

# EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

## Debt of gratitude

We'd be remiss indeed if we did not recognize the immense contributions Don and Steve Dawkins have made to the betterment of Acton over the last 23 years.

The father and son pair recently severed their active business relationship with the olde Hide House, a business they founded with others.

Steve was president of the olde Hide House and Don had been chairman of the board. They're both pursuing other interests now. Don has sold his home at the Blue Springs Golf Course and moved to Guelph while Steve is involved in the Hopeful Thinking Grief Project, an undertaking he established to provide solace for those who have lost a loved one, especially during the Christmas holiday season.

It would be difficult to cut through the sense of hopelessness and gloom which surrounded this community when Beardmore and Co. finally closed its doors. Although there had been a sense of foreboding for over a decade and rumours of the plant closing the actual closing came as a shock to the community. The future looked dim.

It was at this juncture that the Dawkins' and their colleagues lifted the curtain of gloom by promoting on Acton's leather heritage, which can be traced back as far as 1844. It was an exercise in entrepreneurship and faith in the town and people at a time when nothing seemed to be going right, when other industry was packing up and leaving for greener pastures.

By astute management and advertising, the olde Hide House became a thriving business. It became a tourist mecca with buses containing people from all over the globe. (This writer even met people in West Virginia who shopped there and ate at the Jack Tanner's table.) The slogan, "It's worth the drive to Acton" became a byword for Acton especially when Stu Holloway broadcast it across the province.

We have neither the space nor the knowledge to list all the benefits the olde Hide House brought to Acton and area. It arrived on the scene at a time when morale in the community was low and the future looked grim. The Dawkins "enterprise" brought spirits up and established a business which is known in all parts of the world. We are in their debt and wish them well in anything they do. Their names will always be associated with the Hide House.

Meanwhile, the olde Hide House continues to function under a change in management and new investors. Despite rumours to the contrary, it is again in a strong financial position and continues to be a landmark in the community.

## Flag 39 years young

Believe it or not it is 39 years ago this Saturday, Dec. 13 since Canada adopted the red-and-white maple leaf design for its flag by a 163-78 vote in Parliament.

The flag was chosen by an all party parliament committee, which was given just six weeks to choose a suitable design to represent Canada. In the 97 years since Confederation in 1867, that had never been achieved.

The Union Jack was the official Canadian flag although the Red Ensign was widely used since it had a Union Jack and the Canadian Coat of Arms on it, a take-off of the flag of the British merchant marine.

Canadian troops stormed ashore on Juno Beach on D-Day flying the ensign as they had in the raid on Dieppe. The Royal Canadian Legion adopted it as Canada's flag.

Consequently when then Prime Minister Lester Person was elected, he promised a new flag within two years the controversy that erupted was nation wide. All Canadians were invited to submit a design. Pearson's choice was a red white and blue three-maple leaf design, dubbed "Pearson's pennant," by those opposed.

It was profanely labelled a "beer label" by the leader of the opposition John Deifenbaker, a Union Jack stalwart. The Legion wanted the Red Ensign, Quebecers a fleur-de-lis. The committee chose another.

At the official flag raising ceremony on Feb. 15, 1965, it is said Mr. Deifenbaker wept. The rest is history.



**FLAPJACK FUN:** Acton Calvinist Cadet Corps held a pancake breakfast at the Bethel Christian Reform Church on Saturday morning. After serving over 200 breakfasts and selling 150 poinsettias, these cadets had a lot of cleaning up to do. — Angela Tyler photo

## Letters

# Smoking bylaws hypocritical while taking tobacco taxes

To the Editor,

Please excuse me if I seem to belabour the subject of politicians and their overly zealous laws. Truth is the total smoking ban has many people wondering how many nails it will take to finish freedom's coffin. If politicians were serious about cleaning up the environment they would address the major sources of pollution. However, it is easier to attack smokers than to take on big corporations. It is easier to brain-wash everyone to think that the world will be pure and clean again if we just don't smoke. Meanwhile they depend heavily on the revenue from tobacco products. Can anyone sell H-Y-P-O-C-R-I-S-Y?

Common sense dictates that the pollution killing this planet was not caused by tobacco smoke. The poor health experienced by the younger generations would more likely be caused by industrial and nuclear waste, vehicle emissions, junk foods, overuse of drugs and garbage from the thousands of toxic throw-away products in popular use. If

everyone stopped smoking it is doubtful if the world would be any cleaner.

We live in a society that tolerates just about any kind of behaviour. Vandals wreak havoc on a regular basis. Since mostly they are 'young offenders' nothing much is done about it. Child molesters, rapists and murderers get set free to re-offend over and over. We supply free needles to drug addicts and condoms to the sexually promiscuous. Even certain court judges think child pornography and animal torture are just okay. We might wonder if the hostility towards smokers is simply misplaced anger!

One has to wonder what politicians were drinking when they took away the rights of average citizens and gave them to criminals. They make us lock our doors, use our seat belts, wear helmets, tie up our dogs and scoop up their poop. They don't allow us to spank our children, own a gun, say a prayer in public or Heaven forbid, smoke a cigarette. But if you are a murderer, thief, rap-

ist, con artist or vandal you might be brought to court a few years after your crime and told "Please don't do that anymore. It's not nice. You can go now."

If was reported that John Day quoted Nellie McClung: "Never retract, never explain, never apologize, get the job done and let them howl." If our politicians think a dictatorial comment like that is worth repeating, it says volumes about the nature of the people who govern us.

A final word for the anti-smoking zealots. There are too many good people being treated like crap because they smoke. There is no one alive who is not contributing to the pollution of the air, land and water. The message you send to smokers is "your sin is worse than mine." That may be the greatest sin of all.

Eileen Hutcheson

*NOTE: This letter is for the lady at the Legion who told me that her husband, if he were alive would say, "what did we bother fighting for?"*



**THE NEW TANNER**  
PUBLISHING LTD.

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