



A WHITE STILLNESS broken only by snowmobile tracks envelope Fairy Lake in this scene taken from the top of Smallwood Acres by Jim Jennings of Eden Mills. On the far shore after white birches have made a partial pioneer movement

## Farm ponds vital...

Twice within a week Acton firefighters have been summoned to combat fires in the rural areas. In both cases they were able to do little or nothing to save a house and a large barn, in that order, although they arrived promptly on the scene.

Hindered by the large fall of snow which made fighting flames difficult at both blazes, it was the lack of water which hampered them most. Once the supply from the rural fire pumper has been used, firefighters must rely on finding some other source of supply.

When a farm pond is available it makes conditions more favorable for fighting fires. The first call contained an unfortunate set of circumstances where the owner of the house had just returned from vacation. The laneway was plugged with snow. There was no time to clear it before fire struck. The fire truck was unable to get to the house until a snowplow had cleared the laneway. By that time it was too late to save anything.

Last Sunday's blaze which destroyed \$100,000 in farm building, fowl and equipment, could possibly have been contained if an adequate source of water supply had been nearby.

Firefighters had to locate a source almost a half-mile away, where they set up a portable pump and pumped water to a truck on the road, which in turn relayed it to the other pumper at the scene. This took up prime time. The fire was beyond control when hoses were able to direct quantities of water on the barn.

We sympathize with owners of the destroyed property. Loss of personal property and the time and effort which went into it can never be measured in dollars and cents.

Fires in the rural districts have always had tragic overtones. In pioneer days it usually meant complete disaster. Techniques for fighting rural fires have improved immensely in the last few years but distance, time, lack of water and the weather still conspire against effective control.

Although they may seem like a huge expense when installed the farm pond can go a long way towards providing fire protection for rural houses and building. One located close to them could very well be instrumental in saving the lives of stock and preventing severe financial losses.

at the "big bridge" site stands Lakeview subdivision while further back the outlines of Micro Plastics' twin towers can be distinguished. The promontory on the horizon is Churchill where tall steel towers trace against a winter sky.

## Sugar and Spice

by Bill Smiley

Hope you got through the trying holiday season as well as we did. All you 'flu victims have my sympathy. I tottered about for ten days, a tot here and a tot there, not quite desperately ill enough to stay in bed, and therefore getting little sympathy.

Kim spent the festive season going to bed at 2 a.m. and getting up at 2 p.m. Mostly because of a new boy friend, who is out on bail. That's right; he's out on bail.

My wife did her best to set fire to the house one Sunday night when I was at church. For years, I've been telling her to burn junk in the fire-place; paper and wrappings and boxes and such.

She finally caught on. So did the evergreens with which she annually decks the mantel, when she threw into the fire a cardboard box about 2 feet by four.

She stood there, paralyzed, watching the joint go up in flames. The only muscle working was her tongue. When that stops working, she'll be ready for the cold, cold ground. She screamed: "Kim! Kim!"

And Kim responded nobly to the crisis. Upstairs, she came down like a bomb, seized a basin of water from the kitchen sink, and hurled it with unerring aim all over the fire, her mother, the rug, and the hi-fi. Did the trick, though.

Speaking of Kim and fires, she had a New Year's Eve party which caused more turmoil than the Battle of the Boyne did in Ireland.

It wasn't that she demanded a big spread or a hired orchestra or anything like that. She had only one request: that we get out before the guests arrived and stay out until they were gone.

The normal response of a father to such a stipulation is to smack his hand on the table and roar, "O.K. No parents, no party!" Which he did, about eight times.

## Editorial notes

A coast-to-coast survey made by the assistant managing editor of the Montreal Gazette shows that 63 per cent of those interviewed say their newspapers would be less satisfying without advertising.

Only 20 per cent make the same statement about television. And 50 per cent say they would prefer their TV without any commercial advertising at all.

Snyder's survey shows that newspaper circulation has been booming in North America all during the postwar period—fewer than 50 million copies daily in 1945, up 30 per cent to 65 to 70 million at present.

Well done is better than well said.

Every woman needs a strong man who will steady the step ladder while she paints the kitchen ceiling.

Son: "Did Edison make the first talking machine?" Dad: "No, son, he made the first one you could turn off."

