

Free Press Editorial Page

Respected and esteemed . . .

Students at Acton district high school showed their esteem and respect for retiring principal Ted Hansen at the final assembly of the school Thursday morning.

Mr. Hansen resigned as principal after 16 years as head of the school which has grown from a staff of five teachers in the old stone school to a modern education plant with 26 teachers.

Student council president Carol Patterson summed up Mr. Hansen's career very well when she said he had accomplished many things in a quiet, unassuming way. He has served in the Acton school system for 23 years under four school boards. He joined the system in September, 1947, hired by the Acton public school board, which in turn was replaced by the now defunct North Halton board.

The North Halton board, in its turn, was split up into three separate bodies in Acton, Milton and Georgetown as education policies changed. Then, in 1969, they were dissolved to make way for the present Halton county Board of Education.

Mr. Hansen's decision to retire as principal and go back to teaching was dictated by personal considerations. The job as principal in a high school is demanding at all times but in the last few years has assumed even more rigorous

demands on time and talents. During Mr. Hansen's principalship, he has faced some of the most difficult and unsettled years in the history of education in the province. The old education philosophy where school meant at least five hours of work at a desk with books and exercises, has given way to new methods of doing things and numerous field trips where theories are replaced by a first hand observation of subjects.

The nose-to-the-grindstone approach which characterized the successful student of the past, has been replaced by a system which demands more of both student and teacher. It was typical of Mr. Hansen that he met the changing face of education quietly with an air of confidence that gained him many friendships both with students and staff over the years.

The Acton system is going to be poorer without Ted Hansen's presence but we are glad he has decided to stay with teaching even though it is in Milton rather than Acton.

Ted Hansen has made an important contribution to this community which can't be measured by the yardsticks usually associated with success. We wish him many more years in a profession which has become more important as the century unfolds.

Delegations galore . . .

When politicians speak about grass roots and talking with the people, we suspect many of them are merely mouthing platitudes.

But there are those who know what they are talking about and have first hand knowledge of dealing with people.

The best examples of participatory democracy we've ever observed are the sessions of Esquering Council. People in Esquering do not hesitate to approach the township council at regular meetings with complaints. As a matter of fact, everyone from the reeve down persuades them to come out and make their complaints to the entire council.

So it is not unusual to see the council chambers at the township offices filled to overflowing with delegations. There are few regular meeting nights when there isn't someone there as part of a delegation, spokesmen, an individual, an observer, or with some scheme they want the council to approve.

They were practicing participatory democracy in Esquering before Mr. Trudeau and the Ontario government either thought of or conceived it.

It's true that sometimes the council must spend almost an entire meeting dealing with delegations. Sometimes it is frustrating dealing with people who come as special interest groups. On other occasions council solves problems with amazing rapidity when all heads-council and delegation-are put together.

Another feature of the meetings is the unfailing old-fashioned courtesy delegations receive when they arrive at the time to state their case.

It must be difficult on occasions when councillors realize they are going to receive some abuse. But their readiness to come to grips with realities and to exchange dialogue with the people who elect them to office, wins them the respect of the majority of delegations.

There are those who go away unsatisfied where answers must be a straight yes or no, but these are exceptions rather than the rule.

It is not surprising that councillors in Esquering have a reputation for being astute. Councils from all over the province could take a leaf out of the Esquering book when it comes to public relations.

Off the cuff . . .

Women: Latest thing in men's clothing.

Expert: One called in at the last minute to share the blame.

Success with a woman is generally a sign of mediocrity. -Flaubert

You can always tell a fool, but chances are he won't know what you're talking about.



Rocky River



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

There's something basically piggish about man.

He wants to get his snout into that trough, and devil take the runt who can't wiggle his bum in there, because the landscape in front of him is one of solid bums, harder to break through than a cement wall.

When you look at the size of Canada, and then at the population figures, it's difficult to believe that Canadians feel they can't get at the trough, that many of them feel like the runt of the litter. Yet thousands do.

Many of them feel, as the old rural expression has it, that "they're sucking the hind tit." Tit is a short, but perfectly decent, synonym for teat. The hind one is the one the runt gets, if he gets any.

This is rather a long-winded prelude to my major proposition: That thousands of city-dwellers are desperate to get away from it all, out of the smog and the concrete canyons, into the wild green yonder.

For practical reasons, they must, in most cases, live in the city, or exist there. That's where they make a living, where their children will have the best schools, where their friends are. But they don't like it.

