



Black powder puff

—Wendy Thomson Photo

Bill SMILEY



Some days you can't win a nickel. Today is one of them. Outside, it's bucketing down wet snow to clog my driveway. Inside, I'm getting the flu, and my jaw is aching from a going-over the dentist gave me.

And downstairs, two women are squabbling about how to bring up my grandson.

Yes, the little chap is paying his first visit to the old family home, and he's the only bright note in the day.

Think I'll sneak down and have another look at him and try to cheer myself up.

There, I did. And I feel better. He's a dandy little fellow. He's fat, and he smells like a baby, and he produces the occasional lopsided grin, as though he finds the world amusing. He doesn't know the half of it. It's not only amusing; it's ridiculous.

And two of the more ridiculous aspects of it right now are his mother and his grandmother. One has had a baby for six weeks and thinks she knows all about babies. The other hasn't had a baby for 22 years, and she thinks she knows all about babies.

My role is to try to apply some common sense, but it's about as effective as throwing oil on a fire to put it out. They both turn on me and assure me that my knowledge about babies is about as capacious as my knowledge of heaven.

In fact, I know all there is necessary to know about infants: keep them warm and dry and well fed, and they'll be happy. They're just like human beings in that respect.

This little guy is certainly getting that treatment. If his mother puts a fresh diaper on him, his gran has got it off and put another on before he has a chance to wet the first one.

And he's certainly not suffering in the groceries department. He's gulping great quantities of the pure, unadulterated stuff nature intended for him.

There have been rhapsodies written about the beauty of a child nursing at its mother's breast. And I must say it's something to see her cuddling him up to one side and reaching with her free hand for her bottle of beer. She got that out of a baby book, which, so help me, suggested nursing mothers have a bottle of beer to break the monotony or keep the flow coming, or something.

This is a little digression, but I was almost fully grown before I learned that my basic idea about nursing mothers was wrong. Another kid told me, when we were about six, that there is porridge in one breast and milk in the other. That's why they switch the baby over.

Yep, there's nothing like a baby around the house. That kid just doesn't get to cry.

Someone snatches him up the minute he bleats once. Even I.

And my wife is having a great time getting out all the pictures of our kids when they were babies, to see whom he "takes after." The latest notion is that he looks like his Uncle Hugh at that age. I think he looks like Churchill. For once we're in agreement, because Hugh as a baby looked much like Churchill as an elderly man.

And his granny is way ahead of the game on clothes. She's bought him a white summer suit, and a blue bunting bag for next winter. Next winter, already.

I haven't bought him a thing, but I have a furtive foreboding that that urchin is going to cost me plenty, over the years. If the cost of records and fishing tackle and hockey equipment keeps going up, I'll be beggared before he's into high school. I seem to be the only one in the family making a buck these days.

His mother and father have great plans for him. One is a musician and the other an artist, so they think he's going to be some kind of genius. That's what I thought about my kids too. One is a waiter, the other is a young mother.

However, if I use all my craft, perhaps I can lure him away from the decadent artistic life, and turn him into a pretty good angler, or something useful like that.

It doesn't really matter what you plan for a kid, of course. In this crazy world, nothing is clearer than that the best-laid plans nearly always go awry.

All I hope for little Nikov is that he gets a charge out of life, allows himself to love and be loved, and is healthy.

Oh, yes, and one other thing: that he's twice the man his grandfather is.

Why higher plot prices?

A wag may refer to it as a grave plot, but we are sure people of Acton and district must be wondering why the finance committee of Halton Hills wants to even up the price of cemetery plots across Halton Hills.

Right now it is \$25 cheaper to buy a plot in Acton's Fairview Cemetery than it is to purchase a similar plot in Greenwood Cemetery, Georgetown. A non-resident in Georgetown would find it \$75 more to buy a plot than a non-resident of Acton, where the price is the same for residents and all who wish to be buried there.

Now the finance committee of council would like to even it all up and charge the same price in both cemeteries for a plot. They reason the price will have to be higher

because the Georgetown cemetery had, if you'll pardon the expression, gone in the hole last year, according to the treasurer.

It is not a lot of money for a perpetual care plot in any case but we wonder why the price has to be uniform at both places?

