



CONSTANTLY BUBBLING water keeps ice from forming on the pond at Beardmore plant. Quacks and honks still relay to the icy conditions of their environment. They waddle up on shore and into pens provided for them. (Photo by K. Dills) mid-summer enthusiasm as the birds seem serenely oblivious



Bill Smiley

Some random shots and shafts this week. Today we were missing some 400 students from among 1,400 at school. That's about double for this time of year. It's the 'flu. I've never seen so many kids and teachers dragging around as though they were not long for this world.

Croaking, sweating, dull gray in color, they are like so many zombies. Why don't they all stay in bed? Well, I have a theory about that. Bed is boring, unless you are engaged in sleeping, or some other pleasurable occupation.

Dental Health Week is upon us, and I can't avoid the feeling that the cruel month of February is the logical time for it.

I have considered dentists as honorable, but mortal enemies since I was a kid. As a teenager, when my teeth had the consistency of cheese, every visit was a traumatic experience. Crawl into the chair, wishing the dentist would have a heart-attack or something before you did. Clutch the arms in a death-grip. Open the mouth and prepare to render up your soul. Mutter "Aggh, Glug", as he asked stupid questions about what grade you were in this year.

My attitude to the man in the white coat didn't change in the service. Just before I was shipped overseas, I had 14 fillings in one afternoon. No anaesthetic. The maniac who did me filled about six canyons, then stuffed

my cheeks with cotton and went into the next room for afternoon tea. I could hear the leopards tinkling and the heartless swine exchanging jests with the nurse as I lay there quivering like a trout just pulled out of the water.

It's not so bad with the new, "painless" drills. But there isn't much to work on any more. I break a piece off a tooth, go to the dentist and whine, "Couldn't you just build that up one more time, Doc?"

It's rather like handing a man a single brick, and asking him to construct a high-rise with it.

However, young Jane Almond of Meaford thinks dentists are pretty fine fellows. She has won a prize and a plaque from them for a poster, chosen the best for Dental Health Week. Jane designed the poster in Grade 5, and she's now only twelve.

And come to think of it, dentists deserve a decent living and some recognition. They are far more interested in saving your teeth than pulling them. And any man who spends a lot of time looking into mouths like mine can't be all bad.

And an Ontario reader who hails from Wrexham, North Wales, wrote after I mentioned that town in a recent column. I spent a dreary winter there during the war. Edward J. Jones wants to know if I wish any old contacts looked up or have any anecdotes for the Wrexham Leader.

Please, Mr. Jones. I am a happily married man. Any old contacts would be strictly out of the picture. As for anecdotes...

You might mention the night they cancelled night-flying, the abomination of fighter pilots, because of fog. We were so overjoyed, both instructors and students, that quite a celebration developed.

It began with hurling empty pint beer-mugs at the clock on the mantel. When we ran out of mugs and clock, another game began. This was an old R.A.F. favorite.

The hero takes off shoes and socks, lies down on his back and blackens the soles of his feet in the cold fireplace. He then makes footprints up the wall, as high as he can reach. He blackens feet again, gets up on a chair and makes further footprints, higher up. This continues until he is held up to the ceiling by some mates standing atop a table. When it's finished, it looks exactly as though someone has taken a run at the wall, gone right up it, across the ceiling and down the other side.

It was hilarious. We topped this off with a game of rigger in the mess. Art by the time this ended, it was a mess indeed.

For some reason, the C.O. was not amused, when he surveyed the mess in the morning. Surly old coot. It cost about 20 of us 10 quid each to redecorate the officers' mess.

Ah, dear. Nowadays they'd call it flagrant vandalism, and sock the taxpayer for the damages. In those days, it was high spirits, and we paid the shot ourselves.

Or, Mr. Jones, you might mention that Wrexham had one of the best hockey teams in England. We were about 80 per cent Canadian, with several hockey players of Jr. A. calibre. Our C.O., an Englishman, had lived in Canada and loved the game. We won every game, except the crucial last one. Our goalie hit the ice with about twelve pints of bitter in him. He was outstanding. Every time the opposing team shot, he'd stop two of the three pucks he saw, but miss the third. Score, 14-2.

