



the painted box

By Wendy Thomson



McPhee sings songs of being lonesome

Well, the coonhound pups are two months old now; some are sold and gone. All the time we've been fussing over and watching them, it's been hard not to keep writing 'puppy stories'. I'd figured on saving them up to use all at once.

However, now the time has come, I've forgotten the incidents but will type on, hoping they'll come to mind.

I guess the last pup story was about the whelping box and that was long ago. The surviving nine pups lived in the box happily shredding paper and chewing holes in old socks until one adventurous soul found she could hook her paws over the outside of the box rim and balance on her belly long enough to get a rear foot up as long as nobody was chewing on it.

Upstairs

Then she was out and away, dashing madly to the centre of the room then back to stand mournfully outside the box, causing a great uproar inside.

Gradually all nine got the knack and the only way to keep them inside was for someone to stand alongside with the flyswatter and give each a tap on the head when it started to scramble out.

Nasty noise

This caused great distress to the rest of my family who caught me putting the pups to bed that way. The 'nasty noise' would line up at the box edge, watching me with their beautiful slate-colored eyes, incredulous that anyone could bring themselves to speak harsh words like "Quiet!", "Lie down" and "Go to sleep!"

Gradually, one by one they would sink out of sight below the box rim (with unblinking eyes held stubbornly open) and melt into a pile of puppy which finally stilled and slept—for a few hours.

Quietly

I found the whole episode very much like having a human baby in the house—the dash for the phone before it could wake anyone; the tiptoeing around the kitchen at six in the morning hoping they'd sleep just a few minutes longer; the admonition to visitors to "just look QUIETLY"; and not raise the cry.

If the pups did wake, everybody would be mutually ecstatic for awhile, but when the visitors left, I'd have to calm the babies who were wide awake and ready to romp.

More than once the room reverberated with loud, long songs of lonesomeness, till one of the family picked up the distressed one (or two or three) and lulled them to sleep.

Not Acton

The radio helped, though. Since they were especially fond of classical music, I turned the CBC on every afternoon I was home. Their hour of classics was followed by the Max Ferguson Show. This the pups liked. I think because of one familiar word: no, not "Quiet", "Down" or "Sleep" but "McPhee". That's an everyday household-family word here, these days.

Magic word

I should explain. When the pups were small, the littlest seemed to have not much going for him so we figured we could at least give him a grand name. We called him "McTavish" and from that

Orillia hospital school gifts sent to children

The last meeting of L'Arche Auxiliary for 1974 was held at the home of Mrs. Gail Beerman, Mrs. Shirley Skeggs, the president, opened the meeting with a prayer for the mentally retarded.

There were seven members present and two guests.

Gifts received

Mrs. Steen reported on the Christmas gifts for the children in the Orillia Hospital school, and the one little boy in the Christopher Robin Home in Whitby, and said all the gifts had been purchased and mailed. Some of the children would be spending Christmas at home in Acton with their families, and these children had their gifts delivered to their homes.

Mrs. Conroy reported on the Talent Show, and said forms had been sent to all the public schools in the North Halton area, but no response had been received, except from the children at the Robert Little School. More was to be reported when plans were finalized, hopefully at the January meeting.

Members are looking forward to a very busy and interesting year during 1975, and anyone interested in joining the Auxiliary will be made very welcome. Next meeting is at the home of Mrs. Julie Conroy Jan. 22.

1975 was held, and is as follows: president Mrs. Shirley Skeggs, vice president Mrs. June Housefield, secretary Mrs. Chris Steen, corr. secretary Mrs. Julie Conroy, treasurer Mrs. Ruby Lauslien, scrap book Mrs. Gail Beerman, telephone convener Mrs. Shirley Cook, publicity Mrs. Julie Conroy, Flowers of Hope Mrs. Jessie Price.

It was decided to change the meeting night from the fourth Wednesday of the month to the fourth Tuesday, as some members found it rather difficult to attend the meetings on the Wednesday.

