



O Canada was sung with special fervor at the official opening of the Legion

Free Press Editorial Page

B2 The Acton Free Press, Wednesday, Sept. 18, 1974



Crowd of 300 entered the Legion after ceremonies to hear speeches and applaud

How I love September

If I were a young fellow, starting all over again, I would try to finagle myself into a job where I could take my holidays in September, preferably stretching them to about the middle of October.

These are the golden months, in this country. I know. I've lived here longer than I care to remember. October is beautiful, but September is bountiful, beneficent and blessed by a Higher Power. And I don't mean the Hydro.

The other so-called summer months are a pain in the arm. June is hot and humid and mosquitoes. July and August are impossible: stifling when you're trying to sleep, or raining when you're trying to camp.

November is fit only for Remembrance Day, when even the birds weep, because the overhead (clouds) is so low they can't fly. December is a hectic, commercialized mess, when you don't know whether you're going to have a "green" Christmas, meaning dirty and sloppy and slushy, or a "white" Christmas, meaning up to your navel in snow.

January is a long, forbidding month, something like a long, forbidding school teacher, with a drip on his nose, frozen. It promises nothing, threatens much.

February is shorter, but sneakier. It snows and snows and it gets colder and colder. And you get the flu and you get sickening cards from friends who have gone south for the winter.

January and February, unmarried, spawn March, which is like something illegitimate borne by a drab in a ditch. Occasionally it turns out to be a beautiful child, but nine times out of ten, it is retarded.

April. Browning, writing from Italy, said: "Oh to be in England, now that April's there." Maybe England. But another poet, T. S. Eliot, must have been referring to Canada when he said: "April is the cruellest month." There's not much snow left, except in the woods and shadowed corners, but that's about all you can say about it.

Then, as most of us know, comes May. Ah, May the burgeoning of Spring, the little tender shoots coming out on the trees, the

sun warming up, the trout running, summer just around the corner.

Girls who have been named May must be very capricious. May can be glorious, warm, a thawing of the frozen Canadian soul, a realization that you have once again got through a Canadian winter without committing suicide.

This year, May showed her other side. I know a place not too far away where anglers, on opening day, were casting their lures onto a thin skin of ice, not water. And the trout were running, alright. Right underneath the ice. There is no evidence that any of them smashed up through the ice to snatch at a lure. This year, even the crows had a phlegmy rasp in their throats when they cawed.

Well, that about takes care of the Canadian calendar. I've already dealt with the so-called "summer" months. Tourists and mosquitoes in about equal proportions. The tourists get their blood sucked, and the mosquitoes suck out blood.

If I had to choose between a tourist, who kicked sand in my face at the beach, tailgated me on the highway, and crowded me off the golf course, and a mosquito, who merely wanted a quiet four ounces of my blood, I'd have a hard time choosing.

That leaves only September and October. No tourists, no mosquitoes, no snow. Just yellow sunshine, a bountiful larder of the harvest, warm days, cool nights when sleep is deep and sweet. Everything is green, still, in September. I can visualize a fishing camp, good food, a chilly swim, a fire and sweaters, good conversation with good friends, a game of chess, early to bed and up early for a try at the fish, some books, no telephone, no wife, no kids. If this sounds like male chauvinism, it is.

This is perhaps one of the things the more strident feminists in our midst absorbed. Once in a while he must get away from his woman. He's not trying to prove his manhood or anything psychological like that.

He's merely trying to save his sanity. He's sick, right to the heart, of hearing what Mabel said to Marjorie and what Marjorie is going to do about Jack, who

drinks too much, and what Mabel is going to do about her kid, who is smoking pot.

Maybe I'm a male chauvinist, but I'm not a pig. I've changed diapers, done dishes, scrubbed floors, fed babies, long before Women's Lib became fashionable.

But once in a while I have to get away from my woman, with the other braves, and exchange male fopperies, foolishness and far-out stories.

Today we take a sauna bath. I'll bet that a hundred years ago Bull-With-The-Buffalo's-Bum and Sneaky-With-The-Beaver took off for a month's hunting and fishing when they could no longer stand Myrtle White-Father and Mary Six-Babies gossiping about their babies.

And I'll bet they took it in September.

Others say

Deconditionalization—what on earth does it mean? Well, according to Terry Mannell of Halton Region Conservation Authority it describes money formerly allocated by the province which now goes to Regional Government. The Region now determines its distribution. Perhaps it makes sense when you think about it. We had all become conditioned to our municipalities and the Region has deconditioned us, money and all!

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A tribute to Susie

I'm cleaning up our "Susie". She's going to the fair. Her smiling face, in the porker's place. She'll be the cleanest there.

Her sides are chemical bacon. From the scientific store. With every bite the price is right. What could you ask for more?

Her manners at the table Are now improved a lot. She feeds the brood, on chemical food. With "hormones" from the pot.

But, when it comes to feeding people,

She has always done her share. She made good use of farm produce. And licked her platter bare.

That's why I'm proud of "Susie". Come see her at the FAIR. I've washed her feet and trimmed them neat. I've even fixed her hair.

