

Misleading public? . . .

Assertions last week at council that The Free Press is misleading the public about the condition of Acton arena were brought into sharp focus at last Thursday's meeting of the Board of Parks Management when engineer Art Johns was quizzed about the condition of the building.

Mr. Johns said the steel structure of the arena is in excellent shape but the timber on the south side is in bad shape and needs repairs. An examination of the south side of the building indicates repairs are needed immediately. The engineer said the work should not be done piecemeal because recommended repairs are interlocking.

In the first place, Parks Board asked the engineers to make their report using safety as the criteria. The board felt the engineer's report should be followed and requested \$21,000 to make the repairs deemed most urgent, although the engineers estimated it could cost as much as \$27,000.

Acton council recognized there was some degree of urgency about fixing the arena since they voted \$13,000 for repairs but also felt the Board of Parks was exaggerating the need. In line with 1970 policy to exercise restraint and postpone major expenditures, they asked the Parks Board to do the best they could with the \$13 grand and suggested local contractors might be able to do it at that price.

We felt the report—which the Free Press had seen at the previous meeting of Parks Board (it was read aloud)—did reveal an urgency, and so disagreed with council.

We questioned in editorial comment who was going to decide

whether the arena needed a major repair job since it was obvious council did not put too much stock in the engineer's report.

This newspaper also stated that since the safety of the arena had been called into question the public was entitled to know whether there was any doubt about the structural safety of the building. To our minds the report indicated that stands on the south side where the paying customers sit were in danger of collapsing.

We said we thought the steel beams in the arena were solid but not being engineers would hesitate to comment. The engineer has said the steel beams in the arena are solid and safe.

Amen.

We also said the insides of the arena are decaying rapidly and would require attention if the building is not going to degenerate into the same condition it was several years ago. A quick look inside is all that is needed to confirm this.

Although the engineer was very guarded in his comments on the arena's condition he made it clear that the ramshackle look of the wooden stands revealed some of the condition underneath.

Council last week said in very strong terms should there be any doubt about the safety of the arena they would not hesitate to see funds were made available to make needed repairs. We have never questioned the good faith of council or individual councillors—or tried to pose as experts—but we feel it is now only fair to ask just who is misleading the public?

Sweeper makes difference . . .

It is surprising what a difference a street sweeper can make in a Canadian town after winter has piled the streets with refuse.

Acton streets were not any dirtier than they normally are each spring but what an amazing difference when the street sweeper made a few passes up and down.

Dust, which transformed street scenes into a miniature Saharas when Spring winds blew or large trucks went by, suddenly was all gone, pavement reappeared and there was an aura of tidiness that is sure to

inspire the emulation of the good burghers of town.

Litter can make or break a village or town in the eyes of the casual visitor who may take his impressions by the attitudes of the inhabitants.

Dirty town? The people don't care, are slovenly, indifferent.

Clean town? The people do care and make sure streets are neat, orderly, well kept and swept.

A little effort each spring turns winter doldrums into spring symphonies and sets the pattern for the remainder of the year.



THE SIGN SAYS OPEN but the condition of the old shop seems to leave much to be desired. This piece of Canadiana attracted the lens of Jim Jennings' camera when he

cruised around the Cataract area on a recent Sunday afternoon drive, proving there can be humor even in buildings.



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

Can you whistle a Bach prelude and fugue without a memory slip? Can you hum a Beethoven sonata without sliding into falsetto or basso profundo?

Dam right you can't. But I can. Almost. And it cost me only about \$12,000.

Trouble is, and this is a touchy point in April, none of it is deductible. That's what it has cost me, over the years, to provide a musical education for my family.

After all that, I can whistle and hum, both of which I could do before. There's something wrong here, but I can't quite figure out what it is.

I wish I had the 12 G's in bonds at eight per cent. But my wife doesn't agree. We could have taken a trip around the world for that, but she still doesn't agree.

As far as I'm concerned, I could have taken that \$12,000, thrown it off the end of the dock, and been just as far ahead. Once again, the only one who agrees with me is I.

Both my kids have degrees in piano. Both were talented. Near, but not quite at the concert pianist level. Both eschewed (I like that word) a career in music, because they wanted to be first. And they wanted to be free.

Well, they're free. Hugh broke his middle finger, and can play I Went Down To St. James Infirmary, with only a few bum notes. I think Kim could play The Happy Farmer, with a couple of days' practice.

But perhaps it's all been worth it. They've learned something. Hugh has realized that you can't practise the piano when you're waiting table at the Chateau Frontenac or selling vacuum cleaners in Calgary. And Kim has realized that "her" piano won't quite fit into a three-room pad

in Toronto, unless you want to sleep on top of it.

