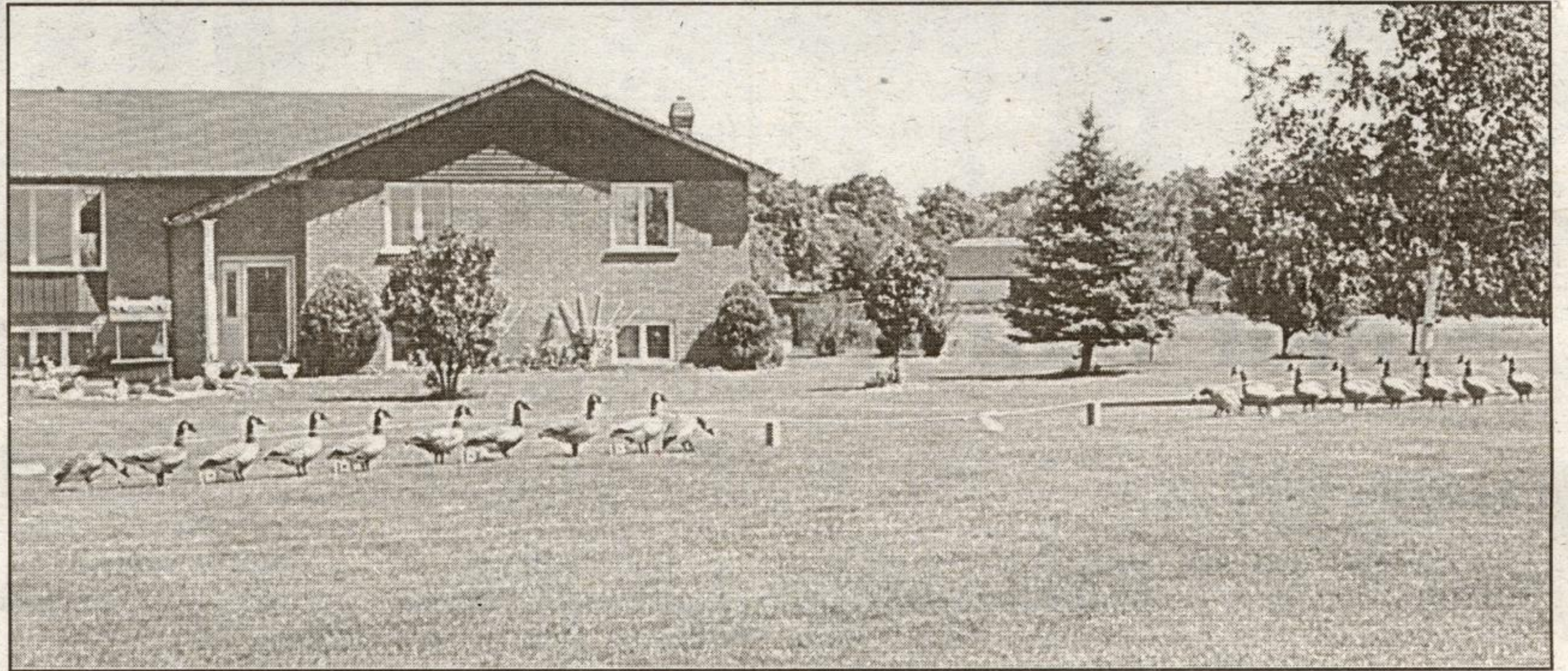
The referendum question would need to include both the tax increase and an extra \$10,000 to cover the cost of the vote. If residents turn down the tax increase, how does the referendum get paid for? Since municipalities cannot legally run a deficit, they can't carry over such a debt to the next budget. And the municipality certainly won't waste money on a vote if there's sufficient funds to avoid one.

The rest of their bulletin however, merely reaffirms what makes GETA watchers grind their teeth in frustration. Their claim that they need to "refute the notion that downloading and market assessment were the cause of the huge increases in taxes (the real culprit is the huge increase in spending by the municipalities.)" is enough to bewilder political observers. Considering the province was responsible for downloading and has been trying to pass the buck to local municipalities ever since, what other message would GETA expect the local MPP to give them?

