

# Free Press Editorial Page

## Readers want information

We were surprised and sorry to learn some councillors are considering closing committee meetings of Halton Hills council to the public.

The three committees meet every other week and discuss matters under their own particular jurisdiction—works, finance and personnel, and administration. The following week their considered resolutions are presented to full council and voted on.

Councillors Roy Booth and Les Duby said the printing of committee news in Wednesday's paper puts councillors on other committees at a disadvantage, since they are asked questions they cannot answer.

Frankly, we don't think this is a reason to exclude the public from the meetings.

We are always very particular in the news account to report that the committee's conclusion is a recommendation only, which must be approved by full council. We think our readers understand that, and understand the system. It seems to us, too, that councillors should not feel embarrassed that they do not know the discussions from another committee meeting. Why should they? It's not reasonable, and we think readers understand, or would if it were explained again to them.

Councillor Booth also said, "We make statements at committee we don't want printed," and Councillor Duby felt it might be better to be

able to talk "man to man" without notes being taken by the press.

As far as the press is concerned, we see things differently again.

To us, valuable information for the public is obtained at committee meetings and we think they should be open.

There are always a few moments after adjournment when councillors who want to add something they wouldn't want to see in the paper could do so.

If the press just attended the full council meetings, the public would miss a great deal. Often the recommendations are passed routinely and all the background reports and discussion would be missed. Surely the voters deserve to know the reasons behind council's decisions.

Reporters have no special status at council or anywhere else. We attend public events—meetings, games, presentations—simply to tell the readers what happened.

As reporters, we use discretion and judgment. We have our own standards, and we like to think they are high.

We have heard this week from some of our readers who were upset to read of the recommendation to exclude the public from committee meetings. Actonians are intelligent readers and voters who certainly know the difference between a committee recommendation and a council decision.

They want to know what council is talking about.

## Possibilities are endless

The possibilities of community involvement with the new Community Services Centre in the Y are endless.

Co-ordinator Judy McLin mans the phones and arranges meetings of people with problems and people with answers. Many of these are professionals. That part of the centre is surely well understood by now and it's mainly confidential and stays so.

But the possibilities of volunteers taking off in different directions, under Mrs. McLin's central office, brings to mind an array of happenings that could make this town and district even better for living and bringing up families.

A meeting of volunteers is being planned for Wednesday evening, May 5. Some specific programs will be discussed but more ideas are bound to turn up.

Some of these ways to enrich the community are probably partially undertaken now by churches and service clubs. But wouldn't it be great if these groups could get together, and work through one office? Pass on news of sick people, needy people, to whoever can help in the best way?

Senior citizens could arrange to phone each their ailing friends who live alone. Meals could be provided. There could be help with housekeeping. Friendly visits. Clothes found. A little babysitting if needed suddenly. Someone to talk to. A driver to take someone to a doctor's appointment.

How about the high school students who can't get summer jobs this year? The lively public school seniors with lots of energy? Couldn't something be worked out for them, such as an extension of the Senior Citizens Assistance program operated under an Opportunities for Youth grant?

Groups with the same problems could meet. One such new group is for teenagers whose parents have drinking problems.

Of course the Centre must begin its volunteer program in a small way. These things will grow. But the date is set for the first meeting on the subject. There won't be something for everyone to do right away. Suggested programs won't burst into being.

But it's a great start, and the possibilities are endless.

## Warmth and Easter

The gorgeous summer weather coinciding with Easter weekend made the ages-old message of rebirth more prominent than ever. The daffodils and tulips in the gardens, wild flowers in the woods and buds on the trees all swelled, grew bright and burst open within a couple of days. You could almost see and feel the greenery growing

in the sunshine.

Easter services filled the churches with happy people. Special music abounded; the clergy had prepared the messages people all over the Christian world want to hear again... have faith, Christ is arisen.

The six month bondage to winter is over.

## Of this and that

Streets were lined with garbage bags Monday morning although the works department had Easter Monday off. So much for how well people remember what they read in the Free Press. There was a good-sized ad saying garbage day was Tuesday this week. "I think I read something about this," mused one woman as she hauled out her bags.

week. Hope you're back in print when ice comes in again, Pete!

