

Free Press Editorial Page

Standing by helplessly . . .

Nothing can give a feeling of hopelessness more than the sight of a home burning down, while spectators stand by powerless to help.

It happened last week in this district when a country home burned to the foundations. A family stood by helplessly and watched their possessions being consumed by fire. Strong winds fed the flames. Firefighters were helpless to provide any more than further prevention.

It happened quickly. Within an hour of the call for help the trim home was almost completely levelled.

Home owners can have more than adequate insurance protection,

but there are keepsakes and mementos in any home that can never be replaced.

Fire is a tragedy. The only positive way of fighting is by prevention.

Be especially careful if you are lighting grass fires this year. Often firefighters are further hampered by fighting these fast spreading fires by the lack of water within pumping distance. Grass fires blown by heavy winds sweep across dry fields rapidly and threaten buildings, way beyond the point where the flames started.

Nothing can bring this message home more vividly than the sight of a family watching their home go up in flames.

End of service . . .

There is more than interest on the part of some Acton people in the public hearing held in Guelph regarding discontinuance of passenger train service between Guelph and Toronto. If the railway is successful with its application to cut off trains 986 and 987, the town of Acton will be completely without passenger rail service.

The railway claims it is losing money on the service and apparently has some sort of figures to show losses of \$147,313 in 1968.

Travel habits of Canadians are changing. They are travelling more and more by highway and airline and less and less by rail. The National Transportation Act of 1967 recognized that railways cannot operate effectively in a competitive environment while bearing the financial burden of uneconomic passenger train services.

Unfortunately the National Transportation Act only recognizes the plight of the railways. It does not outline reasons for the decline in passenger service.

For instance, Southampton mayor Bill Todd told the first public hearing in Owen Sound last week that passengers on the three and a half hour train trip between Walkerton and Toronto have had to ride in baggage cars and stand. M.P. Bruce Whicher told the hearing that many of the 264 passengers on the train last week had to stand from Toronto to Guelph.

These are circumstances which do little to attract passengers for the railways. Judging by the outcry across western Ontario following notice of hearings to discontinue services, it is general. The railways have made no real effort to modernize travel between the small centres of Ontario.

Timetables are not set up to correspond to needs. Trains are almost the same today as they were before the war - outside of a diesel pulling now instead of a steam engine.

Can you picture any private business making money serving the public with the same facilities today as they had 40 years ago?

And in Winchester . . .

Closing the familiar doors of Winchester C.P.R. Station was a severe blow to local residents, but the impact was somewhat softened by assurance that the community would continue to have a freight and express depot. With a local man in charge everyone was assured prompt service for both out-going and in-coming freight.

This, we were told by a group of overly-friendly officials, was all in the name of progress. Unfortunately progress has taken another step - this time the express office has been moved to Smith Falls.

Realizing this would be another blow to the community, an attempt is being made to once again pad it just a little. Our local agent has been

requested to maintain an "on-hand" department.

Possibly the next step, strictly in the interests of progress, will be to transfer this "on-hand" department to nearby Brockville. - Winchester (Ont.) Press.

"The automobile, like the atomic bomb, must be controlled. The world's problem does not lie in the discoveries of the physicist or the engineer. The problem is man's behaviour in the mechanical age." Dr. Wilder Penfield, quoted by Ontario Safety League.

Photos from the past



TEACHER MISS Olla Armstrong's class, in 1920, included: first row Carney Byrnes, John Mellon, Mel Lambert, Charlie Waterhouse, Bill Babcock, George Little, Bob Hall; second row Dorothy Campbell, Irene Cross, Florence Cross, Ruth Gibson, Violet Currie, Phyllis Tyler, Lillia Byrnes, Doreen Masales, Bill Wilson, third row Dorothy Smethurst, Hazel Cox, Jessie Mann, Renetta Waller, Kathleen Kelly, Violet Woods, Margaret Bauer, fourth row, unknown, Mary Nicklin, unknown, May Elliott, Annie Smith, Rita McNabb, unknown, fifth row unknown, Gordon Currie, Gordon Reid, Gordon Cooper, Neil Patrick, unknown, back row Glen Ryder. Miss Armstrong later married George Somerville. Hazel (Cox) Marzo lent the picture.



