

Free Press Editorial Page

Forever means always . . .

We were beginning to think that this newspaper was a voice in the wilderness when it insisted that the job of the railways in Canada was to provide passenger service that tied the towns, villages and cities of Canada together. It was reassuring to see an editorial in the Toronto Globe and Mail recently which tied in with our thoughts on the subject although it touched more on the Canadian Pacific Railway than on the Canadian National.

But both railways seem to feel that the historic commitments and vast sums of money and land which came their way through a people anxious to cement ties across the country are no longer valid reasons for their continuance of passenger service.

We are strongly of the opinion that as the highways of the country continue to become congested that passenger traffic on the rails will increase rather than diminish as both railways seem to contend. However, this depends largely on the efforts of both railways to provide the necessary service which would mean timing trains to coincide with working hours.

For instance, two trains stop at Acton each day, one going to Toronto at 6:50 a.m. and the other going west early in the evening. Acton commuters we suspect, would no doubt appreciate a train leaving later and another earlier. As a result only about a dozen people take advantage of the service each day.

The Globe takes the railways to task for their inability to recognize that not only are they supposed to show a profit but honor their commitments.

For the enormous concessions granted it in 1881 when an Act of Parliament assured the future of the CPR, the railway promised to

"forever efficiently maintain, work and run, the Canadian Pacific Railway." Last week the railway showed a short memory when it asked the Canadian Transport Committee if they could end all passenger service except short run commuter trips. Later the CN asked the committee if they could eliminate several lines from their passenger service including the Toronto to Guelph run.

Like the Globe says, at least two factors from the CPR's record should weigh in the minds of the transport commissioners before they decide if the request is to be granted.

"First, if the CPR lines are unprofitable, it is not because the company itself has been unprofitable. The CPR has not had a history of economic illness. Very early, it diversified—for it could not survive on railway lines alone—into mining and smelting and its relationship with Cominco has prospered handsomely. In later years, it extended itself further into everything from logging to a famous airline.

"Any suggestion, therefore, that the CPR has been crippled through providing rail service is historically untenable. Had it really desired, it might have shored up its losses on the passenger lines from its gains in other, highly lucrative fields—many of which could not have been developed without those original land grants."

The railway was given \$25 million and 25 million acres of land and any public land required for stations, shops and yards. In return for these enormous concessions the CPR. was to "forever" maintain, work and run the railway.

At a time when Canada's bonds need strengthening and commerce is booming the request from the railways is a strange one indeed.

Carry on George . . .

You will have to excuse us if we don't get too excited about the "revolutionary new process" which the Ontario Water Resources Commission has developed to remove algae-nourishing nutrients from sewage.

The "new" method which is relatively cheap and can be adapted to most sewage plants in the province, especially Acton's new tertiary system, uses what the OWRC calls a lime precipitation process. The technique consists of the addition of lime to a conventional treatment system at an early settling stage.

Now we could be wrong but this sounds very much like the treatment that grandpa used to use on the family privy. Only he did it with less fanfare. The only trumpet he blew was his nose.

The people from the OWRC must have grown up in the more affluent sections of Ontario and can't quite remember days before the advent of inside plumbing. Nevertheless, they are to be congratulated for reintroducing a treatment which the sewage disposal plants of the old

days made full use of in every back yard.

Scientists tell us that only a grass roots movement-protest from the general public can save us from extinction from pollution. It looks like it may be a grass roots treatment which has won the first battle against pollution.

It is a very real battle and it must be won if we are going to stay on this planet. Clean fresh air, water and food are the fundamental rights of man. Anyone who would poison our environment can expect to be prosecuted.

We give full marks to Energy and Resources Minister George Kerr for the prominence and publicity he has given to the fight against pollution. Although he has been accused of being too lenient in some matter like the phosphates in detergent, we suspect he has gone further in other cases than most people thought he would.

We would hope that the government has given Mr. Kerr full power to deal with infractions as he sees fit and is not hampered by petty restrictions imposed by pressure groups within the governments.



—Photos by Don Hiltz

NUTCRACKER SWEETS



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

It doesn't require a high IQ to realize that the world is going to hell in a hurry. All you have to do is read, look and listen.

Vietnam, that great canker, continues to suppurate. There is an explosion imminent in the Middle East China and Russia are snarling at each other in outer Mongolia or somewhere. There are a dozen or more brush-wars in progress.

Then there's pollution and inflation and discrimination, and high taxes and shortage of housing, and student riots and sexual freedom and drugs among the kids, just to mention a few other jollies.