You cannot put the same shoe on every foot.

## Free Press Editorial Page

### Let it snow, let it snow...

These new fangled winters with accompanying tons upon tons of snow bear a decided resemblance to the "old fashioned" fellows which so many of us fondly recall.

The snow's about as high as an elephant's eye and has created a state of perpetual digging out for people in the town and district. Many of them resent having to spend so much time disposing of the white stuff, in spite of modern gadgets like snow blowers we've got these days.

Town and township employees fighting the avalanche which has created near chaotic conditions for vehicles and pedestrians alike, have frazzled nerves.

First of all, they are logging long hours at all hours of the day, trying to keep roads and thoroughfares open. They just about succeed in achieving routine conditions when

down comes another fall of snow. Accompanying winds blow it into all the wrong places.

If that isn't enough to shove into a craw, there's always the witticisms of employers to grate the side of nerves not already raw. Employers in this case refers to everyone who has ever thrown a nickel into the tax pot. Scathing criticisms and sarcastic comments can often bite more than the weather.

Cheer up fellas! The almanac says there's only about another six weeks of winter. Spring's just around the corner.

Rumors spread by a friend that his next door neighbor has a giant snowmobile in his back yard and is accepting animals in pairs are merely meant to scare you.

It's surely just a coincidence his neighbor's name is Noah!



SNOWY ROADWAY pictured years ago may be the first line, near town. This is a postcard now owned by Herb Ritchie.

## Free Press

## back issues

### 20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, January 20, 1949.

On Tuesday, Halton County Council unanimously chose Mrs. Mary S. Pettit as Warden for 1949. Mrs. Pettit was the first woman in Halton to be elected to County Council and also has the now added distinction of being the first woman to occupy the post of Warden of Halton.

One of the big pines at the school grounds was blown over in Wednesday's gale and fell on the building.

Born, on Saturday, January 1, at Guelph General Hospital, to Ralph and Eleanor McKeown, a son, William Kenneth.

Bridgeport Vets were defeated by the Tanners 8-3 here Thursday to win their first game in two starts, but it was the worst hockey brawl in years. 38 penitents trooped to the sin-bin in what admittedly was one of the crudest affairs ever seen in Acton. Three of the penalties were majors as the result of fights.

Council at their meeting this week informally discussed the sewerage disposal system and when work should be started. Also discussed was the advisability of incorporating Acton as a town.

The Presbyterian minister from Bracebridge, Rev. R. H. Armstrong, Mrs. Armstrong and family, will be moving to Knox Church here in the near future.

### 50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, January 23, 1919.

January's mild weather has been a real coal saver. The prospect of a bumper ice crop is not encouraging, however. The weather is in direct contrast to the 20 below zero temperatures of a year ago.

Reeve Barber received a painful injury to his right eye last Thursday. Wheel-cutting wood, a sliver flew into his face and struck the eye. It is nearly well again.

Farmers who contemplate sowing clover this year will have a heavy expenditure for seed. It is now quoted at \$28 to \$30 per bushel.

R. M. MacDonald was engaged as secretary-treasurer of the Board of School Trustees at their meeting Wednesday evening at a salary of \$75 per year. D. C. Russell was elected chairman for 1919.

New waterless closets are to be placed in the school and every method is to be investigated immediately. Basement excavations will have to be made or a new lavatory building erected.

Rev. R. E. Jones has resigned as pastor of the local Baptist church. He and his wife will be sorely missed as they were both indefatigable workers.

The fine new cement bridge on the highway at Bronte has been completed.

## Salt and Pepper

by Hartley Coles



The flu bug invaded your family journal over the past week, cutting a swath through the composing room and advertising offices large enough to leave the news staff quivering with fright.

Fortunately by the time it penetrated our thick hides some of the early afflicted had tumbled out of bed, wended their way through the drifts back to the drawing boards.

Asked how they had beaten the virus which is variously described as the Hong Kong flu, intestinal complaint and a variety of unprintable adjectives, most of them recited the litany which came out of the big eye in the parlor:

1. Rest in bed.
2. Drink plenty of fluids.
3. Take aspirin.

Although number one was popular with most of those taken ill, number two found the greatest following. One sufferer said his only complaint was the lack of concern by fellow members of his family over the lack of fluids in the house. Several trips to the "jolly box" were necessary to remedy the deficiency.

