

Thanksgiving 1968...

Thanksgiving, a time when you mentally conjure up buckled-shoes, wide-hatted Pilgrims, fat-breasted turkeys and tables laden with good things to eat, will be misrepresented again this year.

We'll stress the material things and physical comfort we enjoy in a self-congratulatory way, thanking God we are not like the rest of men with their bloated bellies and distended ribs.

We'll sit down to a menu of roast turkey, mashed potatoes, green peas and cranberry sauce with a bowl of brown gravy exuding steamy odors to stimulate the appetite.

In Biafra and other under-developed countries, 5,000 children will die while we eat our Thanksgiving dinner. Canadian grain elevators are bulging with wheat. Officials are worried that we may not have room to store another bumper crop.

After the main course, it's time for dessert. We'll not have much room left for pumpkin pie with a

scoop of ice cream. Most of us will manage to get it down.

The rice bowl is empty in India. The child looks mutely at his parents, his eyes begging for food to take the ache in his belly away.

We'll take our stuffed bodies and lounge them in stuffed chairs and cushiony chesterfields. Some will turn on television sets and switch to the channel they prefer. Others will indulge in free conversation, discuss political issues and criticize the administration.

In Czechoslovakia and other countries behind the Iron Curtain, the play will be an ordinary one. If the television set is turned on, it will be turned to a channel where the government has control. Free discussion is something you can do only with yourself. It isn't safe to confide in anyone else. Missing relatives testify to that.

We've got much to be thankful for, How will we express our thanks in this nuclear, smug, satisfied age?



SHIMMERING REFLECTIONS on the school creek catch fading light on a dull day while brown grasses provide a reminder that autumn is here. Over-

head geese are etching V's in the sky, another reminder to the sluggard that ice will soon be encompassing ripples in its cold grasp. (Staff Photo)

Free Press Editorial Page

Newspaper in the classroom...

It can be said that newspapers make a big difference in the lives of people. People need all the information they can get concerning the many social, economic and political problems of the day in order to act responsibly and prudently.

It makes a difference whether local situations are improving or deteriorating... whether taxes are going up or down... whether police and fire protection are adequate... whether the business outlook is good or bad... what merchants are offering... who won the big game... whether sufficient recreational areas and facilities are provided for citizens... it makes a big difference in a hundred ways in people's lives every day.

It has been said that a city or a town is the reflection of its

newspaper. Good newspapers are found in good, wide-awake, aggressive towns. The opposite also holds true.

Adoption of newspapers as "Living Textbooks" in school classrooms throughout the nation is growing daily. Recognition by educators and teachers of the importance of newspapers as a means of acquainting young people with the rapidly changing world scene is increasing. No bound textbook with a hardback can keep up with it.

Newspapers are being used in classrooms to afford practice in basic reading skills, to improve verbal facility and vocabulary skill development, and to enrich pupils' understanding of many subjects. (The Collingwood, Ont. Weekly Enterprise-Bulletin).

Extend use of schools...

An editorial in The Elmira Signet recently made a good case for more extensive use of the educational facilities in communities across the province, especially during the summer months when they lie virtually deserted.

"It is disheartening," says The Signet, "that we, the taxpayers, have to fork out hard-earned money to erect buildings which lie dormant for a quarter of the year. Surely there is some use to which these schools could be put to good use in the summer period."

Summer has come to an end, the children are back at school and there are also long periods over the school year where multi-million dollar educational buildings stand idle.

School trustees feel an obligation to the ratepayers to keep the new schools in showroom condition. We can sympathize with their efforts.

However, it is the ratepayers who pay the freight for education.

At the last meeting of the High School Board, here, trustees were generally in favor of extending the use of school facilities. Mr. Watson reportedly felt this would be done when the new county board took over in the new year.

There have been suggestions that use of school gyms and swimming pools for instance could be fully utilized by extending their use to the public. We would fully endorse that phase of the request, although it may be quite some time before frills like a swimming pool are installed in schools here.

Even the most hard-shelled trustee would have to admit there is increasing agitation from the public to extend the use of the buildings they are paying for and which are only gainfully used part of the year.



ABOUT 1917, the first and second forms of Acton high school posed for this photograph, lent by Mrs. J. A. Brochu, R.R. 2, Georgetown, the former Marion James. Front row, left to right: Mary Gibbons, Jessie Mann, Esther Starkman, Clara Lantz, Anny Snyder, Marion James, Helen Anderson; second row,

principal J. Rossell, Laura McDonald, Elsie Lappin, Jessie Russell, Frances Hurst, Violet Davis, Ida Beswick; third row, Bill Stewart, Jack Robertson, Harold Wansbrough, Edna Johnston, Jim Talman, Margaret McNeibb, Martha Orr, Pearl Baker the teacher, and at the back, Ray Agnew, Max Bell and Charlie Mann.

Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

Many people have a peculiar idea of "progress". They confuse it with growth or with change or with size. In many cases, these things represent regress, rather than progress.

I try not to be bitter, but I have a perfect example of that kind of progress right outside my front door. When we moved here, it was to a quiet residential street, a leafy tunnel of voluptuous maples and stately oaks, with a green boulevard.

