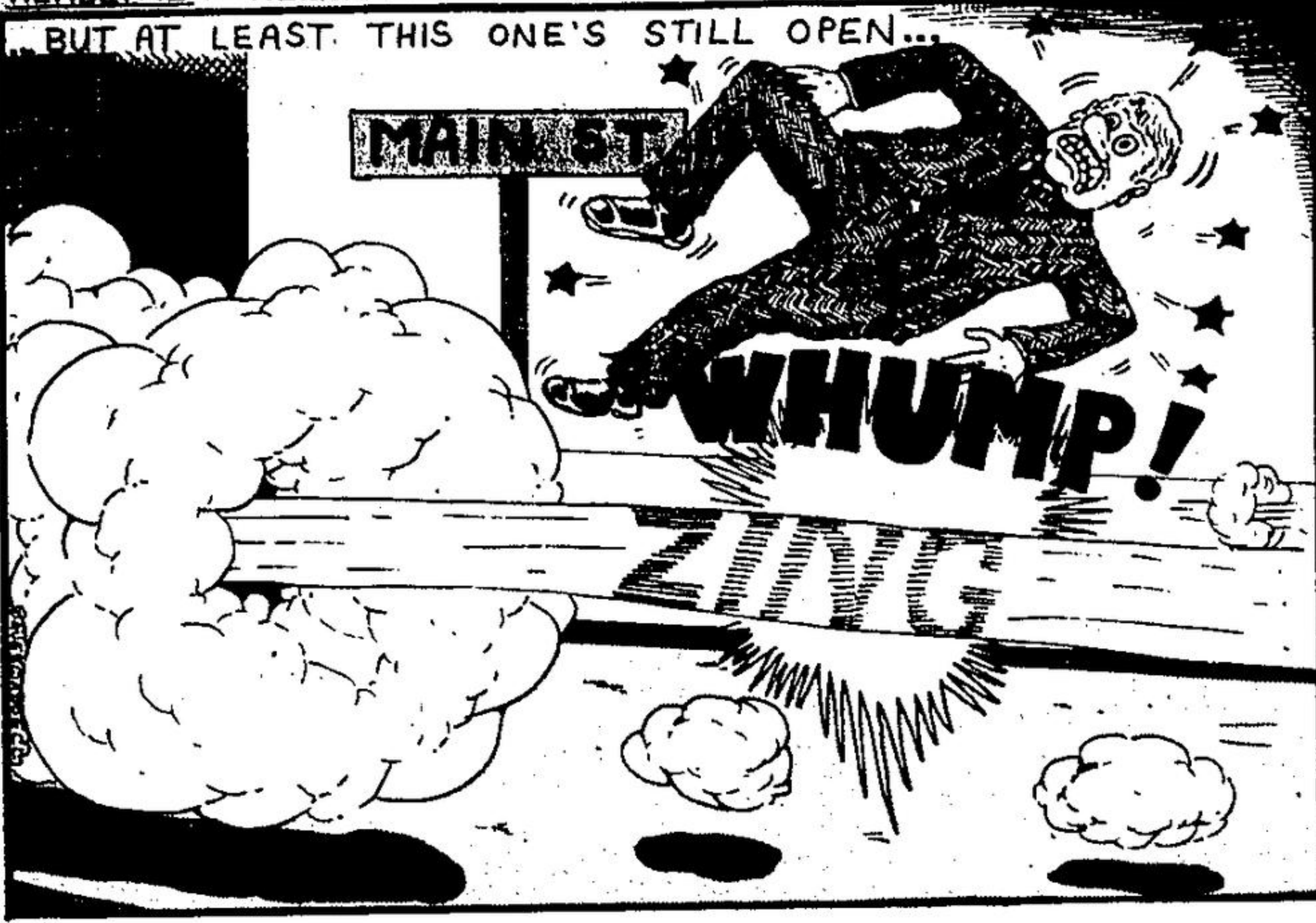


BUT AT LEAST THIS ONE'S STILL OPEN...



Free Press Editorial Page

There appears to be a general and growing concern about the quality of education these days. Not only are teachers concerned, and they are, but students and parents are beginning to feel that they are being short-changed.