What brings all this to mind, and without bitterness, is the fact that my wife, a former piano teacher, has become hooked once again, after a lapse of a couple of years, on the local music festival. She's going every day and listening intently to her former students. (Though she's a bit miffed that some of them are doing extremely well, despite the fact that they don't take lessons from her any more.)

But her reports have cheered me. Things are just the same as they always were. I went through years of them, and I know the scene intimately. The festival mothers are still as friendly as an R.C. bishop and a Mormon lay preacher.

The adjudicator is still rotten, giving the first-place certificate to the girl who played worst. Except when it's your daughter, or your pupil. Then he (or she) shows an insight into music that is superb.

The kids are still sailing into their pieces at breakneck speed, which they can't possibly maintain, and breaking down in the middle, while their mothers and teachers turn purple as the youngsters fumble, and throw up their hands, and burst into tears.

But perhaps the Old Lady is right. Those moments at the music festival, in other years, were the closest to heaven and hell that I've ever experienced, with the possible exception of shooting at a concentration of German tanks, which were firing back at you with bigger guns than you had.

I've stopped breathing for as much as a dangerously long two minutes while my son or daughter weaved through a sonatina. I have gone out afterwards and smoked a complete cigarette in two drags.

I have called the adjudicator a slob, a cretin, moron, and, sometimes, a brilliant judge of music.

Maybe the Old Battleaxe is right. Maybe it was worth \$12,000. Anyway, I can whistle three bars of Tchaikovsky's something or other.

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Salt and Pepper

by hartley coles

We do get letters and handouts for this column and just to catch up on some of the most recent contributions to research at a time when science is turning the world upside down by facts that only existed in comic books and fearless minds two decades ago, I thought you might like this item given us by Audrey Grischow.

PROFESSOR DUMKOPF'S TESTS
Sir: The recent scare over the use of cyclamates in soft drinks has focused attention on the research work being carried out by a team led by Professor Dumkopf Ph.D. at the University of Mooseonee.

Aided by a \$50,000 grant from the National Research Council, Professor Dumkopf and his assistants are studying the harmful effects and the dangers presented by unbridled use of water, known scientifically as H2O. The first findings of the study have now been released and they make interesting reading.

The professor states that in one test 12 rats were held under water for a period of three minutes. At the end of this time all had succumbed—undisputable proof that water is lethal.

In another experiment a quantity of water was subjected to a temperature of 20 degrees Fahr. for two hours, after which it was dropped from a height of one foot on the head of a volunteer junior assistant. Professor Dumkopf reports that the assistant suffered a slight concussion lasting for some minutes.

"As you know," said the Professor, "water is composed of hydrogen and oxygen. The first is violently explosive, the second highly inflammable, hardly the sort of stuff one should be drinking and washing children with."

It is understood that Dr. Shortton Mulman, M.L.A. will exhibit a bottle of water in the Assembly next week and ask the Minister of Health to ban its use in the interest of safety.

Professor Dumkopf is well known in scientific circles for his thesis of "Dumkopf Effect," which postulates that the removal of the legs from a flea, trained to jump on command, induces deafness in the flea.

Signed
R. U. Kidding.

Second item which came in the mail bags was a reminder from British Leyland that a clean car can sometimes get you off the hook if you are under police surveillance.

If you've had a policeman hanging around the corner watching you lately it might be in order to go out and have your car washed. It may surprise drivers to learn that making sure a car is frequently washed and shined can ward off unnecessary police perusal.

A senior Metro Toronto police officer says, trained officers are automatically and immediately suspicious of a dirty car—particularly when conditions are dry and most cars are clean.

"Long experience has shown us that in many cases the driver behind the wheel of a grimy car may be up to no good—or has recently been up to no good."

A quick look outside where my bucket of bolts sat convinced me I was a prime suspect for this dirty vehicle syndrome of the police. Then the rain came and it was again clear that I had not been up to no good.

One traffic patrolman has said: "If I see a late model car in mud or salt splattered condition with dim window visibility, I will be on guard. I will watch this car like a hawk. If I notice the slightest driving confusion or uncertainty, over it comes and I will make a thorough check-out of the driver."

So you see if you have any ideas about robbing a bank or exceeding the speed limit it might be wise to skip up to the car wash and clean up first.

FINALLY, FOR THOSE who are convinced they are being treated like dogs at home it may come as a surprise to learn that this is the year of the dog. The Chinese year 4668 arrived on February 6.