It was gentle and pleasant and safe for children. The town council, in the name of progress, tore out the boulevard, cut down some trees and widened the street.

Results? We now have a speedway out front, and you can scarcely risk crossing the street to the mailbox. The squeal of tires makes the night hideous, as the punks try their spurs. The remaining trees are dying because their natural environment has been disturbed. Much beauty lost, and the only ugly things, hydro and telephone poles, left standing in their nakedness.

Just to complete the picture, there has been a "development" which is automatically "progress" in many minds, at the end of our street. What was once glorious bushland is now a desert of asphalt, containing a supermarket, two gas stations and a Provincial Police barracks.

William Bishop, a Chilham, England, police officer, dashed into the street and held up his hand to halt traffic when a truck caught fire. Only one car was coming along the road and it stopped immediately with one tire firmly on Bishop's toe. He yelled and frantically waved his arms. The driver smiled and drove on.

Because of the development, traffic on our street has quintupled, and every quarter-hour an ancient, snarling bus, belching poison, goes by the front door.

Tough luck, you say. But I've seen it happen so often in handsome old streets in small towns that it makes me sick. The first move of the progress-happy boys is usually to cut down the trees, some of them 100 years old, so that they can widen the road. Grace and shade and dignity are sacrificed to the automobile.

In the cities, it's even worse. Potential park lots are turned into immediate parking lots. Thruways slaughter miles of greenery.

Another plague are the "developers". They take a section of beautiful bushland, fertile farmland or lush fruitland. They send their bulldozers in to make sure everything remotely pretty is made ugly. Then they carve it into 50-foot lots and stick in the jerry-built houses, cheek-by-jowl, at swollen prices. This when Canada has more land that is useless for anything else but building than it can ever use.

Oh, progress has many faces.

It has many sounds. Far below the whoosh of the billion-dollar rocket may be heard the whimper of a starving child.

It has many smells. Behind the sweet emissions of the Public Relations Dept. can be discerned the unmistakable stench of greed, poverty, pollution and waste.

Progress will take a beautiful trout stream and poison it with chemicals or detergents because, "We need the industry."

Progress steadily takes more money for "defence", another phoney word, and less and less, comparatively, for the old, the sick and the helpless.

Progress adopts a liberal attitude toward drugs, but looks down its nose at the dirty, hungry, sick and frightened children of the drug age.

Progress means bigger cars that will go faster on better roads, driven by people who can drink more.

Progress taxes everything but the living breath of the poor, but encourages the boys with the expense accounts and credit cards to cheat.

This may seem like a pretty dim view of "progress". It is, as many people look on it. But I'm not down on the real meaning of the word. I think man can and will progress morally, socially and intellectually.

Oh, well, there's a rumor that the can people are going to start putting their cans out in pastel colors. This would save a lot of bother. We could cut all our forests down. Then, instead of going for a drive on a fall day to see the magnificent autumn foliage, we could have it all year round. Mountains of multi-colored beer cans.

Free Press

back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, October 14, 1948.

The rains of the past week have indeed been helpful to the soil and fall work.

Acton Rotary Club at their weekly meeting voted \$500 to the swimming pool campaign and \$300 to the Y.

Georgetown took the championship at the annual high school field day in Milton. Competition was keen in most events. Milton, finally edged out Acton for the second place.

Another summer has gone and the pre-election hints of continued work on Highway 25 have "gone with the wind". All that remains are the signs that still read "Road under Construction".

A deer hunt is to be held in Nassagaweya Township in December.

Saturday is Scout Apple Day in Acton. Support this worthy cause and incidentally enjoy the apples.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, October 17, 1918.

The general outcry last week for liquor to combat influenza was deplorable, when so many physicians of high renown decry its use under any circumstances. It is just as well for the public to understand frankly that the suggestion to withhold the enforcement of the penalties of the prohibition laws during the outbreak of Spanish influenza originated with the liquor dealers themselves. Their propaganda is ever alert to adopt any enterprise to open the way to the sale of their prohibited products. The public has not been slow to see the trail of the serpent in the suggestion. The authorities will not be caught by the whiskeymen's Prussian trick.

Mr. John Walters has the cement blocks made for a new house to be erected on the old Walters' homestead property, near the southerly corner of Fairy Lake, on the Mill Pond Road.

Another addition to the immense tannery plant of Beardmore and Co. is being completed at the southwesterly corner of the premises, near Main Street.

100 acres—three miles from Acton, 75 acres workable, balance bush and pasture, 1½ acres orchard, soil clay loam. Frame house, 8 rooms and summer kitchen. Bank Barn 54 x 100; shed 38 x 54; driving shed 50 x 24. School 1½ miles. Rural mail. Price—\$7,200.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, October 12, 1893.

The opening day of Acton Horticultural and Agricultural exhibition was favored with delightful weather and entries poured in. On Wednesday the rain kept off pretty well.

There was fine show of stock on the ground. The show in the hall was very attractive with decorations of evergreens, lanterns and hunting. There was a splendid dairy show with various butter specials.

