

Those four mystery lights

The four mysterious lights pictured here last week have brought a possible explanation from amateur astronomer Norm Elliott.

He says that the four images conform to the positions of two stars and two planets. He checked back and ascertained they would be in just that position at that time of the year.

On the left, the two lights are in the same position as the planets Mars and Saturn at that time of year. It's unusual for them to be in such close conjunction and Norm had noticed them at the time.

On the right, the lights are in the position of Castor and Pollux, two bright stars in the constellation Gemini.

Norm thinks a 10 second exposure could easily put the somewhat blurred image of the stars and planets on the film.

Laurence Fuller, Rosemary Rd., who took the pictures, is very interested in Norm's theory, but he thinks the clouds were probably dense all over the sky, not just overhead.

Just the day after the picture appeared in the Free Press, an article appeared in the Globe and Mail on ball lightning, which describes small luminous spheres that appear during thunderstorms. That phenomenon has scientists baffled.

Norm Elliott doesn't think the four simultaneous bright spots could be ball lightning.

Don Hilts of Rockwood a photographer himself, would like to see the negative to try to figure out if the lights were reflections.

No one has even hinted they might be spaceships from outer space!

24th on 24th

So the 24th of May fell on the 24th of May this year! It's only been a movable feast since 1952; before that the 24th was the 24th no matter what. Now it's the preceding Monday, and we can get out on the roads for a long weekend's activities.

Nothing beats the fireworks—a great tradition recalling royalty which hasn't been stamped out yet.

Queen Victoria was born May 24, 1819, and the holiday was first declared 16 years after her death. Now it's a tradition of long standing.

