

Editorial Page

A Year for "Sales"

1961 can be one of Acton's best years. Let's face it. Nothing the metropolitan regions has can outdo the conveniences of the town. All the practical facilities are here.

Ahead lies the construction of a new water reservoir that will provide the pressure that industry requires and this will augment the substantial water supply.

But probably what the town needs as much as anything in the dawn of a new year is the biggest, most enthusiastic group of salesmen the town ever produced. There will always be plenty of town knockers but what we all really need in this age of competition for new industry and new commerce, are enthusiastic citizens who double as town salesmen.

Everyone has a chance, at some point, to talk to others about their town. Enthusiasm is contagious and if you refer to your town in sneering tones what can you expect the reaction to be? Not many people these days are not enthusiastic about their own community and that's just how tough the competition is.

A new council, largely changed from last year, is now grappling with the problems of municipal administration. They, like councils before and after them know, full well the importance of new industry and new commerce. Getting it is not their job alone. It's a task to be shared.

An industrial commission, appointed last year, has been quietly working on the establishment here of new industries or providing information and assistance to old ones. They haven't made many headlines but the work they do is of necessity quiet.

School boards have been preparing adequate accommodation, the Planning Board grappling with intelligent plans and other organizations, with other aspects of community life.

This year it's up to the salesman. And that should include just about everyone. Let's hope that 1961 sees more salesmen out for Acton—more everyday citizens actively interested in promoting the town than knockers. There's only two sides to the fence and the apathetic is just another knocker subdued. Make your choice?

A Decade Ago

Perhaps it's the sparkle of the Christmas lights or perhaps it's the final arrival of the new year, but at this season there seems to be a nostalgia that makes editorial writers look back and a confidence that makes them look ahead.

Last year when the Free Press published its Decade of Progress issue covering the 10 years from 1950 to 1960 we were amazed with the real picture of progress that could be traced to that period. Historical writers will, we feel, agree with the term given the era.

As we start 1961 it is interesting to look back at the Acton of 1951. The things that were happening then are things that set the town on its way to that decade of progress.

A \$750,000 building program was carried out in Acton during 1951 and Acton School Board awarded its contracts for the town's first public school building in many years. The Public Utilities Commission began to rebuild the water tank, bought a new truck and the town bought a snow blower. New fire equipment was also purchased.

The Dominion census showed Acton with a 50 per cent increase in population during the 1941 to 1951 decade and the town council struck a tax rate of 43 mills. Street lighting improvements were being arranged and Acton fair drew half its usual attendance being nearly rained out.

Perhaps one of the most significant events was the street dance arranged to celebrate completion of the Main St. paving program after the upheaval for the installation of sewers. Other town streets were oiled rather than applying calcium and this practise was carried on until the later town-wide street paving.

Paving on Highway 25 between Acton and Milton was completed and it was announced the route of the proposed 401 highway would definitely take it between Acton and Milton.

That was a glimpse of 1951—just 10 years ago. In some aspects it seems ancient while in others it seems like yesterday but the changes since are evident. Can't help wonder what the picture will be in 1971.

In the Crystal Ball

Ahead lies a year, a whole 365 days, all still bright and new.

Perhaps it is the lustre of their newness that produces in each one a desire to look ahead, perhaps just to make resolutions and plans, perhaps just to savor in anticipation the events and developments that may fill those days.

We polished up the crystal ball and tried to get the next decade into focus. It's always a safe practise for editorial writers since no one can claim them in error and the words are usually forgotten long before they need to be proven.

Perhaps you too would care to stare awhile into the next 10 years and see if any of our images come out the same.

We notice there's a new grandstand in the park incorporating the existing washroom facilities and adding greatly to the facilities in the park.

Isn't that No. 7 highway that has been re-routed just south of town with an overpass and cloverleaf at highway 257 that's quite an improvement and no doubt it has made possible the small shopping area near the heart of the town. Those off-street parking areas near the mall are indeed convenient too.

And what is that that is operating in the old Wool Combing plant? Looks like a number of industries using the spacious building on the incubator plant concept. The parking lot is full too.

Way out there, north of where the old town boundary was, isn't that an industrial park? Sure enough and those sparkling new

factories with acres for parking and expansion have been reflected in considerable growth in the town itself.

