

Missed in Festival Country

Acton is poorly served by a new booklet put out by the Niagara and Midwestern Travel Association, listing special events in this large area of Ontario. The Ministry of Industry and Tourism back the advertising program.

A sign outside Acton to the west a couple of years ago gave us the news we were in the Midwestern Ontario Travel area. But we needn't prepare for any influx of people.

Halton gets a full page in the book. Acton, not surprisingly, gets little of that allotted space. (And in the wrong place at that - half way through the list of Oakville's attractions.)

To quote: "Acton - Historical; Halton County Streetcar and Electric Railway Museum."

That's it, folks. For Milton, listed are the centennial pond and mill pond, farmer's market, Kelso Conservation area, Crawford Lake Conservation area, Unity Park, Rotary Park, Drumquin Park, Henderson Park, Omagh Park, Victoria Park.

For Georgetown, old paper mill and dam, House Sol art gallery, Limehouse Conservation area, Terra Cotta Conservation area, Silver Creek Conservation area. For Campbellville, Mountsburt Wild Life Area, Hilton Falls Conservation area, Campbellville Community pond, Mohawk raceway.

Not a mention of Acton park, one of the loveliest small parks around?

The only Acton event listed, and rightly, is Acton fall fair, last on the list of minifestivals.

However, according to Festival Country general manager Mrs. M. Sharkey, it's all simply explained. Her office contacted all Chambers of Commerce and got quite poor response. Any kind of contact that could be made was done in a three-week blitz prior to the deadline for listings.

Acton Chamber knows of no such letter.

They put in for Acton only what they knew, and they'll be very happy to include whatever the Chamber of Commerce or any citizen will them in their next edition.

So next year we'll no doubt see Acton Park and Fairy Lake in the Festival Country listings.

While she was talking to the Free Press about the new booklet on Festival Country this week, general manager Mrs. M. Sharkey mentioned another booklet she has on hand at her office which she knows will prove helpful to many people. It tells how to organize any festival or special event, and could be adapted to any program, big or small.

There are also plenty of extra folders on the many attractions of Festival Country available at the main office as well as at all provincial tourist booths and the 28 tourist information centres in the district.

Festival Country's address is 440 Elizabeth St., Burlington.



—Photo by Wendy Thomson

Airing out the old toy box



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

It wasn't quite the ridiculous and the sublime, but near enough. A good, contrasting picture of Canada on a Sunday in summer.

We'd gone back to the village to join Grandad in the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the little white church by the bay.

Sunday morning, breakfast over, off for a drive with the city-lawyer brother-in-law, while the wives were doing the dishes.

Poked around the neighborhood, shaking our heads over the property developments, where entrepreneurs were getting as much for a single lot as their grandfathers had for a 150-acre farm with house and barn.

Commiserated with each other over the fact that we'd both be millionaires if we'd bought some of this shore property 20 years ago, when it was dirt cheap. Conveniently forgot that neither of us had enough money to buy one lot 20 years ago, let alone a mile of shoreline.

Driving along the shore road, spotted a lot of activity. Naturally, stopped for a look, as one always does in the country.

It was a scuba diving expedition, complete with vans, tanks, goggles, snorkels, and man-from-Mars suits.

Hung around to watch, and asked some casual questions from one of the "divers". He was so reticent you'd have thought he was just about to climb into a Moon-bound capsule, instead of into about 12 inches of water.

He finally admitted grimly that the group had just finished its training, and that this "dive" they were about to make was the "real thing".

There were about 20 in the group. We stood around and watched as they struggled and wiggled and squirmed into their skin-tight suits and heavy tanks, and sprayed their goggles and checked their air-lines and adjusted their flippers.

their accolade, when they were named Citizens of the Year.

But let's say it again, during their last two weeks here—many, many thanks.

This was the real thing, no question about it, and the tension mounted steadily as they spent half an hour getting fitted out for the dangers of the depths: octopi, sunken wrecks, sharks.

There was only one female in the group, an extremely chubby one, and she had so much trouble squeezing into her suit and getting it zipped over the bulges that I was mighty glad I wasn't out there, trapped in a wreck, waiting for her to rescue me. Finally, purple in the face, she was ready.

Then their leader appeared. He had been out there, fearlessly probing the possible dangers of the sunken wreck.

He stood there, barking orders, making them re-check their gear, dividing them into teams, ensuring that their boot-knives were available for a swift slash of a tangled life-line.

Finally, the big dive was on. They waded for 10 feet, since it was too shallow to lie down. Then they flopped and snorkeled out, in about two feet of water, to the wreck, every nerve keyed, every sense alerted to the perils ahead.

The assistant instructor, who wasn't making the dive, sighed with relief, pulled a beer out of his van, and chatted cheerfully with us.

"What do they do out there?" he was asked. "Not a helluva lot," he replied. "When you've swum over the thing about three times, that's about it."

We silently concurred. We knew the "sunken wreck" was an old barge, towed there years before to serve as a dock for a boat-owner. Three years ago, when the water was lower, it sat three feet out of the water. The only sunken treasure would have to be the old car motor which anchored it.

