

Tragic accident a lesson

The horrible accident at the Mill St. track impresses on us all the need for constant caution when driving. Many people, talking about the tragedy, admit they "sneak" over the tracks themselves. They're re-thinking that kind of dangerous practice now, though. The trains come very, very fast. And they're very big. It's no

contest. There have been a couple of other fatal accidents in Acton over the many years the trains have come through. One victim was a pedestrian. Each one makes all the other people show more awareness and concern each time they reach a track.

Free Press Editorial Page

Your opinion on garbage?

People who are seriously concerned about garbage disposal can do something concrete about it now. In last week's Free Press Halton Region included a brochure, called Solid Waste News. Other Halton papers carried it as well. Regional chairman Allan Mason chose this way to pass on to all the people of the county information about the long-range solid waste plan. He explains Halton produces 500 tons of garbage every single day!

On the back page there is a coupon for citizens to fill in, giving their personal opinions. The questionnaire is worded in a way that will cause the respondent to think carefully first. It's a little more complicated than a form where you can tick off "yes" or "no". Despite this, it's your chance to speak out. In the past, Acton sites had been suggested for huge new dumps. We are not too far away to be involved. A few extra forms are available at the Free Press if you would like one.



SANTA'S ELVES THEY ARE NOT, but Ken Hodgson and Ken Hurren of Acton Hydro are helping the town prepare for the festive occasion by decorating Main Street light standards with Christmas fixtures. Their work can be seen high above the Main-Mill Street intersection and along both main streets. Several lights were out Monday, due to a brief power failure in the west end of town.

Hey - how about us?

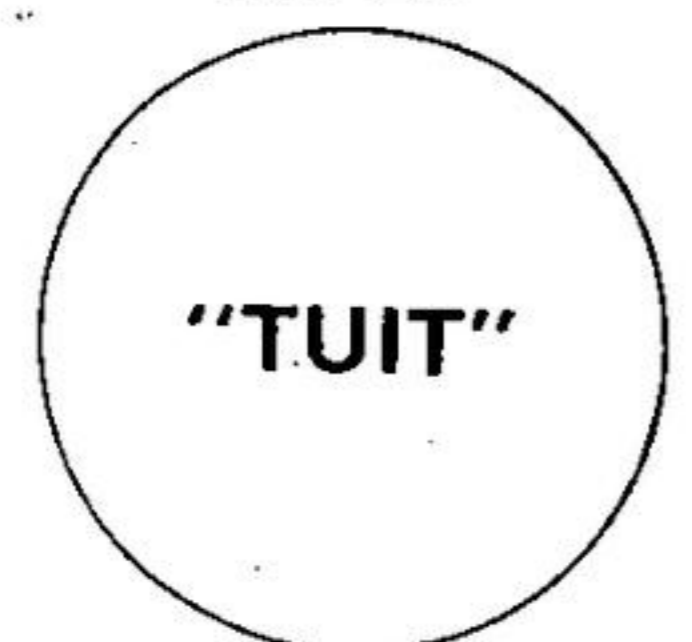
It's hard to imagine council would seriously consider a third arena for Georgetown without a lot of study. However, it was mentioned at a recent council meeting by councillor Mike Armstrong. Georgetown has just nicely opened its second arena, called the Gordon Alcott Memorial arena. How three ice surfaces in Georgetown could be utilized fully would have to be proven.

Acton has its new arena roof, renovations, and is now due for a new public address system. Haven't heard a whisper of a suggestion Acton might have another arena. It's not too far-sighted. Our population in Acton alone is about 7,000 and the district is filling up fast. Georgetown's population is about 18,000.

On the mail and gifts

Houses are decorated with lights and tinsel at this time of year, and magazines and TV screens are decorated with beautiful liquor and beer ads. And speaking of beauty, what do you think of the Christmas stamps put out by our revered post office this year? Again they are daubs supposedly drawn by children, depicting winter scenes in an awkward and garish manner. Wait till some Christmas stamps come in from overseas, courtesy of our post office, again. Let's just compare.

