

Free Press Editorial Page

Priorities for the north

One press report of Trustee Tom Watson's plea for better high school accommodation in North Halton said, "It raises the ugly head of parochialism — something the board has excelled at avoiding during open sessions," also suggesting it was probably his sternest speech in his tenure on the board.

The editorial observation in the news story did not go unnoticed but it was obvious the reporter missed the facts — real shortcomings in the high schools of the north. It was not only Mr. Watson's privilege but also his duty to point omissions to the full board and for the public which may not be aware of them.

Watson pointed out one of the major objectives of the board was to give equal opportunity to every student in Halton County, and of course, one of the major reasons for disbanding local school boards and amalgamating them into one Halton board was to equalize opportunities.

Watson presented a six page fact sheet to illustrate his point — shortcomings at Acton high school, in particular. He urged the board to bring in positive plans for a new high school that will give a more equitable solution to the problems of the north than have been seen in the last six years.

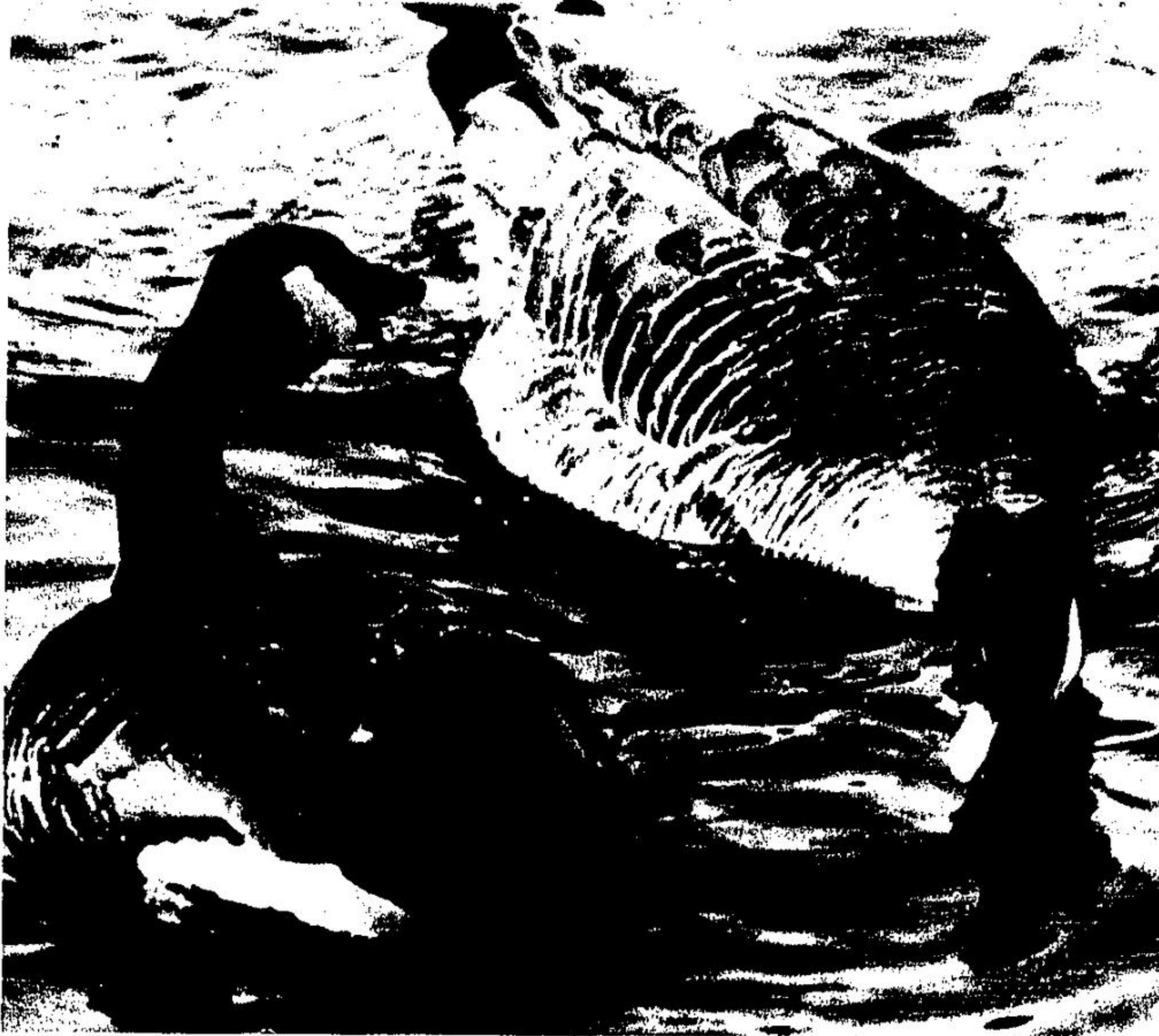
We don't know what precipitated Trustee Watson's broadside but we suspect it had something to do with priorities. He's suggesting the board should be doing something about high school conditions in Acton before they proceed with lavish plans for schools elsewhere.

