

A town in mourning

Eight of our young people have had their lives snuffed out in accidents in the last four days, and their tragic deaths cannot help but touch most homes in this small community. Actonians seem unusually quiet this week, but our hearts are filled with boundless sympathy for the loving families of these unfortunate eight.

Six lively young friends were together in one car, helping one of them return home after his truck ran out of gas. Two others were alone in their vehicles, one of them far from home.

Also involved is a policeman—doing his duty—who lives here in Acton too. For the policemen and

firefighters involved, that night will long be a grim memory.

The cherished people killed in the sickening crash should have had time to contribute to their community and their world. They should have had success in their work and happy families of their own.

A few feet of difference and a few seconds of time wiped out these bright futures.

Tuesday and today flowers by the hundreds are massed by coffins in Acton and Guelph. Parents are dazed. Friends are crying.

And the tragedy is shared by all of us.

Free Press Editorial Page

The past gives strength

Brian Skerrett, who knew all the young people involved, suggests reading and reflecting silently on the following passage by Bonhoeffer can be comforting to those friends and to the families at this time of sadness:

"Nothing can make up for the absence of someone whom we love, and it would be wrong to try to find a substitute; we must simply hold out and see it through. That sounds very hard at first, but at the same time it is a great consolation, for the gap, as long as it remains unfilled, preserves the bonds between us. It is nonsense to say that God fills the gap; He does not fill it, but on the contrary, He keeps it empty

and so helps us to keep alive our former communion with each other, even at the cost of pain. The dearer and richer our memories, the more difficult the separation. But gratitude changes the pangs of memory into a tranquil joy. The beauties of the past are borne, not as a thorn in the flesh, but as a precious gift in themselves. We must take care not to wallow in our memories, or hand ourselves over to them, just as we do not gaze all the time at a valuable present, but only at special times, and apart from these keep it simply as a hidden treasure that is ours for certain. In this way the past gives us lasting joy and strength."

Sympathy for victims

About \$114 was quickly raised here for Red Cross aid for Guatemala. Canisters placed in all four banks attracted the eyes of sympathetic people.

The day following the devastating earthquake the Red Cross contributed \$10,000. A further \$40,000 was donated five days later.

Against this Lenten season St. Joseph's church is collecting

money for churches in Guatemala. Father Smye visited these parishes last year, and as far as he knows his friends there have survived the disaster.

Major tragedies, as well as our local ones, produce a great swell of sympathy.

People everywhere do care about each other.

Need parking places

Most of the merchants are well pleased that their voice has been heeded by Halton Hills council. The Chamber of Commerce brief made its impact, and Mill St. will retain its parking on both sides.

Now it's back to the long-stand-

ing problem of off-street parking for the merchants. The need remains—more than ever, as the population grows. We are edging up to 7,000 people here, and naturally the merchants hope these people will find it easy, pleasant and economical to shop at home.

Hospital care necessity

One good thing about not having a hospital in our town—its services can't be cut on us.

The town of Milton understood they would be forced to close 25 of their 83 beds, but apparently the announcement was in error, and the filled beds will remain filled.

Georgetown hospital has not been instructed to close beds.

In Guelph, where most Acton and district people go for hospital care, St. Joseph's hospital must reduce its staffing budget by \$81,000 but Guelph General is exempted from reductions.

The possible consequences of closing beds in Guelph for people here were frightening. As was pointed out to regional council by Guelph mayor Norm Jary, the Halton patients do not contribute finan-

cially toward capital costs of the General. He requested a grant from Halton, which gives money only to hospitals within its county borders.

There seems to be a feeling Acton, Nassagaweya and Esqueping residents who regularly go to Guelph should in some way pay their share of capital costs.

Ironically, last week's Milton newspaper announced two government decisions. The first was to shut down a third of their hospital beds.

The second was that the town was to receive two Wintario grants—one for films for the library and the other for expansion of skiing at Kelso.

Hasn't the government its priorities mixed?

Of this 'n that

An old bottle found in a house... it was a short story in the Free Press a couple of weeks ago. But the comments keep coming in!

Mrs. J. C. Currie writes from Galt to say she remembers the Caswell family referred to in the note in the bottle. Her family lived at the "sawmill gate" which was then Henderson's mill. The location was at the present entrance to Lakeview subdivision. The family lived there for seven years after coming from England in 1914.

The more publicity about the search for a Halton landfill site, the more interest there seems to be in recycling garbage. Many people are beginning to believe better things can be done with garbage than burying.

People here co-operated wholeheartedly when the high school Outers and then the high school band collected paper and glass. We have proved that householders are willing.

Now we need leadership.

Co-ordinator Judy McLin is ready, able . . . waiting

Judy McLin is lonesome. She's the first co-ordinator of the brand-new Acton community services centre, and she opened up her office at 9 a.m. Monday. While she expects to have busy and profitable full days soon, so far she mostly has peace and quiet.

