

Grass fire control ...

The annual grass fire epidemic is almost over for another season and fire fighting brigades all over the province must be heaving collective sighs of relief.

As regular as the coming of Spring, volunteer brigades can count on a rash of grass fires to quell. Sometimes they come in bunches of twos and threes and leave firefighters exhausted after weekends of rushing, beating out fires, missing meals and neglecting other work.

We are sure most firefighters don't mind fighting fires when it is necessary, no matter how much time and effort they put into it. But in the case of some grass fires which people carelessly light without proper precautions, there is bound to be hard feelings.

Some better measure of control is needed.

There are measures being considered now which may make the lighting of any open fires illegal, without the presence of a provincial officer. As a matter of fact that is the law now, as we understand it, from the Air-Pollution Control Act.

a provincial statute. It is not, as yet, strictly enforced.

Anyone who has seen the smog over Toronto or Hamilton will understand why such a law was necessary. The unrestricted lighting of grass fires is another.

We think where the Act is a little ridiculous is when it prohibits burning of leaves and garbage by responsible persons and can cancel events like the Twelfth Night Christmas tree burning in Acton. And there are places where grass can be burnt off without danger.

Grass fires can, however, also be a menace not only to the burner's property but to adjoining property as well. Some townships recognize this and make a fire permit necessary.

If this makes the would-be burner more conscious of his obligation to keep the fire under control we are for it instead of the more stringent enforcement of the Air Pollution Control Act. If not, it looks like the innocent will have to suffer along with the guilty.

Storm signals aloft ...

Current debate over educational costs and the growing percentage of tax dollars they represent may well lead to a stiffening public attitude about education in general.

At the last meeting of the Halton County Board, while members sought ideas on how to communicate the validity of their budget to the public, one trustee wondered just how much further educators would be permitted to go in developing innovative techniques, new programs and different approaches to the problems of learning. He wondered just how long it might be before the public resentment over costs made many changes impossible.

The concern is a genuine one. Just how long will it be before taxpayers' pocket-book revolt converts their current grudging support for education to open resentment? Educators must become more and more aware of the need to communicate, not simply the acceptance of education, but the validity of the techniques they employ, to the tax-paying parents, pensioners or childless couples. While parents may have some regular contact with education through their children, the pensioners with fixed incomes have no contact and the rising costs inflict considerable burden. The couples without families similarly have no contact with the schools and the rapid pace of changing techniques. Reports of carpeted floors, tape recorders, and other less-than-Spartan surroundings contribute to resentment as those not in close contact can only compare the facilities and equipment to that of a generation ago.

Even parents are too frequently left behind in the innovations which are taking place. Terms like library

resource centres, co-operative teaching, open concept schools, subject promotion and continuous progress are foreign to many. Educators, whose very reason for being, is to communicate, are too often not communicating to that important segment of society that is paying the bills.

But the problem is two sided. Too often in the hectic pace of today, where horizons are limited by the small circle in which one moves, the interest in a broad subject like education is aroused only when controversy develops or when a demand for payment is made. Then we are all too prone to join the chorus of protest without investing any effort in probing the issue personally. We have imbued ourselves with such a feeling of insignificance and futility that we give up without trying to get facts for ourselves. It is so much easier to mouth the opposition colorfully phrased by another.

The apathy generally reflected across the county, when the trustees were elected to the first County Board of Education, is not likely to be repeated another year. Demanding as the job of a trustee may be there are likely to be those who will seek Board positions. Their motivation may be quite simply to cut the costs without regard to the quality of education, and it is highly likely they will earn considerable support.

No one knows at what point a stiffening attitude to education costs will find the necessary catalyst to become a marshalling force. We suggest the day may not be too far distant and the storm signals are up for educators and parents alike.

(Milton Canadian Champion)



EVERTON'S CENTURY-old grist mill was a magnet for fishermen on Saturday but anglers found the mill pond dam out and the prize samples of piscatorial splendor preferred to stay in the river. (Staff Photo)



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

April is a month to try the soul of the householder. And mine has been tried and found wanting.

When the last dirty gray streaks of snow had disappeared, I took a tour of the estate. Then I went inside, wept for a few minutes, and took shock treatment on the rocks.

We live on a corner lot. On two sides of it, there was something that looked like the remains of Hadrian's Wall. It was the ramparts of sand and salt thrown up on the lawn by the snowblower in January.

You can't blow it back into the streets. There are two alternatives. The first is 18 manhours, first with shovel, then with rake, then with stiff broom. The other is to use it as the foundations for a stone wall around the property. Either way, your lawn is ruined.

But that was merely the beginning. Last fall, I managed to keep ahead of the maple leaves, burning and raking like a fiend for a couple of weeks. But the oaks drop late, and they don't cascade down, but drift, one by one.

You might as well wait for them all. I distinctly remember going out one day last November, with a face as long as a foot, taking a look at the fence-to-fence carpeting of sodden leaves, and reaching with heavy heart for the rake.