IF SUCCESS IS measured in numbers the annual maple syrup festival at Elmira was a resounding, shoulder-to-shoulder, crowd accomplishment on a recent weekend. Elmira, called a grimy industrial town in a recent magazine article, hardly looked the part as gay, colorful throngs took in the event. - (Photo by Don Hilt)



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

There's nothing like a little change at this time of year to pull you out of the doldrums. That's what my wife said when the school holidays were coming up. And she was right.

Most of our friends were going somewhere: Skiing, Florida, Jamaica, Mexico, South Carolina.

Family obligations and lack of cash vetoed anything like that, but she had a wonderful plan. My brother-in-law and family were going to Florida. They live in the city. We'd go to the city, stay at their place, saving a big hotel bill, take in a few shows, and step out to dinner a couple of times.

"It'll be just like home for you" says she. "You can take your exam papers and mark them, you won't have a care in the world, we'll have some fun, and it will be a nice change for you."

It was.

Our daughter was home for the weekend, but was going back to the city to stay in the grubby hole her friends rent. She wanted to take back her cat and kitten. She was prevailed upon to wait until midweek - when we were going down - for the animals' sake. First mistake.

Word got around among her friends. Second mistake. To cut it short, we left for the city with two cats, four teenagers, two big boxes of grub for Kim, enough clothes to go to Europe, and me in a surly mood.

Arrived at Kim's abode and carried up the food, only to discover that three teeny-boppers had beat her to it, and there wasn't room for her.

Took her back with us to brother-in-law's house, a handsome place indeed. Picked up the key from a neighbor, as arranged. Turned key in lock. It bent. Played with lock. Stomped on key with heel to straighten it out. Couldn't. Finally door swung open. Great relief.

Fumbled for lights, all located in wrong place. "Phew! This place stinks," said Kim. She was right. Dopey sister-in-law had not turned refrigerator off properly. Freezer was unfrozen, water all over floor, meat putrid.

Off the cuff . . .

Would Senator Keith Davey be happy if Canada's newspapers were as accurate and as honest as Canada's politicians?

City dwellers tend to forget that in many smaller communities fire fighting is done by volunteers. They are authorized to display an amber light on their cars with the letters VFF. The Ontario Safety League reminds drivers that VFF cars, and all other emergency vehicles on duty, should be given the right of way. The law requires that if you hear a car siren, or see an emergency vehicle approaching with red light flashing, you should stop, as near the right hand curb as possible.

Solid hour of mopping up, scrubbing our frig. All hope of hamburger gone out in garbage, rotten. Eventually, I made a mess of crumbled buns in a large tin of spaghetti sauce. It tasted like spaghetti sauce, which is pretty strong without spaghetti.

House was cold. Turned heat well up. Nothing happened. Steam heat. An hour later it was 80. Turned heat way down. Nothing happened. Steam.

Tried washing dishes. No hot water. Afraid to go out to show, or anything, because of faulty key. Might never get in again. Suggested: "Let's get the heck out of here and check in at a hotel." No takers. Too tired. Watched TV and went to bed.

Next day same thing. Hot water came on, for no reason, but wife and daughter bickered most of day, also for no reason. Had company. Sent out for food. Stayed up too late. Fell asleep. Awoke to great squabble and daughter leaving, with her cats. Persuaded her to settle down. Three a.m. and no buses running. She's not so dumb, and agreed.

Third day, worse. Freezing rain and snow outside, no food and raw nerves inside. My wife was right from the start. It was just like home. And my exam papers were still in the suitcase.

Finally took bull by horns and went out on town. Downtown packed with solid mob, barely moving traffic. Had beautiful dinner in crowded joint, after standing in line for half-hour. Hamburg for me, coffee for the girls, who weren't hungry from feminine perversity. At last, saw a one-hour revue, at 11 p.m. Home at 12.30 a.m.

Next day, took Kim down to her house, with cats. All food we'd brought for her was eaten.

Back to house. Wife slaving to clean up. I said: "I'm going home. Period!" For once, no argument. Home through blizzard. Stopped by cop. But, ah, that home, sweet home. No cats, no kid.

There's nothing like a little change.