Mrs. Conroy also reported on the Dog Show, that was tentatively discussed at a previous meeting. She hadn't received any additional information to date, but was hopeful of receiving some for the January meeting.

The election of officers for



WINDS GUSTED at 30 miles-per-hour Saturday evening but seemingly played little havoc with the tresses of one fair Acton maiden, Cathy Upton appears to have no difficulty keeping her hair in place. She confessed however, to having just had it recently set.

The lady directors of Acton Agricultural Society met at the home of Mrs. S. Matthews Thursday evening, Jan. 9 with president, Mrs. Smith, in the chair. The president of the fair board, Ken Murray, and the first vice-president, Russell Murray, presented suggestions to the ladies concerning the displays in the hall being kept over for Sunday showing. This was discussed and voted on later in the meeting.

The secretary read the minutes of the Nov. meeting and December's Christmas pot luck supper. Business arising from these minutes was discussed. Roll call was answered with the payment of fees for the year 1975.

The past president, Mrs. E. Archibald, then took the chair for the election of officers. Mrs. Colham was appointed secretary for the election. Mrs. Latham presented the

report of the nominating committee. The following officers were elected: president Mrs. Vivian Smith, first vice-pres. Mrs. C. W. Swackhamer, second vice-pres. Mrs. G. M. Colham, sec. treasurer Mrs. C. J. Aiken, press reporter Mrs. G. S. Morrison, auditor Mrs. G. Wallace.

Mrs. Smith then took the chair for the remainder of the meeting. A beautiful lunch was served by the hostess and committee and Miss Elyse Pearson was courtesy emcee.

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Free Press Personals

Mr. and Mrs. Mervin H. Soyster of Seattle, Wash. have returned to their home after spending a holiday with her sister Mrs. W. D. Talbot and family.

Miss Elda Fryer is in the Guelph General Hospital undergoing surgery. She was hospitalized Sunday, Jan. 12 and operated on Monday evening. She is presently doing well and her many friends wish her a speedy recovery.

Friends and neighbors of Betty Oakes will be pleased to know she returned from the Guelph General Hospital last Sunday. She has been a patient since New Years and is now at home recuperating favorably.

Mrs. Jean Middleton is back from Baden-Solingen, Germany, visiting with her mother, Mrs. Edgar Lidken. Her father died recently after a long illness. Jean will fly back to her husband and children this week.

P.E.T. course set

Margaret and Bruce Brillinger of Park Ave. are still planning to run a Parent Effectiveness Training course in Acton in the spring.

An advertisement in last week's Free Press announced a similar course in Georgetown. It however, is not the same.

Concern has been expressed that Actonians might be confused, since the Brillingers have already advertised their course and held an introductory session in the high school library.

The Brillingers have taken courses drawn up by the original of Parent Effectiveness Training, Dr. Thomas Gordon. They have given the course very successfully in other places. They are professionals in teaching this communication skill.

Change of the Georgetown course will be changed, as the person in charge doesn't have the same training.

The Brillingers were concerned at first that Actonians might mistake the course advertised last week for theirs. However the Georgetown course is already filled with only four in it from Acton. The Brillingers still expect to have sufficient enrolment here to offer P.E.T. in the spring.

ACW plans sales, tea

The Anglican Church Women met Jan. 8 for a pot luck supper with 25 members and three guests present. A delicious meal was enjoyed and a short meeting was opened by president June Hunter.

Business discussion concerned a rummage sale February 8. The ladies enjoyed a nostalgic look at prices and costs of various items in a 1911 Parish Guild records book. Also mentioned was the spring tea and bake sale and a fall bazaar.

The ladies enjoyed a social evening of court whist. Winners were Susan Lee and Mary Creasey. Mary Creasey also won the lucky chair prize.

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Our readers write

Dear Sirs:

Re: your editorial "Whither goes the mail" I am pleased some people receive their paper in a reasonable period of time. I just received my December 23rd issue today, Thursday, January 9, 1975.

Yours truly,
L. J. McLean.