

Decoration Day tradition

Decoration Day has become a tradition on the first Sunday in June. Usually the weather is perfect, and friends gather at Fairview cemetery for a short service which recalls all those family members and neighbours who have died.

The Legion and some organizations then send representatives wandering throughout the cemetery grounds, searching out grave-stones of former associates. Here, scarlet geraniums are planted as the band plays.

The idea originated when members of the Legion and I.O.D.E. decided Remembrance Day was too damp and bone-chilling a day to adequately honor the town's dead in the cemeteries.

Decoration Day evolved, and the ministerial association and band have been annual supporters. Local groups make donations to cover the costs.

Groups will be up at the cemetery all this week tending to the graves of those who were close to their hearts.

But not all of these people will be back Sunday for the service.

Everything is organized again this year, and the only vital aspect of the day that hasn't been pinpointed is the participation of local families. To ensure the continuing success of this nondenominational service, the people of Acton and district must make a point of attending. It's a community event that is very worthy of deliberate support.



BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT: The Free Press news staff is happy and relieved to announce the final arrival of four fledgling kilddeer, born Thursday afternoon, May 27, in their tiny nest on the gravel and tar roof outside the newsroom window. Mother bird's nerve-wracking afternoon included overseeing three staggering, adventurous wee ones, warning them away from the edges of the roof, and then hustling back to settle down on the one remaining egg. When photographer Eric Elstone climbed out the window for pix, babies hustled into the nest and lay still and mother flapped her wing in a simulated injury, to draw his attention away.



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

Some women's hearts are won by French perfume, mink coats, and diamonds. I've managed to steer clear of this type.

All it takes to make my wife happy is a new machine. After years of comparative poverty, during which everything we had was second-hand, falling apart, or broken, I am occasionally able to gratify her lust for something that hums, purrs, growls or roars. None of those verbs applies to me, by the way.

It doesn't matter what it is, anything from a kitchen gadget to a grand piano; it pleases her pink, for a while.

Not for her the big bouquet on Mother's Day, the fancy earrings on her birthday, the voluptuous dressing gown for Christmas. She wants no part of such frivolities. Just give her something that beats or churns or sews or polishes, and she's in ecstasy.

I didn't know this when we were first married. I thought she was a normal,

greedy woman, and kept trying to please her by buying blouses that didn't fit, sweaters the wrong color, earrings she wouldn't be found dead in.

My first knowledge of her true cravings in material possessions, came after we'd been married a year. I was a student veteran. Our total income was \$88 a month, believe it or not. Our rent was \$75 a month. We ate only because I took part-time and vacation jobs.

One day I came home and was stunned to discover she'd bought a sewing machine, for \$149.95. She has also signed up for a sewing course, at \$15, and had bought material to make a suit, for \$20. I have never been stingy, but I was a trifle aghast.

She had bought it on the instalment plan, naturally. The story has a reasonably happy ending. She quit the sewing course after a few lessons, finally threw out the suit material, about 10 years later. But she traded in that sewing machine on a new one the other day, and got \$75 for the old one. So her sewing has cost her about

three dollars a year, over the years. Even a skinkflint couldn't quarrel with that.

"Migawd," I thought, "Hate to do it, but I'm going to have to have her committed. We've gotta educate the kids, pay the mortgage. She'll ruin us."

Another day I came home and steam started coming out of my navel when she coolly informed me she'd bought a grand piano, for about \$4,000, also on the instalment plan. Our income by this time was just about \$4,000 a year.

Once again, her extravagance turned out to be shrewd dealing. She gave piano lessons, the kids were educated, the mortgage is paid. And the other day, an expert told her the grand piano, as it stands, is worth about \$5,500.

I compare these gambits with my own investments, in which a couple of thousand dollars worth of stocks inevitably wind up as 50 shares of moose pasture, and I can't be anything but humble.

This has gone on through the years beyond, and I've never ceased to be amazed at this woman's thing about a new machine.

There's only one flaw in her aberration. Get her a piano and you never get a meal. She's too busy playing the thing. Get her a record player, and everybody who comes in range must be interviewed. Forget about reading a book or relaxing.

Right now, it's the new sewing machine. It's a beauty, according to her, a Bernina, the Cadillac of sewing machines. It will do anything. In a flash, your garment will have seven new button holes or a monogram stitched onto the pocket in purple thread.

We're probably the only people in town who can read in bed without taking a book. We just turn down the sheets and spell out what she has stitched all over them. Things like: "Cold feet make cool bed-fellows" and "Some limousine is my sewing machine," and "How now, brown cow." It's a lot of fun, but it's hard to get to sleep with all that Braille stitching tapping out messages on your anatomy.

I'll admit the new machine will do everything but button up your fly. But it's playing havoc with our domestic life. She can't drag herself away from it.

The Old Lady is up at five o'clock in the morning, sewing. She sneaks down after the news at 11 p.m. to whip off a few stitches.