I know that diving must be fun, and is dangerous, but this operation made me giggle. It was like watching a lot of six-year-old boys get fitted out in their space uniforms, do a ritual countdown, and then

run around the backyard yelling: "Zoom! Zoom!"

Couldn't help pondering on why 20 odd people would drive a round trip of 300 miles from the city and get dressed in Halloween costumes to paddle around in three feet of water "exploring" an old barge.

Three hours later, we were sitting in the church, for the anniversary service, just 100 yards down the road from the big dive.

There was a simple dignity here which underlined the silliness of the other operation.

I guess we were as inappropriately dressed for a hot summer day as the divers — shirts and ties and suits and summer dresses. Most of the people were middle-aged to old, with a sprinkling of children.

But there was a sense of drawing together, of closeness, of continuity.

Heading the brief history of this little, frame, 100-year-old building, one was aware, however dimly, of the fierce determination of the first families, when they erected it, on a donated lot, at a cost of \$500, that their children would be God-fearing, God-loving Christians.

And there was a little sadness in the knowledge that the Sunday School had been forced to close, and that the church is now open only in summer, and that many of the children, and the children's children and so on, are neither God-fearing nor God-loving.

And there was some pride when Grandad, sitting next to me, was singled out as having been associated with that church for 75 years.

But the children and the children's children had rallied around for the occasion. And after the service, there was the get-together in the community hall for the coffee and sandwiches, and the hundreds of handshakes, and the sometimes desperate trying to put together of names and faces not seen for years, and the presentation of grandchildren, and the hard realization that everyone is growing older.

The new and the old. The silliness and the simplicity. The plump young city men struggling into their skin-suits, and the weather-beaten farmers in their strangling collars and ties.

A summer Sunday in Canada.

Thanks to the O.P.P.

Thank you, too, men of our O.P.P. detachment. This week Corp. Bob Arbour expresses, via a letter to the editor, his feelings about us.

Acton already gave the force

Free Press Editorial Page

Small town quality

Newcomers to Acton, who are moving steadily into the new subdivision homes, will gradually discover the good quality of small town living if they didn't know it already.

Our new friends-to-be will be joining teams, clubs and churches, and beginning to shop here.

The story in last week's Free Press about newcomers coming because of lower house prices, working out of town and evincing small interest in Acton itself, might have been explained more. The person who made this observation, the Hi Neighbour welcome service caller, sees people who have only lived here a couple of weeks or a month. It takes longer than that for

them to become acquainted with a strange town and the strangers around them.

One man, who has lived in town several months, called to say he and his wife find Acton a "good little town"; they wanted the quietness of a small community when they came. They find the shopkeepers terrific to deal with.

He also mentions that many Actonians work out-of-town, which of course is true. Last week's news story irritated him, as a newcomer from Toronto himself.

Other recent citizens will grow to share his complimentary feelings about his new hometown.

The speechless signboard

The big blue signboards at the entrances to town stand bleak and wordless. Few people know how to go about putting up lettering on them, since the development commission no longer exists.

Ted Tyler Jr. says people still call him to ask how they use the signs. Although the development commission members offered their services free to Halton Hills, they have never been used in their old

capacity. They have no jurisdiction over their signs any more.

Alf Doby has the letters, and anyone who'd like to mount something on the signboards should contact him, says Ted Tyler Jr.

Certainly the empty signboards are a sad welcome to Acton.

How about something simple. Unseasonal. Unregional. Like "Have a good day?"

Summertime thoughts

Corn is growing high in the fields, the silky tassels gleaming in the sun. And the roadsides are filled with lilies, Queen Annes lace and wild lupin. Driving in the country is very easy on the eyes in August!

Harry Stemp, of the Uxbridge Times-Journal, tells a story about politicians. "The following was heard between two committee members: 'We started with two alternative plans of action and after three days of meetings we have narrowed them down to eight.'"

Is a moped a bicycle or is it a junior motorcycle? The answer makes little difference to the motorist who finds that he must share the road with these motor-assisted vehicles. It is one more thing to look for — together with motorcycles, bicycles, other motorists and pedestrians.

True, the moped may be difficult to see. It is smaller than either a bicycle or a motorcycle. But with all the recent press coverage given this type of vehicle, motorists by now should be familiar with the moped silhouette.

OUR READERS WRITE:

Thank you, Actonians

I am writing this letter to show my appreciation to the people of Acton for their thoughtfulness and assistance during the past three years.

In three short years there have been many changes and I am sure that during the coming years there will be many more.

I would like to thank the Acton Town Council, the press, the service clubs, the schools, the business people, the firemen, the Fall Fair Board and many others too numerous to mention, for all the assistance given me during my posting in Acton as Corporal in charge of your local O.P.P. detachment, which is closing August 31st, 1975 after some twenty-six years in the community. (The same building and only

two Corporals over a 26 year period).

I was very fortunate to be able to take charge following 22 years of fine service under a great man, Corporal Ray Mason, who I never met but admired from his reputation. I have worked uncountable hours as have the men in an effort to keep peace, law and order in a growing community. This was only done because the officers felt, as I did, we lived and worked in a great town with the backing of the people toward the same goals. A police force can only function as well as the citizens want it too.