My wife, in one of her rare moments of pity, said, "Why don't you wait a few days until they're dry?"

Reeling with shock, I said, "O.K." The next day it snowed. And the next. And so on until the end of January.

They're still there, even more sodden after struggling under four feet of snow all winter. And they'll be the death of me, I know it, if I try to rake them. There must be 48 tons of wet leaves on the lot.

I wonder if I could get some husky male student who's not doing too well in his English at school, and have a quiet, crafty little chat with him, pointing out the ratio of my benevolence to the scarcity of wet oak leaves on my lawn.

Those are just two April problems, neither yet solved. And there's a host of smaller ones. Huge oak branches all over the front lawn, broken off in snow-storms. The hose has been out all winter. My wife set fire to the back porch one winter day when she put out a box of ashes which contained some live coals. Charred is the word.

The flower-beds look like a bar-room floor on a Sunday morning. The shrubs are all broken off at the elbows by the weight

The trouble with some people who don't have much to say is that you have to listen so long to find that out.

of snow. The fences lean precariously, as you would if an oak branch, ten inches thick, had fallen on you.

A dreary scene, indeed. But there's only one thing to be done about it. No use griping. And that's what I did. On the first warm day, I went out and attacked it.

Not directly. That way lies a heart attack. I took a beer and a book, laid them down, looked at the blue sky and thought about Opening Day.

That's the salvation of April. Deep in your heart, you know that all that garbage is going to be attended to, even if the Old Lady has to do it.

And if you have a touch of the poet and artist in you, as what man doesn't, you know that the first day of trout fishing will wash away all the sordid aspects of April, and leave you pure of heart and mind, if not of tongue, when you get out and have a bush at the trout.

This, the promise of getting away out into the real world of icy water and lost lures and no women, on the last weekend of April, gives a man a certain sanity-retaining detachment as he surveys the no-man's-land of his property.

Last year, for various stupid reasons, I missed Opening Day, for the first time in 20 years. This year, even with a broken neck (and I think I have one; the X-rays haven't been read yet), I am going to catch my limit, fall off a log into that polar water, and come home filthy, stinking and purple, all the good things that accompany Opening Day and the real beginning of Spring in this country.

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Photos from the past



ANOTHER CLASS PHOTOGRAPH lent by Mrs. Grace (Lantz) Robertson, shows Miss M. Z. Bennett's class. We have been able to identify: front row, left to right, Beattie Bristow, Frances Kelly, unknown, Ethel Woods, Phyllis Mackie, Jean Lambert, Grace Lantz, a Breen, Helen Lamb, second row Vera Vickers, Blanche Smith, Violet White, Vera Rawlings, Ellen Dunne, Dorothy Babcock, Edna Hinton, May Waterhouse, unknown. Third row Rod Ryder, Hector Lambert, Fred Turner, Harvey McCutcheon, Roly Anderson, Neil McNabb, Lizzie Darby. Back row John Dennis, Bill McBain, Wilbert McMullen, Walter Gibbons, Harold Mooney, unknown, teacher Miss M. Z. Bennett.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, May 5, 1949.

Fellow workers honored Mr. Jas. Dubbie last Friday when he retired from the employ of Beardmore and Co. after 47 years of faithful service.

The organization meeting of Acton Tennis Club was held in the clubhouse. Sid Eisen, second vice president conducted the election of officers. Marc Lafestiere was elected president, Doug Davidson vice-president and treasurer, May Dumarch, secretary, Wm. Near men's team captain; Inez McLellan ladies' team captain, Pat Bayliss, lunch convener.

More willing hands are putting forth an effort at the scout hall. Mr. William Coon has completed the steps and entrance. A new flag pole was secured with Mr. Howard Stull of R. R. 5, making his contribution. The Scout and Guide Mothers have contributed \$200 and the Girl Guides put in \$40. That's how the scouts are getting good turns.

All public school teachers were offered re-engagement by the board, the principal with an increase of \$150, grade teachers at \$100 and Miss McPhail, kindergarten teacher, at \$200 increase.

There was a threatening fire at the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Pasmore in Rockwood. Valuable assistance was rendered by two members of the Guelph fire brigade.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, May 1, 1919.

One of the notable figures of the county, Dr. Anson Buck passed away on Good Friday. His career was interesting and eminently helpful. He had the distinction of practising medicine for about a year and a half prior to attaining the age of 21 years and was also married before attaining his majority. He attended the grammar school at Palermo and was the last living graduate of the Royal College of Medicine in Toronto.

People arose from their slumbers Saturday morning and found all undulating surfaces covered with snow.

Mr. Roy Arnold has leased the Crawford house at the corner of Mill and Frederick and has moved here from Georgetown.

