

# Free Press Editorial Page

## Council setting precedent?

Halton Hills' council's refusal to participate in the Acton Christmas bus service comes as no surprise but their reasons for voting it down somehow leave a lot to be desired. It was estimated the service which has been operating in Acton for the last two years would cost \$62 a day, or \$868 for 14 days. Councillors decided it was too expensive and suggested other parts of Halton Hills should share in such a service if it is operated in Acton.

Such nonsense. If it was a new venture proposed by merchants to line their pockets at the expense of taxpayers we could see the reasons for the refusal but it has been operating in Acton for the past two years with some success.

As we recall it was first inaugurated to serve as a dual purpose—to stimulate interest in the downtown and its services and to give the people of Acton who may not have a vehicle or cannot afford taxi fare, to get downtown at a time of year not conducive to pedestrians. It was meant as a public service.

To suggest that all parts of Halton Hills should participate in the service because Acton has it is ridiculous. In the future does this decision set a precedent? When Georgetown gets a new fire hydrant must Acton and Esquesing also get one? If Esquesing residents have the services of a livestock evaluator does that mean

both Acton and Georgetown must have one, too?

Expensive? For a council that hardly blinks an eye paying architectural charges of thousands for an arena concept never used, \$868 for a Christmas bus service is hardly going to break the bank.

Chamber president Mike Worthington said the Chamber is willing to discuss cost sharing with council. Councillor Joe Hurst felt the town would be paying the full shot. This would seem to be a matter of poor communications between chamber and council.

As we see it, an arrangement for the town and Chamber to share the cost is the only suitable method for continuing the bus service if for no other reason than to pacify councillors in wards three and four who are opposed to the project.

The chamber now is trying to go ahead and raise enough money to operate the bus service on its own tack but likely they will only be able to operate for a few days. Good for them. It seems council - with the exception of former Acton mayor Les Duby - does not want to keep up the public service project the former town of Acton decided was in the best interest of the community.

We can think of no better argument against regional government than the fact that an amalgamated council does not continue the precedents set by the three municipalities prior to amalgamation.



MISTS DRIFT through the layers of woods at Eden Mills in the early morning. Peter McCusker captured

the mood this week while passing through the pretty hamlet.



## Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

About this time of year, every year, all sorts of queer things come creeping out of the woodwork and the underbrush and proceed to create a storm in a saucer. I'm referring to municipal elections.

It begins back in October, when the local paper starts writing trenchant editorials urging people to offer themselves as volunteer guinea pigs to see whether or not the gullotine is working.

But any weekly editor worth his salt will be able to demand the paradox of "new blood" and "solid experience" on the town council or whatever.

These editorials have almost no effect whatever, except to fan the tiny ember in the occasional guy or gal who has a secret ambition to be called "councillor" or "Alderman", or even "Your Worship", and to be on the "inside", helping "shape the future of our community."

Then the papers, in a creditable effort to drum up some interest, begin to interview the incumbent members of town council, public utilities commission, board of education, and dog catcher, to find out who is going to stand again for office.

This probing also has meagre results, at first. Most of those asked reply that they haven't yet made up their minds, or that it's time for someone else to take on their exhausting work load, or that they have found the work very rewarding, but...

Behind this smokescreen of generalities, the potential candidate, in many cases, really means, "I'll see how the wind blows"; or, "Yeah, I'll stand again, if I'm assured a seat by acclamation"; or, "Wait till I see how tough my opposition is."

This is not so in all cases, to be fair. Some small-town politicians have a rare combination of honesty and pugnacity, love

a fight, and come out swinging at the bell. These are often elected by acclamation, because they scare off potentially excellent candidates who don't want to become involved in a verbal donny-brook.

But behind all the smoke of municipal elections, there is, in most cases, very little fire. Occasionally, there is a stand-up slugfest match in which personalities, mud, and other such items are slung about with reckless abandon, while the public looks on with glee.

As a rule, however, the people elected are chosen for public office not because they are honest, fearless crusaders for the taxpayer, but because they are not quite as bad as the alternatives who are running for the job.

Many a man, or woman, has been elected because nobody else wanted the dirty job. And many a strong and capable candidate has been defeated for these very qualities. He has tried on too many toes in an effort to get some action.

