



DWARFED BY ACTON'S huge 60,000 gallon water tower are Sharon Kirkwood and Penny Norrie, both 10. The girls were among spectators who watched the local landmark fall to the wrecker's hammer last Wednesday. The tower, which hasn't

been in use since the town's reservoir on Churchill Road North was built, had to be felled to make room for a condominium house development.—(Staff Photo)



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

For years I have been a tree-lover. Not that I knew anything about them, or ever planted any. But I did know the common varieties. And I did have a feeling that they were something special in a world steadily growing more ugly.

I had what you might call the "only God can make a tree" syndrome. There was something mystic about trees. I have written ecstatic columns about the trees around our place: the matronly maples; the magnificent oaks; the towering spruce; the virginly elms; the lilacs; the single butternut.

I have sat in my backyard and watched them by the hour, deeply moved by the human qualities I gave them. Even that dirty great cedar that drips mucus or something all over the clothesline.

I have been fascinated by the clunking of acorns falling, by the sweet, longing whispers of my two elms, by the muttering of the dowager maples, by the solitary arrogance of my spruce, which I have to crawl under to get into my tool-shed.

But I'm beginning to have doubts, like a priest who has been swept away by something he doesn't quite understand, and then discovers that there's something rotten in Denmark. If not in his own backyard.

That snarl you can't quite hear outside my window is a chain saw. The operator is hacking up one of those brooding oaks which came crashing down during yesterday's summer storm, cutting telephone, hydro and indispensable of indispensables, the TV cable wire, both for myself and my next door neighbor.

All I'll get out of that is a bill for \$100 and twelve bucks worth of fireplace wood, too green to do anything but smoulder.

I'd just got back from a long drive in 90-degree heat, lugged in all the junk from the car, and settled in the backyard with a cold drink and the evening paper when nature took one of her whims.

For a few minutes, it was enjoyable. The wind came up. The lawn chairs went flying. The acorns rattled, and leaves and twigs hurled down on me. I even went in and called the girls to come out and enjoy the storm.

Then the trees started to twist and dance. Even the mighty oaks were writhing like tormented creatures. I love storms, but when the rain came I dashed for shelter.

I'd suddenly remembered a storm at the cottage, when I was a kid. Same thing.

Purple sky. Dead calm. Sudden wind of cyclone force that knocked over giant pines like toothpicks, and a torrent of rain. One 80-foot pine snapped about halfway up and smashed through the roof of the cottage.

It wasn't so bad this time, but one of my oaks, with a girth of about 40 inches, lay there like a stricken bull. It had destroyed a fence, several smaller trees. Fortunately our neighbors had got the kids inside before the real fury of the wind broke, and no one was hurt.

This morning I talked to the hydro man who was stringing new lines. He said he and his mates had worked all through the night, in a driving rain, and laconically remarked that it wasn't much fun.

But to get back to trees. They provide shade and they're pretty to look at. What else? They shower you with unwanted leaves in the fall. They suck up all the juice and prevent you having a decent lawn.

My two virginal elms have been raped by the Dutch disease. It will cost \$200 to have them buried.

My giant spruce is uprooting my garage at a rate of about two inches each year.

My cedar (it must be from Lebanon; I've never seen such a gawky thing in Canada) is little but a rendezvous for mating squirrels.

It would take wild horses to make me cut them all down, but I'm beginning to think that perhaps trees are for the birds.

A taste for brevity . . .

"The horseless carriage will greatly reduce the death rate in cities", Dr. James J. Walsh foretold in 1900. He reasoned that since houseflies like to lay their eggs in horse manure, the coming of the horseless carriage would result in manure-free streets and remove a serious source of infection. The Ontario Safety League says: "Everyone accepted this authoritative statement except the common housefly, which still seems to be circulating around, lighting here and there, laying its eggs and spreading infection. Meanwhile, the horseless carriage, also flourishing prodigiously, is killing us off like flies."

A gas station attendant eyed a sunflower-decorated Volkswagen while the driver, in beard and beads, counted coins to see how much was available. Finally, the attendant said, "Some gas, or shall I just water the flowers?" —The Reader's Digest.

Third anniversary of the invasion of Czechoslovakia was brought forcibly to our attention by a large postcard postmarked Carlisle. It said simply "Remember Czechoslovakia". It was signed Eva Kraus.

Acton author James Henderson's new spy thriller "Copperhead", a hardback book published by Random House, was difficult to procure in nearby bookshops. An obliging colleague visiting Vancouver, bought one at the airport there, and presented it to us this week. We are engrossed in the story. Mr. Henderson and his wife live just outside Acton where, according to the jacket, he enjoys reading bad poetry very late at night.

We are soliciting pictures for our "Photos from the Past" which we hope to start again soon.



It's a good year for political eating.

Tories are serving steak, the Grits are giving out corn while the N.D.P. have an affinity for chicken snacks at recent political picnics but they were all out to make hay for the upcoming provincial election which the fiberts now say will take place around the middle of October. So far, Premier Willie Davis, the Conservative wonder boy from Brampton, hasn't divulged the exact date.

