

Free Press Editorial Page

Why Hallowe'en is spooky!

Children are looking forward to Hallowe'en with great delight.

But it didn't used to be that way. Our distant ancestors, the Anglo-Saxons of the Bronze Age, awefully called it the Feast of the Dead. It was a solemn occasion indeed, and the lords and ladies arranged special feast tables in their cavernous great halls for the spirits who might be out roaming that night. The finest dishes were used, with the best of food and drink.

Amid the autumn winds, some were certain they heard the

moaning calls of the dead.

The forces of evil were believed to be abroad in the fall—the time that saw the end of growing harvest and growth.

Later, the Christian Church found it couldn't get rid of these old entrenched beliefs. And so it adapted, and the feast of the dead became All Saints' Eve, followed on Nov. 1 by All Saints Day.

And now it's a time for frolic, fun, food—and UNICEF.

With, still, a little of that ancient flavor of mystery and fear.

Outdated news no good

Question: Is it really impossible to keep the Chamber of Commerce community bulletin board up-to-date? Couldn't one of the walkathon participants have walked over and taken down the lettering advertising their walk, as soon as possible?

It's depressing to see the same old outdated event pronounced on Mill St. day after day.

Centennial weekend was recorded for weeks afterward, to be replaced by the junior band concert which was listed, also, for weeks after the event.

And now the walkathon... Surely a Chamber of Commerce member could be responsible for keeping the new sign relevant. Better to put up "Merry Christmas" and forget the whole thing!

From Ballinafad to Acton

Why the Ballinafad correspondent wasn't in the Free Press last week is a matter for some mystery. It was mailed Friday morning at Ballinafad, in time for the pick-up there.

Free Press mail was picked up at Acton post office at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday morning, and it wasn't there then. By noon, it had arrived and was picked up in the Free Press box. (If we had had house-to-house delivery, we would have received it a day later.)

Five days from Ballinafad to Acton—a distance you can walk in an hour?

No wonder Mrs. Shortill usually

sends her news in to town with a relative. No wonder we've made arrangements to have a Free Press staff member pick it up every week from now on.

From Ballinafad, the mail goes to Kitchener. From there it would go to Toronto normally, although the time it arrived last week makes postmaster McKeown expect the usual route didn't prevail that day.

This is the new distribution system which sends much mail destined for Acton to Georgetown first, holding it up a day.

Mr. McKeown admits to "bugs" and says meetings have been held to talk over problems.

They've got problems all right.

Of this and that

Many people have expressed strong opinions lately—about regional government in particular. But also about once-a-week garbage collection, postal delays, recreation, and what-have-you. How about sharing these concerns

with others, and letting everyone know what the predominant feelings on such subjects are.

The way we suggest is through a letter to the editor. Short, plain and signed!

OUR READERS WRITE:

Who shot family pet?

4 Park Ave., Acton, Ont. Oct. 23, 1974.

The Editor
Dear Sir:

On Wed. Oct. 23rd in the late afternoon or early evening our cat, a family pet of four years, was shot with a pellet gun of some type. She was seriously injured and as yet has not died.

We are very concerned about this matter from several points of view. We are concerned about such cruel treatment of an animal as harmless as a household cat. We are concerned about the kind of community that such an incident suggests we may be living in. And most important of all, we are

concerned for the welfare of our children and ourselves who could just have easily been the victims and lost an eye or something.

We consider pellet guns to be extremely unsafe!

If this incident was caused by a child either by accident or on purpose, we hope that the child's parents will help him to understand the dangers and that steps will be taken to prevent such happenings from occurring. If this incident is the result of an older person's behavior we appeal to that person to put the gun away or use it for target practice only and in a safe place.

Finally, we hope our pet does not die as a result of this incident!

Yours truly,
Bruce Brillinger.

Is Acton to lose its identity?

The Globe Centre Inc., 950 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ont. K1S 5G6

Thanks very much for sending me the two editions of your paper which I received last Monday. Especially the centennial number of June 26 which I have thoroughly enjoyed. Some of the pictures in it were taken during my time as a resident of Acton and they revived many long forgotten but pleasant memories of places and faces. I knew so well as a boy and teenager. From it I also learned some history of the town before 1903 when my family moved to Acton. By the way, I think the town owes a lot to Mr. A.T. Brown.

But, tell me is Acton to lose its identity in a new town to be called Halton Hills? I hope not. In addition to a century of history behind it, the name, Acton, is so concise and distinctive the present citizens of the town shouldn't accept a change in name without a

plebiscite at least.

In your article regarding Frank M. Intosh's medals, it might have been well to have included the information Frank ran fourth in the 100 yd. dash and second in the 200 yd. dash that year (1901), both events being won by Bobby (not Bobb) Kerr, who could get off the mark very quickly. At top speed "Skinny" could recover some of the early loss of yardage; hence his better showing at the longer distance (200 yd.) I added the note about the winner (Bobby Kerr), who lived in Hamilton I believe, for the education of all your young readers.