A couple of letters to the editors of two daily papers recently were revealing.

In one, a university student stated that he had read a 2,000-word essay written by a friend, who was an honor student. In the essay, there was one (1) sentence which did not have a spelling or grammatical error. And that was the sentence in which he repeated the professor's topic.

In the other letter, a girl who dropped out of school three years ago because of the rigidity of the system, was flaming mad. She returned to Grade 12 this year and discovered, as she put it, "that education had disappeared in the interim."

This young lady said flatly that while teachers used to teach for the average in the class, they are now teaching toward the poorest students, with the keen and bright ones left to fend for themselves. In her opinion, standards had dropped drastically in three years.

There are few teachers who would not agree with her on the last point. Administrators and "educationists", whatever they are, right up to the minister, blandly assure the public, via the media, that standards have not been lowered.

Perhaps they should take off their rose-colored glasses and take a good, clear look at reality. But they have managed to wrap themselves in such a fog of educational jargon that they wouldn't know reality unless it came up and bit them.

What's happened? Maybe I'm prejudiced, but I don't think the fault lies with



Bill Smiley

the teachers. To my definite knowledge, they are working harder than ever, under steadily worsening conditions.

They are teaching as many as two more classes a day than they were three years ago. They are doing more of the unpleasant and uneducational chores than they did. Such a one is "tough patrol" as some teachers call cafeteria supervision. The name is not inaccurate.

A few years ago, supervising a student's dance was an extra chore, but few teachers really minded it. One chatted with the students, deplored their taste in music, but felt that a good time was being had by all.

Everybody was dressed up and happy. The lights in the gym were turned down but not out. There might be the odd case of a kid smoking pot or slightly under the influence but they were rarities. A regular Sunday school picnic.

Nowadays it's more like Saturday night in Dodge City. A darkened gym except for the stage where four or five baboons caper and scream incomprehensibly to the accompaniment of a volume of sound that would make a boiler factory sound like a cemetery.

Someone has thrown up again in the

boys' washroom. Two grim-faced cops stand by the entrance. A teenage girl is caught running not one, but six mickeys of rye.

In the good old days, years ago, a young buck could wear his own mickey in his hip pocket, covered by his jacket. Today, his pants are so tight he couldn't get anything in that pocket so he has some little girl take it in for him. But six!

I'm drifting away from my topic, but not entirely. The defiance of rules, the demand for new "rights" is all part of the school scene today. It's a curious mixture of apathy and mindless defiance.

I sound as though I'm blaming the kids. I'm not. They're human. They'll take what they can get and demand more. They're a pretty decent lot, on the whole. But what girl won't wear hip-huggers if she's allowed to wear jeans, or a blouse slit to the navel if they don't have to wear a bra? What young man of sixteen wouldn't like to have a crack at growing a beard?

No, the real culprit is neither teachers nor kids. It is the little empire-builders in the system. They are so far away from the classroom, and the taxpayers, that they have acquired a god-complex.

They've never been in a classroom, or not for years. And if they are to preserve and expand their empires, they must appear to be doing something. So they scratch each other's backs, come up with revolutionary ideas that were stale 40 years ago, and hide behind a squid-like emission of gobbledeyook such as "input", "feedback", "communications", "concepts" and "individual needs".

These are the barnacles on the good ship Education, and unless she is careened and they are scraped off, ruthlessly, they're likely to sink her.

Tragic slayings shock all of us

The brutality of international guerilla warfare involving civilians was brought home to us forcibly last week with the slayings of Marjan Drijber and Christine Sinclair. Incidents of this nature happen in many places and at many times throughout a year, but it never really sinks in until it involves people you know and with whom you can identify.

We are accustomed to reports of tragedies in far-off places which we tend to think could never happen here, or to us. It just takes a slaying such as the one involving the two Rockwood friends to make us realize how much a part of that far-off world we have become.

It is true as John Donne has

said: "No man is an island, entire of it self. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee."

We offer our sympathy and condolences to the two families who lost the girls in a senseless murder in a quarrel which they likely knew little about and yet now has become frightening reality to family, friends and acquaintances.

Perhaps it does take shocks such as the one last week to make us realize that quarrels which once seemed so far away and belonging to others have now suddenly emerged on our own back door. What affects another part of the

world now suddenly seems to be part of our own.