THE ACTON FREE PRESS
PHONE 533-2010
Business and Editorial Office

Founded in 1875 and published every Wednesday at 58 Willow St., Acton, Ontario. Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the CMA and CIMA. Advertising rates on request. Subscriptions payable in advance, \$8.00 in Canada, \$9.00 in all countries other than Canada, single copies 15 cents. Second class mail Registration Number - 0515. Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of a typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with reasonable allowance for signature, will not be charged for but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the applicable rate. In the event of a typographical error advertising goods or services at a wrong price, goods or services may not be sold. Advertising is merely an offer to sell, and may be withdrawn at any time.

Dills Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd.
David R. Dills, Publisher
Hartley Coles, Editor
Dor Ryder, Adv. Manager
Copyright 1970

Salt and Pepper by hartley coles

Every so often we receive articles at this journal with requests to print them with no changes. At various other times we are asked to outline the requirements for articles. Sometimes we are quizzed about the type of article we want.

Times haven't changed much. A hundred years ago newspapers were receiving the same sort of requests on the issues of the day. Recently we ran across an article which appeared in The Western World of July 9, 1870, which is as valid today as when it was first printed.

It applies to anything written for this newspaper by editors or staff or others who want to try their hand at writing. In the hope that it will be clipped and posted on the desk of every budding or veteran writer, we reprint it again:

1. Do not say, "I write in a hurry, please correct all mistakes." You have ten times the opportunity to do this than the editor has. His time is worth from fifty cents to ten dollars an hour, and he will be likely to correct your errors by fire, and then they will never trouble any one any more. You must do your own work if you want it done. It is said that Newton wrote his chronology over fifteen times before he was satisfied with it, and Gibbon wrote his memoir nine times before sending it to the press. No beginners ought to expect better success for less labor than such learned men.

2. Do not write poetry. Most who try, do not know what poetry is, and they cannot be told till they have learned a great deal more than they know now. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of the rhyme written is good for three things: 1. To give to friends who prize it for the giver's sake. 2. It makes passable kindlings. 3. It will bring about three cents a pound at the paper mill, to work up with old rags. Write prose; - poetic prose is far better than prosaic poetry.

3. Do not write long articles, or long sentences. Write as you would a telegram, where each word costs a dime, or an advertisement which costs a dollar a line.

4. Do not ask an editor to return your manuscript. Keep a copy, with a hundred letters a day to read, he has something to do besides hunting up last year's manuscripts, received, rejected, and buried, or burned, long ago.

5. Do not get angry because your first article is rejected. Quite likely if it is printed you will live to wish it had been burned, or sent to the paper mill. The first pair of shoes a cobbler makes are not likely to sell very readily; and it takes more skill and longer practice to write good articles than to make good shoes.

6. Keep trying and sending on; the practice will do you good, and if writing it in you it will come out. But if you cannot stand criticism, and rejection, and fault finding, you will make a poor author, and may as well know it at once. The writer's first article was rejected; he kept it awhile, sent it to the same paper again, and it was printed.

7. Remember an editor may have a pick of better articles than yours is, which he wrote himself, and yet does not think them worth publishing. He will do the best he can, consistently, by you. He is more anxious to encourage good writers than you are to write.

8. Do not expect an editor to set up a reading school, spelling school, grammar school and writing school for the benefit of those who have not improved their opportunities at home. You can study these matters anywhere; do not impose your ignorance on an editor, and then wonder that he has not time to fool over such nonsense. Some poor printer has to set up the type for your article. Every cent you save by using pale ink, poor paper, and writing carelessly because you are in a hurry, or writing finely, or cross wise, to save three cents' postage, will cost the printer in toll, delay, and eye-sight, at least 50 times as much money as you will save, besides causing him to commit blunders for you to scold about.

Do you wonder such articles are rejected? I can write an article for the press in half the time I could correct such one; and I have often copied over entire pages, rather than torment a compositor with illegible manuscript.

Free Press back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, April 13, 1950.

Canadian baritone John Rockwood, formerly of the American Opera Company, presented a varied program to an exceptionally enthusiastic audience in the United Church Friday. The program, sponsored by the church choir, featured choir numbers, elocution by Mrs. Moffat of Ebenezer and organ solos by Miss Lampard. Chairman for the evening was R. H. Elliott. Soloists in the choir numbers were Miss Betty Gibson, Mrs. K. Randall, Miss D. Simmons and Mr. Ken Allen.