Wondering what to give that person who has absolutely everything? (And that just has to be a man.) Here's a fine suggestion. And all you have to do is cut it out of the Free Press. It's an indispensable item. For years people have been saying "I'll do it as soon as I get around tuit." Right? So cut this out and wrap it up as a gift. He can keep it handy and won't have any trouble getting all those little jobs done around the house, for he will finally have gotten a "round tuit."



The Free Press staff was pleased when the post office staff decided to put letters to Santa Claus in our box. We've got special dealings with the North Pole and the mail will get through, all right. The mails finally came through, and with it another column from Wendy Thomson, one of our favorite people! Fans of her column The Painted Box will be anxious to hear how they fared on their trip west and how things are now. Read on!

There is talk of more inter-church activity in town next year. That would make a new New Year's resolution for church people.

Look back, not ahead

The National Commander of The Salvation Army in Canada, Commissioner Arnold Brown, says Canadians ought to spend less time looking forward to this coming Christmas and more time looking back to the first Christmas. If they did, he is certain that the life-changing message of the Christian churches would be seen to be totally relevant to modern man's situation. What is vitally needed, Commissioner Brown asserts, is not environmental improvements, higher income and more refined standards of living, desirable as in some instances they may be. The chief need is for internal rather than external improvement. It is people who need changing. The significance of Christ's birth is too often lost in the plethora of food and drink, cards and

presents that comprise our commercially stimulated Celebration of Christmas. Not, says the Commissioner, that we should feel guilty about being sentimental at Christmas. The sending of cards and the giving of gifts, so often involving a real sacrifice of time and money, keep friendships in repair and intoxicate children with happiness. Christ would not be contemptuous of this. But with a seriously increasing prison population, with violence multiplying at a horrifying rate, and with alcoholism and the non-medical use of drugs sapping the national strength, to cite only a few of the nation's social ills, the real message of Christmas is obviously needed. Perhaps instead of peering forward to Venus, people should take time to look back to that Christmas star.



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

"And cousins by the dozens." That line from an old nursery rhyme or something seemed to be the theme when the Thomson clan held a family reunion at the old homestead, on a beautiful day in October. There was a lot of kissing and hugging (we're an emotional family.) I was bussed and squeezed by a lot of middle-aged ladies and made up for it by heartily bussing and squeezing a number of extremely busable and squeezable nieces and daughters of nephews and various other attractive young hussies drifting about. Most people have been sucked in, at one time or another, to a family reunion. It can be a ghastly experience, or a joyful one. This one fell into the latter category. There was no mourning for the dead, only a great sense of being alive, and the pleasure of knowing that all these people, of all shapes and ages, were blood kin, all sprung from the fertile loins of one Walter Thomson, an Irishman of Scottish extraction, away back there in the 19th century. Walter was prolific, and his sons were no slouches either. One of them, Mountain Jack Thomson, a sometime scourge of the Ottawa Valley during the great lumbering days, had about 10 children by his first wife, and when she died, married her sister and produced another large family. Another, William, after whom I was named, sired 10 children. And there was the last of them, my uncle Ivan, 84, dancing around like a 30-year-old, welcoming all of us with something close to tears of joy in his eyes. He's as handsome as always, slim as a boy, blue eyes sparkling, wit bubbling, striding about as though he'd never heard of arthritis. A man of many talents, a conservationist who plants trees lovingly, a traveler whose next letter might be from New Zealand, an artist in working with wood, a deep lover of nature and people, and a concerned and loving patriarch of the clan. It is my casual boast, and my brothers' and sisters' grudging concession, that I "take after him". I wish I did. He remarried at 80 and has a three-year-old grandson. Figure that one out. No way can I match that. He showed me the room in the old brick homestead, a fine house on a steep bluff overlooking the Ottawa River, the bedrooms in which my grandmother bore the 10 children. No wonder she died at an age when most modern women are just getting their second wind, or their second husband. He showed me a picture of his family at the dining table. At the head, my grandfather, white hair and huge curly beard. On one side, four strapping sons, and an empty place set for Emerson, a maverick who was in the Klondyke when the photo was taken. How would you like to try to feed a mob like that in these days? You'd be bankrupt in a week. Another picture showed my Uncle Ivan as the sole surviving member of the Shawville Pontiacs, taken in the days when hockey was deadly serious but played for fun, and Shawville used to journey by sleigh to take on the stalwarts of Renfrew and Pembroke. Perhaps sadly, there was no living to be made for huge families on the barren land of Calumet Island, and the tribe dispersed, some of the boys joining the great exodus to The West, the El Dorado of those days. They were honest, hard-working, good-looking, gregarious people. But it wasn't enough. They established themselves and

