

Free Press Editorial Page

An echo from Erin

Last week's editorial on poor delivery of newspapers was echoed on the same day in the Erin Advocate, only editor Bill Doole put his editorial right on his front page.

Here's what our neighboring newspaperman has to say:

If you are one of those readers whose Advocate has been arriving two or three days late, don't blame the newspaper, or the Erin post office, or your rural courier. The foul-up was sired in Ottawa by professionals, postal-delivery "scientists" highly skilled in the finer arts of mail distribution. They created a re-routing Frankenstein, and the information they fed into the computer's memory bank is hard to reargitate.

In other words, while attempting to "streamline" and speed up Canada's mail delivery, the post office brain trust failed to take into account a lot of local situations. The new postal-code system is at the root of the "Snafu" and hopefully, eventually, all will be well. Meanwhile, though let's examine just a couple of local complaints.

Mrs. Robert Priestman, R.R.3, Orton, used to get her Advocate every Thursday morning, regular as clock-work. Now she is lucky if it arrives Friday.

The annoying part of the late Advocate for Mrs. Priestman is the fact that the delivery-contractor's truck goes past her place enroute to Belwood and Kitchener after leaving Erin and Hillsburgh. From Kitchener, the Priestman paper goes to Owen Sound and from there to Orangeville. Finally by Grace of Pierre Trudeau and the post office it finds its way to her.

Then there's Mrs. Don Green of R.R.2, Acton, whose paper has been arriving Fridays and Saturdays ever since the big redistribution change-over. At The Advocate's suggestion, Mrs. Green wrote a letter of protest to Mr. H.F. Murray, the District Director of Postal Services at London, Ont. (Mr. Murray is not to blame personally for the late-mail fiasco and he admits that flak from subscribers should help flag the attention of the Inner Sanctum).

Whatever the reason, last week's paper arrived on time

Thursday morning in Mrs. Green's mail box.

The Advocate is not the only publication suffering bad side-effects from The Great Post Office Caper, but it is getting more than its fair share because of its geographic location—just a stone's throw from such major depots as Orangeville, Guelph, Brampton and Georgetown.

Fortunately, readers in our heaviest circulation area are unaffected by the big change, but we've been taking no chances with the Belfountain mail bag until the bugs are ironed out of Operation Re-distribution. It's going direct from The Advocate to the Belfountain Post Office. If we mail the bag locally, it has to go to Kitchener first...or is it Shanghai or Fairbanks, Alaska?

The majority of our readers buy their paper at their local stores on press day (Wednesday), but there's nothing we can do for Toronto readers who rarely get their paper until Monday.

It would seem easier for a man to wend his way through the eye of a needle than for a weekly newspaper to negotiate its way through the Toronto postal maze.

How about that, Dr. Philbrook? You're our official spokesman in the House of Commons. Terry O'Connor was starting to get action during his term of office.

Editorial notes

A householder watched the hydro crew cut down a few low-hanging branches in front of his house last week without any complaint. Ankle-deep in leaves, he explained, "I'm not so fond of trees this time of year."

He who has money to burn soon meets his match.

It's Fire Prevention Month now, rather than Fire Prevention Week. More inflation?

Thanksgiving Day—the day to quietly list all the things we've got, instead of complaining.

Halton sketches

by John McDonald

John A. Willoughby founded dynasty

Many sons and daughters of Halton County have left their mark not only in the local area but also throughout Canada and further afield.

One purpose of this series of articles is to recall some of the old family histories and to bring to the attention of the younger generation the names of those who have made their mark in the past.

It was 1861 when John A. Willoughby, a local farmer, established himself in the business world. His first venture was the purchase of a livery stable and the business took it to a brilliant start in Georgetown.

The bus was a coach which carried passengers between the railroad station and the downtown area. The Union Bus as it was known, was a success. This success can be attributed not only to the fact that Georgetown was a very enterprising village at this time, but also because the train was the main mode of transportation and Georgetown was the junction of the Grand Trunk and Hamilton & North Western Railways.

The livery stable, reported to be one of the finest in Ontario, was located on Mill Street and is known today as the Royal Canadian Legion Building. This magnificent stone building was erected in 1908. The clean and neat stables, which could hold up to 30 horses, were fitted with Tisdale iron fittings.

The livery business would, of course, be on a 24-hour basis and so a bedroom was maintained upstairs for the "night" man. An early description of the livery stable indicates that a paint room existed where "Mr.



John A. Willoughby.

Willoughby keeps his vehicles freshly painted at short intervals.