I want you folk to see her. All decked up in the rig. Just say a prayer, that she is there. For GOD gave us the PIG.

Victor Smith
R.R. 2, Rockwood.

The fair is for everybody

Acton Agricultural Society expects to add its 61st successful fair to its long history this weekend. And for the first time it will be a three-day fair, including Sunday events. This will make it even more popular.

The first issues of the Free Press almost 100 years ago reported on monthly fairs, but they were primarily for livestock.

Today's fairs are for everybody. The emphasis on entertainment as well as exhibits add new dimensions to the whole concept of rural fairs.

Fairs have actually been in existence in Ontario since 1792, when the governor of Upper

Canada, John Graves Simcoe, was a patron of the first fair at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Now there are over 240 fairs in Ontario, and they seem to be getting better all the time.

Fairs appeal to farm people of course, and these people enjoy a little friendly competition. And to those who have left the farm. But the Acton fair will also be a delight to people who have only seen a farm from their car windows. The mini-farm particularly fills a gap in children's education, and their eyes will be shining as they reach out and pat the live animals.

Local talent will be enjoyed, and Miss Acton Fair will get everyone's

applause. Flowers, sewing, and pickles from town and country homes will be lined up in luscious array. Horses grow more popular each year.

Booths and trailers are going to take this perfect opportunity of meeting many Acton and district people.

The Sheridan trailer, for instance, will be conducting a survey with an eye to starting an Acton campus. If you're interested, look for it.

A fledging Oxfam group will be ready to talk to interested people.

And friends will meet friends. See you there!

The match is impressive

This week's special section on the International Plowing Match will, we hope, interest local people in a unique happening that's very close to home. It will be one of the most interesting events in Ontario and right here in Halton Hills, just

south of Georgetown. As well as the largest display of farm machinery, there will be cars, home supplies, cooking and fashion shows, competitions and parades every day at noon. Halton region and Halton Hills are planning special areas

that will likely interest us even more than outsiders.

Many people in this district have driven miles to attend other matches. Now it's right here - a great opportunity to see something that's really impressive.

Should Acton double?

A housing proposal which could double Acton's size was a mind-boggler at Halton Hills council last week.

Each of the town's three schools already has two portable classrooms. In how many other ways would we have to cope with so many people?

But a more serious problem than that is the long-range goal. Should Acton grow much? Can the Black Creek handle the sewage effluent? Should we be a dormitory town?

In years past, the Free Press would have been attending planning board meetings to hear our

members' opinions on this vital proposal, but meetings of the new Halton Hills planning advisory subcommittee are closed to the press. Their thoughts go on to council, though, via minutes, and we'll be hearing plenty more about this huge project.

OUR READERS WRITE:

Observation on Renaissance

To The Editor,
Acton Free Press.

Since last March I have been following in the Acton Free Press the campaign of the Halton Renaissance Committee to discredit the administrative staff of the Halton Board of Education. I am prompted to write this letter in an attempt to add a dimension on behalf of officials who, because they are professionals, cannot themselves engage in smear tactics. Any citizen organization has the right to be heard on public education concerns and many such groups have participated in programme development on the invitation of the Halton Board and its staff, but when a person or persons carry on a campaign of denunciation, buck-shot fashion, using invective and innuendo to effect their own subjective aims, then their project should be exposed for what it is.

My suspicions in regard to the ethics of the Renaissance Committee were first aroused by the ill-chosen adjectives used to describe Mr. Singleton (Director of Education for Halton). Any contacts that I have had with Mr. Singleton left me impressed with his integrity and competence as opposed to Mr. Campbell's opinion who chooses to describe him as "ruthless, insensitive, cowardly, intimidating, tyrannical." (Acton Free Press - April 10th). These epithets have had to go unanswered since the Director of Education could not possibly stoop to engage in this kind of mudslinging.

The Ren. Com. has based much of its case on an "every householder" opinion survey as indicated by their brief to the Board of Education presented Aug. 22nd. For this reason I will confine my observations to an evaluation of that document in general and some of its recommendations in particular.

In general, the tactic of the campaign appears to be one where the end justifies the means: the end being the highly biased point of view of a small but loud minority

group and the means being a pseudoscientific approach to give the appearance of credibility. Let us examine some of the fallacies inherent in the survey.

First of all, if a survey is to be used as an honest basis for inductive reasoning, it must have good research design to provide the checks and balances to minimize built-in bias. I see no evidence of such care in its compilation (indeed no claim is made in this respect) so that the validity and reliability (the sine qua non of all research) are somewhat suspect.

The brief quotes a Mr. Reade who was apparently consulted with respect to research design. He is quoted as follows, "However, one must ascertain whether the 557 responses can be construed as a random sample of the population. The question must be added, 'Were the respondents more motivated to reply because they were dissatisfied with the status quo than those who didn't reply?'... another point is that IF (my emphasis) the response is random, there is a 95 per cent probability that the results on any given question are valid."

Mr. Reade is quite right but he is not giving credence to this "research", per se, but merely pointing out pitfalls. The committee, however, after admitting that the answer to his question is unknown, blindly proceeds on the assumption that the sample is a random one and therefore valid within five percent! It is as if having quoted scripture, any subsequent statement must be true.

