

After the fire . . . see The Painted Box



the painted box

By Wendy Thomson

It's interesting when an incident from years ago repeats itself.

The first Easter Monday after I began writing for the Free Press, I found myself out with my camera trying to catch on film the dangers of grass fires.

This year, I began writing for the Drayton Valley Western Review in Alberta, and yes—there I was Easter Monday, camera around neck, soul to my knees, smacked to the bone, eyeing up flames with professional interest.

That night, indulging in a bubble bath, trying to overcome the smell of smoke, my mind began a re-run of that Acton fire years ago.

Hung up

I'd jogged quite calmly toward the fire, through and over fences. The first three were cedar rail and easily negotiable, but the fourth was barbed wire and I got hung up in not just one spot but two—sweater and jeans.

A few wiggles only succeeded in starting a rip in the jeans. Since my sweater was new, the thought of having it unravel on me didn't make me too happy so I hung there with smoke billowing in my face, eyes and nose running, thinking, "Be calm. If this were Gord, what would he do?"

First of all, my husband wouldn't get caught. He'd be going over fences instead of through them. If he DID get snagged, he'd just slip out of the sweater, unhook it, and put it back on.

However, the smoke wasn't thick enough for me to try that. And since the fire trucks had arrived, I figured if I caught fire, they'd put me out.

Providence stepped in. The increasing smoke started me on a bout of sneezing. By the time I was done, the sweater was unsnagged, and I eased the rest of the way through the fence, ripping my jeans another few inches. All things considered, I thought it best for me to stay out in the middle of the field from then on and not turn my back to anyone.

The old camera I had then had to be held down at arm's length—right in all the swirling soot and debris. Every so often, I'd try to find a clean spot on my sweater to brush the lens off with. My bush-puppies were no longer "desert sand" colored and had smouldering soles which I was beginning to feel quite distinctly.

grass off) with little regard to what else it burrs before it stops or gets stopped.

I gather from people at the county office, from the reeve of the adjoining township, and from firefighters, that this is a yearly thing that has them tearing out their hair.

Maybe it's because there's so much unused and unopened land here, that some people don't regard it that highly, and the loss of trees is just incidental.

Accidental fire

One of the Easter Monday fires was accidental, started by a man welding in his garage. It burnt over 2,500 acres before it was confined, and even then the "confinement" was only on three sides. It was impossible to get into the east side. The firefighters could only hope the wind wouldn't change and blow from the west.

This fire was just a mile or two below us, and even though there were cleared fields between us and it, we were still pretty jump.

And we weren't the only ones. When I drove down, groups of men were circling the many oil wells dotting the bush country, alert for the least flicker of flame coming too close.

I don't know what all happens if an oil well catches fire, and I didn't stay around to find out.

Actually I got there when the worst was over, which was just as well, as I heard that at one time that afternoon, everybody driving by was handed a wet sack and pressed into firefighting service.

Things are very dry now, and fires are banned for a time, but off to the west of us I see a huge pillar of smoke rising above the trees. I could take the camera and run over, I suppose, but I find it too depressing.

For once, I'd rather stay home and do dishes.

Smoke alarm

A car fire sent Acton Volunteer Firefighters rushing to the middle apartment building on Churchill Rd. S. yesterday, (Tuesday), morning.

A 1969 Oldsmobile Cutlass owned by Tom Adamson of the same building was parked behind the apartment when a mechanic from Toth Motors who was there to fix the car spotted smoke coming from the trunk. The building superintendent, Ken Chappel, extinguished the flames before the firefighters arrived on the scene.

Fire chief Mick Holmes said at press time the cause of the fire was unknown.

A space heater fire May 5 at Caroline Nurseries west of town on Hwy 7 sent the firefighters out that way. Chief Holmes reports no damage.

Donna Riseborough ordained to ministry

A former Robert Little school teacher, Donna Riseborough was ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament Sunday evening in Knox Presbyterian Church.

Miss Riseborough is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Guy Allinson Riseborough and grew up between Mount Forest and Durham. After completing high school, she went straight into teaching and later attended Lakeshore Teachers' College.

She taught in Ashgrove public school before coming to Acton in 1965. While here, she became a member of Knox church which she still calls her home congregation. She also became a member of the Daughters of Knox organization here.

In 1969, while teaching in Caramat, Ontario, Miss Riseborough responded to her Call to the Ministry, and gained certification through the Presbytery of Temiskaming.

Graduates

In 1973, after taking her Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Guelph, Miss Riseborough entered Knox College in Toronto. She graduated on May 4, acquiring her Master of Divinity degree.