More and more women are running for various municipal offices, which is a very good thing indeed. Women can be quite ruthless when it comes to getting things done, and are much less apt to sit around and bicker or gossip, when on a committee, than are men.

Then there is a certain loathsome type who wants to be elected so that he or she can go to meetings. They usually have a rotten home life. They love meetings. They

adore points of order, addenda, and amendments to the motion. They make a brave show of voting against all motions except their own, which are usually so silly, they are almost never passed.

Then there are the strong, silent types. They are often elected because their strength and silence are regarded as depth and wisdom, when they are really just stupidity. These people say, at meetings, "Well, I'm not sure as I understand all the ins and outs of this here thing, but I'll go along with the majority."

Even some young people—18 and 19-year olds—are getting into the act. I'm not too happy about this. From what I've seen of this age group, including my own kids, I don't particularly want them to have anything to do with spending my money.

And of course there are a few people, very few, who are interested in a supplement to their income. It's surprising how much a town councillor drags down in these inflationary times.

That's why I got into the business. Oh, yes, I was on town council for two years. Unopposed. Acclamation. With two mortgages and two kids, that \$75 a year pay as councillor looked mighty good.

Each year, I had a moment of terror when the committees were being struck. I was in a panic in case they put me on the Public Works Committee. I didn't know a pot-hole from a catch-basin.

After two years, I resigned owing to a conflict of interest. I was interested in being a good councillor. My wife was interested in having me home at least one evening a week. As in most of our conflicts, she won.

In closing, I salute all the people I haven't mentioned in this column: the dedicated, hard-working, self-sacrificing people who were elected to office and have to put up for the next year with the whining and grumbling of the rest of us. Hang in there. We need you.

## The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from an issue of the Free Press December 9, 1954  
Four children were christened at Acton United church on Sunday morning, Gail Nereen Douglas, Jane Anne Lamb and twin boys Douglas Victor and Donald Robert Masters. The church was well filled for service, conducted by Rev. E. A. Currey.  
Little damage was reported in a pre-noon blaze today at Thompson Motors, where one of the workmen smelled "something burning."

Investigation in the basement of the Mill St. building found one corner of the area was blazing, fed by cleaning rags. Cause of the blaze is unknown since the section where the fire was located is at the opposite corner to the coal furnace.

Draws for the Acton Citizens' Band and the Acton Fire Fighters' Association were highlights of the Fire Fighters' annual dance held in the town hall on Friday evening. A good crowd enjoyed dancing to the Modernaires.

A broken boiler, an irate contractor, a high school addition an unsettled insurance claim and demands for town services - all interspersed with varied matters of a lesser nature - occupied Acton council Tuesday evening when it met in regular session, delayed a day due to elections.

Legion cribbage team continued their league-topping play on Tuesday scoring 22 points. Next came Eden Mills and Hamblers with 19 each, followed by Town and Tiger Cats with 13.

50 years ago

Taken from an issue of the Free Press December 11, 1924  
The choir of the Methodist church spent a delightful evening in Georgetown last Thursday evening as the guests of Major and Mrs. Kennedy. The hospitality of the bride and groom was unbounded, and all present enjoyed the occasion very much. Rev. Mr. Culp, who is himself a vocalist of merit, accompanied the choir and joined the musical programme rendered during the evening. The kindness of the host and hostess, and also of Mr. and Mrs. John W. Kennedy, the parents of Major Kennedy, was greatly appreciated.

The concert of the L.T.B. Lodge, No. 390, Acton, on Wednesday evening was a success. Mr. W. J. Held, chairman explained the work the L.T.B. were doing for the orphan children left without the care of parents and thrown on the mercy of the world. These children are brought to the L.T.B. Orange Home at Richmond Hill and get the care of a good home, are clothed and well fed and receive good training for their future. The programme was given free. Mr. Stock Donaldson of Guelph, and Mr. Harry Rigby, of Acton, were good in their comic selections. Thomas Mochrie and Babcock pleased the audience with their mouth organ selections. Those who took part in instrumental piano numbers and songs were well rendered.

Mr. Holland, son of Bandmaster Holland of Preston, has moved to Acton with his family. He has a good position in the shoe factory. Being an expert cornetist he is quite an acquisition to Acton Citizen's Band.

