

Town hall could be restored

Weekly newspaper editor Pete Hvidsten was the guest of honor last Friday at a surprise retirement party. A carload from Acton and Milton went over to Port Perry to join in the handshaking, speeches, reminiscing and laughter.

But what impressed us most of all was the place where the party was held—a place close to publisher Hvidsten's heart.

Port Perry's old town hall has been gorgeously restored to its original glory. Pete is on the committee which vigorously protested when the town council seemed willing to sell the ramshackle, big old building and get rid of it.

There was a strong historical society in Port Perry, and at their insistence council leased them the town hall for \$1 a year. They probed at the grant system and discovered there was plenty available if requests were gone about properly.

The town hall was declared a historic site, and the work of restoration began.

It was here, in the huge upstairs "ball room", that the retirement party was held.

And we Acton people couldn't help but think: How about our town hall? Would our council let it fall into such complete disrepair they'd be glad to sell it to anyone who'd take it?

Port Perry's building for years housed a factory. Acton's now houses the police station and senior citizens drop-in centre.

Acton's town hall used to have a wide double staircase leading to the large auditorium upstairs. Where is that staircase now?

Port Perry restored its jail cell, too. Can Acton do that now?

The beautiful building in Port Perry was an inspiration.

For the railroad station we're too late, but maybe we can think ahead about preserving our town hall.

Free Press Editorial Page

Try good news instead

Oh, the problems of trying to produce a newscast for the radio! We had no idea.

At a hearing of the Canadian Radio and Transport commissioners in Toronto last week, two groups from Burlington applied for a license for a radio station there.

The commission was expected to approve them.

One of the group's spokesmen, according to the Toronto Star,

explained news coverage on the station would lean toward interpretive because Burlington does not generate as much "hard news" as some cities. Says the report, "There were not enough local fires, crimes and rapes to fill a 15-minute newscast every day."

Isn't that just a shame? Of course they could take a tip from the weekly newspapers, which find people actually enjoy hearing good news, too!

Let's keep our streets

Renaming of some streets could be a possibility if Halton Hills council pursues a suggestion from the works committee. Last week the committee discussed the idea of maybe renaming streets in Acton and Georgetown which have the same name. The committee agreed to look into the plan sometime in the future and also examine the possibility of naming rural roads.

In Georgetown, the Historical Society has responded quickly. They are going to be ready to suggest name changes if the town goes ahead with the idea.

The members hope historic Georgetown names will not be changed.

Of course, Acton people will feel the same way even if we do not have a Historical Society to put our feelings into words.

Historical names in towns like ours are the same everywhere — Mill, Main, family names such as John and Elizabeth, and others including clues such as Guelph or Church.

The Georgetown group thought they might have liaison between their Esquing Historical Society

and local history-minded people here.

A commendable idea, and one that will be appreciated here.

But the thought that comes to mind at once is that Acton wants to maintain its own full identity — and that means names. Surely Georgetown does too.

We can't really see any great problem in continuing to say Mill St., Acton or Mill St., Georgetown, to the end of time.

The fact there was a mill here is part of our history.

Acton will remain Acton and Georgetown will remain Georgetown, even if our built-up boundaries touch.

Of this and that

So the Toronto high school teachers were advised by their leaders to protest being ordered back to work by dressing "like laborers."

Unite, laborers, and protest. How about dressing like teachers?

OUR READERS WRITE:

Community identity concerns L. Duby

I was concerned to read in last week's Free Press, suggestions of a possible street naming "bingo" (re-naming of streets), so references to Georgetown and Acton could be eliminated.

To do anything that would deliberately remove the need to refer to Acton, Georgetown, or Esquing would be most unnecessary and unacceptable. It would be a voluntary and willful extension to the mandatory regulations of Bill 151.

We all know, or we should by now, that the two towns, and the township, are parts of the new "Town of Halton Hills", the new larger municipality for governing purposes.

I can recognize and appreciate that it may be an administrative and staff convenience, but first should come public convenience.

The changing of street names was done voluntarily in the new Town of Cambridge in the Region of Waterloo, but it did not eliminate the direct reference to Galt, Preston or Hespeler—so what did they gain by it?

What I am saying, then, is that a community will exist, whether it is a municipality or not—as long as its people have a sense of community on which group identity is based.

