

# EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

## Good news for old 'Y'

At last! Something is in the works for the old YMCA building on Mill Street. The new owners of the building, Glenrock Properties Inc. of Glen Williams, said they have "completely gutted" the inside of the stately brick building and are redesigning the space into seven 960-square foot apartments.

Since the property is zoned commercial, the owners are also contemplating a ground level store, which would conform to the original use which at one time lodged the public library on the east side and the village's public utilities office on the west side of the ground level.

Built in 1934 the YMCA was once a source of pride for Actonians. It was generally agreed Acton was the smallest community in the world to have a YMCA. It was a community centre long before they become popular.

The 'Y' as it was known, housed a gymnasium, meeting rooms, public washrooms and Walker Masonic Lodge had its home in the second storey. There was also an apartment there for the YMCA director who in later years had the dual task of recreation director for the town.

All this was made possible by a \$25,000 bequest from the late J.A. Murray, know as "Al" to his fellow citizens. The \$25,000 bequest may not seem like much by today's standards but it was a princely sum in 1934 during the depth of the Great Depression when a man's wages hovered around \$10-\$15 a week for 55 to 60 hours of toil.

One can see it made a fine addition to Mill Street when the only other imposing buildings which existed when the YMCA was constructed were the post office at the corner of Mill and Willow Streets and what was originally the home of W. H. Storey, Acton's first reeve, and is now the MacKinnon Family Funeral Home. The town fathers of the time mulled over what to do with the bequest for some time before deciding a YMCA would suit the village's needs.

In any event it became not only the recreational but along with the old town hall was the social and political centre for the village of about 1,800 souls.

## Supply and demand

The popular belief that market forces of supply and demand determine the price of goods has been blown to smithereens in the last few months by gasoline and beef prices.

According to economic theories, if the supply of goods is short prices go higher. If supply exceeds demand prices go lower. Gasoline and beef obviously don't count.

Prices for gasoline over the last few weeks (days) have been as low as 64.9 cents a litre and as high as 80.9 cents - a span of 16 cents for the same tank of gasoline which Lord knows how much Big Oil or retailers paid for it. Even the suggestion of a drop in supply can send the price yo-yoing.

Talk about being held hostage. It's like Russian roulette. Gas up on Tuesday and pay top. Wait till Thursday and you save five bucks.

Then we have the meat market. According to beef farmers they are stuck with millions of cattle they can't get rid of. Those cattle the packers pay for hardly pay for their feed. This is largely due to the closure of the U.S. border to Canadian beef. However, despite the large supply and the piddly amount of money farmers receive for beef on the hoof, retail prices for beef have hardly moved.

We suspect that like gasoline, the market for beef has been gobbled up by the big meat packers by buying out the independents and gaining control. Much like the oil companies who did the same job on the "little guys". They can pretty well control the market as they will with little competition.

It's good to see the federal government is investigating beef prices. Maybe they'll come up with some answers.



RENOVATING YMCA: Acton's YMCA, a prominent Mill St. landmark since 1934 is undergoing extensive renovations into 'luxury' apartments by a Glen Williams firm.

## Lack of citizen input a 'shame'

In a recent conversation with someone I just met, we somehow got onto the topic of the lack of citizen input in choosing Acton's Citizen of the Year.

I explained how a recent deadline was extended for what I am told was lack of nominations. The gentleman summed it up to a tee. "Shame on all of us," he proclaimed.

Indeed, shame on all of the residents of Acton who could not take a few moments of their time to look to neighbours, friends or such for a person deemed worthy of this title.

For many years, the Acton Rotary Club has taken on the task of supporting the Acton Citizen of the Year. The Rotary, however, does not choose the winner. A committee made up of former recipients does this.

Many winners have been hesitant to receive their award. In true humble fashion, many find the tasks they do unworthy of recognition. Their work or volunteering is done simply because it needs to be done or it is something for which they have a passion.

Unfortunately, the Citizen of



By  
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the Year has changed over the years. No longer is it an award for something that was accomplished during that particular year. Instead, it is more of an award for those who have had worked to better our community over the years. Maybe, for this reason, it's time we changed the title of the award to reflect what it is really about...a thank-you to a person or persons who have contributed service to better our community.

For me, the winner should be one who is unpaid for their "work." Their accomplishments should be done purely, "out of the goodness of their heart." Some have voiced concerns about past recipients whose actual job was taken into consideration for their win. There are hundreds of people in town who volunteer or go that extra mile to help out. The Rotary should never need to extend a deadline for nominations. In conversations I've had recently, as well as at

editorial meetings, at least a dozen names came to mind within minutes. The list included those who have volunteered extensively to others who have done something special, which had gone unnoticed by most.

After numerous years of procrastination and especially after the "shame on us" conversation, I finally decided that I need to take a few moments and send a nomination in for consideration. I personally know neither of the two I suggested. However, I do notice what they have done to better our town. I had shared my nomination letter with four people before submitting it, all of which agreed either nominations are definitely worthy winners.

Although, my nominees are unaware of who they are, I wish them both luck. It is truly an honour to be chosen for this award.

Next year, I hope we all take a moment to look beyond our day-to-day lives for that special someone who goes "above and beyond" and take a moment to nominate for this prestigious award.



**THE**  
**NEW**  
**Tanner**  
PUBLISHING LTD.

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Acton, Ontario L7J 2N2

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