She was also licensed to preach the Gospel at service in Toronto last week.

During the summer months, during her years at Knox college Miss Riseborough served as a student missionary on the Boissevain charge in the Presbytery of Brandon in Manitoba. While still attending school, she did supply preaching in various centres around Ontario, particularly Holstein, Teeswater, Chatsworth and Tara.

Miss Riseborough left yesterday (Tuesday) for Alberta where she has been appointed by the Board of World Mission to serve for two years as Ordained Missionary of the Wanhams-Blueberry Mountain charge in the Presbytery of Peace River, Alberta.

Clergymen came from Erin, Hillsburgh, Campbellville and Streetsville for the ordination Sunday. The Rev. Gerald Remis of Acton, who teaches in Brampton and is a



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minister of the Presbytery of Canada, conducted the worship service. The Rev. Andrew McKenzie of Acton Knox church, preached the ordination sermon with the theme being "My Chosen Instrument."

Take part

Diane Leitch, a friend of Miss Riseborough with her Bachelor of Music, sang two solos for the occasion. She frequently sings on the CKNX Wingham TV station program Circle 8.

The Rev. James Hutchison, the moderator of the Presbytery, of Streetsville, conducted the ordination service according to the traditional

pattern of the Presbyterian church, with the assistance of the ministers of the Brampton Presbytery.

Miss Riseborough was called upon to answer four questions prescribed for those ordained to the church. While she knelt, the prayer of ordination was said and the ministers present circled her and placed their hands on her head. This is called the laying on of hands, explained Mr. McKenzie.

The Rev. Dr. Douglas Lowry, clerk of the Presbytery, of Campbellville narrated the steps leading up to ordination.



This month's issue of Redbook magazine features an article entitled 'Today's Farmer: Tough, Competent — and Female!'

Several farm managers who happen to be women are portrayed as novelties, a sort of guess-what-women-are-into-now approach. The women in the article are genuine farmers, responsible for costs, output and income, as opposed to the traditional farm wife role of cooking the meals, looking after the hens and driving the tractor in haying season.

The article is comprehensive and thorough but I'm getting awfully tired of hearing about liberated women and the worlds they are conquering. Especially when some of the worlds have been conquered for years.

Women have been farming for generations. Women who fell into the stereo-typed image did so because they wanted to. But most men were very glad to have an active partner in the business — farms are family operations. Many women took over some portion of the farm as their own department and ran it well. Women have run farms totally alone since pioneering days. Having a man around just made the fencing easier.

Horse farms and stables are often run by women and I've known lots of them who took care of every operation from spreading manure to handling the stallions at breeding time.

Women have always had the opportunity to manage farms if they wanted to (regardless of public opinion). So what's the big deal now? Liberated Womanhood is now allowed to actually make money out of farming? I think it's a lot of propaganda about something which has been going on without fuss for quite some time.

Maybe I'm complacent because I'm one of the lucky ones who have been 'liberated' (in my day it was called 'getting your own way') most of my life.

When I first became a farmer's wife, my neighbours were mostly of the traditional farm-wife role—house, hens, pickling and preserving. I caused considerable consternation when I stayed in the barn while a cow was being bred. I hated housework and just loved to be out on the tractor or mucking about with my horses.

Mack's mother was a hardworking farm partner rather than a 'wife'. She often ran the farm alone when my father-in-law was away. She entered into every segment of the business and was very vocal about it — it was her choice. Was she 'liberated'?

Actually, farming was one of the first areas women could expect equality if they wanted it. Farmers are rarely afraid of threats to their masculinity—they're just glad of the help!

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Fireworks may be SOLD six days prior to Empire Day, May 19 and Dominion Day, July 1 excluding Sundays.

Family fireworks may not be sold or given to any person under the age of 18 years.

Family fireworks may be SET OFF on Empire Day, May 19 and Dominion Day, July 1 or the three days preceding these holidays.

Persons 18 years of older may discharge fireworks on his own property or on other private property with the consent of the owner.

When under 18 years of age, the person must be under the supervision of parents, guardians or other responsible persons.

Setting off of fireworks is prohibited on public land, roads, buildings, also prohibited in buildings or cars or any place where it would create a nuisance.

The above statements are "without prejudice" and constitute some important interpretations or opinions of bylaw No. 69-1463 of the Corporation of the Town of Acton, which by-law regulates the use and sale of fireworks and firecrackers within the boundaries of the town of Acton only, and is now subject to the jurisdiction of the Town of Halton Hills.

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