Knox church is looking resplendent in a new carpet in rich wine shade. On Tuesday the Ladies' Aid catered for a congregational supper and arranged a concert following. Mrs. R. L. Davidson was assisted by Mrs. A. M. MacPherson, Mrs. D. McLellan and Mrs. John Allison. Rev. R. H. Armstrong introduced numbers by Mrs. Byron Bruce, Mr. Scotty Burton, male quartette of Messrs. George Musselle, H. Baxter, V. B. Rumley and E. A. Hansen; readings by Mrs. Ward Bruce and a skit with Mr. and Mrs. Ward Bruce and Miss Joan Aikens taking part. An interesting composition was a poem by Miss Isabel Anderson paying tribute to those who had laboured to get the new carpet.

The community was shocked to learn of the sudden death of Miss Lottie V. Mason, the younger of twin daughters of Mr. and Mrs. William Mason. Her sister Hazel also died suddenly a few years ago while giving a number at a musical program. Both were accomplished musicians and gave freely of their time and talent. They are survived by brothers Bert, Charles and Amos. Elmer Denny has sold his taxi business to Orville Brown.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, April 15, 1920.

At the Easter thankoffering service of the W.M.S. a mission circle was organized for the senior girls. Officers were elected as follows: president Helen Anderson; vice-president Minnie Blair; secretary Laura Scott; treasurer Beatrice Blair.

The home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Brydon, first line, Erin, was tragically bereft when Max Kirkwood, the eldest son of the home, was tragically shot while with his brother James.

Mr. Charlie Symon, who has been taking a course at Ottawa Business College, arrived home Thursday for a visit.

At a meeting in the town hall on the 8th inst. Acton Musical Society was organized with the following officers: leader of Orchestra, A. Leishman; assistant leader A. M. Shand; chairman management committee C. O. Plant; secretary-treasurer J. C. Matthews; leader choral society W. Robertson; assistant leader Len Worden. Those desirous of joining orchestra or

chorus may attend a practice in the town hall this evening.

Miss Mary McPherson has completed her training as a nurse in Guelph General Hospital and is spending a few holidays here.

A couple of reckless drivers speeded a horse up and down Mill St. yesterday morning. Constable Reid has summoned them to appear to answer this violation of the law.

One of Acton's esteemed life-long residents passed away rather suddenly when Mrs. Anthony Stephenson succumbed to an attack of pleuro-pneumonia. She was born in Scotland in 1851 and came to Acton as a child of 18 months.

Acton will surely receive a pretty healthy rebate from the Hydro Commission for the six weeks or so there have been no street lights owing to the failure of the transformer.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, April 11, 1895.

The annual report of the Inspector of prisons and public charities gives some interesting data respecting our county goal the past year. The number of commitments was 344, of these 293 were for vagrancy. The total number of prisoners sentenced in 1894 was 43 male, 1 female; of these 123 were Canadians, 95 English, 67 Irish, 31 Scotch, 23 from United States and five from other countries.

Denominationally they claimed as follows: Church of England 162, Roman Catholic 70, Presbyterian 66, Methodist 35, others 11. Eight could neither read nor write and 318 were of intemperate habits. The goal expenditure for the year was \$1,262.36. The average cost per day per prisoner was 8.49 cents. The average cost per prisoner throughout the province was 20 cents. Halton is the second lowest cost in the list of 42 goals.

Messrs. Henderson and Co. millinery display shows that radical changes prevail. Crowns have been introduced again and flowers in profusion are used in trimming. Bluettes and various shades of green are in favor. Bonnets are small again.

The warm weather of the past week reminds us of a little duty which each citizen is required to perform - that of cleaning up the accumulation of the past winter's dirt, ashes, refuse, etc. in the back yard. The sooner this is attended to the better for the health of your family. The members of the Board of Health are anxious to secure the best possible sanitary conditions for Acton.

The public school system has become altogether too complex. Some modern text books contain intricate and abstruse problems that abuse the mental facilities of children of tender age.

A ten year old girl was asked "If one pound of sugar costs 009.312 of \$8, find the value of .062 of 16 barrels of 200 pounds each."