One of our readers thinks he has politicians pegged pretty accurately. He sends a clipping: "Understand they think

some grit got into the voting machines at the recent leadership convention. . . . You could say that politics is a 'promising' career. . . . Don't know why we always pick on the poor politician. After all they haven't done anything."

Apparently some Acton councillor think only 800 Actonians are interested in Acton Rams while 4,000 others couldn't care less. Wonder who conducted the survey?

Lots of comment from readers about Lorraine Root's story about spirits along the Indian Trail. Some said "Ridiculous". Others thought it "Very interesting". Certainly it brought a spate of visitors to the lonely road where it winds through the beautiful Eramosa valley.

So the water tower on the cemetery hill has gone, topped like some spindly-legged giant? Another change which some resent because the 60,000 gallon tank was just painted in new colors just over a year ago at a cost of ??? Times change and the tower was unused but we still feel some sculptor or artistic workman could have made a real conversation piece out of the tank. They could have plunked it down at the park or stuck it by Fairy Lake where a few yards of pipe might have made a unique fountain.

Now the Canadian National Exhibition is in full swing it is a fair warning that summer is waning and autumn is not far behind. Summer months, despite the honest measurement of the calendar, still seem to go quicker than the winter ones—especially in the last weeks.

School creek is eyesore . . .

Acton council is right. Something should be done soon to clean up the school creek, where it flows past the public library.

We have watched the creek slowly deteriorate all summer, figuring that soon someone would appear and do something about the weeds growing out of the creek bed. What was one of the town's beauty spots is now an eyesore.

When the new library was erected in centennial year, the grounds around enhanced the building, weeds were kept down, and the creek dammed so there was a small lake along the front of the Robert Little school grounds. There has been a gradual deterioration

in the maintenance of the area until the library's appearance in now affected by the look of the mess in front.

The arched bridge which once reflected in the placid pool now surmounts a bed of weeds, which grow taller every week. The make-shift dam can no longer hold water for any period of time so the summer's low water levels obscure the creek in the weeds.

Motorists used to give the library and its environs more than a passing stare as they journeyed through Acton. Now they continue on their way with hardly a glance.

Councillor Norm Elliott summed up the problem pretty well when he told

council that the library is a "jewel that should have a setting" that shows it off.

Perhaps some thought should be given to building a dam further back from the bridge. This would create a small lake, add a waterfall to further enhance the grounds and at the same time eliminate a flood problem over the bridge at high water.

Councillors seemed to think it was the Halton Board of Education which has jurisdiction over the creek and its banks. If that's the case they should be informed of the eyesore and requested to do something about it, even if it means enforcing the Noxious Weed Act.

Free Press Editorial Page

Bureaucracy strangling us? . . .

Anyone who has been aggravated by the complicated labyrinth created by official bureaucracy which seems to be part and parcel of modern living will agree with the comments from the fine editorial page of the St. Marys Journal-Argus.

The Journal-Argus says modern forms of government lean heavily on assorted departments to run all aspects of life and are creating a series of "monsters" insofar as numerous citizens are concerned.

"From all directions we hear stories of 'buck passing' vain attempts to get any form of satisfaction from government controlled bodies, and a general public feeling that 'stacked-up' bureaucracy is slowly strangling the entire country.

"Two examples of this public reaction have been in the news lately. The most dramatic was that of the man in Chatham who ran the best part of a

mile carrying a sledgehammer, to systematically smash up equipment and furniture in a welfare office.

"While we cannot condone violence as such, we must admit that similar urges come to most of us when faced with some of the more infuriating aspects of control in these times.

"The case brings to mind a stern lecture delivered to troops in Holland after the last war. Service men in Aldershot, England, had the day previously smashed shop windows and generally tore up the town (as a protest against the slow homeward transport of troops).

"Said the Major: "This sort of thing will do you no good at all." He paused before adding: "At least, I don't think it will."

"A muffled chortle passed through the ranks.

"From time immemorial, protest if vigorous enough has reflected in

change of one sort or another. Some admittedly bad, some for good.

"In Toronto recently, a school child drowned in a school swim pool. Police had to wait some five hours before they secured the names of the persons in charge of the pool at the time of the tragedy. The Director of Education for the area was "in a meeting," or some such excuse, and could not be reached. The police, quite naturally, were more than a little irritated by the entire affair.

"Facts concerning the case came up at the inquest, providing further damaging evidence of the bumbling officious attitude prevalent in all levels of government bureaucracy.

"People, being human, will stand for only so much of this attitude on the part of people who are, after all, public servants. The day of reckoning may be fast approaching."

OUR READERS WRITE:

The Editor, Acton Free Press.

Dear Sir:

If I may, I would like to tell the Free Press of my ideas about boys and books.

Two boys had done me a favor, so I invited them in for a rest. While I was absent for a moment, I heard one whisper "Books", and when I returned, they were looking at the book shelves.