Perhaps when we next read the statistics from a quarrel in the far east or Ireland, the most recent tragedy will help us realize that those involved were real people not unlike the Marjan Drijbers and Christine Sinclairs on our own threshold—innocent and seemingly not involved in the violent quarrels.

Two young lives were snuffed out in a few moments of tragedy at a famous tourist spot. They cannot be brought back, but if their deaths contribute in any way to solving some senseless slaying in that troubled part of the world it will be some measure of comfort.

Stop smoking - children are worried

Children want their parents to kick the cigarette habit—now!

A U.S. study of 2,000 children showed an astounding finding. Of those aged seven to 12, some 72 percent said they would love their parents more if they stopped smoking.

That almost sounds like withholding love, a discredited parental tactic. Or a promise of extra love if the parents do what the kids want. Actually, the

statement should probably read that children would really love it if their parents quit smoking.

Children are hurt—and puzzled—when their parents persist in doing something they know is bad for them. They want their parents alive and well.

A word about the kids themselves. They have to breathe in the smoke from their parents' cigarettes. New research suggests there is even more tar and nicotine

in the smoke that drifts off the burning end of the cigarette than in the drag the smoker takes. There are also high levels of other damaging substances, like cadmium and carbon monoxide.

If parents smoke, they inhale on each cigarette for about 24 seconds. The total burning time, in which toxic chemicals are released into the air, is 12 minutes.

The pollution lingers for hours.

Mini-Comment

Surprising what paint and elbow grease can do to improve premises which are faded and worn from use. A good example is the auditorium at the community centre where the floors and walls have been painted, windows shined and trophy cases rubbed up. It looks like a different place.

Nothing like a walk in the country these days to see the carpets of marsh marigolds, waving trilliums and other wild flowers. Blossoms are blooming in the trees, the leaves have unfurled and the warm spring air is gradually replacing the frigid arctic breezes which have delayed the season long enough.

Fergus council is considering moving ahead in an arena renovation program originally scheduled for 1978, because of the available attractive federal-provincial winter capital works project grants. The town has decided on a \$150,000 program to renovate the arena and it is felt the application can be made out in time to meet the May 31 deadline.

The hazards of being a reporter extend far beyond the call of duty sometimes. The Fergus-Elora News Express reports that an amicable agreement has been reached

between the Guelph Mercury and the Fergus Fire Department following a recent incident. It seems the fire department took umbrage at a Mercury report of a fire at Belwood Lake when work was hampered by a "chain of unfortunate incidents." At a subsequent fire, a representative of the Guelph daily received a drenching from one of the hoses presumably held by a firefighter. Then it was the paper's turn to show its teeth. Obviously there are better ways to express your feelings when you feel the paper is "all wet."

It took a good strong wind like those of last week to show there is still plenty of dust around on the streets of Acton. Pedestrians were engulfed in great gobs of the stuff left over from winter sand. Some town streets still are not swept and the dust must be a great nuisance to households along them.

We admire Halton M.P. Terry O'Connor for sticking to his abolitionist guns in the current debate about capital punishment, and using his own convictions to guide him instead of being brow beaten by consultants. O'Connor told a Globe and Mail writer he has been going through hell over the issue, losing friends and support but he says he still can't vote for killing people. He

has been surprised by the numbers who want to retain the death penalty and shocked by the vehemence of some of the letters from those who favor hanging. At last count, he had 126 letters opposing his position and 67 in support. He estimates the same number of letters have been received in his constituency office.

Farmers in the area experiencing difficulties in getting agricultural weather information can get some from the following radio stations in the Toronto-Hamilton area—CFRB, Toronto; CBLT, Toronto; CHUM, Toronto; and CHML, Hamilton. The Halton unit of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, is urging farmers to write or phone those stations who do not carry the farm weather bulletin. The information branch has established a code-a-phone at Toronto. Call 924-9606 at any time. Weather forecasts are updated at 8 a.m., 12 noon and 4:30 p.m.

We are increasingly surprised by the upsurge of interest in horses and horsemen in this area. There must be more horses in the area than there ever was at any time in history.