And he's right. The new Lester B. Pearson school in Burlington is being built in an area which is not yet built-up but students at Acton continue to cope with inadequate facilities. High schools in Georgetown and Milton are also operating at capacity.

We would think some priorities belong in the north, a fact acknowledged by the assistant director of education who reminded the board a report had been commissioned to outline improvements at Acton high school. But it should go further than a report — it should initiate action.

Watson also said school borders should be drawn more realistically so students in Esquesing and Nassagaweya could be accommodated in areas in which they live.

Any parent who has a child who attends a school entailing long bus rides can't help but agree. It also makes economic sense.



In the spring a young goose's fancy . . .

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press March 31, 1955.

Miss Dorothy Stone, A.O.C.A., art teacher who lives at Stewarttown, has samples of her work in a new textbook which has just been approved for use in Ontario secondary schools.

Plans and specifications were submitted on Monday night for the three-room addition at Acton High school. They were approved by the North Halton high school district board. Tenders are to be opened after April 12 when it is anticipated plans for the two-room addition at Milton will be ready for the board's inspection.

Climbing education costs, increasing debenture indebtedness and greater outlay for public works combined with a sizeable deficit and other items of municipal expense to present local ratepayers with an 11 mill rise for their 1955 tax rate this week as council Tuesday night tabled its annual budget and fixed the rate at 70 mills. 1974's rate was 59 mills.

Last week Premier Frost announced that special grants would be made to municipalities to aid in municipal and school affairs. The total amount to be given unconditionally to all Ontario municipalities was between seven and eight million dollars.

Acton's oldest resident, William Mainprize, is observing his 96th birthday at his home on Mill St. Mr. Mainprize, who is a great grandfather, is confined mostly to his home but is still interested in events of the town.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press April 2, 1925.

The chassis demonstration of the Chevrolet car will be made at the warehouses of Mr. J. W. Barterre, Mill Street, on Saturday afternoon. Mr. S. V. King of Georgetown, the popular agent for this district will superintend this interesting exhibition which will be conducted by an expert from the factory of General Motors at Oshawa. The demonstration will be held at two o'clock and will be repeated at eight o'clock.

Little Jimmy Jones, son of Mr. J. W. Jones, manager of the Co-operative store, was successfully operated upon at the Sick Children's Hospital, Toronto, on Sunday, and it is hoped that within a few weeks he will be fully recovered.

Mr. David Williams and his daughter, Miss Jessie, Brock Avenue, intend taking a trip to Scotland this summer. They will make their headquarters with friends in Perth and vicinity.

The Acton Scout troop acted as hosts to a number of Toronto scouts, including huge band of the 29th Toronto troop, during the day. The Toronto contingent arrived in town on the 9:43 electric car and paraded to the local scout headquarters. There the Acton troop, under Scoutmaster Ferris, joined the parade, which marched through the main streets in town until the church hour.

Mr. Jonathan Lane has purchased the new brick cottage on Bower Ave. which has been the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ingrey the past year.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press March 29, 1900.