75 years ago

Taken from an issue of the Free Press December 8, 1899  
Mr. C. Kloepfer, the present member of the House of Commons for South Wellington was again nominated as the stand-bearer of the Conservative party at the convention held in Guelph last week. Mr. Kloepfer is a strong man with his party in that riding.  
Christmas is in three weeks, and the best present you can give a friend is the Free Press for 1900. It is one of Canada's brightest and newest papers and will make anyone happy who receives it.

Mr. Thos. B. Atkins was taken seriously ill last week with pneumonia, followed by an attack of appendicitis. Drs. McDonald and Webster performed an operation on Thursday for his relief and he is now slowly recovering.

Mr. J. H. Matthews and family are evidently destined to remain permanently in Acton. Two years ago he arranged to remove to the North West and subsequently decided to stay here. His recent arrangement to remove to Shelburne has fallen through and he will continue one of our esteemed citizens. This decision will be agreeable to all.  
Acton lost one of her best citizens this week in the removal of Mr. James Clark Miller. He left on Monday for Cheltenham, where he has leased the well-known Haynes mill on the Credit from Mr. Fred Haynes. During his nearly three years' residence in Acton Mr. Clark has proven himself a very worthy and useful citizen and has won general esteem.

## Hydro commission

Acton hydro commission hasn't heard any definite word when it, too, is to be absorbed into regional government.

Last January 11, Acton committees and boards were dissolved, their duties taken over by regional councils. However, Acton Hydro Commission remained, although members didn't expect it would last.

Now perhaps the provincial government will reconsider plans to regionalize these commissions, as they look at the added costs regional governments have incurred.

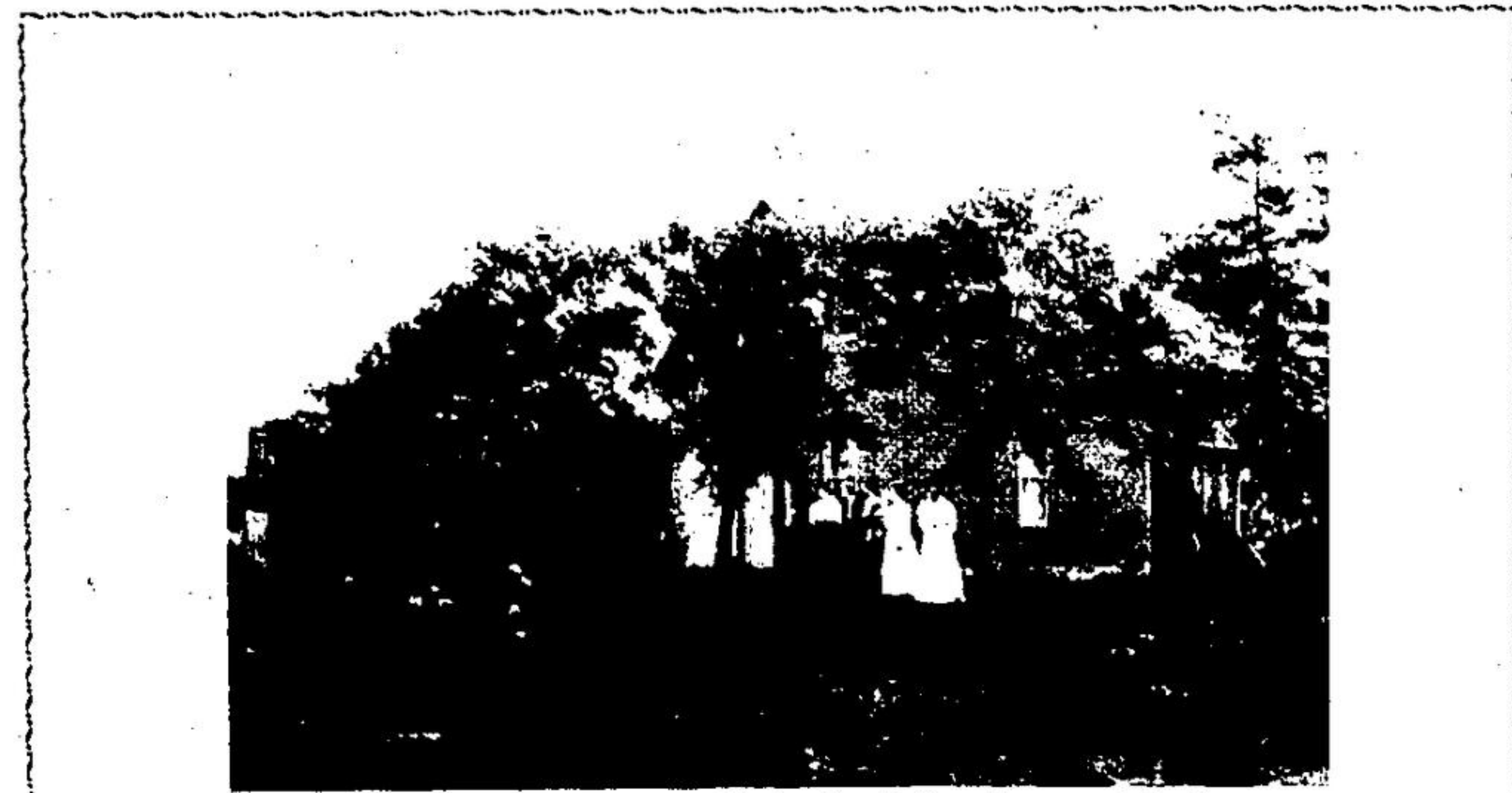
The local commission has done a good job for years, and not lost