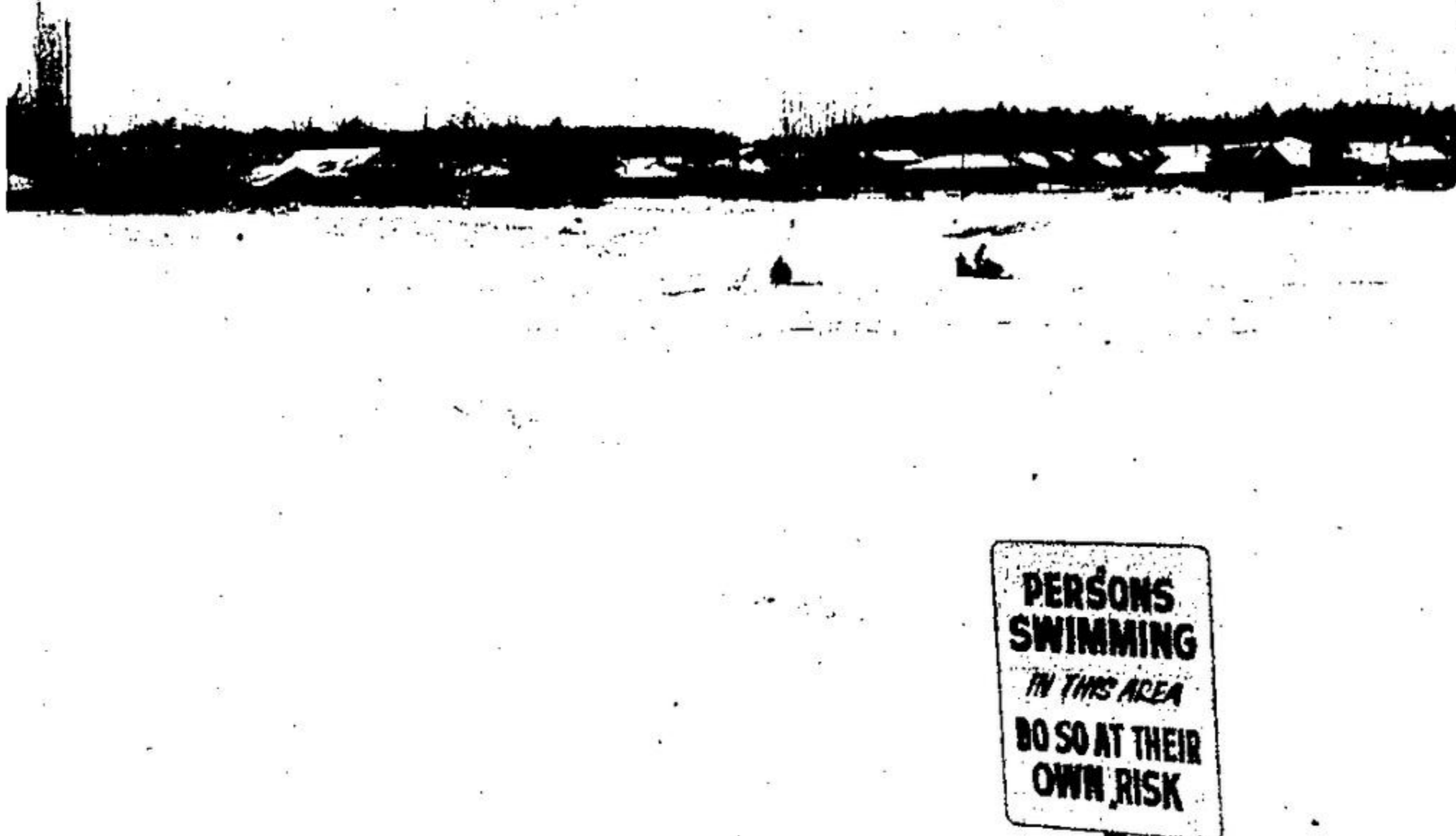
In Metro Toronto, it has been years since there were municipalities called Forest Hill or Leaside, and yet these among others are still strongly identifiable as communities. Other parts of Metro like Willowdale or Parkdale are similarly identifiable because of a sense of community; yet they never were municipalities.

York Region is the same, with communities such as Thornhill and Oak Ridges—neither one a municipality before regionalization.