Say, there have been some little improvements too, that add to the dignity of the town. Those new gates at the Pioneer Cemetery are really attractive and the plaque at the entrance tells quite adequately the story of the town's pioneer fathers, buried there. The cairn, built about 1939, is in surprisingly good condition too. Must have been repaired.

Is that the old post office? Yes sir, it seems to be accommodating the municipal offices and there's the new post office way over there. My things do seem different in what the crystal ball conjures up.

Goodness gracious, is that the daily newspaper they're publishing in Acton now?

And that property that was once a vat-fish pond looks as if it's now a country club and that original nine hole golf course has been expanded.

But the picture is clouding over and the visions in the crystal ball seem to be disappearing. It's time to get back to Acton, January, 1961 meeting the challenges that all those new dreams of projects might involve.

Any new developments, new improvements or new projects that may lie ahead will come only with the work of citizens and those improvements are truly a reflection of the interest citizens hold in their community.

Perhaps the hope for continuing and expanding co-operation sounds hackneyed, but it really is the key isn't it?



—Photo by Esther Taylor

"Winter's Blanket"

Sugar and Spice...

BY BILL SMILEY

Well, here we go into another 12 months of that fascinating, irritating, horrible, beautiful, tragic and joyous process known as living. I've seen 40 of these boxes of tricks and treats opened, and I hope I see 40 more. And the same to you.

I don't remember much about my first New Year's in 1921. It was spent in a small village in Quebec. I was staying with my parents at the time as was six other children. The Great War had been over for more than two years. The post-war boom was still on, and my Dad had bought his first car, a Chevvy, with side curtains. He treated that car, and every one else, like a particularly untractable horse, which would respond only if you yelled hard enough and swore at it with enough feeling.

Ten years later, we stepped into 1931 with the sentiments of a man about to jump into a barrel of broken glass in his bare feet. The Great Depression had begun. Business was terrible. The mortgage prowled, like a great beast, slaying, when my Dad looked over his shoulder. My parents held long, late-at-night conversations, and to the small boy, lying half-awake, uneasy, they had sinister undertones.

The hunger of the beast would not be denied, and in the end, the mortgage swallowed everything for which my dad had worked so hard for more than 20 years. What a prospect that must have been! 50 years old, five children, no food and clothes, home and business lost, and thousands of younger men scrambling for every job in sight.

But the Great Depression had failed to reckon with my mother. She was a bonny fighter, with a tough and cheerful spirit. In the next decade, she took on the Great Depression and kicked it single handed. My dad worked at anything he could get. My mother sold home baking, took in boarders, and in the afternoons, tramped the streets selling a line of cosmetics to her friends. Somehow, we staggered through the depression, kept off

the relief rolls, and never missed a meal.

Remember New Year's of 1942. That wasn't exactly an occasion of great rejoicing, either. The Germans had overrun Europe—England and the commonwealths fought on, back to the wall. My parents had three sons, ripe and ready to be pulled down by the dogs at war. Three times, they were to receive one of those dreaded telegrams.

The first read: "Critically injured." But eldest brother fought a hard fight, had a tremendous constitution, and pulled through with the loss of one eye. The second read: "Missing in action." By a cannon shell missed younger brother's head by an inch, and after two days drifting in a rubber dinghy off the coast of France, he was picked up by Air-Sea Rescue. The third read: "Missing in action." But middle brother climbed safely out of a crash landing in Holland and a few months later, the word trickled through that he was alive and a prisoner.

What did New Year's of 1951 bring? Nothing spectacular for yours truly. The Cold War was on, but the important things in life were a wife, a small son, and what turned out to be a small daughter well on the way. There was also a mortgage of mountainous proportions to gnaw at. We gnawed for the next decade, and chewed it down to a hummock, losing a few teeth in the process.

Suddenly it's 1961. Both my parents have died, slowly and painfully, in the last 10 years. But the process goes on, always changing, always exciting. There's a new job, in new surroundings. There is a boy whose voice is changing to that of a man, and whose feet are the same size as his father's. There is a girl with auburn hair and a cheeky face who topped the home-rod roll in grade five. There are new little cousins springing up all over the country. There is a brother just going to Europe, and another just coming back from South America.

