

Free Press Editorial Page

Oh, to be a kid again

Their own home town was the unusual subject for grades 4, 5 and 6 students at the M. Z. Bennett school one day recently.

It was this same group that spent last Thursday at an impressive crafts day. Another full day their study was their home county.

The historic walking tour through Acton was a unique project that took a lot of planning and the guides who went along ended up realizing they didn't know as much about the town as they might.

How many old-timers know where all these places are?

The first schoolhouse, the first, second and third brick buildings, the site of Col. Beardmore's mansion, an early Adams family home, radial line and radial station, horse

sheds, two former churches now homes, the grave of Robert Little, the first industry, the second industry, site of Henderson's pond and dam, the Sidney Smith home (now part of a school), the pioneer cemetery with first settlers' graves, the drill shed.

And the site of what used to be one of the busiest places in town — the railway station!

Teacher Marlene Titan prepared guide sheets for the people who accompanied the youngsters, and everyone whipped through the whole town in three hours.

In the afternoon, everyone visited an industry—new and really impressive experiences.

Most adults would have loved to be school kids again for this special program of learning and crafts.



SHARON ARCHIBALD of Holmesway Pl. and Lynn Emond of Main Street enjoy covering 11-year-old Tony Sheppard of Kingham Hill with sand Saturday afternoon at the beach of Fairy Lake. Temperatures soared into the 30's. Lifeguards will be on duty when school gets out July 1.

Another go at the creek

So government-sponsored young people are going to clean up the school creek again this year! A phone call to Credit Valley Conservation Authority headquarters brings the skimpy information old tires and other debris will be picked up.

Many crossings of the Robert Little and library bridges have failed to show much debris, but maybe neighbors are too used to the sight to spot the flaws.

Clean-up of the creek through town by students shouldn't really take long. Wonder what the crew will think of next, after all the junk is taken out?

If they cut weeds by the library, they'll discourage the cheeky

ducks who have been extending their territorial limits beyond the pond for the past two years. The cement channelization through the subdivision makes for sterile neatness, but eliminates all the charm.

The long-range plans of the centennial library committee included a vision of a beauty spot around the property. They hoped for stone wiers which would cause the water to cascade gently down into a pool, with natural stone banks and maybe a fountain.

We guess the government wouldn't pay for all that—unless maybe the fountain had a plaque on it.

Onward and upward!

The scout hall addition is a project that—believe it or not—won't have any government support! No grants for students to do the work. No designation that school lane is a provincial depressed area!

Just donations collected and volunteer labor. Congratulations to the organizers!

A major project like Church St.

reconstruction can't be done overnight. The result will be good—but right now things are quite a mess for the neighborhood.

No use complaining. You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs, as they say! Dust, noise, power cutoffs are inevitable for a little while.

It's temporary inconvenience, permanent improvement.



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

Rather belatedly, I'm reading Hugh Garner's autobiographical One Damn Thing After Another, and thoroughly enjoying it.

There are two types of people to whom this book would appeal: those interested in the rather mysterious worlds of the professional writer and publisher, and those who enjoy the reminiscences of a robust and prickly personality who has done a lot of living in sixty-odd years.

It is far from Garner's best book. It is repetitious and padded inexcusably with articles he has written and a speech he has made. There is nothing of the grace and strength of his magnificent short stories or the solid skill of his good novels.

But that's as it should be. He is writing about Hugh Garner the man, as well as Hugh Garner the writer and nobody knows better than he that, while the latter may be on the way to becoming a Canadian literary giant, the former has feet of clay, if not putty.

In most of us, however sedate our lives, there lurks a hidden rebel, a wild non-conformist, a teller-off of the boss, a fighter for hopeless causes.

Garner has been, and is, all of these things and we can enjoy ourselves, vicariously, by identifying with his colorful, battleful life.

Hugh Garner has been fighting battles all his life, and a less doughty fighter would long since have been buried physically, socially, and perhaps spiritually.

