

Let's have a vote . . .

There have been many high sounding allusions to the ideals of democratic principles during debates on regional government all around the county but when the issue is put squarely in front of them, elected representatives can be very evasive.

We refer to the resolution circulated by Acton council to all Halton municipalities urging a plebiscite on whether county residents preferred a Halton region or a Halton-Peel form of government.

Esquosung, Nassagaweya and Acton have endorsed the resolution. Both Milton and Georgetown are sympathetic, but Oakville and Burlington evidently don't want a referendum.

If this was just an ordinary decision that would affect few people it would not be so important. But regional government is going to affect the entire county. It seems to us a plebiscite would be very much in order and the politics of the county would have some grass roots

direction for their decisions, following the result of a vote.

We are a little tired of hearing the old refrain that Darcy McKeough is going to do what he likes, anyway. It is time the elected representatives of this county and others stood on their own two feet and told Mr. McKeough what they do want.

He has asked for their answers on many of the decisions involved in implementing regional government. If there was a clear mandate from the people he would listen. It is the voters who elected the Conservative government and it is the voters who can put it out of office.

We suspect, along with Acton councillor Jack Greer, who suggested a vote, that some of the elected representatives do not represent the wishes of the majority of the people and a referendum might embarrass them.

It is unfortunate that county council has not the power to hold such a plebiscite but there is no reason why each municipality could not hold a separate referendum.

Dr. Green sticks to guns . . .

Halton dental director Dr. Samuel Green stuck to his guns about the poor quality of teeth in the north of Halton during the furor which developed over remarks attributed to him in a Hamilton newspaper.

He denied making any derogatory statements about the personal hygiene of area residents or insinuating this was a poor socio-economic area, however.

He told The Free Press that his remarks were taken out of context by the newspaper and misconstrued. He said North Halton is a very pleasant place in which to live but there are some families in the poorer parts of the north who cannot afford regular visits to the dentist. He also said there were sections of Burlington and Oakville where this was true also, although not to the same degree as in the Georgetown or Acton areas.

Meanwhile, Dr. Green has been muzzled by Halton Health Unit chief Dr. I. A. Hunter from making any further statements until the storm blows over.

Although Dr. Green wasn't aware of it, he touched a raw nerve by suggesting people in the south of the county have better teeth than those in the north.

People north of the base line have long resented the superior attitude of the south end of the county. Reaction here was entirely natural and defensive from those who rose to defend the north's honor.

People in the political, social and sports circles of the south end of the county, have expressed a condescending attitude towards the north for a good many years. It has infuriated our representatives.

Personally we prefer to live in the north. Although there are problems here - and perhaps teeth are one of them - they still have not reached the magnitude of drug and other social problems that exist in the south end of the county.

Affluence does not create happiness as someone remarked during the present controversy.

But let us not gnash our teeth over a dental problem that if it does exist is well within our competence to solve. Let us make sure there is some basis for Dr. Green's remarks and then tackle the problem - if it exists.

If the teeth in the north end of the county are worse than they should be - and Dr. Green living outside the county has no axe to grind - let us give him every assistance to correct the deficiencies.



Outlook Frosty!



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

I've been thinking seriously about giving up my job as a teacher, and settling for a lot less money and a lot more peace of mind. And I'm not the only one.

Colleagues, right and left, are unhappy. One would like to go into the hotel business. Another dreams of buying some rough land on Manitoulin Island, and raising sheep.

Others, who have been teaching a long time, are planning to quit soon and take a reduced pension, rather than battle it out to the full term. They can't face another five years of teaching apathetic, lazy and insolent kids.

Another friend, who has taught happily for 23 years, says he used to look forward to every day of it. This year, he admits, he faces each day with a sort of vague horror. Still another is socking every nickel he can spare into investments so that he can get out while he retains his sanity.

Had lunch the other day with a chap who this year, after some years of running his own business, came into teaching - in the technical department. On his own, he worked 10 or 12 hours a day. At this lunch period, he didn't stop talking for half an hour. From the outside, he thought teaching was a snap. The pay was good, and the holidays looked great. Now, he's exhausted at the end of a teaching day, though he's done no physical labor. He said: "I never knew there were kids like these."

Perhaps we sound like a bunch of old fogies who are getting tired. Most of those I've mentioned are in their 40s, not quite in the old-fogey class. And they've enjoyed their teaching for years.

But another colleague is talking about going to the Northwest Territories. Another is thinking of taking a job in a steel plant. His wife, also a teacher, wants to get out and do social work, at less money. They are all in their 20s.