worked like slaves to build something. Then came the Depression. And they suffered. Boy, how they suffered! All of Canada took it in the neck, but the prairie farmers took it in the neck and in the guts and in various other parts of the anatomy. Most of my uncles went through The Great War. Many of their sons went through World War II. Some didn't come back. Things picked up. Some of them even made a decent living before they died. Their children are moderately well off, middle-class people with warm hearts and no pretensions. But they're fiercely proud of being Thomsons. (And don't ever try to spell it with a "p".) We have notruck with the poor white trash Thomsons with a "p". And there we were, cousins by the dozens, on the lawn of the 103-year-old "homestead", looking out over the Ottawa River.

where Grandfather had been a slide-master in the lumbering days, and Mountain Jack, his brother, had been a "scrapper" known throughout the Valley for his fists and feet, in the days when cops were few and far between, and a man was a man, or else. A gang had flown in from Saskatoon. Others had come from the States. It took me 15 hours driving to get there and back. And I wouldn't have missed it for the world. I hope some of the young ones got the sense of pride and family that I did. There wasn't a millionaire present. There wasn't a famous person present. But there they were, salt of the earth, loquacious, witty lot, and I was glad to be one of them. Social footnote to Westerners. My first cousin, Jack Thomson, and his wife Louise, of Saskatoon, were not, respectively, in their underwear and nightgown, as they were last time I met them, a couple of years ago in Germany.

OUR READERS WRITE:

It's all rather shocking

The Editor, Dear Sir: According to reports in the press, Mrs. Judy Alexander, chairperson of the Halton Board of Education has expressed "shock" at the contents of a letter addressed to the Hon. Thomas Wells in which I protested the destructive philosophy behind the so-called "values education" program. Apparently her "shock" is not the result of a realization of the validity of my critique of that philosophy and its promoters, but rather at the parents who have dared unmask the program for what it is: a monstrous and devious attack on the moral foundations of society! Mrs. Alexander didn't express "shock" when that "values education" philosophy thrust four "Gay Libbers" unannounced into a Grade 12 health class in Halton where they made their pitch to the students for the acceptance of their life-style as "normal". She wasn't "shocked" that the teachers responsible for that outrageous incident stressed to the protesting parent that they DO NOT TEACH MORALS in the classroom! She wasn't "shocked" that the Director of Education slandered the character of the protesting parent with a total misrepresentation of that parent's viewpoints in direct statements made to the press at the time of the incident. She is not "shocked" that to this day there has not been the suggestion of an apology from the Board of Education for these incidents, either to the parents directly involved or to the aroused public which rallied nearly 1,000 strong to protest. Mrs. Alexander is not "shocked" by the arrogance of the social revolutionaries in our classrooms who are forcing our children to read literature of such a disgusting and degrading character that it is unprintable in the public press! She is not "shocked" over the revelation that a family life film being used without Board knowledge or approval for four years in the regional high schools is of such a nature that an Oakville psychiatrist who makes his living counselling five or six high school students daily, expressed his judgment that it was unfit for high school students under any conceivable circumstances! She was not "shocked" that "Playboy" was part of a Grade 10 communications course in this region. This is the pornographic material which an Ottawa inquest into the tragedy and horror of a high school rape and murder incident ruled last week should be banned from the news-stands of that city! In Mrs. Alexander's "liberated" view, if the "professional" says it should be in the course of studies she'll see to it that it stays in the classrooms of the Halton school system! So here we have the incredible spectacle of the elected representative of the parents and taxpayers finally being so distressed by the disturbances created by this philosophical monster which has come to dominate our school system and which is now being attractively packaged to be presented to the public as "values education",—finally Mrs. Alexander is so disturbed that she has come out in the press to express her "shock"! ... at the PARENT WHO DARED TO UNMASK THE MONSTER, that is!! And that IS shocking! Sincerely, Ken Campbell, Milton, Chairman, Renaissance Ontario