What the weeklies are saying

YOU HAVE RIGHTS... BUT... (St. Mary's Journal-Angus)

We have mentioned the growth of bureaucracy in these columns before and some readers may feel that we over-emphasize. But when one reads a lead editorial in the highly reputable Globe and Mail complaining about the same problem—surely it has long ago extended itself beyond sensible limits.

Says the Globe and Mail writer and we quote only the first portion of the editorial: "Take this form and fill it out. Yes, sir. I'm sorry, you can't deduct this amount. Yes, sir."

Your application for a licence has been received and noted and it will be considered in due course. Yes, sir.

Have you noticed how seldom it is that someone says, "No, I know what my rights are and you're wrong"?

People used to say that, but then they used to know what their rights were. Nowadays it is often impossible to know what they are. Governments are churning out thousands of laws every year, boaruses and commissions lurk around every corner regulating activities from the cradle to the grave, cabinets are always passing orders-in-council, forms are always changing—even lawyers can't keep up.

And anyway it's intimidating to confront

a government that you are told has 273,305 civil servants in Ottawa or 67,877 at Queen's Park with their batteries of computers, task forces, legal departments and experts.

Authority becomes unchallengeable and when that happens democracy suffers because it is built on the premise that people can demand and protect their rights. It suffers because government is placed in the hands of bureaucrats—bureaucrats in Government and bureaucrats in private institutions.

BIBLE STILL BEST-SELLER (Hidgetown Dominion)

The Bible continues to be the most widely distributed book in the world. The Canadian Bible Society reports that the 1972 figures indicate an unprecedented circulation in Canada and overseas.

In Canada alone the Society distributed 108,000 Bibles and more than 300,000 copies of the New Testament in addition to more than two and a half million copies of smaller scripture portions. Included in those figures are 33,000 Bibles or Testaments in 76 languages other than English or French.

The Bible Society each year furnishes free scriptures for the blind. More than 7,000 units in Braille or on cassettes or tape were given to the blind last year.

A highlight of the 1972 report was the

announcement that the Canadian Bible Society forwarded \$860,000—or more than \$16,500 per week—for the translation, printing, and distribution of the Bible overseas. Much of this was used to furnish scriptures to those who are newly-literate.

According to Dr. Kenneth MacMillan, general secretary, the Society is aiming to increase its support of world distribution of the Bible. "The hundreds of thousands who will join the ranks of the newly-literate depend upon their Canadian friends of all churches for copies of the Bible," he points out.

The Bible societies of the world have made steady progress in the translation of the scriptures. Today 255 of the world's language groups have the complete Bible in their own tongue. People speaking these languages make up 90 per cent of the world's population.

The Canadian Bible Society is an inter-faith agency that receives the support of people of all denominations. "You might say that it is the best possible practical expression of Christian unity," says the Bible Society's general secretary.

Back Issues of The Free Press

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, May 28, 1953.

Today's Free Press has 20 pages, including a special Coronation Supplement.

A colorful parade with four bands will march down streets decorated with bunting and flags early Sunday afternoon preceding a drumhead service in Prospect Park to mark the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II Tuesday. Local festivities will also include a tree planting ceremony at the public school, a band concert and a dance. Town clerk J. McGeachie has wired a message from the town to the Queen pledging allegiance and reaffirming our faith in democratic principles. It is signed by Mayor Frank Oakes.

Seating at the park will be provided for 1,000. Ajax Engineers and J.B. Mackenzie and Son has assured sufficient planking and Jack Ridley has promised to haul cement blocks to support the planks. A work committee from the Legion will erect the seats.

The \$39,000 addition to Campbellville school will be opened on Friday. Miss June Watkins is one of the teachers.

A convoy of fire fighting equipment from Halton county will take part in a simulated atomic bomb raid on Niagara Falls, New York. It has been estimated 174 pumpers would be required should an atom bomb be dropped.

Lightning struck the house of H. Holmes, Park Ave., shattering windows and knocking a hole in the wall.

Mrs. William Kenney, Church St. who has lived here longer than any other person, died in her 90th year.