touch with the people. Here, at least, there is a full staff designed to serve Acton people only.

No regional bureaucracy could hope to achieve this pleasant rapport, and at reasonable cost. There's no hope of one small commission and its staff empire building at public expense. Regionalized matters can get out of control, while the little taxpayers doesn't really know what's happened.

In Halton, general government costs to run services in 1973 were \$509,000. Under Halton region government, the same cost has risen to 1.2 million.

Hydro is still out of it. Perhaps it would be best to keep it that way.



LAST SURVIVING member of his family, J. Kerr Brown sent the Free Press this picture of the old farm house just east of Acton.

Dear Sir:  
The writer received a copy of the Free Press, to honor the 100th year of publication.

This proved of real interest to me, as I am the last member, now living of the family who lived on the farm, just east of the town. I was born in 1883.

I served my apprenticeship with my brother, A. T. Brown, commencing in the year 1898, and completed this in 1902, entering the Ontario College of Pharmacy in Toronto and secured my Ph.M.B from the University of Toronto in 1903.

I was told the store my brother had purchased was once the building where the T. Milburn Company commenced their operation. They are still marketing Fowlers Wild Strawberry, Doans Kidney Pills, etc. Enclosed you will find a print of the old home on the farm where we were all born. I never knew my father as he died eight months after receiving a fractured skull from a horse kicking him.

In 1903 I went to Montreal and was employed in charge of the dispensary in

Morgan's drug department, this proved a very interesting experience.

However in the spring of 1904, I received a letter from Dr. McKeague, now in Winnipeg, he having practised in Acton for some time. The letter stated that his brother wishes to open a branch store in Winnipeg and invited me to come out and take charge, this I did, for a period of one year. Due to the brother not carrying out an agreement, I opened a store of my own in a suburb of Winnipeg.

After many moves and some years of depression, I retired in 1960, selling the store to my eldest son, who had carried a lot of the work, since graduating, after serving in the world war.

I also had a daughter, Margaret, graduate in pharmacy and during the second world war was my main help during these years.

One son, John K. graduated in pharmacy from the University of Manitoba, later secured his Ph.D. in pharmacognosy from the state university of Washington, in Seattle.

He is now a lecturer in the University of the Pacific in Stockton, Cal. and he and his wife have been enjoying six months sabbatical leave, spending the time in Holland.

His work has included a study of the street drug problem and has been doing work in Europe.

My wife and I retired to Victoria three years ago, after visiting for four winters, and must say we enjoy our living here very much.

Our niece and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Mel McCullough as you no doubt know are still living on the part of the farm retained and I still can recall the old home as it was before the addition was built some time ago.

With sincerest greetings to the residents of Acton.