A good program was played by the band in the evening.

C. W. Kelly of Guelph made a good exhibit of pianos and organs. The finest exhibit of harness ever made in Acton by one man was shown by J. H. Matthews. Alex Waldie showed a collection of 36 varieties of apples.

A patchwork quilt containing 2,892 pieces and bearing a card which read "Made in 1893 by an Acton lady in her 78th year" commanded wide attention.

Prominent winners in the ladies' and flower sections were Jennie Cordingly, Mrs. G. B. Hall, Nettie Bell, Bella Kitching, Mrs. J. L. Warren, Mrs. A. Waldie, Mrs. Havill, Mrs. A. Secord, Mrs. C. S. Smith.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Canadian Champion, Milton, October 8, 1868.

An agitation is arising in the upper end of the way, to the ownership of the Tollgate on the 7th Line, between Ballinafad and the Railroad, and doubts are strongly expressed as to the legality of the gate. The company is long since broken up, but the tolls are still collected for the benefit of persons unknown. Mr. Phillips, the Secretary and Treasurer, shows by his books a surplus of \$700, which he claims for his own services. No dividend has yet been received by the stockholders, and they are not likely to improve a non-paying road, so that it is in a miserable state. Action should at once be taken to abolish the toll, as it is so detrimental to the interests of the Township, and especially of Georgetown, that it should no longer be allowed. A prominent resident of Esquesing ran the gate a few weeks ago in order to test the question, but no complaint has yet been laid. Who will try it next?

Salt and Pepper

by hartley coles



Like to walk?

This is probably the best time of year to stroll along the Bruce Trail. Trees are showing off their autumn dress. The insect population has been reduced to the point where you no longer have to swat at every step.

You can get on the trail at several points only a few miles from here. My favorite spot to start a trek is along the Campbellville sideroad (No. 5) where it meets the fifth line, Nassagaweya.

At this junction, the concession is cut off abruptly by the escarpment after going a few yards to the north. Pedestrians are the only ones to use the trail where it winds through almost uninhabited country over to Speyside. Almost uninhabited? Yes, there is all kinds of wildlife in this veritable wilderness.

I've seen deer, porcupine, rodents, skunks and even turtles along this stretch of well-marked trail.

For a side trip, if you are so inclined, you can veer off the trail to your left once you are on top of the escarpment, and visit picturesque Hilton Falls. The entire tract is unique. It is by far the largest forested region close to the "golden horseshoe" of Ontario.

Abandoned meadows—natural havens for all kinds of birdlife—make the walking easy. There are many unusual limestone cropings, vertical cliffs, large fissures, a cascade and several deep valleys with boulder-strewn streams.

Down below Hilton Falls the Halton Region Conservation Authority is planning a big dam which will necessitate rerouting the trail but it is not started yet.

Back along the trail you'll feel as remote as the Indians must have felt as they hunted in the primeval forest. In spite of the feeling, you are only about a mile from Highway 401 and a few miles from Highway 25 along this stretch of the trail.

The Bruce Trail News, a newsletter devoted to the walkers and workers on the unique trail, says the Niagara to Tobermory path—480 miles long—is an anachronism in North America today!

This is how it is described:

"The Bruce Trail is a footpath following a rocky spine of Dolomitic limestone formed over millions of years by innumerable bodies of diatomal at the edge of an inland saltwater sea. It is a walking

trail built by private citizens largely over private land, with the generous co-operation of the owners of the properties through which it passes. It is a hiking trail intended for use in nature study and recreation by all interested persons entertaining a responsible attitude toward the land. It is all of these things. It is also many more.

To those who are deeply involved in the Trail it is a return to innocence in the age of the hard sell. It is a preference for the genuine in the age of the substitute, a desire for beauty in an environment of urban sprawl, a striving for individualism in an age of conformity, a search for human values in an era of market values.

The Typical Bruce Trailer appears to be out of tune with the times. In an era when man is looked upon as the means to an end other than himself, the Bruce Trailer looks upon man in harmony with nature as the desired end. At a period in which man is treated by the mass media as a machine for the consumption of goods, the Bruce Trailer fears that goods may ultimately become the consumer of man. At a time when the media relentlessly attempt to incite us to borrow and buy, the Bruce Trail invites us to the simple pleasure of a walk in the woods.

As I mentioned before, this is a good time to accept the beckoning finger of the trail, especially since it is almost on our doorstep.

Speaking of escarpments and mountains, have you heard the story of the Scot who had been saving pounds, shillings and pence all his life? He finally decided to take a holiday in the Canadian Rockies where he figured a bit of skiing would be in order—and cheap.

Everything went well until one day an avalanche tumbled down the mountain and buried the ski lodge where he was staying. The skiers panicked, figured they were hopelessly lost. Outside, unknown to the trapped skiers, a rescue team was digging. After three hectic days they finally uncovered the front door of the chalet.

A rescuer knocked. The Scot happened to be standing next to the door. He called out, "Och, who is it!"

"It's the Red Cross," exclaimed the eager rescuer.

"Don't bother," came back the retort. We give at the office."

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