Willoughby's business concerns were not confined to the livery establishment by any means. John A. was very instrumental in promoting the establishment of the Georgetown Coated Paper Mills, which came into existence in 1910, and is now owned by Donnar, J. A. Willoughby was the first President of the company.

In 1904, Mr. Willoughby entered the municipal council and served as reeve of Georgetown from 1905 to 1908. While serving as a member of the board of education and library board, Willoughby donated a parcel of land for the site of a new library, but in the meantime, the Congregational church was donated (and remains the home of Georgetown's library

today). The parcel of land donated by John A. was then sold for \$500 and used in purchasing equipment for the library.

Beginning with small land transactions in 1907, J. A. Willoughby's firm became the largest rural real estate company in Canada during the thirties. The original realty office was located on Mill Street in the livery building.

It was Willoughby who was commissioned to purchase all the right-of-ways for the Toronto Suburban Railway Company for their line between Georgetown and Guelph.

J. A. Willoughby apparently built his business on honesty and integrity. This tradition has been handed down to John A.'s son, Bertram Willoughby, who now heads Gibson-Willoughby Real Estate which is now based in Toronto.

Due to the firm's early emphasis on farm transactions, Bertram studied field husbandry at the Ontario Agricultural College to be better able to relate with farmers and talk their own language. Two real estate firms, Gibson Brothers and J. A. Willoughby, merged in 1966 and were bought out by Bertram Willoughby in 1971.

The former Willoughby residence is located on a 155 acre farm "just outside the corporation." During the 1920's John A. created a nine-hole "golf links" on the property. A group of local businessmen bought the estate and developed it into what is now called the North Halton Golf and Country Club. Bertram Willoughby is still a shareholder of the club.



GAPING MOUTHS of storm sewers tell a big story of continuing progress and growth in Acton. These big-mouth pipes were interviewed by photographer Peter McCusker on Mill St. this week. The storm sewers are

also going in on Arthur and Peel St., where workmen are laying 3000 feet of pipe and constructing 5000 feet of ditching.



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

This week, I'm going to make two predictions. For too long, I've been hiding my light under a bushel, when it comes to forecasting, and it's time to come out from under the bushel and reveal that I am somewhat of a seer, when it comes to the future.

Years ago, I came out against capital punishment. It was done away with. I said we should let Red China into the U.N. It was done. I said the trout were disappearing from our streams, because of pollution. They did. I suggested I would never be rich. I'm not.

But nobody paid any attention. Only within the family did anyone realize that I had the gift of prophecy. I told my son, "If you don't stop goofing around, you're going to flunk out of college." He did. I told my wife, "If you don't stop worrying so much about everything, you're going to be a nervous wreck." She is. I told my daughter, "If you pick that baby up every time he utters a whimper, he'll be spoiled silly." He is.

You see, even my own family didn't put much faith in me, even though I'm always right. I'm somewhat like Cassandra, the

lady from ancient Troy, who was given the gift of foreseeing the future, and, at the same time, the curse that nobody would ever believe her.

O.K. It's time to go public. If I'm right, I'll have politicians and poets, actors and authors, beating a path to my door. Will I win? Will I be famous? Will I wow them? Will I write the great Canadian novel?

I've decided to take on an assistant, though it's only to keep his mother from starving in a cockroach-ridden apartment.

He will be Nikov Chen, my grandbabby. He's half fey Irish and half romantic German and half blunt Canadian. That makes him 150 per cent. A natural. If he chortles, I'll tell my whining clients "Yes". If his face wrinkles and he starts to whimper, as he does, I'll give my customers a blunt, "No". We should make a million. With the new child labour laws, I'll probably have to give him ten per cent.

Well, here's my first prediction. This is being written after the first half of the Canada-Russia series. They are all tied up.

With that group of lottery old men, who

have given a great account of themselves, and those unknown young players, making up the WHL team, it takes a lot of courage to come out with a blunt forecast of the final result.

But here it is. I predict — and if I'm not right on the nose, I'll drink a bottle of vodka on the town hall steps — that 2,400 of the 2,500 Canadians going to Russia for the games there will be drunk sixty per cent of the time, and hung over the other forty per cent.

As for the series itself, what does it matter who wins? It's only a game, though a rather entrancing combination of ballet and mayhem.

Besides, Canadians are the biggest sports cry-babies in the world. If we lose, we were robbed. If we win, it's a victory of free enterprise over authoritarianism. This is a nation of Monday morning quarterbacks and late Saturday night referees.

We're a nation of experts, especially in hockey. After all, for several generations, all that the world knew Canada was any good at was producing maple syrup, rye whiskey and hockey players.