I have noticed better communications and

more public support, citizens are backing the police, which is a necessity. The youths (the greatest majority) are a great bunch and can be proud, as must be their parents, in this day and age to live and work in such a fine community. (Police need People and People need Police.)

In leaving in September, I can only say that of the six postings I have had during my career this town has been my favorite. I will always remember it as Acton and the people as friends and neighbours.

Thanks again, Bob Arbour.

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, August 18, 1955. Faithful Old Friends, being still the words of the ancient hymn that rose from their throats (at the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the late Mrs. M. Sharkey) when residents of the area, former pupils and friends joined in the tribute to the pioneers of the area Sunday, marking 100 years for the school section was the three-day event. More than 500 turned out for the dance at Brookville hall. There was such a large crowd the music was relayed outside and couples danced outside.

Guests present at the reunion were Levi Blakey, 93, and Lila Culver, 75. Oldest students present were David Hutchison and Mrs. Gilbert W. E. Patterson, the oldest living teacher, gave a few arithmetic lessons on the blackboard.

Work is progressing this week on a new utility addition to Brookwood public school. With 11,000 seats from all over the world, Dave Hills, scoutmaster of the first Acton troop, and Queens Scout Wayne Currie are attending the World Jamboree at Niagara on the Lake.

Building in Acton continues at a record setting pace. Practically all the building is in Lakewood subdivision where walls are going up for 27 houses.

Upper school graduates will be Janice Baker, whose highest mark was 92, Barbara Baxter, Nelson Benton, Robert Cox, Frederick Gordon, Francis Heffernan, Elizabeth Jany, Nancy Lambert, June Lindsay, William MacCall, David McVey, Ruth Marshall, Dennis Papillon and Peter Schulz.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press August 6, 1925.

Last Sunday, about two o'clock, at the beginning of the thunderstorm which continued for some time, the kitchen chimney of the residence of Mr. John Cameron was struck with lightning. The bricks for several feet of the top of the chimney were hurled over the roof.

With the largely increased motor traffic since the completion of the Toronto-Sarnia highway through Acton, the crossing on Mill Street over the Canadian National Railway is found to be much too narrow. They should be widened at one end and graded with broken stone between the several lines of tracks. In making this crossing the other evening a big car crossed Mr. A. E. Macklin, J. P., and his sedan of the crossing and between the rails, a rather dangerous predicament.

Week after week former residents of Acton come to the town of their birth or early residence to view again the scenes of their youth and meet any who were school mates or companions in the early days. Last Thursday, Mr. John Livingstone, of St. Catharines and his younger brother, Mr. Hugh Livingstone, of Hemlock Mich. came to visit their birthplace. They are sons of David Livingstone, one of the early residents John was born in the house now occupied by Miss Murray as a millinery store and residence on Mill St. Citizens used to refer to the place as beside Charlie Symon's store and warehouse.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press August 16, 1900.

The Board of Trustees of Acton Public School met in regular monthly session last Wednesday evening.

Members present: H. Holmes, Chairman, H. Swackhamer, W. R. Kenney and John Agnew.

In rural sections the public schools reopen next Monday, August 20th, and in cities, towns and villages on Monday, September 3rd. High schools also reopen on September 3rd. The pupils in town will make the best of the next two weeks. Merry little people who have been a source of great comfort, sliding down the banister, falling into the cistern, chasing the neighbors' chickens and coming home from the swimming hole with mud in their ears and holes in their clothes, and all other juvenile recreations, which well regulated parents recognize and duly appreciate will soon require to obey the school bell's call and give up to a large extent these innocent vacation doings.

The annual garden party of St. Patrick's Church, Georgetown, will be held on the Tennis Court at the residence of Mr. John H. Barber, M.P.P., on Tuesday next, 21st inst. A very interesting programme has been provided. Mr. H. S. Holmes agent, G.T.R. has arranged for a coach to be attached to the 6:19 p.m. train to accommodate the friends in Acton, Brockton and Guelph, which will return, leaving Georgetown at 10:30. Special features will include vocal music by the well-known humorist, Ramsay, of Toronto, who will sing "When Johnny Comes Home," with chorus; a tug of war between the firemen of Acton and Georgetown, and an address by the Hon. J. R. Stratton, Provincial Secretary.

THE ACTON FREE PRESS
PHONE 853 2010
Business and Editorial Office

Founded in 1973 and published every Wednesday at 39 Willow St., Acton, Ontario. Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the CCNA and CNA. Advertising rates on request. Subscriptions by cheque in advance, \$4.00 in Canada, \$6.00 in all countries other than Canada, single copies 15 cents, carrier delivery in Acton 13 cents per week. Second class mail Registration Number 0515. Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of typographical error, the printer of the advertisement space occupied by the error shall be held responsible for the correction. In the event of a typographical error advertising space or services of a printing price, please or services may not be sold. Advertising is merely an offer to sell, and may be withdrawn at any time.

DON PRYDE and Publishing Co. Ltd.
David R. Doh, Publisher
Kay Doh Editor
Dan Ryder Advertising Manager
Copyright 1975