Top this off with coronaries and constipation, lung cancer and livers turning to stone, abortions and acne, and it's hard to believe the ragged old human race can keep its finger in the dyke much longer.

As if that isn't enough, it's November in Canada, a thought to chill the spirit, curdle the blood, make the bones ache and turn one's thoughts to Hamlet: "To be or not to be; that is the question."

Personally, I'd prefer not to be, in November. But I haven't the guts to commit suicide. However, anyone who'd care to finish me off is welcome.

November is a month that should be deleted from the calendar, by act of Parliament, if necessary.

It's given a perfect send-off by the horror of Halloween. This is kind of fun when your kids are little. They're excited and you're delighted. But when they've grown up, and you have an entire evening of answering the doorbell and smiling heartily at surly urchins who sneer at your McIntosh apples and snarl, "Haven't ya got any chocolate bars?", its charm fades a little.

Then there's everything else that November brings. Snow tires neglected until too late. Storm windows ditto. Freezing winds. Rain that turns to snow. Last year's rubbers leaking. Dirt tracked in.

The glories of autumn have vanished. The pleasures of winter are not yet. All you have is a grey, ulcerous, dirty, sodden, spiritless thirty days of gloom in which the sun seems to have disappeared from the universe.

It's a time for huddling by the fire. Except that you've forgotten to get your winter wood in. A time for reading depressing poetry. A time for grumbling and grumbling. A time for watching third-rate TV and despising yourself for

Off the cuff

A thought is an idea in transit.

It's a happy marriage when the wife knows who's boss and the husband doesn't.

Salt and Pepper



by hartley coles

I'm not saying I'll see it is a rare occasion when I go to the movies when it is on the late, late late to the triple late show on TV. Even then I don't see all the magic eye before Elmer Fudd's head has completely captivated Melissa Stern's face, or vice versa.

So it was a rare occasion in the weekend before last when I attended two movies in as many days. My old head is still tingling from two completely different stories with entirely different messages that kept bringing emotions to the point where I felt someone else should know about them.

Don't expect any Nathan Cohen criticism from this critic but both films were very much concerned with the younger generation and their attitudes to life. My chosen one was two could be conditioned by my age. I'm past 30 which I understand puts me into the category of those you can't trust.

Well, that's a line that goes back to the old melodramas where Olcan Harry has Sexy Susan strapped to the railroad tracks while an onrushing train bears down on them with smoke streaming from its stack so thick that George Kerr would turn cartwheels and slip a restraining order on them today.

First film was the controversial "Easy Rider", a highly acclaimed dope epic which portrays the fictional but what could easily be true story of a pair of clean-cut American youths in need of haircuts but exuding a Christ-like charity and love for everyone they come across. They peddle dope across the American border from Mexico. From the proceeds they buy two handsome motorcycles and travel across the southern United States.

The photography is superb and the scenes in the mountains and plains of the U.S. give you wanderlust. The girls are pretty and there's some odd looking ones thrown in to provide contrast.

Very next day we headed for the big smoke to see the Battle of Britain, a glimpse into the time machine for a period where heroics were as common as hippies are today. The film almost completely captures the era when the Royal Air Force and its allies, particularly the Polish, polished off the German Luftwaffe over the skies of England.

Truly, never in the history of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.

Both pictures take you, envelop you in their message. For an old trooper it is disconcerting to see the difference in attitude of today's youth compared to

mine I almost three decades ago.

"Easy Rider" is unsettling, makes you re-examine your prejudices and attitudes. The film condemns today's society and its culture but at the same time doesn't give it a bad name. It is hard to believe that some of the people encountered in the small southern U.S. towns could be as brutal or violent as the story would have you believe.

There's one scene which provides the key for all the action and dialogue. The two bike riders pick up an easy-living, bowling lawyer, and they discuss why they are ridiculed and hated by the "squares" they encounter along the way to New Orleans.

The mouthpiece, and that's an apt word for the character, tells the two riders that it isn't them people hate but what they represent. Complete freedom. It is much talked about in the U.S., he says, but very seldom practiced.

They speak of another type of freedom in the Battle of Britain when the youth of the country disciplined themselves to defeat the Nazi conquerors with Spitfire squadrons. The youth responded nobly (an ill word these days) and the Nazis were stopped in their Heinkels and Messerschmitts. It was the turning point in the war.