Sincerely,  
Mr. and Mrs. J. Kerr Brown,  
Suite 401, 905 Burdett Avenue,  
Victoria, B.C.

## OUR READERS WRITE:

### Disappearance of rural area

Dear Sir:  
According to recent press reports the development of the Halton Hills region may be retarded because of - as I understand it - an insufficient existing number of municipal water mains in the area.

As usual, "development" is to be understood as the covering of the land with houses, schools, shopping centres, parking lots, the whole spectrum of suburban achievements. Indications that we may be spared this wholesale destruction of the Esquesing countryside can be regarded as the best news to reach this area for some time, particularly in view of the bankruptcy of the much-heralded "Toronto-Centred Regional Plan", which would have given us some measure of protection.

Yet, incredible as it may seem, there are voices in the councils of the northern region protesting the lack of "development" for this area, naively defending the completely discredited notion that more houses, more people, more acres covered in asphalt will lower the individual tax burden or - as the

somewhat poetic saying goes - achieve social equity. There are those who plead for a continuing conversion of 2 percent of the rural area to residential, a plan that, if followed, would almost guarantee eternal bliss for everyone.

A conversion at this rate would see the complete disappearance of the rural area in 50 years, obviously in the opinion of some councillors a desirable state of affairs. Perhaps it should be suggested then, that we make a concerted effort and get the bulldozers really going on 4 percent, or better still 10 percent of the area per year, so that the satisfying condition of living in Suburbia may be enjoyed in our own lifetime, and not only in that of our children.

Personally, I resent being represented in the municipal council by a mentality dating from the age of the dinosaurs. I expect of my councillors to progress with the times and to protect, rather than to attempt to destroy the land with the governing of which they have been entrusted.

Charles Hildebrandt

### Worries about lake water

Dear Sirs:  
I am enclosing an article which appeared in the Canadian Champion, Milton, Wednesday November 6, 1974 re Fairy Lake, Acton.

I was most concerned after reading this article as my family has camped at Smallwood Acres on Fairy Lake from the 24th of May to Thanksgiving for the past nine years using the lake for swimming, fishing and boating. If the water is of such poor quality fish would not survive what about children! I have always been led to believe the water was treated yearly and found to have no algae whatsoever and to be one of the cleanest bodies of water around.

During this past summer Mr. George Bain was interviewed and photographs taken re this matter in an attempt to get some action in cleaning up the mess in Fairy Lake. All to no avail. Perhaps if you were to publish said article you might stir the powers to be up a little.

I would appreciate anything you can do in this matter as another season is just around the corner and it would be nice to know if the water will be safe for children to

swim in. I would also be interested in your comments on this article.

(Mrs.) L. P. Ashton,  
162 Van Dusen Blvd.,  
Toronto 18, Ontario,  
M8Z 3H3

(Mrs. Ashton refers to two sentences in the Champion, a resume of a full report of a Halton Hills council meeting in the Acton Free Press of Oct. 30.

The water is of course tested regularly or swimming would not be permitted. Beardmore also tests regularly since the water is used in its tannery operations.

Beardmore chemist John Greifeneder explained at length how pickerel cannot survive in the slow waters here, while pike and bass do very well.

Mr. Bain's complaint was of the over-luxurious growth of weeds rather than quality of water.

Copies of relevant articles in the Free Press are being sent to Mrs. Ashton in the hope she and her family will return with confidence to camp here.)

## THE ACTON FREE PRESS

PHONE 853-2010

Business and Editorial Office



Founded in 1875 and published every Wednesday at 39 Willow St., Acton, Ontario. Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation. The CNA and CMAA Advertising Rates on request. Subscriptions payable in advance. \$4.00 in Canada, \$9.00 in all countries other than Canada. Single copies 15 cents; carrier delivery in Acton 15 cents per week. Second class mail Registration Number 0215. Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of typographical error, the portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with a reasonable allowance for signature, will not be charged for at the applicable rate. In the event of a typographical error advertising goods or services at a wrong price, goods or services may not be sold. Advertising is merely an offer to sell, and may be withdrawn at any time.

Dills Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd.  
David R. Dills, Publisher  
Key Dills, Editor  
Don Ryder, Advertising Manager  
Copyright 1974