She wants that to change . . . soon.

Open House will be held at the new centre on Saturday, March 27, in the afternoon. Everybody's invited - come and see the new place, urges the co-ordinator. She and agency representatives board members will be there to dispense coffee, show the two small rooms and chat.

This week Mrs. McLin sits in her quiet office with its empty chairs and hopes anyone interested will drop in.

Her days so far are set at 9 to 5, but she says it may turn out a more reasonable day is from noon till 8 p.m., for instance. She hopes to hear what people need and want, since she's not settled into any patterns there.

New concept

This type of centre is a new concept that is apparently finding growing favor. It unites many agencies, who have been finding their roles and files overlapping. The provincial government has "given its blessing" and promised a grant.

The group which first conceived the idea stressed Acton's unusual needs. The town has no hospital, no health unit office. Professionals making calls here reported "my car is my office in Acton."

It was felt Acton didn't get its full share of services, and people didn't know how to contact the agencies available.

Last week the requested grant of \$6,000 was cut to \$4,000 by the region, but at least the centre is open and operating. Funding began with a \$3,000 grant from Halton Hills.

Using room

Representatives from various agencies are already using the small meeting room beside her office. She arranges their appointments.

Judy falls somewhere between these professionals and the general public.

She will listen, but not attempt to give professional advice. She, like all the other workers, will maintain strictest confidence. Anyone with any type of problem is



VACANT CHAIR is ready for a visitor to the spanking-new Community Services centre in the Y.M.C.A. Co-ordinator Judy McLin began her job Monday. It's a bold innovation for the town and she wants to hear suggestions. "Drop in!" says Judy.

welcome to call here. Maybe talking it out will be enough, but Judy will know who else to contact if other help is needed.

Family or personal problems - anything. First call

In fact the first call to the new centre was treated with as much respect as all will probably be.

There's the story: The new phone rang for the first time and Dave Mitchell of the Children's Aid Society delightedly lifted it. "Acton Community Services Centre!"

Question: "Is there a hockey game tonight?"

(Quick conference). Answer: "Yes!"

So what if the caller did think he had the arena on the line . . .

More apt calls came before long!

Agencies ready

The public health nurses are all set to use the Y now. First thing local nurse Shirley McKay is planning is a pre-school assessment session when hearing, vision and developmental testing will be done for young children. She is lining up appointments now. She plans to have this program the third Wednesday of each month, starting in March.

Judy McLin thinks she may arrange baby-sitting service for the mothers coming to the clinic, if there is a need.

Val Walters, the high school nurse, is planning to use the private room for interviews with students who have problems they would like to talk about. She visualizes group meetings there, too.

The Children's Aid counsellor - presently Dave Mitchell - will be there one afternoon a week.

Interviews and psychometric assessment are on the agenda for the Board of Education employees - such as Acton's Bill Coon - who will use the centre. (He's the one who found the furniture and lights for the room, and is an active booster of the whole plan.)

Local psychiatrist Dr. John Dougan will schedule interviews here one evening a week.

The family counsellor for Acton and district, Ina Dzidzums, will be in the new room one afternoon a week. She has been

using the former clerk's office in the town office, but there was less privacy there.

Information

The Community Services Centre will also be the place to call for information. Housekeepers . . . babysitters . . . where to get things . . . where to go for what . . . how to join something . . . who does what.

Volunteers are working on lists for Mrs. McLin so she'll have everything at her fingertips.

Co-ordinating of volunteers could become a major role of the new centre. Judy would like to help provide volunteers wherever they are needed. This is an area likely to grow tremendously.

Confidence

But volunteers are never used in connection with professional appointments, Mrs. McLin points out.

The doctors who will refer patients to the centre have insisted on that. They stress confidentiality.

Local doctors have been in on the planning of the centre from the beginning, with Dr. Craig Hutchison the most active and supportive. His group has already contacted Mrs. McLin. She is following up in her own quiet way.

From U.S.

Judy was born at Mount Clemens, Michigan, went to school there and then to Macomb Community College where she received her degree following a two-year social work course. She also took a course in child development at Wayne State University.

Then she married a Canadian, John McLin, and they came to Mississauga for a year. She worked in a bank then, and then when they bought a town house in Acton she was transferred to Milton.

She did volunteer work with the Children's Aid Society for a year.

She wasn't satisfied with the job in the bank. "I wanted to work with people," she found. "I enjoy talking to people, and they say I'm a good listener."

Her husband now works in Milton.

Her hobbies are crafts and reading - nothing too strenuous. She and her husband have three pets - a Sealpoint blue Siamese cat, an orphan cat from the States, and a dog who's a cross between a terrier and a poodle.

breaches in the rigid walls of the old, hide-bound university traditions.