I have to get most of the meals. She has time to iron only one shirt and wash one pair of socks at a time, which rather keeps me on edge, sartorially. I am barraged with totally incomprehensible terms such as tucks, darts, pleats, basting, gathering.

I know it will end, once she is on familiar terms with her new toy. But until then, it is rather like living with a child who has discovered what fun it is to pound on a drum.

Maybe I should have got her one of those garden tractors, with a tiller and cultivator. At least she'd be getting some fresh air, and I'd be getting some peas.

OUR READERS WRITE:

Good response to article

Acton Free Press, 59 Willow St. N., Acton, Ontario.

To the Editor:

On behalf of the Halton Regional Police Force I would like to thank you for the write-up in the Acton Free Press regarding bicycle licences that were on sale at our office on 29 May 76.

We had a very good response with ninety-six licences being sold. Constable Alex Pearce and Mr. "Pop" Main were in the office helping with the sale of these licences.

Yours truly,

Tom Roduck, Police Constable.

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, May 31, 1956.

A serious fire was averted Tuesday afternoon at the home of Mr. and Mrs. M. Pawthrope, Main St. South, when flames caught between the oil stovepipe elbow and chimney of the small frame house. Firemen answered the call and destroyed the fire. Wall paint was blistered near the stove.

Captain Fisher of the Salvation Army reports that returns from the current Red Shield appeal continue to come in steadily. The response from all sections of the community has so far been "splendid," he said.

Town Planner P. A. Deacon told members of the Planning Board at a meeting Monday night that it was likely the first draft of Acton's town plan would be ready by late June. It was suggested a joint meeting with council be arranged for June 25 to study the colored plan which would show zones and denote land uses.

Six Wolf Cubs brought honors to Acton last Saturday when they tied for fifth place in the Niagara District Cubaree held in Port Colborne. The boys competed against 23 other Cub Packs totalling 630 members from Port Colborne, Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, Fort Erie and other Niagara centres. Cubs who attended from Acton were Brian Barbeau, James Ironside, Richard Ironside, Gary Masales, Robert Foyers and Wayne Roszell.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, June 3, 1926.

Last Thursday marked an event of keen interest in the annals of local history. For several weeks the executives of the personal property of Fairview Place, the ancestral home of the Sidney Smith family for three generations, have informed the public that the lares and penates of the household would be offered for auction.

(Note: this is the stone school on the Robert Little property). Crowds assembled from a wide area, including a number of professional dealers in antiques from Toronto. No sale of the house was effected as no bid reached the reserve bid of \$10,000. The disposal of household goods was gratifyingly successful. None of the contents were reserved with the exception of furniture, silverware, statues, engravings and jewelry which had been bequeathed by will to the surviving sons and their families. The rare mahogany, walnuts and teakwoods did not escape the professional eye.

The baseball season opened with a game against Hillsburgh. The Acton line-up had some old-timers and some newcomers. Neil Gibbons and Bill Nawn were pitchers and Frank Gibbons did the receiving. White was at first, Leishman at second base, Gordon Huffman shortstop and L. Masales at third base. The outfield was covered by Holloway, John Kentner, S. Mackie and Drone. Acton defeated Hillsburgh 8-3.

The Hillsburgh teams always assure of a good game.

100 years ago

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

Statute Labor—It is high time that this relic of by-gone ages was allowed to take its place with "things of the past." The system of road making and repairing by statute labor is not only one of the most ridiculous pieces of petty tyranny of modern times but is one of the greatest humbugs. Road-making requires skilled labor. The farmer who is assessed for so many days' labor usually sends his worst hands and his poorest teams. The days are looked upon by most of the men as holidays.

Another Revolting Wife Murder. A Madoc Farmer Beats Out His Wife's Brains. (Full account given).

The contractor for the new Methodist church building is making good progress. In common with nearly all towns in Ontario, the businessmen of Acton have unanimously resolved that on and after this date they will take American silver only at the following rates: half dime pieces for four cents, dime pieces for 8 cents, quarters for 20 cents, half dollars for 40 cents, dollars for 80 cents. British silver will be taken at the same as heretofore, sterling shilling 24c and York shillings 12 cents.

The village has long had the reputation of being one of the most loyal in the province and there will be one of the best demonstrations ever here on May 24th.

Cheapest prints ever offered to the Canadian public - 7 cents, just to hand, Christie, Henderson and Co.

20 year history for Cancer Society branch

A resume of the work of the Acton Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society was prepared by Mrs. Velma West, and copies given out to over 100 attending the annual pot luck dinner in Knox Thursday. Guest speaker Don Inslay also referred to the branch history in his entertaining address.

Here is what Mrs. West wrote.

Acton Branch, Canadian Cancer Society, began over 20 years ago when Mrs. Kaye Thompson, a part-time secretary for Halton County Health Unit, was asked by the Unit to help make some dressings in the Health Unit building in the evenings for needy patients. She recruited some Milton ladies and began making the dressings after hours.