All of us are making quite reasonable salaries. It would be quite a wrench,

financially, to quit, especially for those who have roots in the community, a mortgage, and growing children to educate.

But the malaise is there. And it's difficult to put your finger on the trouble. Our wives are getting worried. They ask, "What is wrong, specifically?" And it's difficult to give an answer that doesn't sound trivial. It's a host of little things which add up to one word - frustration.

What is the trouble, then? I think there are two major sources. First, the pendulum has swung too far - from a system that was archaic to one with end permisiveness. Everyone is supposed to do his own thing. Sad truth is that a majority of teenagers haven't got a "thing" to do. They want to be entertained, not learn.

They'll sit happily through a movie at school, chewing gum. But try to get them to talk about it, express their ideas, relate it to their own lives, and they groan with boredom. They're mentally lazy, as most teenagers have always been. Their favorite comment on a thought-provoking, stimulating movie, is "Stoopid."

I've never believed in corporal punishment, either as a disciplinary deterrent or as a spur. But I'm beginning to wonder. I am hurt and alarmed at the increasing lack of courtesy, the "who cares?" attitude of the kids, and the increase in plain, dirty talk. (The language you can hear in a modern high school, especially among girls, would curdle your blood.)

You can imagine the joyous rapture of my wife to my proposal that I quit. Like the good little wife she is, she said she'd go anywhere with me, and do anything, as long as I was happy. She made up a great list of where and how we could save money, without the salary.

But the reaction has set in, and in 100 casual, little hints she's revealing the utter folly of it all. But I was prepared for that, and I'm going to keep her thinking about a shack, and a pot-bellied stove, and potatoes, and porridge for a while yet. It'll do her good.

Not bikini weather . . .

This is the time when many Canadians wish they were anywhere but in snow-filled Canada.

Exotic tropical countries beckon with a fascination they could never exert in more clement weather.

For those who have the money and the time, Florida, the Bahamas and the southern United States are havens at this time of the year.

Elderly people, especially, tire of the snow and cold more quickly than those who don't mind digging out from behind a drift, snowelling sidewalks and driveways and battling sub-zero temperatures which trigger sinus and rheumatic complaints.

But, then there are those who like the winter, who delight in the fresh fallen snow, the winterscapes, where a bright sun floods the frosty

white earth in light you can never duplicate in summer.

The skiers, the snowmobilers, skaters, hunters and others who enjoy the winter outdoors would like to keep the winter.

On the other hand, it would be nice to spend a couple of weeks in some tropical climate for a couple of weeks. May the many who are soaking up sun in some far distant point, enjoy themselves and come back safely.

The snow is deep here, the mercury dipped to about 15 below zero last night, but the sun is shining, the sky is blue, and the winter birds are calling back and forth over the feeding stations. But let's face it. It is too darn cold to venture out in your bathing suit.

Salt and Pepper



by hartley coles

Monday was Groundhog Day, according to the calendar, and the Farmers' Almanac.

Thinking of Ground Hog Day brings up the weather. According to the weather Monday, we can expect Spring any old day because the ground hog couldn't see his shadow.

Well, we consulted the Almanac to see how accurate it has been this year. Surprisingly enough it predicted the weather so far with a remarkable degree of accuracy.

Our forefathers lived by the Farmers' Almanac, which although it bears the word "Farmer" in the title is full of information for everyone including astrology, astronomy, calendars, history, bits of verse, homely humor, advice for farmers, gardening tips, a fishing guide and numerous recipes.

Almanacs are not for sale to the public but almost four million copies are being distributed this year as a goodwill gesture. In 1934 the circulation had dropped to an all time low of 10,000 but since Ray Geiger became editor it has steadily regained lost ground and is again being consulted with frequency in this age of Aquarius.

The editor of the Almanac is referred to as a Philomath, meaning a lover of learning or philosopher-mathematician. Other well known Philoms? Try Aristotle, Plato, Euclid, Copernicus, Galileo, Sir Isaac Newton and Ben Franklin and you can see editor Geiger is travelling in distinguished company.

As a matter of fact, he is believed to be the only living Philomath, which must make him feel like the Last of the Mohicans or the missing link or some other such creature.

The Geiger's - Ray and his wife - have a family of five and the whole gang helps to gather material for the Almanac. What they don't come up with, other volunteers do.

For instance, the Bishop of Atlanta is a regular contributor and much material comes from a long term resident of a Kansas prison who has a lot of time on his hands.

You've never read the almanac?