If the Acton cemetery was able to operate without running into debt at the lower figure, surely the thing to do would be to find out how the cemetery board operated and then try to emulate it. Instead the committee decided it would be easier to raise the price and have both cemeteries uniform.

Unfortunately it is reasoning like this which permeates much of the regional government philosophy.

We are not suggesting for one moment that Greenwood Cemetery board did not operate properly or within the framework set out for it but here must be a reason why it costs \$25 more to buy a plot there than it does in Acton. It can't be the high price of land because both cemeteries have had the land for many years. So it stands to reason it must be the mode of operation.

Maybe the committee could take a leaf out of the Acton book and if it is so necessary to have the price uniform apply the lower price for plots in both cemeteries.

Now it is up for study for a "realistic" figure but we would hope it is not just another measure to add to the high cost of dying.

Free Press Editorial Page

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

End of exciting hockey season

Local hockey fans were sorry to see Acton Junior Sabres knocked out of the Junior "C" hockey playoffs by the powerful Bradford Vaseys but there were really no surprises.

The Bradford club could be called the York Region All Stars. They've collected players from Markham, Sharon, Unionville, Maple and Oak Ridges as well as Bradford and they had the guns to brush off the Acton club in four straight games.

The Sabres were handicapped by having to face the Vaseys only two nights after knocking off the

Penetang Hurons which required two 200 mile round trips by bus, but they never gave up trying. Bradford is the defending Junior "D" champion and could go a long way towards the Ontario Junior "C" trophy this year.

On the plus side for the Sabres it must be mentioned it is the first year in three years the club has been going they have played better than 500 hockey. They also beat the Bradford team twice during the season finishing third in the seven team league.

Fans appreciated the calibre of play, doubling the attendance of

last season and following the Sabres faithfully on out-of-town trips. Team spirit was good and players who signed from out of town commented favorably on the treatment and atmosphere in Acton.

It may have been coincidence that the weather warmed up once the Sabres were eliminated but for many fans and players the winter is over now. There will still be a vacancy to fill on Friday nights but for players, coach, manager and other officials it will likely be a welcome rest after a fine season.

Rumors generally speculation

We haven't been hearing any specially hot rumors recently, but no doubt there are plenty making the rounds. Gossip isn't by any means confined to small towns but they do provide fertile soil in which rumors can grow with the telling.

The Lachute Watchman does a bit of moralizing on rumors that many of us might take to heart: RUMORS...You know what a

small town is? That's where the folks know all the news before the paper comes out.

There's a lot of truth to the statements.

It never ceases to amaze us how the grapevine can become so twisted... where do these stories originate? How can a total fabrication spread like wildfire and yet be as groundless as air?

We wonder. Nevertheless, rumors seem to be a part of most organizations, both large and small. Let's remind ourselves that rumors are generally pure speculation and not only can be ludicrous.

The next time, "Have you heard?" comes your way, think twice before you pass it on. Look twice at the person you heard it from. — Dutton Advance

OUR READERS WRITE:

Dismayed at time off school

Feb. 26, 1974.

As a parent of two school age children, I am extremely annoyed and dismayed at all the days off children are having over and above the regular school breaks.

The Ministry of Education for Ontario has allotted twelve days during the school year for Professional Development activities. Isn't it bad enough that our schools suffer from bad teacher pupil ratios and ridiculously long holidays? I know of no business that closes down for staff training

which is basically what these Professional Activity Days are.

What other profession, what percentage of the adult population gets a week at Christmas and Easter and more than two months summer vacation? (This year the last day of school is June 21st and the children don't return till after Labor Day, some ten and a half weeks later.)

I suggest that these days could well be had during the approximately three months

each year that the schools are closed to our children and still leave the teachers ample time to pursue other interests.

Many parents I talk to feel much the same way but unfortunately apathy is a wide spread disease in our society today and involvement comes at too high a price.

Sincerely,
E. Lott (Mrs.)
R. R. 4, Acton.

Vic's answer to energy crisis

The folk are all conserving Their energy and heat. Our candles flare, in the frigid air, We've got the CRISIS beat.

Ever since the CRISIS started, With energy and heat, I've been wrapped in Grandma's flannels, To preserve my body heat.