A group of Mennonites from Drayton area who tore down the Elora arena were hired by Ferguson curling club to tear down their building a week ago. Work started at 9:30 a.m. on a Friday morning and finished shortly after 5 p.m. the same day. About 40 men were involved and they didn't use any heavy equipment. The curling club paid the demolition team \$1,000—which they donated to the Guatemala relief fund.

Pete Vidler's breezy curling column ends for the season this



NEW DAM between Guelph and Rockwood flooded several acres of land to produce this man-made lake. Roads and telephone poles disappear into the water as a reminder of what once was. The lake is turning into a playground for sail and canoe enthusiasts who enjoyed it over the Easter weekend. Most of the dam is made of earth and stone.



## Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

Have you had the feeling in the last couple of years that everybody and his brother, and sister, is trying to rip you off? I have. And I don't like.

Perhaps it's because of inflation, but I don't recall any period in my life in this country in which so many people were pursuing the buck so avidly, with an almost complete disregard for what they produce in return for that buck.

Result is a steady deterioration in service, courtesy and integrity in the business world. Perhaps it's just a reflection, but the same disintegration seems to be taking place in the social world.

Insolence and indifference are becoming the trademarks of the business world. Bad manners and worse language have become almost obligatory in the social world.

I haven't the space to deal with both aspects in one column, so I'll just catalogue a few typical examples of the kind of rip-off and shabby treatment that are merely the tip of the iceberg.

My wife ordered two pairs of infant pyjamas from one of our huge, national department stores. The catalogue priced them at \$2.25 a pair. Now the catalogue did state that prices quoted were only guaranteed until a certain date.

The parcel arrived a few days after that date. The goods were satisfactory. Each pair was encased in the manufacturer's plastic package, clearly labeled \$2.25. But the bill from the department store was for \$2.50 a pair.

These had obviously been bought to sell at a good profit for \$2.25. Probably 100 per cent mark-up. Suddenly they cost \$2.50. Chickenfeed, you say? More like chickenery, if you add up all those quarters on a national basis, and multiply it by all the other items boosted in price for no reason at all except that the department store can probably get away with it.

My wife ordered a caftan from some outfit, which advertised satisfaction guaranteed or your money refunded. She ordered one down to her calves and received one down to her navel. She sent it back and asked for her money back. Two weeks later, a form letter said the company would be happy to fill her order for the right size. Sometime. Only \$14, but they have the money and she doesn't have the dress, and I know what the outcome will be.

They will stiff-arm her with form letters, in response to her angry, passionate, or pleading inquiries, until she gives up. Some day, the shoddy thing will arrive, designed for a lady midget or a professional basketball player.

Went to the city for winter break. Stayed at a hotel we'd frequented for years. Didn't bother to get a reservation, after reading articles about city hotels operating at a little over 50 per cent capacity.

"What? You want a room without a reservation?"

"Yes."

"Well! How do you intend to pay?"

Getting a little browned off, I ticked the item marked "by cheque." That's how I've paid for years.

"Oh, we don't accept cheques!"

"Well, what the hell's it on the registration card for?"

"Oh, we have a new policy. That'll be cash. In advance."

By now, steam was coming out my ears. Here I was, an old customer. Obviously not a dead-beat. The hotel was about one-third full. If I'd been alone, I'd have told them what to do with the entire operation, sideways. But my wife was sitting there on the luggage. I paid, muttering. Plus \$2 key deposit, another item in the new policy.

Went to our room, ordered some ice. I went out for a paper. My wife signed for the ice, standard procedure. A few moments after I got back, a flustered waiter came at the door, waving a bill. I was an "Advance" and had to pay cash. The sum was \$1. He was embarrassed, I was furious.

Things weren't good. The room was rather shabby. Breakfast arrived borne by a surly waiter, half an hour late. The handle on the coffee pot was broken, the wheat cakes were cold.

Nothing improved. To top the whole performance, they tried to over-charge me when I checked out. It was only \$1.15, but by this time I'd have taken it to the Supreme Court. I hollered, and I got my pitance.

