



It's the only swimming pool in town . . . so far

Bill SMILEY



What's in a name? Quite a bit, if you're going to be stuck with it for the rest of your life.

When the young people were trying to think of a name for my new grandson, I started pondering on this whole business of Christian monikers.

Naming of children seems to go in cycles. And the names in one generation seem either ugly or affected to the people of the next generation.

There was a time when girls were quite happy to be called Pearl or Ruby, Mabel or Myrtle or Elsie. If a girl were given a name like that today, she'd run away from home at the age of five.

The same period produced boys' names like Elmer, Horace, Marvin, not to mention those two great poets, one Greek, one Latin: Homer and Virgil.

That was known as the bad period to be tagged. Before that was the romantic period. In my mother's family, the boys were dubbed things like Drayton, Emerson, Lionel, Ivan. On my wife's side, her mother was Sophie, and her mother's sisters were Charlotte and Esther.

Those ladies wound up as Sophie, Lottie and Acey, but the damage was done. My wife's mother named her Ivy and her sister Iris, but they didn't turn out to be a couple of clinging vines. My wife hates her name so I call her Susie, which seems to suit her.

My own mother was on the ebb-tide of the romantic period, but she did name her daughters Florence and Norma. They wound up as Floss and The Brat, so it wasn't too bad.

With the boys' names, my ma wasn't too bad, but my brothers are Byron Arnott

Keith and Donald Allan Blake, and I'm William Bryant Thomson.

Not too awful, really, but my brothers emerged as Blake and Arnott. I have been called Billy, Bill, Willie and Will, among other things, but have never been known as William, except in legal documents.

I was the lucky one. I grew up in an age of Jacks and Bobs and Bills and Joes and Toms. A Gordon was suspect, and a Homer was hooted out of the gang, unless he could find a nickname like Stink or Piggy or Greaseball or some such affectionate nomenclature.

In my group, there was a Harold, an Arnold and a Clayton. They were tolerated because they became Smokey Oakes, Goon Imeson and Pappy Warren.

After my generation, a new wave of snobbery set in, as women started calling their kids after heroes in the Ladies Home Journal and British novels.

There sprouted a whole crop of Peters and Stevens and Michaels and Jeffreys and Christophers and Marks and Matthews and Nicholases and Davids and Ians. There wasn't a George or a John in the lot.

And the girls got it too. There were Samanthas and Natalies and Sonyas and Patriciae and Lisbes and Pamelas and Elizabeth James and Rhondas and Deborahs.

My God, were there Deborahs! I have five of them this year in a class with twelve girls in it.

Finding a girl called Mary these days is just as tough as finding a boy called John.

Oh, I'm not blaming the parents all that

much. It's no joke, choosing a name. We were going to call our first-born Judy, because it was to be a girl. It didn't have the right plumbing, so we named it Hugh, after a Sir Hugh Smiley in Ireland. And do you know, the old skinflint didn't even put our boy in his will!

Second time around, we took no chances. The kid was to be called Kim, which would suit either sex. We thought it was different. The only Kim around was Kim Novak. A dozen years later, there was a Kim on every street-corner.

Well, like all grandparents, not wanting to interfere, just trying to be helpful, we tried to ram a name down my daughter's throat for her infant.

But most of the good ones were gone. In her own family connection, there are already a Peter and a Paul, a David and a Hugh, a Steven and a Patrick, a Matthew and a Darcy. All the good ones were gobbled up.

We suggested Geoffrey and Mark and Michael and others, and at each, she'd say, "ehhhh, that reminds me of . . ."

The kid was a week old. I was getting desperate. I asked my students to help me. They really tried. They came up with Charley and Cool-hand Luke and Jim and Oscar. Big help.

Well, I know the suspense is killing you, so I'll tell. They named the poor little kid Nicove Chen.

Nicov (pronounced Kneecove) is a character in a Dostoevski novel. Chen (pronounced Shen) means in Chinese "first-born."

Her mother's face didn't fall more than a foot. My blood pressure went up only 20 points.

However, he said similingly, it's kinda cute when you get used to it. Russian, Chinese, and his last name is Sieber, which is German. A real conglomerate.

As soon as he's up to mine, I'm going to call him Kneecap.

Queen's Park should make good

The dilemma in Halton Hills over where money is to come from until the municipality is able to collect interim taxes will likely be resolved by borrowing from the bank, a retrogression into years when councils did not have the financial acumen to perceive the savings resulting from the early collection of taxes.

Councillors are aware the assessment department has been bogged down with appeals on title transfers so the tax roll could not be finished. However, they felt Queens Park would come through with grants.

Before regional government was introduced promises of aid from Queens Park were profuse

and had a ring of imminence about them that convinced negotiators it was genuine. We have no doubt they were made with the conviction the money would be available when needed but a letter from the Hon. John White last week was not very definite about the date grants would be available. Councillors thought he evaded the question.