At the Educational Convention in Toronto it was emphasized no teacher should be employed before attaining the age of 21 years. The nation's chief builders are building character and on account of the nature and importance of the work teachers should at least be full age.

Salt and Pepper

One holdup that doesn't concern the O.P.P. or the Mounties has been going on for centuries.

Give up?

Here's a clue. Think of an ordinary snake in the grass.

No, not your husband, girls! I'm talking about garters.

There's some extraordinary press releases that cross this desk each week but a recent one entitled "The Garter Holdup" certainly gives you a leg-up. It starts back in the cave when women wrapped their legs in skins in the raw weather and tried to hold them up by tying vines around.

Cave men may have said "blest be the tie that vines", but the subject of garters appears to have been socially unmentionable until A.D. 1340. Katherine, the Countess of Salisbury, was coveting at a royal ball when she lost her garter.

Edward the Third, a gallant monarch, found it. In order to save Katherine from any embarrassment, he held it up and announced: "Honi soit qui mal y pense".

If you're truly bilingual that one won't stump you but if you've got only a few halting phrases in French, like me, you'll be glad to know that King Eddy said: "Evil is who evil thinks."

Then looking around at the leering members of the court the king said he would create a new order—the Order of the Garter—so the nobles would be proud to wear it.

The Garter has never looked back.

There was a temporary setback around the turn of the century when doctors blamed tight garters as a cause of blood clots and jaundice. But the manufacturers introduced all sorts of new wrinkles, disguising the garter in a variety of apparatus that does the same job.

It's a case of an old apparatus appearing under a new guise.

Latest in the What Next Department is a model agency for ugly men! And where of course, but in England.

On the grounds that a continuing supply of ugly faces was difficult to find for advertising photography, Men's Wear of

For 25 years Comfort soap has been Canada's big seller. "It's All Right." Friends at Churchill of Bishop Warne of Delhi, India, have expressed concern for his welfare during the mutiny there.

Miss Minnie Bennett, teacher of the Entrance Department, has been unable to teach this week owing to a severe sore throat.

Barbers have set a uniform minimum cost for cutting hair at 50 cents. The post office staff has been unusually busy with registered letters with cheques from Victory Bonds.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, May 3, 1894.

Thirteen Newfoundland steamers have captured 107,657 seals.

It is to be regretted that the pretty custom of observing "May Day", in vogue until recent years, has not been continued. The anniversary of ye olden time is remembered by many of our older people with pleasure. Fifty years ago last Tuesday Mrs. S. A. Secord of this place then Miss Augusta Culloden who was then in her teens and attending a young ladies' school in Hamilton, was crowned "Queen of the May" by the young ladies of that city. After the coronation the procession marched through the city, the "May Queen" preceded by a retinue of maids of honor strewing flowers in her path and followed by hundreds of others who joined in the festivities.

About 140 persons attended the At Home of Acton Home Circle last Thursday evening. After the musical program, cake, ice cream and coffee were dispensed. The hall was beautifully decorated for the occasion and everything had a cosy, home-like appearance.

Acton's assessment increased \$27,000 this year and the population 27.

Ex-Warden Husband, the Reform candidate for the coming provincial elections, is pursuing a vigorous canvass. He was in town Monday and his friends here were pleased to meet him.

The fish nursery at Campbellville is almost complete.

Miss Minnie Morton died suddenly in her 19th year. Her bright young life gradually faded through the inroads of consumption.



by Harley Cole

Canada reports that four young Britons opened The Ugly Agency, advertised for people, and were swamped with response.

"The trouble was," one of the owners said, "most of the applicants weren't ugly enough. Out of the 1,000 we tested, we only signed 100. Some of those who failed the ugly test were pretty disappointed."

"We believe there is a need for people who look like ordinary people. Usually you have to walk around the streets looking for the kind of face. It occurred to us that the thing to do was to create a reservoir of interesting faces."

No comment.

A lady sent this chuckly along:

THE PSYCHIATRIST advised the henpecked husband to assert his authority. "Tonight, when you go home, I want you to show your wife that you're the boss."

The patient decided the doctor was right. When he reached home, he slammed the door, grabbed his wife by the arm and told her he wanted dinner ready in five minutes. "When you've finished with that," he continued, "you're going straight upstairs and lay out my evening clothes, because tonight I'm going out with the boys. And furthermore," he added, cocking an eyebrow, "do you know who's going to tie my black tie and help me on with my coat?"

"Sure," said his wife, rolling up her sleeves. "The undertaker!"

COMMENTS FROM READERS over the last week:

"Liked your column on privies a week ago. We've got to defend our venerable institutions."

"Did you swallow a dictionary? Don't use so many big words. You don't talk like that all the time, do you?"

"Why don't you talk about something else besides your relatives?" Answer: Because they are related to me.

"Don't say a word in front of him. He'll put it in that column."

"Could you sprinkle a little salt and pepper on the fact that I need a job building fireplaces. Les Trevall."