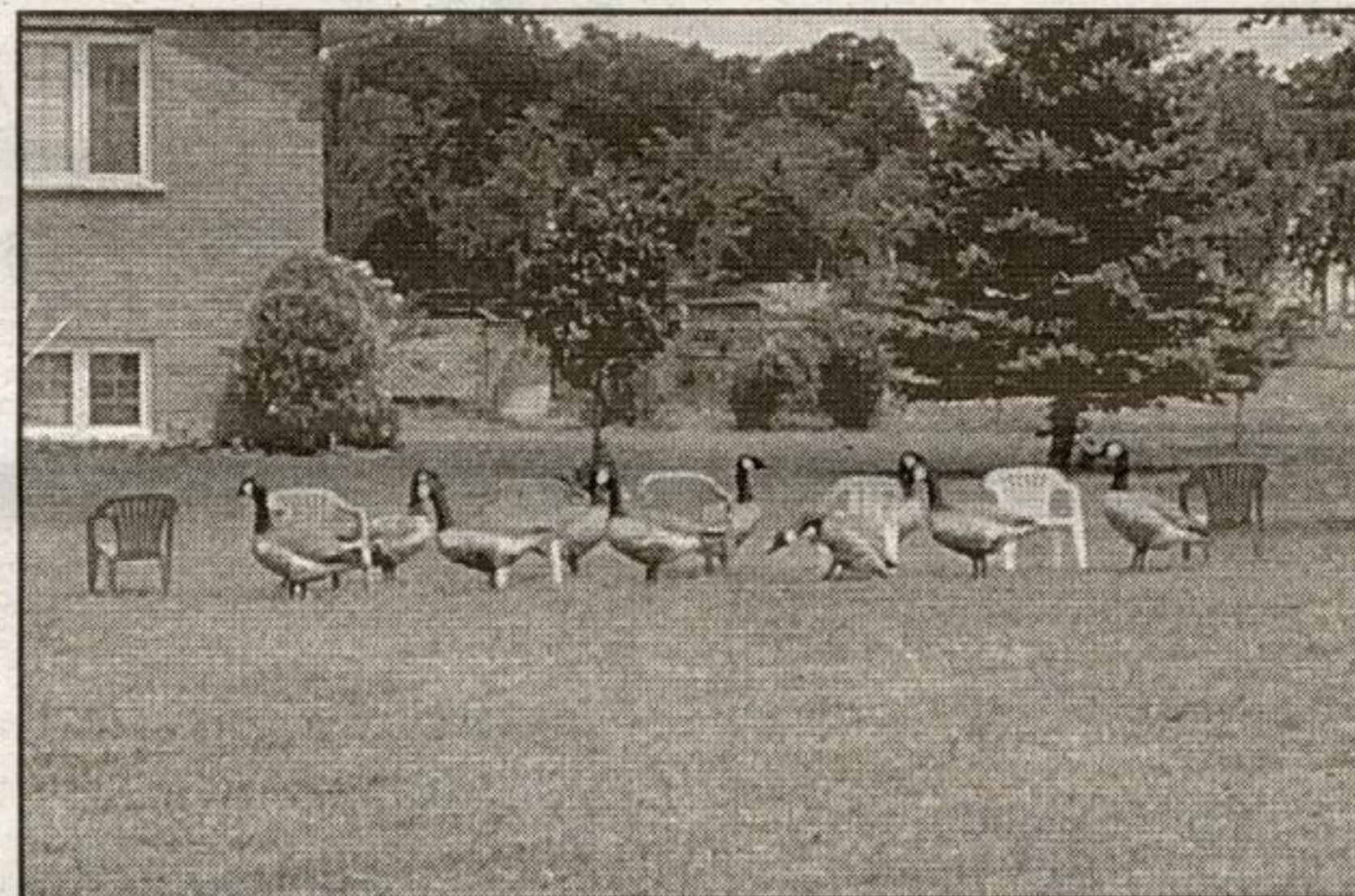
GETA claims to have received "nothing but lip service" from local and Wellington County politicians. Small wonder when members refuse to make any concrete suggestions concerning budget cuts. When I complain to a business I must explain exactly how and where they erred. Merely saying I disapprove of the way they do business allows them to shrug me off as just another crank.

Considering the steadfast belief in provincial politicians and unremitting condemnation of local politicians I must conclude that GETA fits the old saying. There are none so blind as those who will not see.