Obvious solution: Buy a summer cottage. Many do.

But even there, one does not escape from the throngs, the cramped feeling. Cottages are, mainly, stuck cheek by jowl. Boats and motorcycles in summer, snowmobiles in winter, pollute the air with stink and noise. Added hazards in winter are the roof breaking in under snow, and local hoodlums breaking in under booze.

Also, for many, the cost of a waterfront lot and cottage are simply out of reach. Have you tried to pick up a nicely-treed, sand-beach water lot lately? Figure on \$50 a foot for anything decent. Add a cottage, drill a well, pay taxes and upkeep, and you have to be pretty well-heeled even to consider it.

Accordingly, many city denizens of modest means are buying a chunk of land right in the country, anything from 10 to 50 acres. In some areas within a couple of hours' drive, one can still buy "land" for \$50 an acre. Thus, instead of socking \$5,000 into a 100-foot water lot, you can have your own ten-acre empire for \$500.

European immigrants are particularly interested in such land, because they didn't

FLOWER POWER In this swinging age, swinging words have worked themselves into many areas—automobiles, colors, haute couture and so on. Now, according to the Wall Street Journal, flowers are the latest to succumb to the trend.

The latest garden catalogs feature seeds whose names reflect the times. One company, for example, advertises a new petunia called Sweet Bippy and an impatiens called A-Go-Go. Buyers can get marigolds called Groovy and Tiger, while one variety of sweet alyssum is called (appropriately?) Tiny Tim.

have a hope of buying an acre at home, unless wealthy.

This land is usually sub-marginal, or worse. But there seems to be a basic instinct to own some land, even though it won't grow anything but rocks and Christmas trees. Just to be able to pace around and say: "This is mine. Nobody can take it away from me." And the sheer delight of posting "No Trespassing" signs around your domain!

A man's home used to be his castle. Now it's his prison. But he can have an estate in the country.

It's an ideal set-up for a man with a young family. Preferably he should be handy with tools. He can buy his chunk of junk and spend a couple of years just going up on weekends and vacations, tenting and clearing a hole in the scrub brush for his shack.

And if he's smart, it will be, at first, just that—a shack. Never mind the three bedrooms. Bang in some bunks. Never mind the big stone fireplace. Get a good wood stove.

Over the years, he can add to the place, until, eventually, he will have a snug retirement home. No traffic problems. No pollution. No punks. No people. Small tax bills. A place to putter, to meditate.

Sounds silly? Maybe. But with the new leisure age creeping upon us, it makes more sense than taking on a huge mortgage at 10 per cent, which will be paid off eight years after you die.

Ideally, the property would have a small stream loaded with fat trout, a deer run, huge patches of wild berries. Realistically, it will be impossible to get water when you drill your well, the land will be infested by rattlesnakes or rodents, and smothered in nettles and poison oak. But we can't have everything.

I'm tempted myself. Any chuckling, gleaming-eyed farmer want to get rid of 50 acres of rock and swamp for \$10 an acre?



This newspaper business has many sides, sometimes it's demanding. At other times it becomes pleasant when there are functions to attend which are more enjoyable than reportable.

Rarely does a week go by when there isn't an invitation to attend an event of official opening. There's usually a lunch or a dinner, and sometimes refreshments, which is the polite way to refer to booze.

All well and good. We news hounds are around for just that sort of thing. But sometimes there are aspects of the story which never get printed.

Take this spring when they opened Acton's new water pollution control plant. A model plant which drew a lot of praise from pollution experts.

But the official opening just happened to coincide with my wife's birthday. She, being a sentimental sort expected we might just do something unusual to celebrate.

We did. We attended the official opening of the water pollution control plant. Couldn't get something to attend much more unusual than that, could you?

However, it didn't evoke the amount of enthusiasm I expected.

It's mere coincidence the gleaming new plant is located beside the town dump. It is one of the cleanest dumps you ever laid eyes on. But as far as my better half is concerned it is a dump and the water pollution control plant is a sewage plant.

So when friends and relations ask what she did on her birthday, she replies:

"I was down in the dumps nearly all day." If I happen to be around she throws a look which pinpoints me as the culprit responsible.

I was hoping she would overlook the dump like residents on Churchill Rd. But she prefers to remember exactly where it is, even though sanitary land fill has

transformed it from an unsightly mess to a model dump. One new resident was so impressed with our town dump he said it influenced him to move here.

