

## Report revealing, commendable . . .

The 1970 financial report of the Halton Board of Education is an informative documentation of the costs of running what is acknowledged to be one of the most efficient boards in the province. Dated February, it is being circulated in readable form through a special financial edition of the Halton Education News.

When you receive yours, take time to study it thoroughly since this is where over half your municipal tax dollar is spent.

The report reveals the board was within a few hundred dollars of their \$36 million budget in actual expenses, a fact which requires effective control, as Education News modestly asserts. There may have been some juggling to come up with figures that close, but most taxpayers will agree that the mechanics of the operation are being handled with care due an enterprise of such magnitude.

Reductions in the mill rates in six of the seven Halton municipalities were due in great part to increases in grants from the provincial government but Nassagaweya was sequestered with an increase of six mills. The board claims part of the credit for reducing the mill

rate with policies, practices and procedures established in 1969.

Nassagaweya's startling hike was due to an error in estimating the provincial equalization figure which resulted in an under-levy the year previous. Acton, on the other hand had a \$20,000 overlevy imposed and the 5.9 reduction was in large part due to that factor, as well as to efficient procedures and increased government grants.

It is very difficult to gauge whether the \$4 million increase the board levied last year was necessary.

Provincial grants made up the difference so the taxpayer's direct levy remained substantially unchanged. Provincial grants, of course, are out of the same pockets, but redistributed on the provincial level.

Municipal taxes make up 48 per cent of the board's revenue while provincial grants take care of 51 per cent, a figure which is forecast to rise to 60 per cent in 1972.

It is interesting to note instruction comprises 71 per cent of the board's expenditures and debenture charges account for 12 per cent which really

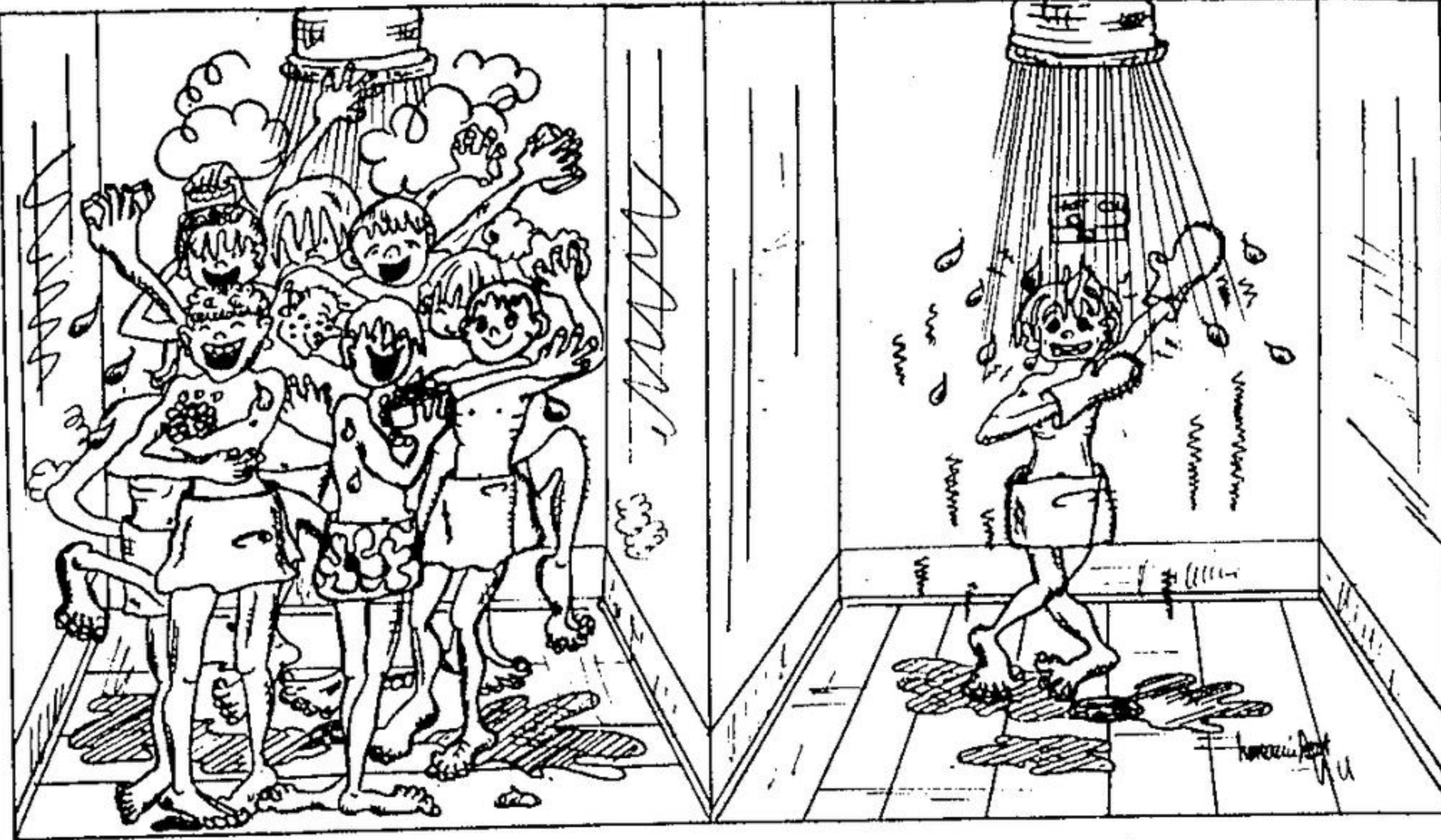
leaves the board only 17 per cent on which to operate. (Councils of the county fond of pointing out that when the education levy is extracted they are left with little to operate on will no doubt be surprised the board is in similar straightjacket.)

