



## Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

Going back to school could be a traumatic experience, but it isn't. It's sad to see the summer go, and all those things you were going to do not done. But there's a certain excitement as we step into September, surely the finest month of the year in this country.

It is certainly not a sad occasion for mothers of young children. Most of them have a sigh of relief, right down to their sandals, at the thought of school opening. Children are wonderful creatures, but, like booze, they should be taken in small doses.

In summer, they are constantly wanting to eat, do something dangerous, or fight with their brothers and sisters. A young mother's nerves are tough, but can be stretched only so far.

Even more grateful for our educational system are the parents of all those teenagers who didn't have a job this summer. Most of them, even those who complain bitterly about high education taxes, could kiss the minister of education on both cheeks. For, despite all the wonderful things to do in summer, there is nothing more bored than a teenager of either sex, just

hanging around home.

I can't blame them much. I get bored silly myself, just hanging around home. And adolescence makes it even more frustrating, because the body is full of beans, not meant for sitting in a lawnchair, reading a book.

But the pattern goes something like this. Sleep till noon or later. Get up after the lunch dishes are done and make a shambles of the kitchen repairing a messy hamburger. Leave the mess for Mom. Demand why there isn't a clean shirt. Slouch to the streets or the park, or hitchhike to the beach. Sit around and rap with a gang of other bored teenagers.

If dinner is at six, be sure to get home at either five or seven and demand to be fed immediately. Then spend an hour in the bathroom, fancying up, and drift off to stay out half the night, muttering vaguely that you don't know where you're going or when you'll be home. This, of course, after "borrowing", in plaintive tones, a little something from the old man.

With exceptions, this is how it goes. It's demoralizing for all parties. And it's one

reason even teenagers are glad to get back to school and their parents are not glad, but ecstatic.

Then there's the business of clothes for school. Little kids are sent off clean and shining, in fairly conventional apparel. Big kids battle every inch of the way. Big boys aren't so bad, though even they are showing peacock tendencies. It's the big girls who cause the trouble.

After a summer in shorts and jeans, sweatshirt and bare feet, they are exceedingly loath to don dresses and skirts and shoes. So they do the next best thing—battle their mothers over every item of attire, and demand something exotic: a buckskin jacket, a prayer shawl, a micro or maxi skirt, a see-through blouse.

However, once they're back at school, the kids enjoy it. For a while. They discuss their summer romances and immediately begin new ones. They brag about the wild times they had. They positively swagger if they've hitchhiked to Vancouver. They swiftly assess new teachers and try to drive them up the wall. They groan with exaggerated dismay when they find out that Old So-and-So will be teaching them again this year.

And how do the teachers feel? Most of them are glad to get back to work. They're broke, or they're sick of muddling around with their families, or they want to see what kind of rotten time-table they have this year, or they just plain love teaching.

I know one who'll be glad to get back, for all the reasons mentioned above.



FIELDS OF GOLDEN GRAIN dot the Halton countryside. There is still an abundance of agriculture in Halton, despite growing speculation and growth of urban areas. Sheaves of grain, pictured here, are a rare sight today. This used to be the handiest way to keep grain until it was ready to be taken to a stationary threshing machine. Now, giant combines move through the fields and cut, thresh and winnow grain crops in one operation.

## Hope for house owners, buyers . . .

There is some hope for a solution to the housing shortage in the announcement last week from the Hon. Darcy McKeough at the Ontario Municipal Association convention that the Ontario government will implement uniform building standards in the province as soon as possible.

It is also a victory for Halton M.P.P. Jim Snow, the genial giant who advocated the government adopt uniform building standards in March of 1968.

Among the benefits the provincial government hopes will accrue from their fresh look at an old problem, is that builders' technology will be more capable of producing buildings of architectural and functional quality in mass volume as a result of the uniform standard.

In laymen's language it looks like the government is saying builders will be able to produce houses on an assembly line basis which should be easy to look at and cheaper to buy than the inflation-priced living quarters now being built.