I've heard women who wouldn't know a shift from a nylon slip castigating the Canadian players for all sorts of sins.

I've heard mature men, who couldn't even skate on their ankles when they were kids, shouting obscenities at our players because, "They're not hitting enough, fergawsake."

I've heard teenagers of both sexes cheer when some Canadian ape rammed his stick into a Russian's teeth.

Well, that's my first prediction. The second is that I'm going to win Mayor Drapoo's lottery. First prize: A cool million, tax free.

This prediction is based on a combination of prophecy and logic, not just a wild hunch.

Look. In the past two years, I've broken my toe, my nose, two ribs, and the law. I'm not saying that the Lord is picking on me. I just don't think he's been keeping an eye on this little sparrow, when he falls.

It's time for a different kind of break, and the law of averages suggests to the occult side of me, that it's going to be the Big Million.



Willoughby's "Union Bus" at Georgetown station.



Willoughby's Livery Stables, now occupied by the Legion.

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press October 21, 1954

Judging by the avalanche of donated goods which followed the appeal here early this week for food, clothing and furniture for destitute hurricane victims in the Toronto area, Acton and district residents should respond unflinchingly to the need of the Ontario Hurricane Relief Fund.

An irate Acton resident who with his wife and three children moved here less than two months ago, appeared before council Monday night to demand town assumption of legal responsibility involved in damages to his property and dwelling when flooding waters over Main Street last Friday night filled his basement and caused a claimed \$2,500 loss.

W. Roberts who bought the Main Street house, formerly occupied by Geo. Kovacs early this September contended town was responsible for the damages because the house surmounted a natural drain. Regardless of whether the town installed the drain or not, Mr. Roberts insisted a permit for construction of the house should never have been issued by the town in the first place when this drain was known to exist on the foundation.

The aftermath of Hurricane Hazel in Halton was described in damaged bridges, washouts, and flooded farmlands, during the regular monthly session of Halton County Council in Milton Tuesday afternoon.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press October 9, 1924

Through the successful efforts of Chief McPherson, who is also a special officer for the enforcement of the Ontario Temperance Act, the operations of Phillip Forbes, who has for a couple of years enjoyed (?) the rather unenviable reputation of being the "King of Bootleggers" for this county, were brought up short last week. Forbes has been a crafty, cunning manufacturer and dispenser of moonshine liquor for some time.

The annual field day of Acton high school in the Park last Saturday afternoon was in some respects the best ever held by the school. The forty-seven events had each a good quota of contestants, and the various competitions were spirited and manifested and showed that all contestants had been subject to healthful practice prior to entering the field day contests.

The opening meeting of Knox Young People's Guild will be held next Monday evening at eight o'clock. A good musical programme has been prepared which will be followed by a social hour.

In the list of prize-winners of Acton Fall Fair, published last week, the name of Mrs. W. J. Hall was inadvertently omitted as the winner of the first prize for Petunia, single, in bloom.

Mrs. Mary Carruthers, Guelph's centenarian, who celebrated her 101st birthday on Friday, September 26, was one of several hundred citizens who appeared personally before the revising officer at the court house.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press October 12, 1899

The following message was received by the Free Press last Friday.

To The Editor of the Free Press: Sir— Allow us through your columns, on behalf of all Actonians in Winnipeg and the west to congratulate the Crescent Lacrosse Club on their success in winning the Royal District Championship.

Chicken thieves are again at work in this part of the country. Last week, Mr. R. Gibbons' hen-coop was visited by night and about forty or fifty of his best hens were stolen. It is a dastardly trick and the sneak thief if caught deserves to be punished to the full extent of the law. As this is not the first hen-coop that has been robbed during the past few months a stricter watch will be kept in the future and the party who is in the business may receive a hot reception on their next visit.

In law it is just as bad to give a boy under eighteen years of age cigarettes as it is to sell them to him. Wm. Barman, a farm hand, who works near Stoney Creek, learned that Saturday morning, and the information cost him \$10. He was fined that amount by Magistrate Jells, he having been convicted of buying a package of "coffin spikes" at Culp's store in Stoney Creek and giving them to John Langton, a fifteen-year-old cigarette fiend. The Magistrate said that was the lowest fine he could impose according to law.

Editorial notes

Quite a few people, from force of habit, put out their garbage for collection last Thursday morning. But twice-a-week garbage collection is a thing of the past, until next summer. With regional government came equality. That means Acton gets once a week garbage collection now, instead of our usual two making us the same as Georgetown.

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Untidiness on the streets has brought complaints from some residents. Garbage littered on the main streets and around the post office have been mentioned. Is this worse than it was, or are we imagining things?

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