And a happy Valentine's Day to all.

Need improved phone directories

Much maligned Old Mother Bell will soon be making an announcement on improvement of its telephone directory system, a representative of the company told Esquesing council recently.

Directories will be revised W. C. Barnes assured councillors. Regional government announcements would also play a big part in changes.

Esquesing deputy reeve Len Coxe echoed a familiar complaint in town and area when he told the Bell man that people from the Georgetown exchange

did not have a book with Acton numbers in it, although it is a free calling area. And vice versa.

Acton is included in the Guelph-Kitchener book while the Georgetown area shares a smaller directory with Brampton, Orangeville and Milton, among others.

Acton phone users also have a free calling area with Rockwood but there is a long distance charge to phone Brookville, the capital of Nassagaweya.

Improvements in directories are long overdue. Mr. Coxe's suggestion that free calling areas be included in

the new directories makes sense, even though they may not be in the same phone district.

Although the company has declared that directories for those within the free calling area are free of charge to those who request them, few people follow the offer up.

Wouldn't it be more convenient for everyone if the directories were sent to subscribers along with their own book? It would also go a long way towards improving the Bell Image which is slightly tarnished in this area, anyway.

Free Press Editorial Page

4 The Acton Free Press, Wednesday, February 7, 1973

Unemployment insurance valuable

Unemployment Insurance, possibly the best buffer ever devised against a major depression, is getting slapped across both ears with almost monotonous frequency these days. Granted, the changes made in the act by the Liberal government a year or so ago were not well thought out, but the intent was probably good. At least we can give the party marks for an effort.

From the days the Unemployment scheme was broadened to include seasonally employed help, trouble has been brewing. The up-grading of benefits in the last change of the Act merely added a few gallons of highly volatile fuel to a fire that has been smouldering for years.

For a start, we maintain the plan should be restricted to regular, not seasonal workers, thus making the

fund automatically much more self-supporting. The eight week qualifying work period was a horrible blunder. The period should be smartly increased to at least twenty weeks.

Facing facts, the so-called welfare burn should not be blamed for the present debacle simply because these people never have been on the work force in any great numbers. We submit that the main offenders are part-time, relatively well-heeled free-loaders, taking advantage of a good thing.

The suggestion that the fund should be eliminated as a source of retirement income for a period does not sit well with this writer. Personally, adding up the years, we will have paid into the fund a total of thirty-six years before retirement. If God willing, the writer is still kicking by 1981, he expects to get a little jam out of this fund.

In fact if no final benefit is available from what should be considered only as built up equity, this lad, for one, will raise a little old-fashioned Cain and put a prop under same.

Kicking off the well-heeled free-loaders is one thing. Knocking out people who have paid in without drawing out for well over 30 years is quite another.

We will admit Unemployment Insurance is basically "term", but for the people who have supported the less fortunate in some cases and the deliberate looters in others over the years, such a final pay-off is only their just due, in our opinion.

The ills of the fund can easily be cured by chopping in the proper places. The benefits of such insurance are too visible to allow the plan to fall into disrepute.—St. Mary's Journal-Argus.

Back Issues of The Free Press

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 12, 1953.

"Operation Flood Relief" sprang into action in Acton Wednesday night of this week as representatives of various organizations gave an enthusiastic green light to the suggestion that "maybe something should be done" to assist the unfortunate people in Great Britain and the Netherlands whose homes and land were swept away in the worst floods on record. Joe Hurst was named to head the committee of five to "start the ball rolling." Lakeside chapter of the I.O.D.E. started the fund off with a pledge of \$200 and principal

McKenzie reported the plans of the school to present their operetta Tom Sawyer on Thursday evening with all proceeds to flood relief. Named to the committee were E. Tyler, G. W. McKenzie, Mrs. Finlay and Mrs. Bean with J. McGeachie as clerk. Other representatives indicated their groups would co-operate.