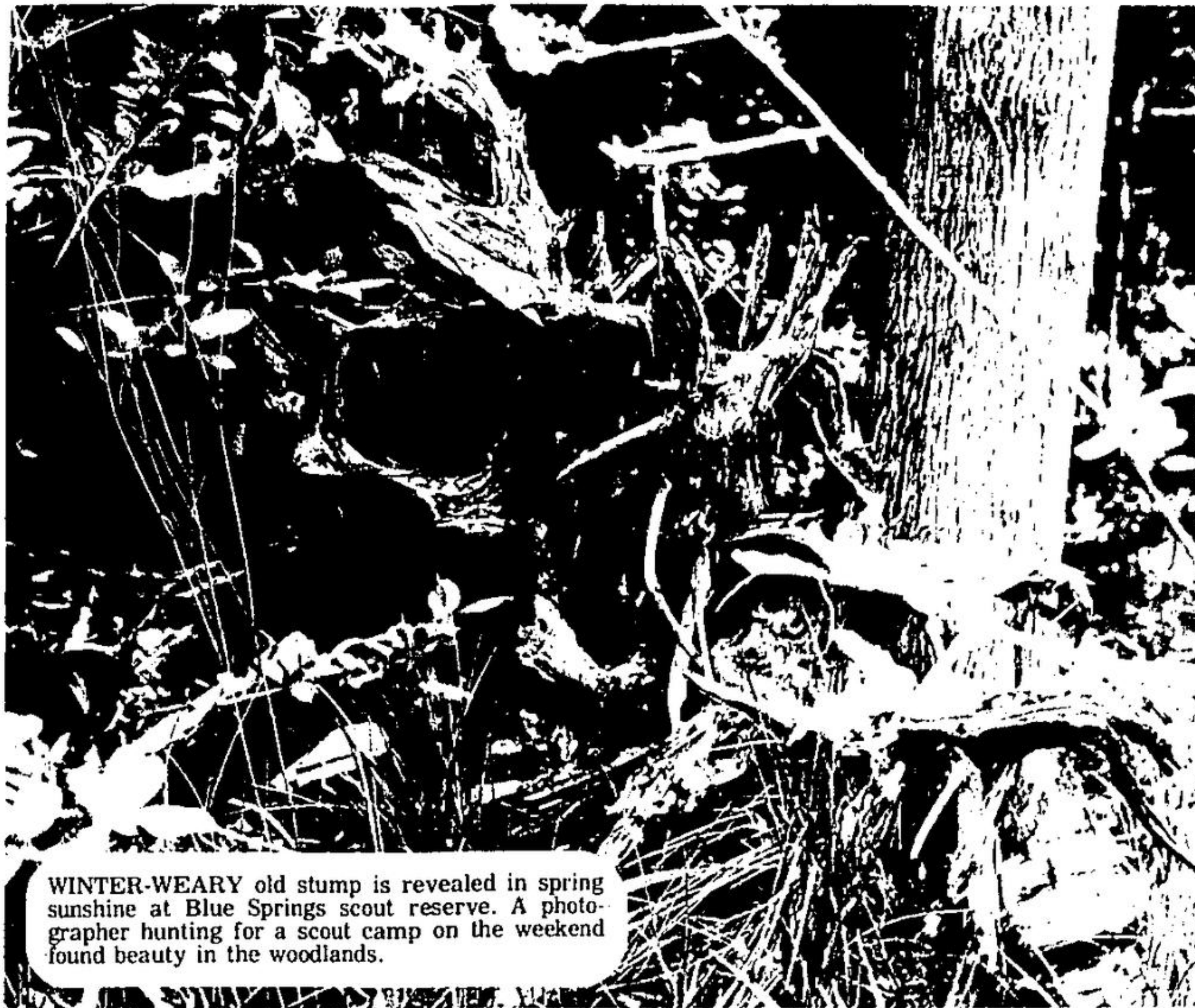
Of this and that

Erin printer Colin Newland has found and donated to the University of Guelph four ruffed grouse eggs. The University requested help in a letter to the editor here. He's the only person we've heard of who was able to help in the research. And he turned down the \$1 each offered by the university for each egg!

Although there are no government grants for young people's projects in Acton and district this summer, the days of grants aren't all over. A Student Community Service program grant brings \$4,633 to two Oakville students to provide service to immigrants. Another gives \$5,174 for senior citizens. This one will provide tools and seeds for senior citizens interested in gardening.

Nine more Wintario grants have been assigned to Halton, but none yet for Acton. They go to Oakville for lane dividers for swim meets, Milton for soccer travel costs, Burlington for goal equipment, Oakville for baseball equipment, Campbellville for baseball equipment, Burlington for ski first aid equipment, Georgetown for baseball equipment and Oakville for transportation to the seminar "Management by Women in the Arts."

Last Wednesday's snow was a shock to eyes, and campers got a cold start on the season with the low temperatures over the holiday.



WINTER-WEARY old stump is revealed in spring sunshine at Blue Springs scout reserve. A photographer hunting for a scout camp on the weekend found beauty in the woodlands.



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

This is a time of year when a lot of school teachers get a sinking feeling.

All year they have been laboring in the fairly barren vineyards of their students, sustained by the knowledge that there is still time to produce a green shoot or two, and maybe even enough grapes to make some kind of brew.

Suddenly, there are only 16 teaching days left, and there is the dreadful realization that they have exhausted all their skills, and that it had about as much effect on Susie and Joe as would a bucket of water poured over a seal. It just doesn't stick.

Thus, when they should be looking forward with anticipation to end of term and summer vacation, many teachers find themselves instead in a veritable Slough of Despond.

It is the students' perennial belief in miracles that puts the teachers onto anti-depressant pills about now.

Aside from school work, adolescents

are not dumb. They are quiet aware that education these days is a sociological jungle from which they have a far better chance of emerging unscathed than do those poor devils who try to teach them.

They know that in our enlightened society, "failure" is a dirty word, and that everyone from the Minister of Education, through the school board, down to their classroom teacher, will do back flips trying to avoid pinning such a label on them.

Many students know perfectly well that they can goof around most of the year, play truant, miss assignments, be late with essays, and nothing very terrible will happen to them.

In fact, if they go around looking serious and sincere for the last few weeks, and do a little work, there's every chance that they will scrape or scramble through, only to repeat the whole process the next year.

Born and raised in a society where it is no shame to accept charity, because it's

now dignified as welfare, where unemployment insurance is a cosy cushion against adversity, where their aged parents will be looked after by the state, where the work ethic is scorned, where the semi-literate hockey player or pop star is not only idolized but rich, the kids are not going to get their shirts in a knot over something as apparently irrelevant as doing well at school.