As a kid, he fought the obloquy and occasional humiliation of the very poor in a Toronto slum, and emerged from it tough and chip-on-shoulder.

As a youth, he dropped out of school and ran head-on into the Depression. He bummed all over North America, riding freights, seeing country, working at many things and storing a great fund of experience for his future fiction.

He learned earlier the frustration of a proletarian facing the establishment and this led to a suspicion of, and disillusionment with, authority, which he has retained all his life.

He fought as a volunteer in the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. This was probably the last gallant crusade in the history of war, when thousands of young idealists from many nations left home to battle fascism. Most of them were scorned and derided as "reds" in their own countries.

Yet Garner was clear-headed enough to realize that the Communists were using the volunteers as dupes, and he was never sucked in.

Again a fight loomed when Canada declared war on Germany. Garner joined up in the army, right away. His "red" background was against him, so he switched to the navy and spent a number of dangerous, tumultuous and hilarious years before his discharge as a chief petty officer (he certainly wasn't "officer material").

Then came the biggest battle of all, trying to become a professional writer in Canada. At the time, he had about as much chance as he would have had if he'd chosen to run for king of England.

Doggedly, he fought stupid editors, timid publishers and the great apathy of the Canadian reader, sustained only by his own sublime and certain conviction that his stuff was good.

It was a long, pitched battle, with many a skirmish, the occasional rout, and the just-as-occasional victory. But he won.

At his best, Hugh Garner is one of the best short story writers in the English language, with a grasp of the feelings and motives of "ordinary" people that is wholly credible.

His novels are above average, a couple of them excellent, notably "Cabbage-town."

Where most of us can identify with Garner is in his scorn for the petty, the bureaucratic, the timid, the phoney.

He is somewhat like a "naughty" baby who pulls the cat's tail, knocks over the delicate table with the Spode figurine on it, and sits up looking around to make sure everybody is taking notice.

If Canada were the sort of country which erects statues of its writers, heaven forbid, Garner would be sculpted in solid stone, a fiendish grin on his face, a chip on each shoulder, and his right arm outflung, the middle finger of that hand raised erectly in the universal gesture.

Our readers write

School system must be changed within structure

R.R. 2, Rockwood, May 22, 1975.

To the Editor, Dear Sir:

In response to letters appearing in the Canadian Champion, the Acton Free Press and the Independent (Georgetown) by the Rev. K. Campbell and M. Traas, I would point out first of all to Rev. Campbell that in my twenty years of writing letters to newspapers owned by the Dills Publishing Co., and as an avid reader of letters to these publications, I have never read a letter that was irrational or abusive. Sometimes of course, the truth hurts.

I am flattered that the Reverend noted my interest in the environment. Of course I am concerned with the disposal of garbage, not with the spreading of it. Regarding the attendance at the Renaissance Rally in Milton, and the discrepancy in numbers from previous rallies, it could have been that the film "Sexuality and Communications" was the drawing card.

I discount the testimony of one psychiatrist. Daily in our courts psychiatrists testify for both defense and prosecution. They seldom agree. I could mention the U.S. Presidential Commission which studied hard core pornography and found it not harmful. This was a report of all sectors, from the field of psychiatry to the media. So much for the testimony of psychiatrists! I do maintain, however, that our children should be educated in sexual matters.

I love the Reverend's reference to the Apostle Paul, though this being International Women's Year, I think I would have stayed clear of Paul. The Bible is riddled with quotations, proverbs, etc., each contradicting the other, but to stick with the Apostle Paul, there is a difference between "providing" and "after having provided, coming back to the public purse for a refund."

The choice of schools for one's children is very important but we cannot all send our children to a school of our own choice, or we would require almost as many schools as we have homes, and as we are a nation of many ethnic groups, and many religions, the obvious answer is to teach the basics in the schools, and parents wishing for

specialized education, should provide for it outside of the system.