I think it is safe to say that every other Region in Ontario has communities of this sort—former municipalities that are retaining their identities despite amalgamations, and other communities that never were municipalities but exist, nevertheless, because their inhabitants have a sense of group identity.

It is my opinion that we should search for all ways possible to preserve our identities, and part of that searching and preserving should be undertaken by those of us who are representatives of communities that make up the newly—merged municipality.

In this regard may I make these points. First, encouraging community spirit within a segment of a municipality is a positive act, and not to be confined with promoting destructive divisions, and—fundamentally, a community will always exist if it meets the needs of its inhabitants.



BELIEVE IT OR not, there were both snowmobilers and swimmers in Fairy Lake Sunday. Three divers were practising underwater manoeuvres while

snowmobilers etched patterns all over the lake with their machines. Sunday was a perfect day for winter sports fans, sunny and cold with plenty of snow.



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

Recently, I listed some of the things I dislike about our society. When I'd finished, I thought to myself: "Boy, you are a nasty old piece of work. Do you realize you've barely scratched the surface?"

For a week or two, I went around thinking, in 10 or 20 second spurts, every three or four days, that I was a Curmudgeon.

Some of my younger readers will not know what a curmudgeon is. Well, it comes from the root word "mud".

We all know what mud is. It is dirty. It is cool under the toes, unless it is in the form of a mud pack, which is good for the wrinkles. If your name is Mudd, you are either in the doghouse, or you are a loser. I hope that is clear.

To the root word "mud" (unless we want to root around in the mud a bit longer), we attach the prefix "cur".

A cur, as everyone knows, is a cad with teeth, and sometimes a moustache, who plays the villain in old-fashioned melodramas.

In new-fashioned melodrama, he also has teeth and a big belly or a bald head, and he has become the hero.

Still with me? We now have "curmud", signifying a mean guy who is cool under the toes, has wrinkles, or is a loser. Sometimes all three.

Now we come to the suffix, "geon", which is of more obscure vintage.

It is of Hungarian antecedent, and it seems to have meant, originally, something we might call colloquially "a dummy who makes a lot of silly and unnecessary noise without getting anywhere," which is rather a contradiction in terms, come to think of it.

There are many pervasions of the original, of course. We find the suffix in such words as "Injun", "engine", and "John".

But the original meaning is in there somewhere. An Injun, for example is one of the original "In" people, who rides around in ever-diminishing circles, emitting war-whoops, until he is shot off his horse.

Think of your car. The engine makes a lot of silly and unnecessary noise—at least mine does—and gets nowhere. Occasionally, the car gets somewhere, but the engine remains exactly where it started. . . in the car.

And, of course, there is the colloquial word "John", meaning a toilet. Or water closet or backhouse, if toilet offends you. This item of hardware indulges in a great deal of unnecessary noise, whether receiv-

ing or transmitting, and is usually going nowhere, except on trains, buses or airplanes, when it is so active it has to put up a "busy" sign most of the time.

On ships, of course with their innate sense of superiority, the "john" is called a "head".

This came about when one of the head men in the British Navy, Admiral Sir Dudley Pound, affectionately known to his jolly tars as "dud", once went looking for the "john" and discovered a lot of Common Seamen (and a very common lot they were) lined up with one of the symptoms of scurvy known as "dire rear". In the interests of clarity, this has nothing to do with the term "rear admiral".

Understandably, Sir Dud flew into a high rage, the only type allowed to senior officers, and uttered a good deal of silly and unnecessary noise, or "geon", when he had to wait his turn for the "john".

As naval tradition has it, this led to the wedding of "dud" and "geon", meaning a John that isn't working, or a senior officer with a red face, or a towering rage, whichever you choose.

That's one of the beauties of the English language. You can take your pick. And you know what you can do with it.

If you have followed me carefully through this brief but enlightening exploration into semantics, I am sure you have come to the conclusion, as I have, that I am not a Curmudgeon at all.

I am not a mean guy. I haven't hit a little kid since mine grew up.

I am not cool under the toes. My feet heat something terrible in this weather.

I am not a loser. How can you know you're a loser when you don't know what it is to be a winner?

I do not go around making silly and unnecessary noises, except when it is absolutely necessary.

And finally, I feel that I am definitely getting somewhere.