And let's not blame them too much. Let's take a look at the world we're passing on to them.

It's a world strangling-drowning in its own poisons, created by the greed of past generations. The kids see the greed and the poisoning going right on. Small wonder they are a little cynical about some of the virtues such as unselfishness and the golden rule.

It's a world in which the rip-off is admired, on the whole. They see unions ripping off management, management ripping off the consumer, everybody trying to rip off the government. So why not rip off the school system? It's the biggest sucker of all.

It's a world in which the media pander to the bizarre and violent. The hijacker, the terrorist are overnight sensations. Is it naive to suggest that these are responsible, to some extent, for the bomb warnings, and the incredible vandalism in our schools?

It's a world of drugs. The old man has his drinks every night and gets smashed on the weekend. The old lady has 18 different kinds of pills. Why not run away from reality by emulating them.

It's a world in which the daily papers are full of examples of corruption in high places. A senator here, a president there, has helped himself. So what's wrong with cheating, as long as you aren't caught?

It's a world in which the best and bravest are often bullied by the brutal and belligerent. So why not give the teachers a hard time? "They can't do nothin' to ya, anyhow, 'cept senja home. So what? Write a note and sign your old man's name."

Not a very pretty picture? You're right, gentle reader. But this is not an indictment of students. It's a cry of shame for the society we're handing on to them.

Let's restore "failure" to our vocabulary. Let's restore "excellence," another word that's been dropped. Let's show the kids that apathy is ugly, that reason is superior to violence, that love and sex are not synonymous, that compassion and courage far outweigh cruelty and cowardice.

I'm sorry for them, and what we have shown them. But I don't despair. Let's show them it's a beautiful world, and that they are beautiful and that they are needed to make it more beautiful. Then watch them go.

Fowl chapter

An advertisement in today's paper from the Conservation Authority asks people not to feed the wildfowl on Fairy Lake, since this discourages them from migrating.

The ad goes on to say if the birds do not migrate there "is every possibility that they will die from exposure during the winter." Could someone tell us why the Authority thinks this way? How many have died? Have any bodies been found?

The flocks seemed content enough, and bird lovers enjoyed feeding them in midwinter. The water was kept open for them.

The request is reasonable enough without adding a horror note of imminent death to it.

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of May 24, 1956

Highest cheque ever paid in an Appreciation Day draw was made out to Mrs. Herb Price last Saturday. With a 30 per cent coupon and the name of the merchant of the week, she won \$188 from the \$610 jackpot. Hers was the second name drawn.

Placing second behind Preston in their class at Play Day in Guelph last Thursday was the Acton high school team. About 30 competed, with Oscar Drijber and Mrs. Reed coaching. Bruce Andrews set a new record for the mile race and came in second in the 880 yard race. Blair Hotchen won the ball throw, Jim Denny placed first in the pole vault with Bill Oost second; Bill Oost came second in high jump; Frank Cooper won a dash; Delmar Watson came third in both the mile and 880. Ruth Landsborough came third in the 75 yard dash and third in the running broad.

Constable Donald Cook, recently transferred from Acton to the Waterdown detachment of the Provincial Police, was reported to be injured in collision on the Queen Elizabeth Highway. The accident occurred near Stone Creek Tuesday. The cruiser Constable Cook was driving was struck in the rear by another car driven by Lawrence Toole, 22, of Winona.

Natives of Eden Mills, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Roberts celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at their Moffat home Wednesday when friends and neighbors gathered to honor the couple.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, May 27, 1926.

Mr. Peter A. Smith has purchased Hill Hall, the fine residential property on the Beadmore and Co premises which he and his wife have occupied for the past four years or so. Mr. Smith has retired from the superintendency of Beadmore sole leather tannery and will now take life somewhat leisurely. Mr. and Mrs. Smith and their daughter Pearl will continue to live in their residence in Acton.