The Oriental lunar calendar was established more than 2,000 years ago and runs in 12 year cycles. Each of the 12 years is named for a wild or domestic animal.

The animal of the year in which a person is born is thought to influence the personality. So here's a list of animal years which you can try on for size:

- 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960 - Rat Years. Keen mind, clever, resourceful.
- 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961 - Ox Years. Good, strong, tireless worker.
- 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962 - Tiger Years. Brave, strong.
- 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963 - Rabbit Years. Clever, successful.
- 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964 - Dragon Years. Wise, generous, fortunate.
- 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965 - Snake Years. Good business sense.
- 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966 - Horse Years. Strong, willing to work hard.
- 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967 - Sheep Years. Quiet, devoted.
- 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968 - Monkey Years. Active, quick worker.
- 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969 - Rooster Years. Diligent, independent.
- 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970 - Dog Years. Faithful, honest.
- 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971 - Pig Years. Healthy.

It turns out that I am a rabbit, a name my better half has not yet seen fit to label me, except for accusations of going down a hole when ever she has something to say.

Oh well, you know what they say about bunnies. They sure can't add but how they can multiply.

Free Press back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, April 20, 1950.

Work started this week on construction of a new building for Micro Plastics which will double their space on Wallace Ave.

Many friends regret to learn of the unfortunate mishap sustained by Mrs. W. J. Wolfe when she suffered a critical injury to her right eye which may mean a permanent injury to the sight of that eye. She was playing badminton in the Y when her racket struck her glasses and the broken glass injured her eye. She is in Guelph General Hospital.

The special Easter holiday program which functioned daily at the Y last week was successful from every standpoint. All classes are polishing up their acts for the annual circus. The Junior Teen Ageds will hold another party Saturday.

The members and friends of the Acton Home and School Association enjoyed an evening of euchre and square dancing in the games room of the Y. The president Mrs. R. Parker introduced the new officers, president Dr. G. A. Sirs; 1st vice-president Mr. R. R. Parker; 2nd vice-president Mrs. Stewart Sinclair; recording secretary Mrs. L. Lovell; corresponding secretary Mr. C. Heard; treasurer Mr. K. Hurren; executive committee Mrs. H. Force, Mrs. Luxton, Mrs. W. Wolfe, Mr. C. Lindsay.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, April 18, 1895.

Acton Checker Club wound up its business and disbanded for the season. During the winter the Club furnished a quiet, comfortable room for their members, away from bar-room influences, and many an enjoyable evening was spent together working out the intricacies of this brainy game. Much credit for the success of the winter's pleasure is due Mr. H. S. Holmes, who acted as secretary and manager.

Acton Cornet Band is again having regular practice, a fact which a few members have perhaps overlooked.

There was a typical Irish eviction at Crewsons Corners when a poor widow's few household effects were seized for rent and she was evicted from the house.

The sweet young men who made a midnight raid of a neighborhood sugar bush seemed to enjoy themselves immensely although they had to gather their own sap. The owner of the bush is sorry he did not know they were coming as he could have left things more convenient for them.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, April 22, 1920.

One evening last week at a gathering in St. Joseph's hall Mr. John Kennedy was rewarded for 17 years of faithful service as a steward of the church. The address was read by Peter Gibbons and Rev. Father Goodrow added words of appreciation. He was presented with a purse of gold and a reclining chair.

Shut up your hens now, Mr. Poultryman. Your neighbors have begun gardening operations.

There's nothing slow about Acton's reeve. It's two weeks now since he planted his early potatoes, so rumor goes.

Photos from the past



MARTHA ORR was teacher for the senior three class which lined up for the photographer in 1933. First row, Tom Watson, Beverly Arnold, Gordon McCutcheon, Bill Eccleshaw, Ivan Vickers, Owen Masales, Bob Loutett, Harry Savage; second row, Annie Molozzie, Irma Wilderspin, Daisy Buchanan, Ruby Smith, Kay Sweeney, Ruth Hubble, Irene Fryer, Marjory Allen, Bertha Bristow; third row, Margaret Scriven, Mina Cripps, Mary Turkosz, Kathleen Gibbers,

Dorothy Arnold, Fran Chisholm, Olga Port, Dorothy King, Rita Cripps, Doris Bilton, Marie Brunelle, Irma Marzo, Georgina Evans, Isabel Crewson; fourth row, Jean Brown, Dorothy Bayliss, Bill Buchanan, Gordon Marshall, Herb Cook, Harvey Lambert, Elmer Mainprize, Lino Marzo, Lorne Masales, Allan Leishman, John Robson, Jack Cooney.