Where else could you find deft-a-nitions like these: Leaky faucet - a drip tease;

Tattle tale - School Pigeon; Non drinking physician - Dry doc.

Or a joke like this?

A political prisoner in Cuba, about to be executed, was blindfolded. The captain of the execution squad asked if he wanted a cigarette. "No thank you," replied the doomed man, "I'm trying to quit."

Did you know this? The Lord's Prayer has 56 words; Lincoln's Gettysburg address 266, the Ten Commandments, 297, but a recent U.S. government order on the price of cabbages contains 26,911 words. Some cabbages.

Husband answering phone: "She's not at home. Would you care to leave a rumor?"

The Almanac, of course, is revered for its long range forecasts and a story goes that in the old days a typesetter's assistant carelessly dropped a halp storm into the middle of July. When the halp storm actually occurred during that period, faith in the almanac predictions were assured.

Any child can tell you what's wrong with today's parents, says the Almanac. They think they know more than their children.

There's even something for operators of nudist camps. Sign to be placed on the camp during the winter. "Clothed for the winter."

There's puzzles and riddles, facts and fancies, list of holidays, information on the moon and stars and lucky and unlucky days for those who hold horoscopic ideas to be true. There's even a recipe for success.

To a cupful of luck set in a strong healthy frame, add a pinch of conservatism, a dash of daring and several drops of vision. Then pour on an ounce of belief in one's fellow man, a spoonful of experience, and a jigger of good humor. Allow to settle with a sweet, helpful mate of understanding, education and intelligent compromise. Then bestir oneself continually, add an icing of part common sense, part honesty and serve one's God, one's country and one's family.

Can't argue much with that, can you?

So, for gosh sakes if you haven't got an Almanac this year try for one next. It quite likely will be around. Been going for 153 consecutive years now.

Free Press

back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday February 2, 1950.

The latest addition to Acton business section is the new General Motors garage of Lorne Garner Motors Ltd. which was officially opened on Saturday. The building is a new, modern structure just completed and has frontage on Main St. and Bower Ave.

Loyal Scots of Knox church celebrated the 191st anniversary of the birthday of Robert Burns with a traditional haggis supper sponsored by the So-Ed group. The haggis was carried in by Kenneth Mann to the strains of the pipes played by Pipe Major Peter Gibson and Piper Henderson of the Fergus Pipe Band. Mr. Robert Chalmers was master of ceremonies. Also on the program were solos and readings by Crawford Douglas, Margaret Brown, Isabel Anderson, Mrs. Turner, James Moore, Mr. Wm. Burton and "auld Scotch songs" by the company.

About 75 Acton business women and men attended a dinner meeting on Monday night to start the activities of an Acton organization of business folk. Mr. Stephen Jones, president of the Chamber of Commerce of Mount Forest, was guest speaker, and told of the advantages of belonging to the central group. President Bert Hinton was in charge of the evening. A number of films on conservation were shown.

Two new carding machines have arrived at the Wool Combing plant. Plans for the erection of a county home for the aged have begun to materialize.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 5, 1920.

The proposed straight route provincial highway from Toronto to Sarnia by way of Georgetown, Acton, Guelph and Stratford is just as live an issue as it was under the late government. More than 100 delegates assembled at a convention at the Central Ontario Highways Association in Stratford to urge the advantages of the straight route on the minister of Public Works, the Hon. F. C. Biggs. Mr. Biggs was quite sympathetic to the idea of permanent highways and said he hoped to see them stretching through every part of the province, but it was impossible to promise money and labor to do it all at once.

He strongly criticized the Toronto-Hamilton Highway Commission

Going a Canadian mile . . .

Canadians always seem to be amused by the lack of education Americans exhibit about Canada and things Canadian. Reports are sometimes exaggerated but Marketing recently listed some of the worst questions tourists ask year-in and year-out at Niagara Falls.

- Where is Ontario?
- When you say 25 miles, is that Canadian miles or U.S. miles?
- Where do I change my money into pounds, shillings and pence?
- Do you drive on the wrong side of the road here?

• Is there a Montreal on the U.S. side?

• We're going to Windsor. Have you a booklet to explain the French signs?

• How much of Canada can we see in one day?

• Where can we rough it? Are there any gas stations or do we have to carry our own gas?

• You must be American. You speak just like us.

• What do you do in the evenings in Canada?

• Where does it start snowing?



Photos from the past



BALLINAFAD HOTEL was situated where Ford's feed mill is now. The proprietor was D. M. McLeod. The building burned down

years ago. Mrs. Ella Harding, R. R. 2, lent this picture to the Free Press.

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