It's no wonder city hotels are less than half filled.

I know what you're saying. "Smiley had his dignity hurt, because he was treated like a transient."

Not at all. My dignity, what's left of it can't be hurt by such trivia.

There's nothing wrong with cash on the barrel-head. But there is something wrong when customers are treated with insolence, indifference and bad manners. And ripped off into the bargain, unless they fight like tigers.

Unemployment insurance, which puts an ever-increasing burden on employer and employee alike, is expected to pay out \$4 billion last year. Of the beneficiaries, 37 per cent are under 25. Only 28.5 are heads of family units, and 17 per cent are part-time workers.

## The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Free Press April 19, 1956

Joy Peal has been selected to participate in "An Adventure in Citizenship" sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ottawa. Again this year the Rotary Club of Ottawa will play host to nearly 200 young people in senior high school students from every province of Canada. It is the annual project. The grade 12 students who was a finalist in last year's Peanut Queen contest will be 17 just after she returns from Ottawa. With good scholastic standing she also takes part in extra-curricular activities.

Staff house at Halton Centennial Manor, just south of Milton, is now well underway. The foundation has been poured and work continuing with the good weather. The new house, which will accommodate the Manor staff is situated just north of the Manor buildings. Estimated cost of the new building is about \$115,000 which includes interior furnishings.

Tax-payers in Acton were greeted through the mails during the past few days with a pink-colored notice calling for 1956's first installment of taxes.

James Callan of Roseford Terrace suffered painful injury to a finger while changing a tire on his car last week. Several stitches were required.

50 years ago

Taken from the Issue of the Free Press, Thursday, April 22, 1926

A new line of transportation through Acton, from Toronto to Kitchener, was inaugurated yesterday. The line, new buses of the Toronto, Kitchener and London Coach lines, made their first trips calling on scheduled time. Several officials were on board the first coach. The schedule gives three cars east and west daily. The cars are very comfortable, heated and attractive. Wiles Cafe is the waiting room for the coaches.

Keen sorrow is felt by Mrs. H. S. Holmes at the death of her parrot Polly which has been in the home for 21 years. It was always good company, sensibly talkative and always well-behaved with her mistress. The children in the neighborhood of "Villanore" will miss this rare and beautiful bird.

Unfortunately diphtheria has appeared in two homes at Limehouse. The dear little two-year-old daughter of Mr. B. Smethurst succumbed to the dread disease on Monday.

Friday's snow was unwelcome. The first snow of the season fell six months ago. Of a total registration of 303,736 motor cars in Ontario last year, farmers came first with 86,434 and merchants second with 23,332.

Acton has 506 Hydro consumers and a net surplus for the past year of \$3,358.12. The store also shows good profits.

It is rumored the Women's Institute is thinking seriously of taking over the Horticulture Society.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, April 13, 1876.

Six persons were baptized in the stream near Tolton's Mills on Saturday by Mr. Hertzog.

Alex Weir, the young man who attempted suicide last week, has been committed to Milton jail for safekeeping.

Mr. S. Zimmerman is one of the first of the season. He has already erected a building at the corner of Main and Mill Sts. and is now occupying it as a meat store.

Messrs. Christie Henderson and Co. have just purchased a spanking new team and rig. They intend going into the business of buying eggs extensively this season and for that purpose will have two teams constantly on the road within a radius of 20 or 30 miles of Acton.

Last Friday evening a public meeting was held in Campbell's Hall for the purpose of organizing a Farmers' Grange here. There were about 100 people present. Mr. William Gordon was elected chairman and Mr. Robert B. Campbell secretary. Messrs. Leslie, Aikens and Watson spoke briefly of the benefits of the organization, especially in a social point of view. There were 22 names given in and new members paid a fee of \$3 and the Grange was fully organized that night.

(Headline: Seduction, Abortion and Murder is followed by the account of a tragedy in St. Louis. Another headline Murder and Arson in the Township of Caledon is followed by many gruesome details.)

## THE ACTON FREE PRESS

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