There was also no more said about transitional grants which were hinted at rather strongly when negotiations between the province and councils of North Halton were in a vital stage. It may suit the Government to forget about these promises now, but municipal politicians have long memories.

At this stage of the game the town of Halton Hills is dependent on revenue left after expenses that had no designated tag from the former town of Georgetown. When that runs out the treasurer, Lloyd Peterson, says the town will likely have an overdraft at the bank.

It could be substantial unless the province decides it is time they got off their collective derrieres and made good on some of the promises so freely given before regional government was implemented.

Meanwhile, local taxpayers will pay the difference, an occurrence we suspect may become more frequent as time goes on.

Free Press Editorial Page

B2 The Acton Free Press, Wed., Feb. 6, 1974

Trainmen in a trance?

No one should be really surprised Canadian National is applying to take the two commuter trains servicing passengers from Guelph to Toronto out of service. The railway has been trying to reduce passenger service for years in favor of the more lucrative freight business. The latest move is just another in an outdated policy which makes less sense than ever during the energy crisis when governments are urging people to take public transport rather than use their cars.

Why doesn't the federal government step in and clean out some of the fuddy duddies who operate the railways under rules that would have been considered obscure in the 19th century?

As you recall a federal mediator just ruled the railroads were trying to make their employees subsidize them by refusing to grant adequate pay for work which used to be considered attractive and broadening. It is mean things such as this which have contributed in great degree to the deterioration of rail service in this country.

In the case of taking the two

commuter trains out of service in favor of them using the soon to come GO trains from Georgetown to Toronto, the railroad has no consideration whatsoever for those who commute from Guelph and Acton. It is a policy of non-service that infuriates the public especially from the CN which boasts so mightily about a "national" railway.

Wellington M.P. Alf Hales put the matter succinctly when said, "It seems an asinine idea to me to terminate the GO train at Georgetown . . . Why stop at Georgetown when the equipment is in operation, the staff aboard, the tracks are there and all other railway facilities available?"

Mr. Hales also took a crack at a proposed bus service which would link with the train at Georgetown. "Stupid," he said, "Who's going to get on a bus for 20 miles and then have to transfer to the train. It would be a different matter if the tracks were not already there."

You'll recall when the CN closed down the Acton station and managed to fob that off as contributing to the efficiency of the railroad, little mention was made

about the inconvenience it was going to cause travellers and commuters. The transport hearing concluded the railway had to keep the station partly open to provide accommodation to catch the two trains which still stopped in Acton.

It was part and parcel of the old cat and mouse game. Given the wedge it wasn't long until they had the station removed and a cold glassed-in phone booth erected in the station's stead.

Now if they cut off the two remaining trains they can sell the glass kiosks from Rockwood and Acton to the phone company because they will be of no further use here.

It is the taxpayers of the entire country who are subsidizing the railway under their unique system of always declaring losses but it seems the men at the top are concerned only with supplying the cities of the country with adequate service.

The romance of railroading has been replaced by the trance of the trainmen in an era when we need wise heads in charge of transportation.

A nod at women's lib?

Not to be outshone by the appointment of a woman to be Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, members of Acton Chamber of Commerce also nodded in the direction of a femme lib by electing not one but two women to head the organization this year.

The election of Betty Eastwood to the chair was more good sense than genuflecting towards the women libbers. She has been an active and enthusiastic member of the Chamber for several years and

a sparkplug for increased participation in community affairs. Her enthusiasm has rubbed off and given the Chamber a more integrated approach in dealings with problems.

Assisting Mrs. Eastwood as secretary is Marjorie Staley, the second woman to join the executive in a key role. They'll be joined by three from the male side of the ledger, which should lend the Chamber a balanced approach to the projects and problems which face them during the year.

It is fitting at this time to congratulate the officers and members of the last year's executive who participated in a fruitful round of activities. Not all were successful but most followed the Chamber motto of building the community.

Now Acton is incorporated in the new town of Halton Hills it would have been easy for Chamber boosters to throw up their hands and be absorbed by a larger unit. It speaks well for them that they should decide to continue keeping the community as the focus of their work and prepared to broaden their horizons by making contacts with their sister Chambers in Georgetown and neighboring Milton.

Back Issues of The Free Press

20 years ago

50 years ago

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, February 4, 1954.

Drainage of existing or non-existing cellars in Warren Grove will create a problem for residents there unless, council warned, owners adhere to depth guides provided by foundation footings. The point was made during a discussion on sewer conduit installations scheduled for the subdivision next spring.

A local man appeared on CBLT's popular television show Tabloid Friday. Gordon Beatty, a member of Micro Plastics Ltd. staff, appeared on the show as chairman of the 1954 international convention of the Society of Plastic Engineers.

