

Free Press  
**YOUTH PAGE**

**fresh tracks**  
by Barbara McIntosh

**SMALL TALK**

At one time or another everybody finds themselves taking an empty seat beside a stranger on a bus or train. Initially you both open pocket novels and pretend to become uninterested in the plot. You both glance out the window at alternate intervals making sure that eyes never make contact. Both know that conversation would relax the atmosphere but both are reluctant to make the first move. Then as if ordained, a book slides off a knee and the stranger's pair of hands picks it up. "Is this book any good?" he asks and with that, you are off into conversation about general reading habits, basically why you are travelling in the same direction, and the general state of the weather. When the trip ends, you both realize you haven't said anything, but "small-talk" was all that was necessary.

A prime complaint of the love generation is our so-called communication problem. People worry because they don't talk about important things...there's no honest self expression, they say...souls don't touch. Yet when it comes right down to it, "small-talk" is a vital social function.

I mean, you just can't walk up to your mother's friend in the post office and hit her with a statement like "What's your view of the escalation of the exportation of Kangaroo fur from Australia," no matter how vital you think the issue is. Instead you talk about the weather or the superficial state of each other's health, because that's all that is really necessary to be friendly.

And you don't ask your taxi driver if he thinks war is an economic catalyst. You talk about the weather or the superficial state of roads around town, because that's all that is really necessary to make the trip enjoyable.

Granted, some "small-talk" expressions are sadly overworked. Take "How are you," or "What's new with you," for example. At the same time, can you think of anything else better to say when you meet a former acquaintance you never knew very well in the first place and you couldn't care less about now.

Young people traditionally loathe the "small-talk" of first dates with those inevitable questions about musical tastes and plans for the future. Yet any relationship has to start somewhere. A certain amount of "small-talk" is inescapable.

If we kept track of everything we talked about in an ordinary day, we would no doubt find a good percentage of it said very little and meant even less.

But then, surely we can hope to really know and understand only a very few people out of all the mass of humanity we meet in a lifetime. In fact, to really touch souls with just one other person should be enough.

For the rest, what's wrong with "small talk"?

STRUMMING SONGS of love and protest, the unnamed folk trio of Victor Funk, George Beshari and Lynda Gage made their stage debut during the Acton and District Cancer Society Family Night in the high school auditorium Tuesday night. (Staff Photo)



**Student summer job hunters**

Summer jobs will be scarce again this year for students in high school, college and university, warns H. W. Fuller, Manager of the Canada Manpower Centre in Brampton. In an effort to relieve the problem, a Student Summer Employment program is already underway. Acton employers are being urged to list their summer job requirements with school placement offices and Canada Manpower Centres. Student services are also being arranged by the Brampton Manpower Centre.

There will be no placement service within the high school for summer jobs. Mr. Skerrett, head of the guidance department feels that if students really want jobs they can find them through the government services.

**Sheridan College open house**

"Open House 1969" will be at the Sheridan College, Brampton campus, 98 Church Street East, March 30 from 1:30 to 5:00 p.m. The general public is cordially invited.

College officials expect about 2,000 people, members of the general public and specially invited guests. Over 1,200 attended open house last April.

**Coach Skerret on OFSAA finals**

Basketball coach Brian Skerret had a few comments to make about last week's OFSAA finals and the three-day frolic in Peterborough that went with it. "I was pleased with the first game with St. Anne's but in the second we choked up, perhaps due to the let down of not making the finals and the pressures of a terminal game system."

On Monday night's game, the Redmen shot a 51 per cent field goal percentage and were playing at their best according to Mr. Skerret. They lost to St. Anne's 75-64 and the St. Anne's team went on to take second spot in the tournament.

Tuesday night, the Redmen dropped their field goal average to 27 per cent and lost to Fort William by a narrow 39-35 edge. "I think we are as good if not better than Fort William," asserts coach Skerret. "We just weren't playing up to par." Fort William went on into the consolation finals.