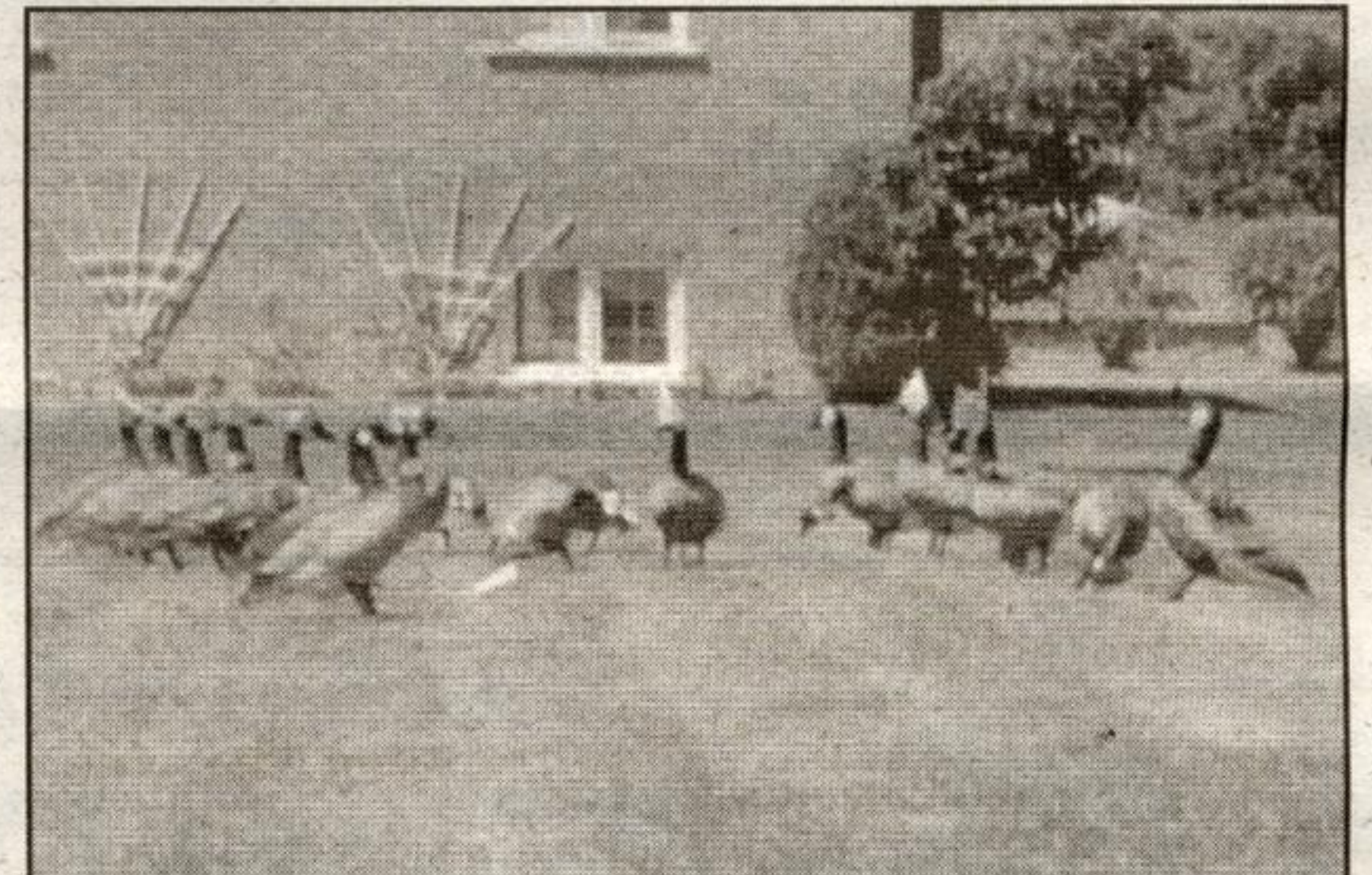
The Rockwood MOILLER



GOOSE GAMES: Motorists travelling on Hwy.7 on the curve west of Rockwood are continually amused and fascinated by the antics of about 18 geese decoys which are constantly changed to suit the occasion. Above, the geese are obviously engaged in a tug-of-war but they play all sorts of games including diving from towers into swimming pools through the warm weather. - Maggie Petrushevsky photo



Nothing like a game of musical chairs to keep the feathers in shape.-Maggie Petrushevski photo



When geese flock together they enjoy themselves with games and silly hats.-Maggie Petrushevski photo

Ticked off by high gasoline prices

To the editor,
I live in Rockwood and was driving to Guelph on Thursday night and noticed the Shell station in town was pumping gas during the blackout. When I came back I figured I might as well top up, so I pulled into the Shell and asked to fill up, they were only taking cash, but unbelievably, they had raised the price from around 71