M. Traas pointed out that Christian religion has been replaced by secular humanism. If this comes to mean the end of Man's Inhumanity to Man, the end of bombings and shootings in Ireland, an end to Middle East strife, if this means an end to global conflict, (remember that each German soldier wore "God With Us" on his belt buckle, and that the Allies prayed for victory before each battle) well, I for one will accept secular humanism!!

Throughout the ages, humanity has suffered far more darkness than light in the name of religion. Religious wars, the Inquisition, Pogroms, there is not an atrocity that has not been committed by mem-

bers of one faith or another. I respect the right of people to follow the religion of their choice, but again, we cannot provide schools for people of every religious persuasion.

M. Traas says the Alliance of Christian Schools here in Ontario has eight thousand students. In 1973, (the latest figures available) in the Province of Ontario there was a total of one million, four hundred and twenty two thousand, eight hundred and eighty five students in the Ontario School System. Of this number eight hundred and ninety eight thousand, six hundred and sixty eight children were in the Public School System.

Although the parents of these students may not be ecstatic about the system, they

have not seen fit to remove their children, and this being a democracy, we must accept the rule of the majority. If the school system is to be changed it has to be done within our democratic structure. The topic on everyone's lips today is education costs, and we cannot afford to provide for each individual's tastes.

Education is a specialized field. You don't attempt to fix a automatic transmission yourself, you don't tell the captain how to fly a jet. We have to place ourselves in the hands of the experts. If those directing our experts fail us, we must replace them, and the place to do that is at the polls.

W. A. Johnson

Force of evil is powerful

Dear Editor,

Lately there is evident concern over the breakdown of our social system and the growth of crime, violence, disobedience, racism, etc., but there is little said as to the root cause of all these evils—our own human nature.

We are given the ability to judge right from wrong, but prefer the wrong. Our appetite for evil is voracious, violence for example feeds on itself and produces more violence; the victim wishes vengeance and resorts to the same violence which harmed him, while the criminal is aware of the new way of achieving his own ends. Even jail will not remove his appetite for violence. Indeed he will seek instruction, and opportunities for more acts of violence, in his "time of reformation and meditation."

My suggestion is that there should be more effort, and trust, put into training children, so that they will realize they do have a nature which will lead them to their own destruction, as well as the present teaching on the "good side" of man.

We are not only creatures of love and light, we need to be aware of the inner struggle for control of our lives. If we think only good things will happen to us, we will

be stunned when we find it is not so.

The force of evil is powerful, greed and pride are very evident on all sides, children must be taught that they must resist these sins. "Sin" is an unacceptable word in many circles, but children know it is present if they are taught to identify their "bad" feelings as such. As homes have left the moral teaching to the church or Sunday school, children only learn how to handle sins one day a week but come in contact with wickedness every day, plus artificial wickedness on the screen. Is it any wonder the devil wins?

Some judges suggest criminals attend church to improve their control over their baser nature, but habits are hard to break. If, however, children are taught early at home, and at school, that it is their own responsibility and duty to do what is right, and there is also an example of the same by the parents, only then will we have a better world.

Let this be a "plug" and encouragement for our Sunday Schools and Christian homes. Keep up the good work. Your country's future depends on you!

Yours truly, S. Drijber.

Cat rescue brings thanks

P.O. Box 393, Terminal "A", Toronto 116, Ontario, May 20, 1975

The Acton Free Press, Acton, Ontario

Dear Sir:

Please give my very sincere thanks to all those who helped me rescue my cat on Sunday, May 18, 1975 between 9:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. in your park.

My special thanks to Mr. Townsley who did the final rescue and to the family living at 41 Knox Avenue who gave me the kind use of their telephone.

The help of the citizens of Acton is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely, (Mrs.) L.M. Chambers

P.S.—The cat is getting his nails trimmed this week.

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press May 26, 1955

Acton will shortly have a third medical doctor. Dr. and Mrs. Buckner will move to Wellington St. A son, Robbie, will come with them and two daughters who are in Scotland will join them later. Another daughter is in Montreal.

Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Johnston celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary quietly at their home on Wednesday. Acton friends extend hearty congratulations.