Compared against nearby boards of education of similar size the costs per pupil for the Halton board are surprisingly good especially at the secondary level.

There is also a substantial reduction in the capital budget, which is the amount of money borrowed each year to provide school sites, buildings and equipment. The board estimates it will cost \$19,225,000 over the next five years to finance facilities for additional students and upgrading present schools, all of which must be borrowed.

It is difficult to criticize the budget from a layman's point of view since it reflects a down-to-earth approach to education that critics of the board had claimed was lacking.

The report also makes it clear why Education Minister Davis uses the Halton board as his showpiece.



Group therapy?

Mild, isn't it?

A NEWS ITEM in the Free Press of January 27 stating hockey teams can't shower at the arena unless they all get in at once, tickled the fancy of writer Lorraine Root and with a little urging she turned her cartooning talent to good use,

visualizing the scene much as it must appear. Cause of the group therapy was the lack of hot water due to the old age of the water heater and it is reliably reported that replacement is on the books.



### Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

There's nothing like a solid stretch of really cold weather to remind you that Nature still packs a mighty wallop, despite all man's ingenuity in trying to keep his chin covered.

We've had a dandy around here — day after day of below-zero temperatures. Even though they have been bright, the sun had about as much effect on the atmosphere as a fried egg, sunny-side up.

Everyone enjoys the first couple of days of such a spell. We all feel like hardy pioneers when we stomp in out of the cold, eyes and noses running, and exchange such inanities as "That's a real snapper" and "cold 'nuff fer ya?"

But after a week or so, it begins to get to you. You begin to remember those stories about people who go mad in the rainy season, or when the sirocco is blowing.

It doesn't affect the kids. They love it, bundled to the nose and full of warm, red blood. Most of the elderly hate it, and visibly shrink. It doesn't bother the outdoor enthusiasts, because they keep warm doing something. They can't lick it, so they join it.

It's the ordinary, simple, every-day householder like me who begins to feel the pinch, and develops a deep gloom. When you turn the key in the car and it just groans like

a wounded buffalo, before expiring. When you look up at the ever-thickening ice on the roof and remember you've just had your living-room redecorated, and know it's going to cost \$30 to have it chipped off. And finally, when your downstairs facilities don't work, and you realize with horror that even in this day of oil furnaces, inside pipes can freeze.

And the oilman cometh. And cometh and cometh.

This is the time when you should stop and realize how lucky you are, instead of bending everybody's ear with your petty woes. You should remember how it used to be.

Like most Canadians, I was brought up on cold winters. Earliest recollections are of midwinter Sunday mornings. My mother would take my kid brother and me into bed with her where we'd help ourselves to the breakfast-in-bed she always got Sunday mornings, and listen with fear and fascination to her tales of winter on Calumet Island, in the Ottawa River. The best was about the time Lady, the dainty little mare, went through the ice and the dreadful time they spent trying to rescue her. I think she died.

Then there was my Dad. He hated winter and made no bones about it. It was

Depression times, and the coal bill was an albatross around his neck. He was a mild, gentle man, never known to say anything stronger than "shoot". But inside him was some of the wild despair of his Irish forefathers.

When he'd go down to fire up the furnace, I'd get my ear up against the furnace-pipe and listen with delight to language that should have given me curly hair, interspersed with the occasional clang, when he'd belt the furnace with his shovel out of sheer rage.