Most surprising part of the picture is the honesty of the producers who show that the first German bombs on British cities were dropped by mistake. A plan which lost its bearings dumped its load willy nilly over London and fled. Hitler was going to discipline the flyers but the British retaliated on Berlin before he had a chance and the Nazis replied with ferocity on British cities.

If the Nazis had kept hammering away at British airfields where they were causing untold damage and confusion they might have won the Battle of Britain and the war. That proved to be the first of Hitler's bad mistakes.

I heartily recommend you see the Battle of Britain to get an insight into a time when the world was in a much worse state than it is today but seemed to have more courage and conviction to fall back on.

Easy Rider? It is a disquieting movie but certainly another younger people will want to see. But life is not as simple as they see it.

Would that it were.

And that ends my career as a movie critic.



20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, November 10, 1949.

Chuck Kingmill was chosen last Friday evening to head Acton's teen-agers as they elected him president of the Penguin Club. The usual campaign and election speeches were the highlight of the evening, and a band led the candidates around the town. Ron Salt, also a contender for the position, was nosed out by a small margin. Ron will serve as vice-president and these two leaders will be assisted by the other two members of the executive, Patsy Duval and JoAnn Velhuis.

The fine new garage at Main St. and West Bower Ave. has been sold by Mr. Bert Woods to Mr. Lorne Garner of Toronto who will come to Acton soon and put the new premises in operation.

First taste of winter came last week but the snow didn't stay long.

W. K. Randall, who was formerly attached to the Bridgen branch of the Bank of Nova Scotia, has been transferred to the Acton branch.

The Soldiers Memorial in Acton with the new sections in recognition of the Acton boys who paid the supreme sacrifice in the war of 1939-45 will be unveiled by the Lieutenant-Governor Ray Lawson tomorrow morning.

Resident of Acton for many years, Mrs. Harry Goldham passed away Monday in her 81st year. The community was shocked to learn of the sudden death of William Blair who was calling at the home of his daughter Mrs. Rae West when he was suddenly stricken.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, November 13, 1919.

The first meeting of the High School Literary Society was held on Monday for the purpose of appointing officers: President Maxwell Bell; vice president Annie Snyder; secretary-treasurer Elsie Stewart; editor Isabel McQueen; critic Miss Baker; sporting editor Neil Gibbons; current events James Talman; reporter to the Free Press Isabel Elliott; class representatives Fred Warren, Esther Starkman, Clara Lantz.

Following are the officers of the Great War Veterans Association: President Com. W. J. Gould; 1st vice president com. A. M.

Smith; Com. J. J. Cooney D. C. M. was elected to the executive to take the place of N. Stuckey who removed to Grand Valley.

Over 50 applications have been received by the officials of Knox church for permission to preach with a view to a call.

Mrs. Roy Arnold's reception at the residence, corner Mill and Frederick Sts., was a very enjoyable function. About 60 ladies in town attended. Mrs. William Arnold assisted to receive; Mrs. (Dr.) Bell attended the guests; Mrs. (Rev.) I. M. Moyer and Mrs. G. H. Brown poured tea and Miss Muriel Thompson and Miss Bertie Speight served, with Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Arnold's mother, having general oversight. Miss Doris Lantz attended at the door.

Advertisement — As a winter panacea for coughs and colds Algonquin Park cannot be equalled.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, November 15, 1894.

Council met in regular session Monday evening. All the members were present. There was very little business demanded their attention. The finance committee's report had but two items viz., — James Firstbrook for lamp chimneys \$3 and James Brown for lumber \$268.73. Upon motion of councillors Williams and Anderson these accounts were passed. Adjournment took place at an early hour.

Bread is down to eight cents in Acton.

The merry jingle of sleigh bells is heard on the street again. Three inches of snow has fallen.

Mr. and Mrs. James Conboy of Brandon, Man., who have been visiting at the home of Mr. J. H. Matthews, Bower Ave., have been sadly bereaved this week. Their dear little son Leyton, age seven, was suddenly taken ill last Wednesday with trouble in the bowels. He died on Monday night after much suffering. His remains were taken to Erin village, the former home of the parents, and interred there.

Miss Bella Gordon has been engaged teacher of Bannockburn school for 1895.

Due to the snow, the plowing match at the farm of Mr. Peter Mann had to be postponed by Acton Plowing Society. Master Fred Storey, who has been attending the Phonometric Institute at Petrolia the past couple of months, is reported completely cured of stammering. He is expected home today.



Photos from the past



THERE WAS DANCING ON THE STREETS YEARS AGO