Mr. Murray McDonald came home last week from Southampton for a few days to recuperate. On Monday of last week while in an elevator at the tannery at Southampton, the cables broke and he fell with the cage some forty feet. He was badly shaken up but escaped serious injury.

Mr. James Brown, of Brown's Saw Mills, has decided, after mature consideration, to erect and equip a first-class planing mill, sash and door factory, in connection with his saw mill. A new building, 38 x 54 in ground floor, and 24 x 54 in second floor will be erected at once and the equipment will include a fifty horsepower engine, which will also run the mill. Mr. Richard Cook and mother, Mrs. Thomas Cook, have decided to remove to Grand Rapids, Mich., about the middle of next month. They intend to dispose of their property on Lake Ave.

The very interesting letter from Mr. J. M. Moore on our first page, was written during the last days of the voyage to South Africa and was posted at Cape Town upon the arrival of the Laurentian. Free Press readers will enjoy this well written letter.

Mr. G. L. Kitchen, who has had charge of the municipal electric lighting plant here since last April, put in his resignation to the Fire and Light Committee last week. He leaves today for Newmarket, where he has secured the position of electrician of the municipal electric lighting plant.

Look for a raise

If Halton Hills follows the pattern of most Canadian municipalities, property taxes will jump at least 10 per cent and perhaps as much as 25 per cent this year to meet much higher costs.

The Financial Post is predicting taxes in most Canadian cities will probably rise from \$50 to \$70 per house and the reasons for the tax increases are as numerous as the municipalities that have to collect them. Every community, it seems, has the same dismal story.

Although no concrete information is yet available from Halton Hills which is waiting word from the Board of Education and the Region on the amount they are going to have to fork over, there seems to be no doubt among some councillors polled that taxes are on their way up.

The Post's cross-country survey shows labor costs are up 15 to 20 per cent, education costs have skyrocketed, the cost of repairing streets has risen 30 to 40 per cent, fuel prices are up 20 per cent and even the cost of all the bureaucratic paper has doubled.

There is no reason to suppose Halton Hills will escape the effects of a country-wide hike in costs, although the finance committee of council last year did very well with the budget they control. However, consider only about 20 per cent of the budget is controlled at the local level, so much is going to depend on spending at the Board of Education and at the Region where forecasts to date are ominous.

Councillors may still be able to salvage a reasonable budget but it will take a wave of a magic wand.

Bird sanctuary or no?

Now seems the time to settle the matter of the wildlife sanctuary at the lake. If the town is to have the wild birds, the regulations must be understood and made clear.

For lack of knowledge to result in the comical-tragic scenes of the past month is too bad. Dozens of ducks have been trapped and taken away. Many remain.

The pet domestic geese are locked in cages in a countryside

barn, the mated pair no longer together.

Dale Gartley agreed their are two alternatives. The permit can be revoked. Or there can be a few swans, few Canada geese and a few tame Mallard.

There have apparently been far too many birds here for a proper sanctuary. Water quality for swimming could suffer too.

Less worry on skates

A skatathon to raise money this spring is a commendable idea. Abolished are the worries about traffic, blisters and cold that always accompanied a walkathon.

The worries were the adults', not the children's, of course! The participants always had a ball.

But an organized skatathon on the last day of ice in the arena seems a lot less nerve-wracking, even though it is likely less exciting for the participants.

The Rotary club is arranging the event, with the profits going to both the club and schools.

Need old-time weather

Winter sports fans didn't have the best of seasons, although this week's snow squalls keep reminding us winter hasn't gone yet.

Various winter events especially planned to take advantage of the Canadian cold have gone awry, due to too mild weather. Skiing locally wasn't the best. Events planned by conservation authorities fundered on bad days. The Y's Men just gave up on their snowmobile rally.

By next year there's a good

possibility the multi-recreation trails will materialize in this district. Plans are being made for publicly-owned land to be used for snowmobiling, winter hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

All we'll need next year is a lower Celsius reading than this year's sometimes-disappointing Fahrenheit. If we are to live in Canadian winters, they might as well be cold, crisp and sparkling!



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

This column is being written in considerable pain. It is caused by one of three things, but I haven't time to see a doctor because I have to write my column. So don't be surprised if it breaks off in the middle.