Another complained about his inability to swallow the aspirins. He merely took another pill of the fluid in lieu of a tablet. This created a scene when the doctor came to diagnose the case. The sufferer kept insisting he never felt better in his life.

This information led to an intellectual discussion in the back shop one day last week over the efficacy of the old fashioned cures which medical science says are about as useless as a cake of soap in the Sinai desert. A few pooh-poohed the antibiotics and miracle drugs available at the drug store. They plumped for a large order of goose grease over wheezy chests and a good dose of cod liver oil to cure anything short of T.B. The latter would require two applications of goose.

Then there is the mustard plaster. Applied at the right moment it can draw everything out of your system including skin, which comes off in large patches, when you are overdone.

### 75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, January 18, 1894.

Court Star A.O.F. passed its first mile post and celebrated its anniversary with fitting ceremonies. Newly-elected officers are George Lawson, H. Grindell, W. Stark, A. E. Nicklin, A. E. Wright, John Clark, Chas. Jenner, W. Mason, H. H. L. Worden, Dr. J. Urea.

A fire at the residence of Mrs. C. S. Smith caused considerable damage. (This is now the stone school.) It was only by energetic and courageous efforts the flames were subdued.

Mrs. Charles Faulkner had a severe cold which settled in her lungs, from which pneumonia developed and she died on Sunday morning, leaving her husband and three small children.

All the Guelph school children have been vaccinated.

The skating rink on Henderson's pond will be open Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday night of each week.

The concert of the Price-Raymond Operatic Co. in the town hall Monday had a slim audience.

Rockwood had the first carnival of the season. Fred Jago won the egg and barrel race and Tom Garstang captured the one mile race.

The majority of those on the sick list are recovering.

### 100 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Canadian Champion, Milton, January 14, 1894.

A man named James Buzzard died suddenly in Streetville on the 8th inst. At the investigation conducted by Dr. Wood, coroner for the County of Peel, it transpired that the deceased was of intemperate habits, and that his death had been caused by delirium tremens.

We are happy to learn that notwithstanding the lull in the Volunteer movement, the Oakville Rifle Company are resolved to maintain their efficiency unimpaired. On the 29th ult., a general muster was convened, and of 47 men, the number present, all without exception cheerfully re-enlisted for the three years' term; four new recruits were added, and 11 more of the old members have since signified their willingness to "follow suit".

Captain Chisholm is deservedly popular with his men, which accounts for their enthusiasm in re-enlisting. On Christmas Eve last the pupils of the senior department of the Milton Common School presented their teacher, Mr. Campbell, with two beautifully bound volumes of poetry. We are always pleased to chronicle such affairs, as they show that a proper feeling of affection and respect exists in the hearts of the pupils.

If it weren't for the fact most of us survived the cures and lived on into this enlightened age you'd almost be tempted to question their merits. But who can argue with success?

Mothers at the first sign of a sniffle bundled their progeny into bed after soaking feet in a tub containing hot, steaming water and epsom salts. That took the badness out of the lower extremities. Camphorated oil, goose grease and mustard plasters looks after the other end.

It was when the cod liver oil was administered in large tablespoonfuls that you knew you were in for a marathon run which could make the Olympics look like five year-olds doing the 100 yard dash.

In those days, unless your father owned the neighborhood plumbing shop there was only one relief station. It was located in the back yard, sometimes only a few feet from the door. Others, depending on the family's tastes, were stationed in the farthest reaches of the property.

When the cod liver oil started to release its stored up energy, few bothered to stand on ceremony. You simply applied a geometry theorem — the shortest distance to the nearest point. Needless to say, some lost the race but mothers were understanding in those days. They wouldn't hold it against you.

They believed there was nothing like another dose of cod liver oil to clear up any malfunctions.

Since the sufferer soon became aware, especially in the sub-zero winter weather, that the cure was worse than the disease it didn't take long for him to regain his feet and trudge back to his books.

Nowadays with all our creature comforts it is difficult to reconstruct the days of outside plumbing without a great deal of snickering. We would gather from this that inside plumbing has made a hit and will likely be around until they can find something more advanced.

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