I spent a winter in northern England, with archaic and often non-existing heating equipment, except in the pubs. Sheer, clammy misery, except in the pubs. I spent another in Germany on the Baltic Sea, with very little food and almost no heat. Not much joy there.

Then I got married. Our first place had two wood stoves. I'd hop out of bed, plunk my freezing baby in with his warm mother, and rustle up two fires. Then I'd take a roll of newspaper into the cellar, set fire to it, and unfreeze the water pipes which froze solid every night. Then off through the zero to the newspaper office, which boasted one of the last wood-burning furnaces on the continent. You could see your breath in the place until about 11 a.m.

We graduated to a coal furnace, which did nothing but produce in me the same violence and frustration my father had felt twenty years before.

When I think of those days, and step out of bed into a pleasantly oil-heated house, I realize what a piddling little cold spell we're having now, and almost feel like going out in the snow in my pyjamas and doing some push-ups. Almost.

Fred Dawkins was released from hospital the same day.

Knox church school room was filled to capacity on Sunday evening when members of the four Protestant congregations in Acton met for an hour of fellowship and the annual meeting of the local auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The most interesting event of the evening was the revelation that Mr. A.T. Brown has been secretary-treasurer of the auxiliary for 53 years. His resignation was accepted and by unanimous decision he was made honorary secretary. New officers are President M.M. Coles; Honorary Secretary A.T. Brown; Secretary-Treasurer Charles Land-sborough, Ernest West, Lorne Welch, Arthur Haydon and Dr. A.J. Buchanan.

Last Friday evening a good crowd attended a social evening under the auspices of Local 26, National Shoe and Leather workers in the town hall. The program featured euchre and dancing.

R.R. Parker was chosen president of Acton Fair at the annual meeting Saturday. George Wallace steps up as first vice-president and J.C. Dennis is second vice-president. Weather last year was unfavorable. Total receipts were \$4306 and there is a balance of \$140.

favor of the local boys. Supper was served to the Toronto hockeyists and their followers by the rink management. The carnival in the evening was the big feature, and it was the biggest winter carnival ever held in town. The spectators' benches and stands were filled to capacity and fully 200 appeared in costume on the ice. Costumes were judged and there were races. The fancy skating by Mr. Jack Cawthra of Toronto was of a class seldom seen and the skate waltzing by himself and Miss Macdonald was excellent. During the evening fireworks were displayed and colored searchlights and candles used in a pleasing lighting scheme. An excellent eight-piece band from Toronto furnished the music for the skaters and dancers until 11.15.

The moccasin dance was quite an innovation that seemed to be quite popular, although it is said that those who used rubbers instead of moccasins had much drier feet after their evening's indulgence. Mr. Alex McDonald, mail carrier for Rural Route No. 4, lost his fine little driver on Friday night after a few hours' illness. This faithful little animal had served for seven years on this route and was always reliable.

The 20th annual ball and supper of Acton Fire Brigade in the town hall is counted a record success.

A dastardly attempt at highway robbery was made Saturday night on the York Road between Rockwood and Guelph when Roy Young was stopped. He noticed a rail fence across the road and stopped, then sped away. Three shots were fired.

### 20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, February 1, 1951.

Six bright red mail boxes were put up Wednesday at convenient locations in town, and the first pick up from them was made Thursday by Joseph "Sonny" Jocke, the courier. The boxes will be cleared twice a day except on Sundays.

Mrs. Violet Dawkins, wife of Acton's fire chief Fred Dawkins, is still in hospital with a broken arm and shoulder injuries following an accident which occurred late last Saturday afternoon. Two cars were involved in the accident on No. 7 highway.

### Free Press

back issues

### 75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, January 23, 1896.

Mr. James Matthews, postmaster, met with an accident by which serious results were narrowly escaped. While out driving, his horse shied, upset the cutter and he was thrown against a barbed wire fence. The left side of his face and eyebrows were painfully lacerated. His eyes barely escaped permanent injury.

The annual congregational meeting of Knox church was held on Monday afternoon. The attendance was larger than usual. Reports of the various organizations of the church were presented and showed the finances to be in an advanced state of success. The present membership of the church is 291. The pastor's stipend was increased to \$1000.

The third week of the special services in the Methodist church opened on Sunday with immense congregations. The evening service was possibly the largest ever gathered in the sacred edifice every pew and every step at the pulpit and through the galleries was occupied and about 200 chairs from the school room were placed in the aisles and vestibules. There were between 800 and 900 persons in the audience. A large number have expressed a desire to live Christian lives in the future and rich blessings have been realized by many.

The icemen are busy with the harvest. The crop is very fine this season.