As a matter of fact it is the lack of proper sampling which gives the survey a dangerous bias and makes the conclusions drawn from it to be spurious. It is my opinion that heedless of Mr. Reade's warning, the committee succumbed to the temptation of phrasing the questions in a manner likely to elicit emotional rather than rational responses. Those who were generally satisfied with the educational system would tend (as I did) to dismiss it as rhetoric. Anyone with a beef would be apt to use it as a vehicle for his dissatisfaction. To test the sample randomness a pilot study to determine the pattern of response is necessary.

Apart from the above, the actual numbers responding is not as impressive as one is led to believe. The questionnaire is called an "every householder" opinion survey. The number of responses (557) represents about one per cent of the total households polled. Therefore when the claim is made that to the question "in your opinion are the elementary schools adequately teaching the 3 R's?" the proportion replying "No" is 68 per cent, one must appreciate that this response has come from 68 per cent of the households.

Another observation supports my criticism of the number game being played. When a well-advised forum was conducted by the Ren. Com. in Acton on May 1st, less than 20 Actonians were present (Acton Free Press). This represents something less than a ground sell of protest!

A predominant part of the brief in question which deals with Recommendations reveals surprising ignorance of educational policies, practices and techniques of the Halton system. For example - the committee recommends that a committee be appointed to evaluate the county system while in fact such a group was set up in 1971. It included 13 citizens who responded to an advertisement for members.

Another recommendation is equally redundant: "we recommend that wherever the "open concept" approach to education is being followed, an optional program along more conventional lines must be provided by the Board..." Since 1972 the Board's policy on optional attendance has been in effect.

And so the brief goes on from rhetorical questions and innuendo to redundant recommendations, all justified, presumably, by a pseudo-scientific opinion survey. At the risk of putting myself in the same ring with Mr. Campbell, I cannot resist the mischievous comment that the term "Renaissance" is certainly an appropriate one for 15th century thinking.

E. B. Cornfort,
R.R. 4, Acton

Free Press back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of September 23, 1954
Despite a continuously threatening day; which concluded with a disheartening shower of rain, about 3,000 flocked through the exhibits, the midway, and the area allotted to judging at Acton's annual fall fair last Saturday. This year's event was fully a two-day fair, with the midway in full swing Friday evening, the show which crowded the arena Friday evening, Saturday afternoon crammed with events and both a donkey baseball game and dance on Saturday evening.

Recipients were slightly below last year. Both days had chilly and damp weather. The arena was filled with many standing for the acts of the Friday performance. After President Ray Everdell welcomed the group, R. Parker took over as master of ceremonies for evening.

Winners of the freckled face contest were Jamie Inroside, William Wragg, Yvonne Blitewyck and June Rennick.

Those who won the prizes for attending the fair from the greatest distance were Mrs. Wilson of Crief, Perthshire, Scotland, and Mrs. L. E. Crump, London, England. Three girls, students at Acton high school last year, have been awarded Dominion-Provincial student-aid bursaries. The three whose work merited the award are Nancy Lambert, Mary Braida and Ena Jennings.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of September 18, 1921
It has at last been decided that two questions, and two only, shall be submitted to the electors of the Province of Ontario at the Plebiscite Vote on the question of intoxicating liquors at the election, to be held on October 23 next.

A fairly good crowd turned out on Thursday evening last to the Citizens' Band Concert in the Town Hall.

The anniversary services of the Methodist Church will be held on Sunday, November 23. Rev. Mr. Culp has been successful in securing Rev. George H. Williamson, D. D., pastor of the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, as the preacher for this occasion.

The business men of Acton contemplate the organization of a Board of Trade or Chamber of Commerce, and will meet in town hall this evening at eight o'clock to take the first steps toward the formation of such an institution. The purpose is to take into consideration matters of interest for the town's welfare; to co-operate with the Council in securing desirable improvements; to investigate proposals for additional manufacturing places and any other matters calculated to advance the best material interests of the municipality.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of September 11, 1899
Mr. Henry Horlop, Eden Mills, recently put in new machinery in the mill, which was running last Friday for the first time since the alterations were made. Naturally the villagers were interested, and were present in considerable numbers to inspect the mill.

Ponton's \$50,000 civil suit against the Dominion Bank came to grief again in the Divisional Court yesterday. Last March the case was dismissed by Judge Street at the Cobourg Assizes, the plaintiff refusing to go on after the judge had refused to postpone the trial. The Divisional Court judge held that they could not interfere with the discretion exercised by the trial judge in refusing the application. The bona fides of the application was affected by the fact that when the first application was made nothing was said about these witnesses, who were then absent. The appeal was dismissed with costs.

The induction of Rev. L. W. Ross, late of Glencoe, into the pastorate of Knox Church, Guelph, takes place this afternoon at three o'clock. Rev. R. J. M. Glassford, Moderator of the Presbytery will preside; Rev. Mr. Johnson will preach the sermon; Rev. A. Blair, B. A. Nassagaweya, will address the Minister and Rev. H. A. Macpherson, Acton