It soon became apparent that Acton, Georgetown and surrounding areas also had patients needing such dressings. A room was secured free in Milton Town Hall and volunteers from Acton, Nassagaweya, Milton, Georgetown and Esquesing gathered there to make dressings.

Soon so many dressings were needed that a room in the Acton Free Press building was granted us free and here Mrs. Kay Lidkea recruited Acton and area ladies to make dressings. It might be said here that over the years the Acton Free Press has always been most kind and helpful in reporting and advertising for our Branch.

Transportation. Meanwhile, summer holidays having caused a shortage of Public Health Nurses, caused the Director of Nursing of the Health Unit to ask Mrs. Velma West, an R.M. on the Unit staff, to visit patients in Acton and area who needed dressings and transportation to treatment centre in Toronto.

She found Acton's first transportation committee already in action. Mr. Ted Tyler Sr., of Tyler Transport, Acton, had been taking some needy patients to Toronto for treatment, leaving them for

the day and bringing them home on the return truck trip.

Mrs. West was given permission to write to Toronto to the Canadian Cancer Society for help and thus, a very interested but informal group gathered at the Y while Mr. McFarlane instructed us in "does and don'ts" and a local Branch was born.

Many different activities were then carried out. We did not always have a president, but we managed to have a dedicated business man who was a trained projectionist, Mr. Harold Denny, volunteer as our Education Chairman. He and Velma West visited several organizations. Mr. Denny showing the then current Cancer Society films and Velma explaining the work of the Society.

Dressings. Automatically Velma West became Services Chairman, and due to having to give up the room at the Free Press building, dressings were made and stored in the upstairs of the West home. At one time Velma remembers supplying services to five patients within one block of her home. It would be wonderful to name all the volunteers who drove, made dressings, performed other kindnesses but memory and time will not permit.

Dr. Garrett volunteered to be our Medical Advisor and now Acton Medical Group are our support.

We were always fortunate in having the co-operation of bank managers and staff, as well as business men such as Mr. Tom Shields as Campaign Chairman. Time progressed and male campaign managers were replaced by a lady, Mrs. Irene Arbie, who for ten years did a wonderful job as Campaign Chairman. About four years ago, Mrs. Usher replaced her, and two years ago, Mr. Arlie White has been spending his retirement in doing most successful Campaign Chairman work. What energy and success!

Presidents. As to Presidents, we are not sure we always had one. It is believed Ray Arbie was our

first President, followed by Roy Kirkness, and then a few years of a vacant chair. On his retirement as President of Beardmore Tanning Company, we persuaded Mr. Wesley Beatty to become our President, and he proved to be a most helpful addition. He has just recently retired as our President passing his duties on to the capable hands of our former Campaign Chairman, Mrs. Rena Arbie.

About ten years ago, due to being out of town too much, Velma West recruited Mrs. Gloria Coats, a local nurse, to be Services Chairman, and a very busy person she was!

Volunteer drivers were not always plentiful but Beardmore Tannery promised us help when needed as well as many other kind drivers.

Cancer dressings were placed under the able supervision of Mrs. May Dummarsh and are now stored at her home and the Coats home. Gratefully we admit calls for dressings are not very numerous which speaks well of the progress in cancer treatment and control.



ORIGINAL MEMBERS of Acton branch of the Cancer Society were honored at the pot luck dinner Thursday, and guest speaker Don Inslay (second from right) looked over the account of the group's history with them. Left to right are Harold Denny, Audrey Denny, Velma West, Mr. Inslay and Ray Arbie.

After several years of faithful service as Services Chairman, Mrs. Coats has become involved in District work and has persuaded Mrs. Cathy McGillivray to be our present Services Chairman, so Services are still being ably carried on.

When Mr. Denny resigned as Education Chairman, Mrs. Sue Sale ably carried on and expanded this field and has now progressed to District Education work, and Mrs. Marion Patterson is now our busy Education Chairman as well as secretary.

Throughout the years Miss Elma L. Reid has done a very capable task in taking care of our "11 Memorium" funds.

Activity group. The latest venture of our Branch is the introduction of an Activity Group who knit, sew, take and whatever, you wouldn't believe their ingenuity. Their products are sold at Acton Fall Fair in a Cancer Education decorated booth. Goodies and handwork are also sent to Princess Margaret Hospital and the lodge for needy patients. This group has a monthly meeting under

the able leadership of Miss Mary Papillon. Their latest caper was a garage sale which was a whopping success.

During the years, some of the highlights of the Branch activities were two fashion shows, several visits by the late Mr. Maurice Grimes, who always cheered, motivated, and encouraged as well as kept us well informed. Several education programs were held and were surprisingly well attended. Walkathons by High School students proved successful as well as proving our young people were dedicated and helpful citizens.

Now a word about volunteers! Acton Branch cannot begin to name them all or adequately express our gratitude for their help. However, each Spring a pot luck supper is held and we try to say a friendly "Thank You"!

Acton is a town where action on behalf of the Canadian Cancer Society cannot be equalled! With sincere respect and dedication this resume is presented.

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