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago Taken from the issue of the Free Press December 15, 1955 A turkey dinner preceded the last meeting of the music study group for this year. The group met Monday at the home of Mrs. J. Jany. Records, carol singing and games were included in the program, of gifts and presentations to Mrs. F. Blow and Mrs. E. Bilton. On Friday evening, December 9, the Fifth Line neighbors of Mr. and Mrs. William Burgess met at the home of their daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. H. McEachern, to honor them on the occasion of their 49th wedding anniversary. Acton's Junior D hockey team is to play its first game on Sunday afternoon in Milton. Opposition is to be a juvenile team from Burlington. A surprise for both the girls concerned and their parents was the capping ceremony held at St. Joseph's hospital last week. Marilyn Marks and Rochelle Henderson of Acton were among the group of 31 student nurses who received their caps, although they had not expected them until the new year. Two collisions in this area recently caused upwards of \$800 damage. No injuries were suffered in either of the two head-on crashes. Last Friday cars collided on a hill west of Acton on No. 7, causing over \$600 total damage. Drivers of the cars were Betty Dennis of Acton and Fred Kozody of Toronto. A head-on collision at a curve on the Acton sideroad Sunday caused a total of \$200 damage. Drivers of the vehicles involved were Jack Varcoe and Mack Smith.

50 years ago Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, December 10, 1925. Last Friday evening Mr. and Mrs. H. S. Holmes very hospitably entertained the members of the staff at the Canadian National Railway station and their wives at their beautiful home "Villamore", Bower Ave. The occasion was the seventieth birthday of Mr. Holmes. Mr. Holmes has been agent of the railway company here for 43 years. His railway experience dates back to 1871 when he became railway operator at Camiache station. This makes a continuous record of 54 years with the same railway and on the same division. It is an interesting fact that Mr. Holmes followed the electrical wizard Thomas A. Edison who in 1870 was operator at Camiache. The Crewsons Corners Sunday School is planning their annual Christmas entertainment. A moment's reflection would convince anyone of the unseemliness of smoking a cigar or the choicest weed during council meeting. In the election of Councillor Amos Mason to the position of Reeve, Acton has been fortunate in securing a successful businessman who has much pride in his home town. His beautiful home, the residence of the late Hon. David Henderson, is a very desirable executive mansion. Mr. Fyfe Somerville passed away at the homestead in Nassagaweya at the ripe old age of 85. For some time he had been feeling the burden of years. He was a native of Esquimaux. Christmas trees are now being selected by fathers and big brothers.

100 years ago Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, December 2, 1875. Milton stores close at 7.30. What is there to prevent Acton following suit? The letter we published last week from Mr. Matthews concerning the hangers-on at the post office store, appears to have had some effect. His lady customers will no doubt be glad to know that they may now enter without being compelled to run the gauntlet of masculine smoke-stacks. The cattle fair today was not very well attended, and the cattle on the ground were too lean to attract the attention of drovers. The Social and Literary entertainment given in the Temperance Hall by the Young People's Literary Society last Monday evening was a decided success in every particular. Esquimaux council met at Stewarttown Nov. 12th. The sum of \$8 was granted for relief. (Two men) were re-admitted to the poor house for the winter. Five dollars were granted for the purchase of blankets for a pauper. (All names were given.) Married in Acton, on the first inst., Mr. James McLam to Miss Elizabeth Milne, both of Acton. A coffee social will be held at the residence of Mr. Charles Cameron sen., in aid of St. Alban's church parsonage fund. The Suez Canal purchase continued to attract great attention in Europe.

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Small crowd for Ombudsman

Dear Sir: I attended a N.A.R.A. meeting Dec. 2 and was very disappointed with the poor attendance. The Ontario Ombudsman was the guest speaker. This very important man took time out from his busy schedule to speak to the residents of this area and they didn't have the courtesy to come and hear what he had to say. I hope when they have problems they will know what to do. Fortunately the Mayor, our council members and the press turned up. I enjoyed Mr. Maloney's informative talk and hope he will someday come back and speak to us again. Yours truly, (Mrs.) Betty Stone, R. R. 2, Rockwood. More Letters On Page B3