Tenders for wood for Acton public school will be opened next Monday.

New officers of Court Olive branch of the I.O.F. are John McGill, Thomas Gamble, Duncan McDonald, C.C. Speight, David Tovel, Robert Scott, James Lockey, N.G. Moore, Henry Bauer, James Plant, Drs. McKesgue and Wren.

### 50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, February 3, 1921

Saturday was a gala day at the new rink. In the afternoon a hockey match between the club of the Toronto office of Beardmore and Co. and the employees of the firm here was quite a feature. The score was 6 to 2 in

## Rural roads big improvement . . .

A few years ago a snowstorm of last week's magnitude would have isolated some of the more remote rural districts for days and even weeks.

Today, with the help of modern machinery and an around-the-clock vigil, country roads are cleaned off and made passable almost as quickly as those in urban centres.

This improvement in winter communications revolved around the

automobile. Before there was a car or truck in almost every country home, farmers depended on the horse and sleigh for transports, often over roads which would be impassable for other types of vehicle traffic. Few had tractors.

If the road was impassable for horses, it was not unusual for a farmer to take to the fields with horses and sleigh, bypassing drifted roads.

Winter for some remote farms meant isolation when the snow became deep. We can remember instances where snowstorms meant virtually no communication because telephone wires sometimes expired with the roads.

Because farmers were self sustaining few worried about them. Spring would spring the trap.

When communications led by the automobile became more rapid there was a new migration — from city and town — to country. Urban people, living in the country expected the same conveniences they enjoyed in city or town. Townships purchased or hired modern snow cleaning equipment to keep abreast of the new demands. In the process improvements attracted more people to rural areas. School buses required better and more passable routes.

There are problems. Country roads, exposed to the vagaries of the winds, still get choked with snow. And despite the best efforts of those who man plows, it takes some time to make them passable because of long distances and few machines involved.

In any event, most people will agree that the last decade has seen a big change in rural winter travel and few, if any, would want to return to the "good old days"

Courtesy in driving should also be extended to pedestrians. Remember pedestrians in a crosswalk have the right-of-way at all times.



### Salt and Pepper by hartley coles

I've always wondered what the most sensitive part of my anatomy is, but it took a plunge by the mercury to reveal the answer, it's my ears—as it should be with a newspaperman.

Walking through last Wednesday's brisk below zero temperatures to put this paper to bed, I neglected to wear a hat to cover the two appendages that stick out on either side of the skull.

When I arrived at the office with both hands wrapped around my ears, I discovered Jack Frost had already slipped past and turned them to chunks of ice. They hurt like hives all week every time I went near the heat. Around Monday the skin started to peel.

By this time next week I should have a brand new outer layer on both receiving sets that may not help the hearing but are capable of making me more hidebound than ever.

Speaking of ears, it brings back an incident which turned my ears red Saturday on 7 Highway, between Rockwood and Guelph.

Roads were icy. My wife and I were cruising along with some caution when all of a sudden the car skidded on an extremely treacherous stretch of road.

I pulled into the skid in the same manner as I have pulled out of dozens of others — but the car kept skidding, started lurching for the ditch on the other side of the highway. I pulled on the wheel again in the direction of that skid. Sure enough it started in the right direction but failed to straighten out.

We landed in a good sized snowbank, narrowly missing a telephone pole. The rear end sat in a position that manual labor would never correct.

Both of us sat there for a few seconds, thankful there was no traffic coming the other way when the car started to skid. Doubly thankful we missed the pole. But after a few more seconds my better half enquired tactfully:

"Do you think you might have oversteered?" I thought I was going to get an earful so the diplomacy of the question left me momentarily stunned. I recovered sufficiently to suggest that my skill at the wheel had saved us from a head-on with a pole. I reconstructed the scene endeavoring to show how I turned the vehicle so the snowbank would absorb the full impact on the side of the car.

She was unimpressed.

After the tow truck had pulled us out and we had again reconstructed the skid, I wasn't so sure I hadn't oversteered. I was tempted to suggest that the next time we went into a skid she should take over. My record for losing disagreements is almost intact, however, and I didn't want to start winning while I was ahead.

So I merely said, "Ah well, there was no damage to the car, anyway."

### Photos from the past



AFTERMATH OF a snowstorm years ago shows Mill St. plugged solidly with snow. The picture above is taken at the corner of Mill and Main and the picture below at the corner of Mill and Willow. Due to a more liberal use of horse power in those days, travel by cutter was possible despite the heavy snow. Most of today's storm troubles stem from the necessity to travel by car and the increasing distance between home and work.

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