Rae and Velma West were elected president of the United church couples' club with Don and Annette Van Fleet vice-president, Cranston and Chris Griese secretary, Jack and Bunny Stewart treasurer and Edgar and Marie Bliton pianists.

H. Deveau reported someone stayed in the Roxy theatre at the end of the final show Monday and tried to locate money but nothing was taken.

Principal Robbins showed slides of his Christmas trip to Florida to the high school students and to the Rotary club this week.

Mrs. G. W. McKenzie was elected regent of Lakeside chapter of the I.O.D.E.

Bob Holmes required 30 stitches to his right hand when he got caught in a carding machine at the Wool Combing plant.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of February 1, 1923.

The fancy dress carnival at Acton rink on Saturday evening attracted a large attendance of costumed skaters and visitors. The ice in the well-lighted rink was in good condition and the scene was a pretty one when the large company appeared together in kaleidoscopic array on the ice. Winners were best lady Miss A. Clarke as Bo Peep; Miss Jean Kennedy as Pierrot; gents E. Gamble as Highlander, F. Morris as jockey; boys' race under 18 A. Bishop, G.

Masales; best costume girls under 18 Dorothy Campbell snowman; V. Rumley nurse; boys under 18 W. Coleman rajah; E. Cotes as Mrs. Murphy; girls' race Miss V. Rumley, Miss Jean Kennedy; best costumed couple Mr. and Mrs. L. B. Shorey sheik and queen; Mrs. S. McLam knitting bag and Mrs. G. Bishop Black Prince; boys' race under 14 James Massey, Fred Ewing; girls' race under 14 Gwen Maddock, Addie Hurst; obstacle race H. Dorsey, H. Kennedy; best dancers, couple, Miss S. McLam and Mr. A. Mochrie; Miss Jessie McGregor and Mr. G. Bishop; most original costume Doris Holloway as Jackie Coogan; Dorothy Ewing as Britannia. Acton Citizens' Band discoursed a splendid program.

Influenza is epidemic in many parts of Ontario. There has not been so much illness since the flu epidemic of 1918.

Last Thursday evening the employees of the Shoe Factory met at the post office at 7.30 and went by sleigh to the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. Early, Nassagaweya. They enjoyed singing to the organ and dancing and a midnight supper. It was 2.30 a.m. when somebody thought it was time they were getting home and they reached Acton at 3.40. There were no absentees from work the following morning.

Old Bruin had no difficulty in seeing his shadow on Candlemas Day.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 10, 1898.

An important session of Council was held on Tuesday evening at Sunderland Villa, the home of the reeve. The liquor license bylaw was passed limiting the number of licenses to three with a fee of \$125. A bylaw was passed appointing a municipal officer to attend to the following duties: assessor, collector, sanitary inspector, caretaker for the town hall, caretaker of public school, caretaker of public park, caretaker of cemetery, lamplighter, repairing and building sidewalks, cutting weeds, village constable, pound-keeper, and whatever other duties may be required. R. D. Graham, the present incumbent, was re-engaged at an increase of salary to \$450 per annum though members of council were not unanimous in support of the increase.

Council appointed three members of the library board, Rev. James McLachlan, Mrs. H. A. Macpherson, and H. P. Moore.

The municipal treasurer was authorized to deposit all monies received by him for taxes etc. in the bank of Storey, Christie and Co., Acton and all monies received on account of sinking fund in the Bank of Hamilton, Georgetown.

The clerk was instructed to correspond with Mr. Parke, electrician of Berlin, requesting him to give a detailed statement of the cost of an electric light plant of sufficient capacity to supply Acton with an arc and incandescent service, also the cost of fuel and other running expenses.

Councillor Murray introduced the matter of ringing the town bell for the church services on Sunday morning. The matter was favorably received but held over with a view to securing uniformity in the hours of services. The auditor's report was presented, and 300 copies are to be printed. The meeting adjourned at 9.30 p.m.

Mini-Comment . . .