All very commendable. Coupled with the announcement that a consultants' report has recommended that a moratorium on tax increases caused by residential property improvements be imposed, and you have two pretty good pieces of news for prospective and home owners.

The recommendation for a moratorium calls for new provincial initiatives in assisting owners and tenants to improve their properties. Citing the maintenance of property as an important aspect of environmental control, the report also says the best way of counteracting this concern and provide encouragement to owners is to introduce an explicit exemption for improvements for a limited period of time.

This exemption could be achieved, the report suggests, by a moratorium on tax increases due to property improvements, could cover a five year period with a limit of \$5,000 of assessment on any single property at any one time.

In layman's language it looks like the report recommends a

house owner who wants to put on an addition or otherwise brighten up his dwelling would be tax exempt on the improvements for five years, which should give him a chance to pay for the job without being busted by taxes.

Also recommended in the Lawson report is a system of Ontario Government loans built on a sliding interest rate geared to income, for those people who cannot afford normal interest rates. In instances where the owner or tenant can handle regular interest rates, the report urged the government to help make the necessary loans available through normal lending institutions. (The interest rate for the former would be determined by a formula similar to that used in establishing rentals for public housing tenants.)

Although the government has been content to ignore the problems of housing in the private sector for many years it looks at

last as if they are at last concerned about the maintenance of a vital environment.

Slums—rural or urban—are created in private housing sector when home owners can no longer afford to keep up their properties, either through inability to raise the money or the realization that improvements will only raise taxes they can ill afford to pay.

We would agree that "the most important factor in encouraging people to look after their property is the confidence they feel in its future," the report says, "and in the continuing attractiveness of the area." Poor construction, neglect, unsightly and unsanitary conditions take years to rectify so the objective must be "to reinforce the efforts of the ordinary individual to look after his own property."

Another recommendation which needs more than hasty scrutiny by the government is one to create a

province-wide system for disposal of car hulks.

Unightly wrecks or cars that refuse to go any further are cluttering up both urban and rural areas in this town, neighboring villages and farms. Removal of these eyesores would help neighborhood aesthetics as well as lifting the ones from neighbors who complain but seldom get action.

All of these recommendations, as we see them, are meant to improve living conditions not to create some huge anti-septic paradise where suspicions of dirt or junk are banned by edicts, and ignored by the sloppy.

We would hope that the government accepts the report as a penetrating look at some very real problems in the province with accompanying imaginative solutions.

Implementation should be the next step—and soon.

## We ape animals and birds . . .

An editorial writer in the Ridgetown Dominion took her own survey of how often animals, birds, fish and even insects penetrate our daily speech.

It was a headline entitled, "This Grandfather is Still a Lion," which started mental processes moving. About a late-comer to big time auto racing, who still indulges in the sport though a grandfather and 43 years old, the headline writer adapted the simile.

We do use expressions such as he is a "bear for punishment" or "stubborn as a mule." We rail at the road hog. An older person is often as frisky as a colt, or someone eats like a horse. There are wolves in sheep's clothing, sly as a fox and

some refer to wives as hounds for bargains.

Other examples? We can act like a bull in a china shop or possess a whale of an appetite.

The wife may be a mouse when it comes to mingling with guests at a party and chicken out when it comes to welcoming some of her husband's friends, but she eats like a bird, is busy as a bee and a cute chick.

She is such a calf when it comes to travelling on a plane but behaves like a wildcat if forced to go against her wishes. He has horse sense, is wise as an owl when it comes to handling women and has eyes like a hawk when she comes home with

a new dress which stretches the budget to the breaking point.

The close-pursed relative is tight as a . . . clam. Modern form of greeting — "You old dog, you!"

The neighbor lady may sing like a canary but neighbors feel she has the voice of a crow. Some people waddle like ducks. And who hasn't been busy as a bee?

People are quick to note that birds of a feather flock together. Who hasn't referred to someone as that "worm". Common shunning of surprise is mixed up in terms like that "snake in the grass."

All these similes suggest that perhaps we resemble the lower animals and birds more than we care to admit.