"I figured," he said seriously, "that if this town could operate a dump like that they've got something on the ball. What better place could I get for my garbage?"

That was a point I hadn't thought about but I made a mental note to tell clerk Joe Hurst in case he wanted to include a picture and write up in the next town brochure. Although it does seem questionable, doesn't it?

I guess it depends on how you were brought up.

When we were kids the town dump was a real attraction. There were treasures there not available anywhere else in town. There were rats as big as cats that offered tempting targets for catapults.

We often gathered up all the valuables we could at the dump and tramped home with them, only to be told in easily understood language to "cast the stuff back again." There were such valuables as broken dolls, odd-shaped stovepipes, broken glass that just needed a little glue, bits of leather, old shoes, various articles of clothing, old bottles and tin cans of every shape and size.

Then to stand out the display there was an aroma which bore no resemblance to any other odor in town. Apparently some of the aroma had got on it and stuck to our clothes because even when we didn't bring back some treasure I can remember my mother sniffing suspiciously and saying

"You've been down to the dump. Get in and have a bath."

The circle's complete. It isn't a matter of a bath now. It's a matter of changing my wife's attitude about dumps.

Has anyone seen that book: "Dumps can be beautiful."



20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, June 15, 1950.

The community was shocked to learn of the sudden death of the Very Rev. A. C. Stewart, a beloved minister of Knox church for nine years and Moderator of the Presbyterian church. He was a man who had gone to the top of his high calling in the ministry. He came to Acton in 1921. It was during his ministry the choir room was built and the pipe organ installed. He was Scoutmaster and a leader among the young people. Funeral service was in Midland. Interment was in Fairview cemetery and seldom do so many gather as were present last evening to pay tribute to Dr. Stewart.

Sewer construction work has now hit the main section of the town.

Work has begun on the sewage disposal plant and the road into it is reached from the Third Line.

Micro Plastics new addition is getting into operation now.

On Saturday the Victoria Mission Band of Knox church observed its 50th anniversary with a tea in the school room and a party for the children. The first leader was Mrs. C. S. Smith and early meetings were often held in her home. Two of the charter members were present, Mrs. E. J. Hassard and Miss Ruby Clark. Mrs. F. S. Blow and Mrs. R. H. Armstrong poured tea and the girls from the Explorer group served at the tables. Miss Betty Sinclair played a piano solo.

The Rotary club has started a fund for the Manitoba Flood Relief.

The regular meeting of Acton Junior Farmers and Junior Institute was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph McKeown. During the social time games were won by life saver contest Ray Everdell's team; baby bottle contest Lawrence Hensley; cake eating contest Keith Black; blindfolded boxing, a draw by Irene Semanyk and Andy Johnson.

An event of interest this week in Parliament was the presentation of Mr. Davin's bill granting the franchise to women. It was defeated by a vote of 105 to 47. There is well grounded belief that the women do not desire political enfranchisement. Certainly there was no display of interest in the motion or its fate.

For several years in succession the home and grounds of Councillor Stalker of Esquering have been opened for garden parties under the auspices of Knox church. The one held Wednesday evening was largely attended and most enjoyable and an excellent program of music was rendered by the choir.

Esquering township schools receive \$483 as the government grant this year.

Advertisement - I was tortured for 30 years, my fingers and hands twisted out of shape with Rheumatism. . . With Williams' pink pills I am a new man.

The sad news of the death of Mrs. Thomas Taylor, of Guelph, daughter of Mr. David Williamson, reached Acton Monday morning. The remains were brought to Acton Tuesday and interred in Fairview cemetery. General sympathy is extended to the bereaved husband and parents. (The death notice records her age as 19 years, 8 months, 11 days. Not referred to in the obituary was an item in the "Born" column - In Guelph, on Sunday, 2nd June, the wife of Thomas Taylor, of a son.)

Other deaths - John Black of Eramosa, 1 year and four months; Joseph Chisholm, formerly of Acton, 40.

The streets and walks committee is turnpiking some of the side streets.

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Photos from the past



THE BOY SCOUT CONFERENCE AT ACTON—MARCH 22 AND 23, 1929

HOUSECLEANING IN his newspaper plant, the editor of the Fergus News-Record, Jim Couper, found this old picture and sent it along to the Free Press. The photograph of the Boy Scout Conference at Acton on March 22 and 23, 1929, is in a presentation folder printed with the Acton Free Press crest.