Acton mayor Les Duby thinks North Halton would be the suitable name for the area which encloses Acton, Georgetown, and most of Esquesing and Nassagaweya in one proposed municipality. If that is not popular he would like to see MT. EGAN selected as the area's name. EGAN of course, is a compound of the first letter of the four northern municipalities and the MT. stands for Mount in recognition that this area is several hundred feet above the municipalities to the south, thanks to the presence of the Niagara Escarpment, commonly called "the mountain." Other names we have heard suggested? How about "Escarpmento" which reporter Ralph Kelly, dreamed up?

The Globe and Mail says those who howled longest and loudest at the recent regional government proposals were, of course, those who wanted their pie left as it was, such as Mayor Hazel McCallion of Streetsville, and those who wanted to get their hands on a much bigger pie, such as Mayor Coppins, of Hamilton. Many showed their displeasure announcement night with loud razors for the Minister, showing they not only lacked good manners but knew TV and radio transmitted boos to a much wider audience than in the auditorium. The Globe suggests the provincial government has been called upon to perform as Solomon in the Burlington-Hamilton case. We would suggest they'd be better performing as

Joshua, and knock some of the walls down which divide communities.

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We don't think there should be any difficulty in deciding where Burlington should go in a new regional system. The people of Burlington voted overwhelmingly to stay in Halton where they have been since Joseph Brant buried his hatchet at the former Wellington Square. Hamilton never has had a claim on the Halton community other than claiming it was an extension of the Steel City by geography, and casting covetous eyes on assessment. Burlington, of course, would rather be a big frog in the Halton pond than a tadpole on a Hamilton hook-up.

Chivalry still exists in the world of pork, if nothing else. Consider the pig which became a ham. His last act was to give his seat to a lady, in a sandwich.

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During the nine months ended last December 21, the weather on a degree basis was 18 per cent colder than in the same period of 1971, says a report from the gas company. Obviously the weather is trying to make up for the harsh treatment of last year with warmer than normal temperatures this winter. Let us hope the warming trend stays with us through spring and summer as well even if the company gets gas pains.

Herald suggests carving Halton into five areas

Although there seems to have been little adverse reaction from residents of Georgetown to the proposed regional government set-up announced on January 23, possibly because the town would dominate the North Halton area, not all is considered rosy, as some politicians seem to think.

In the February 1 issue, the Georgetown Herald, which deferred any comment until then, has decided there are disadvantages to the proposed North Halton area which centre around the inclusion of two established urban communities in one area government.

This is what the Herald, says editorially:

NOT ALL GOOD

"Theory and practice are not always compatible.

Regional government, has announced last week for Halton County, has one decided drawback for this area-inclusion of

two established urban communities in one area government.

"While this is not unique, we question the wisdom of operating one municipality with two sizeable communities eight miles apart.

"In most cases, where a larger region has been created, such towns are much closer together geographically and can be fitted together with a minimum of inconvenience.

"In Halton, other major towns will be the only urban centre of a new area.

"Surely an extra area would still fulfill requirements and accomplish the aims of a larger region.

"Georgetown and a portion of Esquesing could be one area.

"Acton, Nassagaweya and perhaps a small portion of Esquesing could be another.

"This would eliminate most of the fighting which is bound to result when the four portions of North Halton try to get together on the make-up of a new area council.

NOT SO NEW

"Examining Halton's new look, it would seem that a region could have been created with less fanfare and less fuss by phasing out Halton's two remaining townships, and making a few boundary changes.

"Nelson and Trafalgar townships disappeared into Oakville and Burlington some years ago, with slight opposition.

"Esquesing and Nassagaweya could have gone the same way, at the same time altering boundaries where needed, as has been done in the new plan.

"Essentially, Halton's regional government sticks to county boundaries,

and we have had a two-tier regional set-up for decades.

"All that needed doing was to turn over more powers to county council, have five area councils instead of seven, and we would have a new look.

"As noted above, the New North Halton area, comprising Georgetown, Acton and the northern parts of Esquesing and Nassagaweya will be unwieldy.

"A rose by any other name" "as the poet says... but it is quite a tug to see historic names like Georgetown and Acton disappear.

Administration will be a problem too.

"Locations of a central municipal office, combining staff, solution of problems not common to both towns, will be difficult decisions."

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