Mr. Skerret added, "I would put us in 4th or 5th place in Ontario." In his estimation the only team that was outstanding above the rest was the top winner from Pelham near Welland. With a giant centre of 6' 8" they won all their games.

All in all, Mr. Skerret wasn't impressed with either the Peterborough transportation system, or the reception given the teams by OFSAA or the

Clarence (Sonny) Rognvaldson, an Icelandic Manitoban by birth, has been an Acton resident since 1945. He took his B. A. in philosophy at McMaster University after many years experience in industrial maintenance. This is his tenth year teaching at A. D. H. S., the last three years exclusively in the industrial arts.

**Pedagogues are people**



"Preventive maintenance can be done by anyone, but constructive maintenance needs men with ingenuity and training," explains Mr. Rognvaldson, which is why he finds his present position as head of industrial arts so rewarding. Mr. Rognvaldson graduated from the Manitoba school system when 16 years old and went on to training in blacksmithing, woodworking, and electrical apprenticeship in the Winnipeg area. Following the war, the family came to Acton where he worked on mechanical maintenance for Baxter Laboratories.



When the company decided to re-locate out of Acton, he decided to change professions while he still had the opportunity, and enrolled in a general arts program at McMaster University. He feels he was more motivated as an adult student, because he was protecting a huge investment. "I figure it cost me \$18,000 including that loss of regular earnings for the full four years," he says.

Unlike many teachers, Mr.

Rognvaldson has the training to teach in either the arts or the technical fields. For a number of years he chose geography, but three years ago switched full time into the industrial arts department.

As head of the department, Mr. Rognvaldson can't see Acton developing a larger technical wing because the present building could not be adapted without a huge capital expenditure.

"If industrial arts are expanded in the future it will probably be in a centrally located school below the escarpment. This was the vision of industrial arts people as early as 1956, and probably would have come about if Georgetown hadn't gone ahead on their own."

At the present time, the school offers training courses in electronics, small engines, welding, machine shop and woodworking on the four-year plan. Next year some students on the five-year program will be able to take shop options as well.

In addition, next year there will be a new course for girls called home mechanics. Mr. Rognvaldson has set up the program in response to appeals from girls who want to learn useful little tips like how to change fuses, fix drippy taps, mend broken chairs, and unjam the car gear shift. As well as practical training, the girls will learn creative arts in woods and metals.

Since its founding four years ago, Mr. Rognvaldson has been the sole instructor of the high school driver training program and he is convinced that the legal driving age should be raised to 18. "I think 16 is too early because I don't think they have developed a mature sense of anticipating a problem yet."

"At the same time, drivers should start early when their learning process, reflect action, and enthusiasm are at their highest," he adds. Mr. Rognvaldson suggests a temporary license at 16 followed by a two-year period of actual driving experience before the

driver assumes full responsibility for a vehicle.

He is convinced that the school training program is helpful and necessary in the community. He regrets that it is taught on a voluntary basis outside of school time, and would like to see more teachers become involved.

"In the four years since it was initiated nearly 200 drivers have graduated, and out of them there has only been one serious accident and a few minor mishaps," he said. About 50 students have taken advantage of the course this year.

He is the only teacher to complete the required course through the Department of Highways, the Department of Education, and the Ontario Safety League.

Outside of school, Mr. Rognvaldson pursues a variety of interests. He is a member of the Y's Men's Club and the Music Order. An avid sportsman he enjoys hunting and fishing and last year took his wife on a canoe trip through the wilds of Algonquin Park.

On the music side, he enjoys classical works best, but he is certainly not averse to swinging out with a lively go-go beat.

The one thing he wishes he could do and doesn't is ski. It wasn't a popular sport in the flat Lake District of Manitoba where he grew up. However, he adds, "I'm still seriously thinking of taking it up - except I'm afraid I might fall and get hurt."

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