Halton county road committee was empowered to investigate the possibility of employing for Halton an engineer on a full-time basis, which would preclude his taking on any outside work.

At Knox Evening Auxiliary meeting a two-part play was given by Mrs. H. Mainprize as the mother and Mrs. R. H. Armstrong as her daughter, showing the right and wrong way to treat New Canadians.

Mrs. Robert Loing is now 90 and Mrs. Peter Smith 93.

Official guests at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in Westminster Abbey spent their seven-hour sit on some 6,000 stools made especially for the occasion. Recently F. L. Wright, who with Mrs. Wright was in England for the Coronation in June, received one of these handsome stools which were made available in limited quantities for purchase throughout the Commonwealth. The chair is now on display in McCutcheon's window.

Fast President Amos Mason sent a box of oranges from Florida to the Rotary Club members.

Constable H. Gunn has been detailed for duty at the opening of the Legislature.

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, February 7, 1924.

The annual report of J. M. Denyes B.A., Public School Inspector, presented at the meeting of County Council, was a review of the tenth year of his inspectorate. Average salary in rural schools in 1913 was \$562 and last year was \$1,060. Average salary in the urban schools had risen from \$549 to \$1,114.

He said "It has become increasingly evident to me that the efficiency of our schools is not necessarily to be found in the acquiring of information in the courses, not even in the facility with which the practical work in these subjects is accomplished. The highest success is found rather in the degree in which the boys and girls are imbued with the ideals of honor, truth and morality and trained in the habits of industry, application and clear thinking. It is these ideals and habits which make for good citizenship and that is the ultimate objective of all our teaching."

Last Thursday death ended the sufferings of William Cooper Sr., one of our oldest residents.

There wasn't much sunshine on Candlemas Day for the bear to see his shadow. The rural mail carriers have had another week of bad roads and tedious experiences.

The Clyde restaurant, operated by Messrs. Mills and Stuckey, has been opened on Mill St. in the premises lately occupied by M. Brown as a clothing store.

Knox church voted in favor of a new vote on Church Union. It is stated that those in favor of union refrained from voting.

A heating system, which is quite satisfactory, has been installed in St. John's church, Rockwood.

The highway patrol gang opened up the new highway from Crewsons corners to Guelph.

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, February 2, 1899.

William H. Ismond, whose face has been familiar on Acton's streets for more than 50 years has been gathered to his fathers. He was of Quaker parentage and his parents came from Pennsylvania. Though not of age he belonged to Col. Cronkell's regiment in the Mackenzie rebellion and in later years recalled many of the occurrences in those stirring times. His father met his death as a result of exposure in that struggle. He was one of the farmers who was compelled by the enemy to drive with his team to Toronto one of the prisoners who was afterwards executed. Mr. Ismond came to Acton in 1847. He was always interested in Acton's progress and was repeatedly returned as a member of the Municipal Council, being elected one year as Street Commissioner on salary.

Owing to very manifest fear of defeat if they played outside their own rink, the Milton Hockey Team backed out of the match arranged to be played at Georgetown rink last Thursday evening with Acton. At Berlin on Saturday the Intermediates and Acton played an exciting game. They scored 9 goals, their strong defense keeping Acton down to 2. Our team was goal Swackhamer; point Jago; cover McCann; forwards E. Ryder, McIntosh, F. Ryder, McDonald. Unpires were Ed Erb, Berlin and George Lawson, Acton.

R. D. Graham was re-engaged as municipal officer at a salary of \$450, his duties being Assessor, Collector, Sanitary Inspector, Caretaker town hall, public school, cemetery, public park, making monthly collections, cutting weeds, repairing and building sidewalks, Village Constable, Pound Keeper, Truant Officer and whatever other duties that may be required.

Our Readers Write

Someone cared - someone didn't

Dear Mr. Editor: Someone cared—but—by the same token someone didn't.

While driving my husband to work in the a.m. of Friday, Feb. 1, we saw a beautiful big black cat (a family pet, no doubt) being carefully lifted up into the arms of a truck driver and placed off the road. How humane and thoughtful of him—how utterly thoughtless of the driver of the other vehicles that hit the poor creature. You see the cat was not killed by the impact and another car could have come along and run over it again.

As one of the general public my praise goes to an unknown truck driver for being so thoughtful about this incident. If he was so considerate about a stunned animal you can rest assured he would be the first to render help to a human being.

I hope you have space for this in your paper—especially after reading about a dog being hit near Ballinacree while being walked by its owners.

Some people do care, thank God.

A Pet Owner

Yes, your letters to the editor are welcome on topical subjects. Please be sure to sign your own name and address to permit us to confirm by telephone. A pen name is permissible but it reduces the effectiveness of your message. We don't recommend it.

The Free Press reserves the right to reject letter it considers libellous or slanderous and to shorten lengthy letters.