Empire Day was loyally observed Friday evening with a school concert of merit in the town hall. Playing in a mouth organ band were Gordon Currie, Melvin Locker, Gordon Cooper, Bill Wilson, John Kerr, Bert Hinton, Toss Gibbons, Colin McNabb, Carney Byrne, Gordon Titus, Murray Smith, George Tyler, Lloyd Bruce and Arthur Gamble.

I.O.D.E. awards went to Kathleen Molozie, Bert Hinton, Helen Ostrander, Katherine Stewart, Mary Gibbons, John Mellon, Bessie Raiwins, Bobbie Hall, Jane Elson, Helen Campbell, Irene Elliott, Ida Morello, Helen Evans, Ethel Woods, Jean Lambert and Wilma Hansen.

Milton public schools have barred married women as teachers and when women teachers are engaged they must make a solemn promise not to marry during the term.

Acton now has eight gasoline tanks installed for the convenience of the motorists.

Acton I.O.O.F. will hold their annual Decoration Day and church parade Sunday, June 5.

In the whole of Canada not 25 cities have adopted Daylight Saving. It's time the fad was discontinued.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press May 11, 1876.

Some of our storekeepers are keeping very late hours. The habit is a dangerous one, and if persisted in will ruin their reputation for—(We'll tell you some other time.)

The Minister of Education has appointed Monday, the 10th day of July, for the commencement of the examinations of teachers for the current year, for certificates of the first, second and third class.

One evening last week a gentleman in our village, while considerably elevated, was accidentally insulted. As nothing but blood would satisfy his honor, the by-standers kindly loaded up a double-barrelled shot gun. After considerable trouble, they decided to toss for first shot, which the aggressing party was fortunate enough to secure. Our friend was accordingly posted up at twenty paces distance, with instructions to stand still. Instead of this, he surprised the spectators by making tracks in a lively manner for a neighboring wood pile. He escaped two flying shots through his adversary's want of practice, and lives to tell the tale.

At a large meeting of the merchants and traders of Brampton on Thursday, a resolution was adopted to take United States silver at only eighty cents on the dollar after the 15th of the month.

People we miss

Bob MacArthur and Dora Ryder have ended long careers in the printing business and all of us in the company had a party Thursday because of it.

Bob started work at the Free Press on January 10, 1927—all of 49 years ago. He was away from Acton for nine years of that span,

but always as a printer and sometimes reporter too.

He is the last person here to retire who worked under the legendary H. P. Moore, that staunch, old-fashioned pillar of the community, who was publisher for many years.

As printing foreman, Bob taught the young and lively apprentices who are still here—older and less lively—Dave and Jim Dills, Hartley Coles and Wilf Duval, as well as many others. They remember how Bob was especially meticulous about the care of the equipment

and he used to operate all of it. When the Milton newspaper was purchased, Bob was closely involved in reporting, printing and mailing. It was wartime then and things weren't easy. Staff was minimal.

He married Sabra Nelson who worked in the front office and even after she left she continued to write the 20 and 50 years ago columns for years.

Dora Ryder has a special place in our affections; she worked here 32 years and retired, not because of years but because of a cruel illness. It was great to have her with us again last week and she spoke touchingly of her work and life.

She started in the front office but soon showed an aptitude for operating the folder, handpress and newspaper press. She specialized in operating the linotype, one of the few women to do so at the time. And her friends had to admit she was the speediest and most accurate. Not to mention the prettiest.

She left the Free Press to serve in the WRCNS but returned after the war. She married advertising manager Don Ryder and her next absence was after the birth of their son, but luckily she returned after that, too.

At the party Dave Dills spoke about them both and made presentations. Wilf Duval presented Bob with a refinished old type drawer filled with souvenirs of his printing days, and a folding workbench. Dora, who had been partied before, was given a huge plant by Hartley Coles. Oral Norton gave Bob something very special to help him remember all the girls.

We miss them both here very much.



RETIREMENT PARTY for Bob MacArthur and Dora Ryder was held Thursday by Dills Printing and Publishing at the Legion. Bob, a printer for 49 years, was presented with a type drawer filled

with souvenirs of the trade from fellow workers. Dora Ryder has been a linotype operator and proof reader for 32 years. With them in the picture are Dave Dills and Jim Dills.

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