It's a sharp, biting pain in the chest. But don't worry, gentle reader. It only hurts when I cough, laugh, blow my nose or take a deep breath.

Possibly it's a heart attack, which seems to be the current fad among my peers these days. I hope it's not, because I dislike chasing after popular trends.

On the other hand, it may be an attack of pleurisy. I have a cough like a lion, and am spewing oysters into tissues, toilet paper and the snow, depending on when the fit strikes me.

A third possibility is that I twisted a muscle in my chest yesterday when I fell on a ski slope and decided to plow the last 50 yards with my nose, winding up in a contortion of limbs that would have made Houdini green with envy.

Personally, I subscribe to the third theory, mainly because it makes me seem like a clean-living chap, and secondly because I don't like the sound of the other two. Each is a bit fraught.

At any rate, this ominous—or silly—little pain OUCH! (I just sneezed) has made me a topic that is all the rage these days—corporal punishment in our schools.

It's almost as popular as capital punishment for criminals, and is even more widely discussed, for, while criminals make up a comparatively small segment of our society, rotten kids are always there in great numbers.

Usually, the business of beating kids is seen in black and white. On the one hand, you have the fundamentalists, who go back to the Bible with that old chestnut, "Spare the rod and spoil the child."

These people forget that several of the disciples were fishermen, and that what this particular one meant was, "If you don't let the kid use your spare rod once in a while, he'll grow up to be a lousy angler."

On the other side are the other crazies: psychologists, who think a kid who is thumped will be warped for life; mothers who read articles by psychologists; and former child-beaters who are now school principals.

And in between, as usual, are all the confused, decent and sensible people like you and me and the Moderator of the United Church of Canada, who thinks the strap should be brought back.

Both the extreme camps, of course, are full of crap. In the first group, we have people who were whipped unmercifully when they were kids, and by some weird type of logic, now claim it was good for them. They can hardly wait for a chance to get their own back.

And in the second group are all the other people who were whipped unmercifully

fully when they were kids and are trying to prove that that is what made them queer ever since.

I despise both groups, and will stick with the great mass in the middle. Most of us were whipped, at one time or another, but not unmercifully, and we deserved every stroke of the hairbrush, skep of the yardstick, and swish of the willow-switch.

It didn't warp us, psychologically or physically. It taught us something about the society we would be living in—that there are certain limits, and if you transgress them, you take your licks.

My mother used to work over my kid brother and me about once a week, whether we needed it or not. She used a fly-swatter, which has a sting like a scorpion, or a yardstick, if we got under the bed, and the fly-swatter wouldn't reach. It did us no harm whatever, and probably saved her sanity.

The same brother and I were in the same class in school, and once a week our teacher, Old Mary Walker, would give us a good strapping, along with a buddy, G.G. Relyea. We thought the world of her. The strapings stung, but once in a while, we'd jerk back our hand and she'd hit herself a good crack on the thigh, which doubled the

number on each hand but raised our status in the class.

There are only two reasons for a teacher to use a strap: 1) he or she is a poor teacher, and 2) to add a little drama to the monotony of the classroom.

A word to the bleeding-hearts. There are a lot more insidious ways to warp a child's personality than physical punishment. The real sadists of the classroom, and they are few, thank goodness, are those who use personal harassment, hectoring, and sarcasm. These can do far more permanent damage than a good thump.

Naturally, my sympathies in this affair are with the teacher. I have no time for the bully. The teacher with strength of character has few discipline problems.

But what about the sensitive young lady teacher who asks a lout to do something, and he says: "Screw you?"

So the punk gets a "suspension" for a few days (translation: holiday).

If I had the say, I'd turf him out of school for a year, and let his parents put up with him. It would serve both parties right.



Sergeants of the original 164th Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force



PICTURES OF the 164th Battalion in World War I have been loaned by Dr. A. J. Buchanan. He and his comrades from Grand Valley are included in the picture. He knows there are Acton men there, too, but he cannot identify them. Can anyone else give the names of the Acton soldiers, for the record?

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