Miss Daisy Foster, who is retiring from teaching, was presented with a spoon at the regular meeting of the Halton Federation of Women Teachers, Esqueving unit in Georgetown Tuesday evening. Mr. Kemp of Burlington made the presentation.

This year Joe Jan was the Acton high school student chosen to go to Ottawa for a Rotary-sponsored Adventure in Citizenship. He met Prime Minister St. Laurent while there.

Excavation began this week for the addition to Acton high school, which will add three new classrooms in a wing to the east of the present school. Debentures were issued at \$40,000 for the addition which will include three classrooms, a storage room and nurses' room, with corridor.

St. Alban's Male Chorus has been re-named Acton Chorallers following the last meeting on Wednesday, May 18. The decision was made by popular vote.

Leno Braida, son of Mr. and Mrs. Abele Braida, graduated with honors in Chemical Engineering from the University of Toronto, Wednesday. He will do post-graduate work at University of Toronto.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press May 28, 1925

An unusual interest was taken by Acton Methodists in the proceedings of Hamilton Conference in session at Guelph during the past week. Among those present for one or more sessions were: Rev. and Mrs. J. Culp, Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Kerr and Mrs. Ostrander, Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. H. P. Moore, Mr. W. J. Akins, Misses Clara E. Moore, Mr. W. J. Speight, Fern Brown, Ruth Nelson, Mrs. Annie Johnston, Miss Belle Stephenson and Miss Lottie E. Speight.

Riversdale Farm, the home of Mr. and Mrs. William McCullough, near Acton, was the scene of a pretty wedding on Wednesday, May 20, when their daughter, Edna Mabel was united in marriage to Mr. John Clayton Wilson, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Wilson, Ashgrove.

The Acton Ladies' Softball team got away to a good start on their 1925 season, which promises to be the best the club has had yet, on Monday when they cleaned up everything at Erin.

Miss Miriam Hellsberg, of Toronto, visited at the home of Mrs. William Anderson, Peel Street, on Monday. Dr. and Mrs. Gollop attended the annual homecoming at the Royal College of Dental Surgeons.

A New York millionaire whose life has been despaired of because of prolonged paroxysms of hicoughs has been cured by a stranger who described the successful remedy in these words: "Stop each ear with a finger. Press firmly. Have someone put a glass of water to the mouth and drink."

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press May 31, 1900

Mr. John Kenney, Jr. has returned to his place in the Dominion Boot & Shoe Store, after spending five weeks on the road in the interest of Oberholzer & Co., shoe manufacturers, Berlin. He took the route of another traveller who was temporarily laid off. The outing was enjoyed and his big sales proved his ability to handle stock to advantage.

No present resident of Acton can remember when the old frame dwelling in the rear of the residence of Mr. D. Henderson, M.P., which is being torn down this week, was erected. It was built over 70 years ago and was the farm residence of the late Rufus Adams, one of the founders of Acton. It was well and strongly built, and much of the timber and lumber it contained is as sound as when put in. After Mr. Adams' death one of his daughters held a private school in the building. It was subsequently occupied by the late Mr. Johnson, father of Mrs. R. Little, Mr. John Moore, Manager of the Toronto Lime and Cement Works, Limehouse, occupied it for a time; then Dr. Morrow was its owner for some years, and fifteen years ago, Mr. Henderson purchased it. It was here he resided when first elected to the House of Commons in 1868. The old house has been vacant since 1892.

We learn from the Youngstown, Ohio, Telegram that Miss Jennie Siegel has been appointed by the W.C.T.U. of the city to solicit subscriptions for the erection of a home for the rescue of unfortunate women.

THE ACTON FREE PRESS

PHONE 853-2010

Business and Editorial Office



Founded in 1923 and published every Wednesday at 39 Willow St., Acton, Ontario. Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the CCNA and Ottawa 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 201. 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 reasonable allowance for signatures, will not be charged for but the balance of the advertisement will be paid 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
Ray Dills, Editor
Dan Ryder, Advertising Manager

Copyright 1975