"You like books?" I queried.

"Ya".

"What kind?"

"Mystery."

"The 'Lassie' books and the 'Little'

books are not mysteries", I answered, "and they are most interesting."

They did not seem too familiar with these books.

Could it be, we parents are starving our boys for books which cost so little, while we indulge ourselves in expensive television? Libraries are all right, but a boy wants a book for his own, to read it, to re-read it, to place it on his own book shelf, to prize it, and

say "That's mine".

The books by that young author Jean Little, of nearby Guelph, Ont. ("Mine For Keeps") etc., should be read by every boy and girl. They are Canadian. They are good.

And if they want books about Pioneer school days, they have a treat in store for them, when they read the works of that Manitoban writer of long ago, Ralph Connor. His book "Glenarry School Days" about pioneer school life in Ontario, is both exciting and informative.

Let your boy have books.

Yours truly,
Millicent Milroy.

Free Press back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, September 6, 1951

Three young children are left motherless following a tragic accident on No. 7 highway. Mrs. Harry Ware was instantly killed near Rockwood. All three youngsters and their father are still in hospital. Mrs. Ware is the former Barbara Mae Taylor of Acton. She was a good student and very active in church work. Rev. W. G. Luxton conducted the funeral service Tuesday and interment followed in Rockwood cemetery.

From across the Dominion and across the seas, Rover Scouts, the Boys Scout Association's senior organization, gathered at Blue Springs scout reserve over the weekend for the first Canadian Rover Moot. More than 500 attended the Canadian gathering. Stanley Hall M.P.P., Mayor Tyler and Lieutenant Governor Ray Lawson were on the reviewing stand for the march past on Sunday. Stores were set up in large marquees by Watson's Dairy Bar and Elliott Bros. to provide the men with food for their outdoor cooking.

For four days a daily newspaper for the Moot was published at the Free Press office. Copy came in at 7 p.m. and the copies were out by 5 a.m. Labor Day really had meaning.

Telescopes are provided at the C.N.E. where viewers may glimpse a view of the huge craters and great mountain ranges on the moon.

Mr. James Chalmers attended a reunion at Grand Rapids, Mich., of veterans of the Spanish-American War and enjoyed meeting old friends, some of whom he had not seen for 50 years.

The Sunday School room in the United church was painted pale pink this week. Miss Clara Grindley docked in Canada Saturday after spending the summer in Europe. She was back at Acton high school for opening day.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, September 1, 1921

Frank Holmes, driver, has been named to fill the vacancy on council caused by the death of Councillor Mullin. Mr. Holmes,

while not anxious for the nomination, is willing to fill the vacancy until the end of the year. He was in Toronto on business when the nomination was made.

Mr. J. M. Roszell, who has been principal of Acton's Public and Continuation Schools since the retirement of Inspector W. H. Stewart, has announced that he accepted the position of headmaster at Bradford. The board is naturally somewhat embarrassed at this turn of events since they had engaged him at an increased salary of \$1,900 on the understanding he would remain at least two years.

Messrs A. O. T. Beardmore and Gordon Beardmore are contestants in the polo matches at Toronto this week.

As a result of a detailed explanation of how to procure Hydro light and power and the rates chargeable, at an enthusiastic meeting near Postville, a large number of farmers in Trafalgar township have decided to install the service at once.

A reunion known as the Kitching-Watson reunion took place at "Elje Spring" park, the grounds so popular in this community. Over 75 persons represented for the most part the direct descendants of the late John Kitching and Ann Watson, pioneer settlers in Nassagaweya.

At Rockwood, Mr. Harris is having a bowling green prepared and the men of the village are anxious to get started at the new game. The other evening 14 of them visited Guelph to get ideas and learn how the game is played.

Elderberry pickers are busy these days.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press September 3, 1896

Rev. Hugh A. Macpherson was given charge of Knox church in interesting ceremonies at a most auspicious inaugural. On Tuesday the people of Knox Church were in exuberant spirits and the occasion was a succession of events from morning till night. Presbytery met in the morning and dinner was served to them. The induction service began at 2 p.m. and was lengthy, followed by a sumptuous tea. The program in the evening was also lengthy and included many addresses from visiting clergymen.

Mr. Jos. Croft of Rockwood has an attack of typhoid fever.

Tomatoes are selling at present for 35 cents a bushel.

The welcome music of the school bell was heard on Tuesday morning.

How about civic holiday, citizens? The reeve is ready to proclaim one if you request it. How would next Thursday do?

Two Woodstock hotel keepers have been fined for having their blinds drawn after hours.

The summer days are speeding fast, Jack Frost is nearly due; my loved-one's sunburned nose will soon take on a tinge of blue.

It was reported at council that fireman Campbell's accident on Bower Ave. had cost him 10 days work in addition to his physician's bill. Council agreed he be granted \$15 toward defraying expenses and payment lost due to injuries received while on duty at the fire.

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