Katherine Kirkness represented Britannia in the Empire Day pageant at school, written by Miss Anderson. Miss M. Z. Bennett spoke to the pupils and the I.O.D.E. presented awards.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, May 24, 1923

Two new Ford sedan cars, of which their owners were very proud, came into collision at the corner of Mill and Main. Both were running at low speed and both honked their horns thinking the other would stop. Miss Ryan, Georgetown, had her radiator and lamps smashed. Mr. George Mulholland of Bower Ave. had the panel crushed in and the glass smashed.

The town hall was entirely inadequate to hold the crowd which came to hear Premier Drury speak before the elections. Dr. Farmer, a Tory of the old school, presided. He answered in a most convincing manner the charges that the government has been extravagant in its expenditures in old Ontario and had neglected the north.

Twenty-five years ago a family came to Acton from Collingwood which has enriched the community in many ways. The father, John Brown, an expert engineer, died Friday.

Messrs. Charles A.G. Matthews and J. Victor Coleman of Toronto, two graduates of the Free Press of years long past, paid this office an appreciated visit Monday, after attending Mr. Brown's funeral.

Among the 70 girl graduates of the University of Toronto is Edna Cobban, daughter of Mitchell Cobban, formerly of Acton.

Greenville Masales, last year's captain of the junior ball team who were Halton League champions, had a painful accident Monday. While sliding into third base he broke a leg and an arm. Two local teams played a benefit game for him Tuesday.

Mr. J.A. Willoughby's golf links at Georgetown will open today. Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby renew their invitation to those in Acton who wish to use the links. Miss Ada Mackenzie will take part in exhibition matches on opening day.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, May 19, 1898.

Mr. T.H. Rolston, butcher, had a miraculous escape from instant death last Wednesday during the thunderstorm. He was in a shed at the farm of Mr. Wm. Gray near Crewsons Corners when the bolt struck. The hair was burned off his head and face, his clothes were singed, his breast and limbs were also painfully burned. Pieces of his boots were found five or six yards away. He recovered consciousness during the night and is gradually recovering. The narrow escape has been the principal topic of conversation.

Sam Tovell, who drives Holiday's brewery wagon, experienced no small amount of trouble on his way to Acton Thursday morning. About a mile from Eden Mills the front axle of his wagon broke and Sam, kegs and all tumbled out on the road.

Mr. Cameron has the front of the old Presbyterian church building moved to the front and set on a cement foundation. The work of transforming the edifice into dwellings will begin at once.

Several new families have moved into town this week.

The Queen's birthday should be the most generally observed of all the statutory holidays. Make no other engagement for the eve of Victoria Day than to attend the cantata The Arch of Fame to be given by the Methodist Sunday School. Her Gracious Majesty is now in her 80th year.

A movement is afoot on the part of our local merchants to have the streets watered during the four summer months. Negotiations are being made with Mr. John Williams Liveryman.

The holiday rate to Toronto was fifty cents for a return ticket. New Black Dress Goods are at Gurney and Co., Mill St. Fine black henriettes, fine black serge, new broadcloths, black chifons, and new lustrous.

THE ACTON FREE PRESS PHONE 853-2010 Business and Editorial Office. Includes logo for CNRA and contact information for David R. Dill, Publisher, and Hartley Coles, Editor.

Values must be rearranged

Times have changed from days we knew, was it not so long ago? When money gave more value, and the pace was kinda slow. When we could save a little bit, and you'd often hear folks say, "Let us put some funds aside for that rainy day."

Our values have grown out of step, we've moved from need to greed, "Keep up with the Jones's" has become the daily creed. We must try out this, and buy up that, seems the way of life. The more we have, the more we want, has led us to this strife.

And then I read of a little boy, who with the greatest pride, Takes part of his allowance to a bank to put aside. He hopes his money will mount up—say in a year or two, - Then he can buy a brand new bike, all bright and shiny new.

But the rate of soaring prices, the plans of this little man, By the time he has enough saved up—he'll be on the pension plan. So I've come to this conclusion that our way of life must change, Priorities for material things we will have to re-arrange.

The hope is to the future,—time may rid this 'crave infection,' And the youth of tomorrow take a meaningful direction. To live a much more sane life, with more humility, And reminding us once again,—'The best things in life are free'.

Jay Dee, R.R.1 Acton.