Letters

to 89.9.
The guy at the pump said it was because he had to run the generator (Laughing out loud). Talk about taking advantage of a situation.
I was surprised at how courteous most people were at lights and at stores that were open and trying

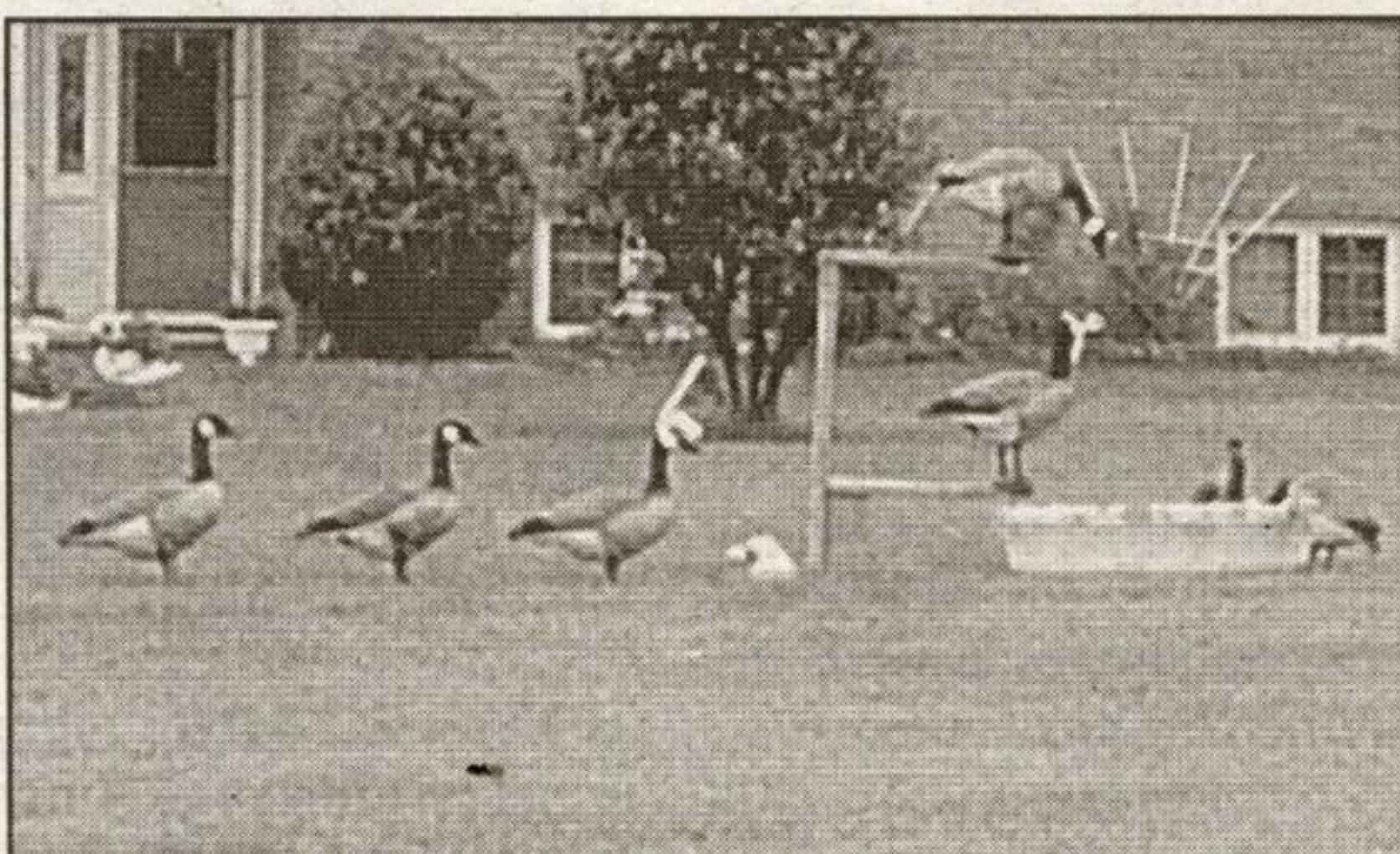
to remain open for people; this is how things are supposed to work.

It is unfortunate that a few have to try and turn more of a profit at a time like this instead of helping out.

Rockwood Shell should read the Business Integrity Section of Shell Canada's

Commitments on their website: Deliver value to our customers: Customers are the lifeblood of our business. We seek constantly to strengthen existing customer relationships and develop new ones.

Ticked in Rockwood,
S. Gibson.



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