But the ticklish wool is scratching, My stomach and my knees, I'm suspicious though, I'd like to know, If I'm raising Grandma's fleas.

I don't need my pyjamas, When I get into bed, On top of this wool, I still can pull, My snowsuit on instead.

Then when the ice begins to melt, And I start to itch and scratch, To get relief, I lift the leaf, And raise the bottom hatch.

Though they've got the market cornered, They will never have us beat, We'll live on eggs and bacon, And conserve our surplus wheat.

Victor Smith,
R.R. 2, Rockwood.



Free Press back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 25, 1954

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, this year's operetta presentation by pupils of Acton Public School, was staged before a large appreciative audience Wednesday night in the school auditorium. Second performance will be tonight. Don Lindsay introduced the operetta and Mrs. C. Heard accompanied on the piano. Costumes were made by mothers under the direction of Miss Dena Braida. R. Parker was in charge of make-up, and D. Price in charge of scenery. Mrs. Heard directed the performance with Mrs. Franklin as stage manager. Heading the cast were Faye Sagaski as Snow White, Teresa Arbie, Jim Wahlman, Brock Robinson, Bob Jones, Betty Bean, Mary Jane Force, Helen Braniewicz, Jane Mason, Bob Parker, Ruth Landsborough, John Pasma, Edward Molody. The seven dwarfs were Bill Johnson, Terry Masales, Keith Andrews, Bruce Andrews, Bill Dawkins, Jeffrey Fryer and Jon Hurst.

David Dills received the Medal of Merit for outstanding service to Canadian Scouting.

The third annual Mother and Daughter banquet was sponsored by the Y Ladies' Auxiliary. Sheila Paul gave the toast to the mothers and Mrs. J. Jany replied. Mrs. R. Price led a song with Mrs. Oakes at the piano. A piano duet was given by Helen and Ruth Landsborough, Blair Hotchen sang a solo and Fay Garner played an accordion solo. Margaret Price presented a bouquet of flowers to the guest speaker Mrs. Hoey, Girl Guide Commissioner.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, March 6, 1924.

The ladies of the Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian Missionary Societies will unite in a service of prayer on Friday afternoon at three o'clock.

The work of conveying the heavy lathes and other machinery from the old shop on Main St. to the new Thomson factory in Maplehurst was completed last week. Superintendent Blow and his men are now busily engaged in placing the machinery. Mr. Hartley Harrison, the head of the sales department, leaves next week on a business trip to Vancouver B.C.

The ladies of the Methodist church will hold a Rummage Sale and afternoon tea in the school room on Wed. afternoon and evening, 26th inst. A rummage sale is a new adventure in Acton and will naturally have features of interest.

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Miss Bertha Brown has been chosen as one of the Canadian teachers to spend a year teaching in London, England.

"Save a Forest" week has been proclaimed by order-in-council.

The Toronto Lime Company has already commenced burning lime at their works at Dolly Varden. The prospects are for a big season's trade.

For several Sunday mornings Rev. Hackett has been preaching on the rules of the Methodist church. Next Sunday morning he will speak on the rules of the church concerning amusements.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 23, 1899.

The first payments for the supply of electric current will be due next week and collections will be made monthly thereafter. Up to this point it has been a continual outgo, but now the matter will take a different turn.

The evangelistic service in the Methodist church has proceeded with a growing interest. Evangelist McHardy has stirred up Christians and awakened sinners. The subject this evening will be "Out of the Mine into the Choir."

A concert by the minstrel club at Rockwood was very successful. All the boys connected with the event performed their parts well. Special mention must be made of Messrs. Duffield, Fletcher and Duff in the orchestra and Mr. Roy Brooks in the singing, and Mr. John Strachan who conducted the entertainment and Miss F. Lee the pianist.

Mr. Howard Price lost a valuable horse this week. While driving home from Acton to Ballinlad it dropped dead.

There was a large attendance at the funeral of Gerlie Abbott at Everton. She was almost 15 and will be much missed in the home.

Rev. R. B. Cook has returned home from the funeral of his grand-daughter at Palermo. She failed to come down to breakfast one day and was found dead.