I would also like to correct a typographical error in my late sister Erie's married name which is singular, Butcher, not Butchers.

Again thanking you for your thoughtfulness in sending me the complimentary copies of your excellent publication. I am,

Yours truly,
Wm. E. White



Leaf me alone, Oh, leaf me alone . . .

AUTUMN'S DELIGHT...the crunch and crackle of a heap of sweet-smelling leaves. These youngsters built their leaf mountain in a safe corner at the park. They are Cindy Brouillard, Bobby Brouillard, Allen Bennett and Doug Bennett.



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

It's a fine, nay, a beautiful October day, and I have a fine, nay, a beautiful feeling inside me. I've spent a weekend with my grandbabby. The experience was enough to make me feel that the daily grind, which seems to get grindier and grindier, might be worthwhile after all.

The Jews have a saying, in one of their books, that killing a man is a terrible thing, because you are not only killing him, but the sons he might have and the sons they might have and so on and so on. I think this is a fine thought.

This would apply equally to killing a woman, though the Old Testament Jews were not exactly sold on Women's Lib.

If I had been killed in the war, and there was a good chance I would be, that grandbab would not exist, and the whole world would be poorer. I'm not kidding.

The existence of so much delight and charm and laughter and love, all wrapped

up in one perfectly formed nine-month old creation, restores my faith, which at times becomes a little tattered around the edges, in God.

Man alone, with all his gifts, could never devise the shine in that child's eyes, the mischievous two-tooth grin, the sinuosity of muscle, the incredible endurance.

The urchin is living proof to me that humans have a soul, a will, a spirit. Technology can put together a computer, but it can't begin to create, or even imitate, the glory that is a baby.

I can imagine man devising a machine which could reproduce the sonorous lines of Milton, the fantastic fancy of Shakespeare, but there would always be something missing.

Computers are clean things. They don't have to go to the bathroom. They don't have under-arm problems. No corns or constipa-

tion, arthritis or acne, piles or pimples. But something is missing. Soul? Maybe.

I'm not trying to foist upon you the idea that my grandson is perfect, or a genius, even though he is. I'm merely trying to remind you, if you have grandchildren, of what a joy they are, and if you now have only rotten kids, you have a precious experience in store for your nether years.

My grandbab is not the most beautiful child in the world. He'd probably come in second, or even third, in an international Beautiful Baby contest.

And he's not the smartest. I discovered this last summer, at the beach. He'd sit there, stark naked, pick up a handful of sand, and pour it over his left ear. Never his right. It was a lot of trouble, getting that sand out of his ear. And he liked to eat sand, was delighted if he got a handful with a stone in it, for chewing.

But he's got his grandfather's genes, which make him intelligent, charming, lovable, and pretty well all round perfect, as I point out to my wife.

Unfortunately, he has his mother's jeans, as well. Which make him bad-tempered when crossed, make him knock over anything that's over-knockable. But also give him eyes like two huge dark grapes, a sense of humor, and a smile like a Christmas tree when the lights have just been plugged in.

I have no trouble coping with him, when he spends a visit. All I do is make sure I've had twelve hours sleep for the three nights before he arrives, do extensive calisthenics and some jogging for three days before he arrives. Then I'm ready for Super-Babe.

His parents are no problem. His mother is satisfied with a hug, a kiss, and a cheque. His father is satisfied with a full refrigerator, which he opens and starts rubbing his stomach one minute after we've shaken hands.

They disappear, and I have the kid on my lap. For about eight seconds. Then he gives a lurch, a twist, and he's down, crawling at about forty miles an hour straight in to the fireplace.

Luckily, I'm prepared. The andirons are all locked away, except the broom, which he uses to comb his hair and bang his forehead. Everything breakable, reachable or fragile is locked in the vestibule.

I toss a chess set on the floor. Terrific. He picks up a rook, crawls to the coffee table, so carefully waxed and polished, and proceeds to scrawl graffiti on its shining surface. My wife looks on in horror. "What the hell. You can't take it with you," I offer.

I do a lot of other wrong things. I take off his wet diaper and let him crawl around on the Indian rug, bare bum. I sing to him bar-rack-room songs that would curdle the blood. I let him chew my fingers. I let him pull the cat's tail.

And finally, after three hours of straight action, I pull him up on my knee, hum an original lullaby which goes "Doo-deepioopdee-doo-dee-doo," and he goes to sleep.

Asleep, he's the utter innocent. Garden of Eden. Soft and warm. No hypocrisy, no lying, no violence, no evil. It's beautiful. Even though I'm so stiff I can't get out of my chair three hours later when his parents get home from the movies.

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press October 28, 1954.

An Acton Chamber of Commerce came into official being Wednesday evening when 35 local men representing commercial, industrial and professional interests gathered at a dinner meeting to adopt a constitution and endorse Dr. F. G. Oakes, veteran of wide experience in municipal bodies as the first president.