## Free Press back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, September 7, 1950

School bells have summoned over 500 students back to their places this week in Acton schools. Principal McKenzie reports an increase in attendance over last year and this year the school will handle 386 pupils in 10 rooms. The rotary system will be inaugurated in grades five to eight. Mr. McKenzie and Mr. Smith will be in charge of the Social Studies in the four grades. Miss Foster will assist the music supervisor Miss Stewart, and Mrs. Wilkinson will be in charge of science. Enrolment at the high school reaches a new peak of 127. The teaching staff is Principal Robbins, Mr. T. Hansen, Mrs. Robbins, Miss Gammie, Miss Grindley and Mr. Ross Doyle.

Several of the lower grades are split up in two rooms. Mrs. Alger now teaches grades one and two; Miss Williams grades two and three and Miss Griffin three and four. Miss Anderson will teach grade four, Miss Bentley grade one and Miss McPhail—the kindergarten.

Russell Howard Neville of Eden Mills died in Guelph General Hospital in his 35th year after a lengthy illness.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, August 29, 1895.

One of the biggest day's threshing ever accomplished in this section was performed on Monday for Mr. David Williamson. William Cripps was the manipulator of the machine which turned out 1,625 bushels of grain in 10 hours and 29 minutes, as follows: 125 bushels of peas, 290 of wheat, 300 of barley and 910 of oats. This work required five changes during the day and meant considerable hustling.

The following are the selections of literature in the H. S. Entrance examination for 1896: Selections for memorization: The Bells of Shandon, To Mary in Heaven, Ring Out Wild Bells, Lady Clare, Lead Kindly Light, Before Sedan, To a Skylark, The Three Fishers, Elegy written in a Country Churchyard. (The reading list is too long to publish but includes such sentimental selections as: To Daffodils, Rule Britannia, The Death of Little Nell, The Evening Cloud, A Psalm of Life, The Exile of Erin, Ye Mariners of England, The Capture of Quebec, The Raven, Indian Summer, The Cane-Bottomed Chair, The Return of the Swallows.)

## 50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, September 16, 1920.

The Toronto Star the other evening published the following item: "An Earls Court poultry fancier has established a record in the district. His 12 hens have presented him with 837 eggs within 10 months." "Pshaw!" said John Kenny of Bower Ave. as he read this from his paper in the post office. "I have hens that can beat that. I have 10 hens which have laid 1,110 eggs in eight months."

Excavations have been made for the splendid memorial monument to be erected as Acton's contribution to the memory of their brave soldier heroes, and the cement foundations are now being put in. The German trench mortar to be placed beside the monument has arrived from Ottawa and has been placed on the town hall square. The members of the Epworth League have been spending the past two months in weekly athletic exercises.

The shrill whistle and steady hum of the threshing machine are heard in our midst again.

Thomas Nelles, Nassagaweya, who was struck by lightning three months ago, was in town for the first time since the incident.



## Photos from the past



STUDENTS AND STAFF of Acton Continuation School in 1929-30: back row left to right John Wilson, Stewart Ruddick, William Near, Aileen Clarridge, Gladys Agar, Bessie Rawlings, Isabel Switzer, Joe Kelly, Basil Mellon, Gordon Hansen, Stewart Lantz, Bill Williams,

William Johnson, Tom Nicol, Ted Hansen, Harry Norton, Bill Wilson, Jack Skilling, Gordon Cook, Bert Hinton, Murray Smith, Milton Rynard, Gordon Leslie, Muriel Agar, Audrey McComb, Olive Rookes, Esther Taylor, Harvey Hassard, Clifford Webster, George Molozzi;

front row left to right Velma Blair, Adabel Brown, Barbara Guthrie, Laura Wiley, Clara Bauer, Catherine Mackie, Marjory Cross, Laura Hall, Marguerite Roszell, Marjory Near, Isabel M. Smith, Isabel Smith, Miss Bertha Nephew, principal Mr. Laurence, Miss Rynard,

Isabel Bruce, Lillian Perry, Doris MacDonald, Lorna McComb, Helen Ostrander, Claire Garden, Marjory Garden, Orval Chalmers, Violet Currie.

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