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press January 26, 1956

Garnet Rose was elected president of the Brotherhood of Anglican Churchmen at their first meeting of the new year. Other officers are: vice-president, E. Lasby; secretary, K. Thompson; bazaar convener, B. Spitzer; social convener, G. Hargrave.

When Susan Marilyn, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fyfe Somerville, was christened in Knox church, there were seven grandfathers, two grandmothers, two great grandmothers, one great grandfather. They were Mr. and Mrs. George Somerville of Acton, Mr. and Mrs. Andy Frank of Campbellville, Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Storey of Rockwood and Mrs. William Frank of Georgetown. The guests, including Mr. Bill Somerville of Guelph, gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fyfe Somerville afterwards.

The January meeting of the Bannockburn Women's Institute was held in Bannockburn school. The president, Mrs. C. Storey, opened the meeting with the Institute Ode, followed by the Lord's Prayer. Roll call was a favorite magazine. The guest speaker for the evening was Mac Sprowl, who showed the ladies some very interesting local pictures and some of his trip to the British Isles.

Ken Knox is the president of the Y Board this year. Other board members are: vice-president G. W. McKenzie; secretary, Mrs. J. Hurst; treasurer, Mrs. Janet Rogers; publicity, Phil Caddick; finance chairman, Bill Wilson; building, Jack Ridley; and leadership, Elmer Smith.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 21, 1926

The annual meeting of Acton Fall Fair was held in the Council Chamber January 13. The Auditor's Report showed a credit balance of \$26.65 for the year, in addition to the Victory Bonds purchased during the war.

The assets materially increased through a gift of G. T. Beardmore of sanitary and commodious poultry coops to the value of \$400. Mr. George Havill and Mr. Alex. Walde were appointed life members of the association. President is S. Johnstone; 1st vice president Duncan McDougall; 2nd vice president R. J. Kerr; directors: W. K. Grant, I. B. Shorey, Wm. Kenney, J. R. Kennedy, C. Woodhall, R. J. Ramshaw, D. S. Lindsay, E. J. Hassard, R. M. McDonald, S. H. Lindsay, D. D. Walde, J. F. Robertson, R. W. Dredge, J. H. Smith, Robert Kerr, Chas. McKeown, Duncan Campbell, Chas. Lasby, W. Hortop, N. H. Black.

No benefaction ever conferred in town, from a humane standpoint, has been more beneficial than the splendid animal watering trough on Main St. installed some years ago by the Women's Institute. The flowing water is relished by horses, dogs and birds. This year it has been kept running even through zero weather. (This trough is now in the park.)

The marriage took place at Knox church of Alice Johnstone and Victor B. Rumley. The bride wore her travelling costume of blonde crepe meteur with brown chenille, close fitting French hat of the same shade, and carried roses.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 13, 1887

At their regular monthly meeting school trustees agreed to carry out clauses of the Ontario School Law in reference to the attendance of children between the ages of seven and 12 years inclusive during four months of the year. They approved the sum of \$30 be granted toward replenishing the Acton School Library, and that no works of fiction be purchased.

To the Editor: Sir: You amongst others may perchance have noticed the ruined condition of the fences and other wooden structures in our village. One of our citizens has at length discovered the cause of all this havoc, in the shape of a most pertinacious cow. This animal lately sawed her way through the wall of his domicile, appropriated poultry feed and a straw mattress and demolished the contents of a feather bed and a large quantity of unmanufactured fur. She was with difficulty dislodged by the aid of a bowl of hot water and a pitchfork. It is to be hoped the Municipal Council will make some provision against this terrorism.

The monthly fair last Thursday was but thinly attended owing, no doubt, to the very bad state of the roads. The only sale reported to us was by Mr. Benj. Anderson, who sold a cow for \$31.

The Milton News says Halton can take the premium for worst roads in Canada.

The Fountain Hotel at Kilbride was burned to the ground.

It is believed a practical route for the Pacific Railway through British Columbia has been found.

THE ACTON FREE PRESS

PHONE 853-2010

Business and Editorial Office



Founded in 1875 and published every Wednesday at 39 Willow St., Acton, Ontario. Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations, the CNA and the QWNA. Advertising rates on request. Subscriptions payable in advance. \$7.50 in Canada, \$10.00 in all countries other than Canada; single copies 15 cents; carrier delivery in Acton 15 cents per week. Second class mail Registration Number 6215. 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 signature, 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.

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