Dr. Oakes, former mayor of the town and currently chairman of the P.U.C. was the unanimous choice of the initial Chamber membership when he was accorded an acclamation to the office. Theron Jones elected to withdraw his name in favor of Dr. Oakes after he was nominated from the floor.

Sparse attendance at Monday night's public meeting in the school auditorium did not deter achievement of the aims of the gathering, to form a committee and clarify arrangements to channel Acton and district donations to the Ontario Hurricane Relief Fund.

G. A. Dills, chairman and Ken Knox, secretary-treasurer, were named officials to make arrangements for funds collected here, to go forward to the provincial fund.

Friday afternoon, October 22, members of the Acton Fire Department supervised fire drills and held inspections of schools in the rural Acton fire area and in town.

The firemen, wearing their uniforms went to 11 schools in Esquimes, Nassagaweya and Erin townships and the Acton high school and public school.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press October 30, 1924.

For the sixth time the electors of the province of Ontario have said emphatically by their votes: "No more legalized sale of intoxicating liquor within our borders." The Government Sale propaganda was not popular. The sophistries and camouflage of the campaign were too thinly disguised not to be understood by the humblest voter, who desired to stand for a sober province, and the elimination of temptation for the weak or unwary.

On Sunday forenoon Mr. A. J. Murray of Cloverdale Farm, had occasion to visit his farm on the first line, when he discovered a gang of hunters, with hounds and a motor car, hunting in the swamp there. He promptly ordered them off his premises, and they decamped in a rather ugly mood.

Last week two of the three thieves who effected an entrance to the Georgetown Creamery on the night of Acton Fair, and stole 23 boxes of butter were sentenced to Burwash Reformatory. The information has been given by one of their number, who turned King's evidence and was let off on suspended sentence, that the trio, with their truck, did come to Acton. About eleven o'clock that night they went to the Acton Creamery, unlocked the door with the purpose of loading up from Mr. O'Neil's stock.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, October 31, 1899

While threshing on the farm of Mr. Malcolm McPherson, lot 13, con. 5, Esquimes, last Thursday afternoon, Robt. Swackhamer, son of David Swackhamer, the well-known thresher, met with an accident which narrowly escaped being fatal; indeed the young man is still in a precarious condition. Shortly after starting the machine, after dinner, the belt which runs the beaters slipped off and young Swackhamer ran to replace the belt, with the machine in motion. In some way the shirt-sleeve of the right arm was caught in the pulley and he was thrown with great force against the drive wheel. His head came in contact with the wheel. His head and his skull was fractured and the flesh badly lacerated, requiring a number of stitches. The arm was fractured in two places and the shoulder so much injured that a dozen stitches were necessary. It at first was thought that recovery was impossible but the young man has a splendid constitution and his youthful vigor is much in his favor.

Last Friday, Mr. John McLean, farmer of Erin, raised successfully the new bank barn he had just framed for Mr. Robert Smith, lot 20, con. 6, Nassagaweya. Everything went together without a hitch, and the onlookers were delighted with this safe and ingenious method of raising. Only three men were required in addition to the framers to handle the framework of the barn which is 40x60 feet.

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Business and Editorial Office



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Evils caused by liquor

Dear Sir:

I have just read in a grand old newspaper, a statement which I wish could not be verified. The paper says in large black letters: "The Brewing Co. may spend more than 164 million dollars on expansion."

That means they are likely to spread out in every direction, to every hole and corner, where liquor sales are not at present allowed. Rockwood is one of those corners.

Since Local Option was voted for by our citizens some years ago, liquor has not been sold here. And do you know why they voted liquor out? Because of the evil it had caused. People felt sorry for the wife and family of a man who contrived to drink

heavily until his home was gone, lost to liquor addiction. Was there punishment? Oh no, liquor companies are immune.

Another family whose lovely children were also my pupils, suffered from drunkenness too. After much patience from his employer, the father was finally fired. There was no 'Welfare' then, and the children were all small. Oh, how they suffered!

Do you want more examples? I can give them.

Yours truly,
Millicent Milroy,
Rockwood, Ont.

Consider your fur coat

Dear Sir:

Anyone who purchases a fur coat or a coat with fur trim must accept some responsibility for causing unnecessary suffering to the animals whose pelt he or she is wearing.

In Canada millions of animals die in agony because of the demand for fur. Fur bearing animals in other countries suffer a similar fate.

For example in a small country such as Thailand the otter has now almost disappeared because of trappers' activities.

It takes the skins of no less than 40 otters to make one fur coat. These superb, attractive animals have been sacrificed in the tens of thousands simply to meet the demand of people in countries such as Canada for fur coats.

I hope everyone who feels the need to wear fur will, before purchasing a coat, first demand proof that the fur of the coat is either synthetic or, at the very worst, the fur is obtained from ranch animals.

T. I. Hughes,
Executive Vice-President
Ontario Humane Society.

More letters to the Editor on page B3