...Dodging 'Round the District

BY ROY DOWNS

MILTON—It was the best Christmas the Milton post office employees had experienced in 35 years, thanks to all those who mailed Christmas cards early, reported postmaster Bill Randall. The post office processed 26,536 letters during December, and sold 210,000 two-cent stamps.

BRAMPTON—The first Rambler to be produced in Brampton's new American Motors plant came off the line last week, just seven months and 13 days after groundbreaking ceremonies at the new \$3,000,000 plant. Production lines will be in full swing sometime this month, turning out about 32 cars a day.

BURLINGTON—Following an extended trip through the United Kingdom, Miss Marie Hudson, director of nursing in the new Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital, announced she has hired 81 U.K. nurses for work at the new hospital when it opens later this month. Some come from England, Scotland and Ireland and their native countries include Spain, Yugoslavia, Australia, New Zealand and Jamaica.

GEORGETOWN—Tight money isn't so tight that bank employees can't get together once in a while. In Georgetown, employees of the three banks set a new precedent in local friendly relations by melting their Christmas parties into one big event.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Back in 1940

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, January 9, 1941

During the school board meeting Thursday evening trustee F. S. Blow was named chairman for the year with committees set up as follows: finance committee, V. B. Rumley and G. A. Dills; party committee, F. S. Blow and Dr. F. G. Oakes. Supplies committee, J. H. Boyd and Dr. A. J. Buchanan. It was decided during the meeting to hold monthly meetings on the second Thursday of each month in order not to conflict with other groups meeting.

Last Sunday Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Haasard quietly observed their 25th wedding anniversary. On Monday night a group of esteemed friends called at their home during a surprise visit and presented them with a beautiful silver flower basket. A social evening was spent and a group photograph taken.

During the inaugural meeting of the Acton Public Utilities Commission Tuesday evening C. H. Hansen was chosen as chairman for another year. Members reviewed a report from the superintendent that irregular consumption of water had appeared in several places but noted the problem was gradually being eliminated.

Last Friday evening, January 5, about 30 friends and neighbors gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Gamble to spend a social time with Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Greer, on their 10th wedding anniversary. Little Joyce and Jim Greer attended the door and welcomed the guests. The evening was spent in playing cards and chinese checkers after which the couple were presented with gifts and showered with congratulations.

Several units of machines have been put into operation at the Wool Combing plant during the past week and a number of new employees have been engaged.

Saturday's storm and blizzard nearly paralyzed traffic on Saturday but constant work on the part of the highways plows kept things moving in a slow vein.

Back in 1910

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, January 5, 1911

Hemlock bark is coming in rapidly now for the tannery and on New Year's Day 50 car loads were in the yard ready to be unloaded. The workmen are busy unloading the cars now. They are handling about 24 cars a day. The last day of the year was the coldest of the season with the mercury hovering around 10 below zero. In spite of this cold spell the January thaw was closely on deck and arrived with the first moments of the New Year. It remained for 40 hours and continued to reduce the amount of snow.

Mr. H. S. Holmes, agent of the G.T.R. here, closed up the year's business on Saturday, which aggregated at Acton station receipts of \$128,000 for freight and traffic service. This is the largest business in the history of Acton. It averages over \$400 per day and does not include any express business.

Acton opened its hockey season here last Thursday evening by defeating a team from Georgetown 8-3. Acton practically had the game from the start but in the last stages Georgetown wakened up a little and helped make the play more interesting. On New Year's afternoon the local team had it "go" with the best team from Georgetown and came out with a 4-1 victory. There was never any doubt at any time who the best team was in spite of a win which showed play down considerably. Malone of the Acton forwards had the misfortune to suffer a broken shoulder blade when he collided with the fence. He was attended on the spot by Dr. Holmes who was attending the game.

Principal Stewart went to Parry Sound on Tuesday to put in a month on the staff there pending the engagement of another teacher. During his absence, Mr. Howard Black of the Toronto University will act as principal in the Acton school.

The New Year celebrations in town were certainly something not to be desired and it is only hoped this practice will discontinue in the future.

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