Standards in the universities have been lowered, but I think their end-product, the graduate, is just as bright, a whole lot more sensitive, a good deal more tolerant, and far more articulate (even though badly spoken), than the large majority of my contemporaries.

Today's students are not as polite, but they are far more honest. They are not as "moral", but they are far less inhibited. They are not as steady, but they are far less afraid. They are not as tough, but they are far less prejudiced. They are more likely to kick over the traces, but not as likely to be led by the nose.

Perhaps that's why about 80 per cent of the male population of Canadian universities vanished into the armed forces after the war began. It was like getting out of prison.

Courses were excellent, but narrow. Most professors were pompous and few were teachers. Students were, for the most part, not taught to think, but only to regurgitate. It was a rather shallow and snobbish in-world, out of the main stream of life.

Not so these days. Rigidity has been shattered, channels have been widened, and experimentation is welcomed, perhaps too much so.

There are fresh winds blowing. And one of the freshest is the new status of women on campus. In my day, the females were, with few exceptions, grimly headed for a spinster's life in a classroom, or rich girls there to have fun and get a husband.

Not so today. There are thousands of young women of all colors, shapes and sizes heading with determination for the bench, or the operating room, or the newspaper offices, or whatever, but heading for a freedom to be a person.

I'm glad my daughter wasn't a mother of two 30 years ago. She'd be stuck at home, "keeping house" and bringing up the children, instead of swaggering off to lectures gallantly, baby on back.

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, March 15, 1956

H. J. Deveau, manager of the local Roxy Theatre, announces this week that Odeon Theatres (Canada) Limited has acquired the Roxy Theatre here.

Immediate action to put Acton's dog population under control, hurried by Ontario's rabies scare, was taken by council. After considerable discussion on steps that could be taken to make the control effective, council decreed that all local dogs should be tied up until further notice. Council will try to arrange to have Humane Society service in Acton.

After a lengthy debate members of county council agreed to survey the entire hospital situation in Halton county.

Events at Acton Y as winter wears on, strike a wide variety of activity. Bantam basketballers are playing in Kitchener. The two Gra-Y clubs, the Ladies' auxiliary and members of the boys' and girls' gym classes gathered to see a film on the centennial of the Y in Paris.

Halton debating teams were honored at the annual banquet of the Junior Farmers. Trophies were presented to George Greenless, Mac Sprowl, Lloyd Vivian and Roy Ford. Earl Whitecock and Art Bennett were their coaches.

Miss Beryl Flynn escaped with minor burns when an explosion occurred in the kitchen of her home.

George Elliott Q.C. was guest speaker at the regular meeting of the Home and School Association. Miss E. Goodwin explained the teaching of music.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, March 4, 1926

The annual meeting of the Chamber of Commerce last Thursday evening had a fairly good attendance. The election resulted as follows: honorary president R. M. McDonald; president James Symon; 1st vice-president C. H. Harrison; 2nd vice-president E. J. Hassard; treasurer L. B. Shorey; secretary N. H. Garden; executive committee E. J. Hassard, W. K. Graham, A. Mason, H. S. Holmes, J. M. McDonald, A. T. Brown.

The members discussed the proposed increase in rates of the Bell Telephone Company and requested that the council oppose any increase in the business rates.

Acton employees of the Hewitson Shoe Company held their annual entertainment, supper and dance in the Town Hall on Friday and they and their friends, who were provided with invitations, were provided with a full evening's fun.

Thursday's all-day rainstorm filled many cisterns which had become low.

All radio owners without a license will be fined by the government from now on.

At the March meeting of the Women's Institute a committee was named to get estimates on the erection of a booth at the park.

High school honor roll—Muriel Crossman, Olive Cooper, Archie Kerr, Mary Chalmers, Addie Hurst, Fred Day, Meryle Stewart, Stewart Lasby, Harvey Young, Nellie Young, Lois Malone, Ivan Kirkness, Meryl Grindell, Muriel McComb.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, March 2, 1876

There are presently ten prisoners in the county jail.

Last Friday two youths from the country furnished the loafers of our village with free entertainment. After a considerable amount of ruffianism they were separated and both parties were glad to hear are doing as well as could be expected under the circumstances.

A serious accident, which may prove fatal, occurred yesterday afternoon to a boy about seven years of age, son of Mr. William Thompson. A number of boys coming from school jumped upon a wood sleigh and when nearly opposite Scott's store, young Thompson either fell or was pushed off and the hind bob of the sleigh passed over his body. He jumped up, but in a moment became too weak to walk. He was taken home in a sleigh and at last account lies in a critical condition. What makes the matter worse is that his mother is just now confined to bed with serious illness.

The total number of children enrolled in the Acton Public School during the months of January and February is 196. There are 62 children in the section of school age who have not yet been enrolled this year.

We are compelled to omit editorials this week to make room for communications. During 1875 20,410 immigrants are reported to have settled in Canada.

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