

Time to forget?

The poor attendance at Decoration Day service was disappointing to organizers (those of them who were there) and a surprise to those who attended. Certainly there isn't much use organizing the program and parade if the people of the community will not respond.

Reason for the non-attendance is difficult to pinpoint. It's not physical. The event is always at the same day of the same month at the same time. The weather was perfect.

There were plenty of people in town - gardening, lounging, swimming, barbecuing, taking drives. People who belong to the supporting organizations.

There are more headstones than ever, more people here than ever before.

Why did so few attend? Acton used to have great community spirit, as people who moved here or moved away observed.

Maybe that time is past. Should we forget the whole thing?

Free Press Editorial Page

Few show concern

Again the attendance was underwhelming at a meeting called to explain the concept of a middle school. About a dozen parents turned up Monday.

Local trustee Tom Watson didn't know if people were apathetic or satisfied. Again, it's hard to say.

The people there had good questions about bussing, lunch

hours, open concept classrooms. They didn't always agree with the answers given.

How about the rest of the parents of the hundreds of grade six, seven and eight students who will be walking to the old high school when it becomes a middle school?

Monday night was the time to be heard.

Wrong way to learn

More power to Judy LaMarsh and Lucien Beaulieu who are off to Europe to see if foreign media have far less violence than Canadian and U.S. radio and television.

Other papers have been critical of the expense. Not us.

Again the old cliché: what's the value of a human life?

Our children are obviously growing up here thinking murder and terror are the normal way of life. Anything we can do to change this horrible distorted vision, given to our young people in their own living rooms, is surely worth the expense.

In Europe there are already policies set for the media on the broadcasting of violence. Many European countries, including Poland and Hungary, have pioneered in the development of children's programming and adult drama.

No one can deny that people are drawn to read, watch and talk about accidents, murders, disas-

ters natural and unnatural. This kind of news produces horror and fear. Yet people respond to it.

This human tendency is apparent when the 100 Years Ago column is being written each week. In 1876, the editor of the Free Press got the Toronto papers and culled the news for his readers. Most of them depended entirely on the Free Press for news, both local and international. Again his choice shows murder and disaster are always fascinating, no matter what part of the world they occur in. Court cases, suicides and accidents are reported in detail.

Print is one thing, television another.

It is adults who read newspapers in the main.

But it is impressionable children with an undeveloped sense of reality who are sitting slack-jawed in front of the T.V., silently listening to the screams and watching the blood drip.

Of this and that

"Here's news for the front page!" a Toronto subscriber told us. "I got the Free Press on Thursday!"

The same householder has such freakish delivery as a general rule

that papers even arrive out of order, one of them a week and a half late. That's Toronto we said, not Timbuktoo.

The new middle school for Acton has no name. Any ideas?



Lest We Forget . . . Decoration Day on Sunday



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

Recently, we watched the Emmy awards, presented from Hollywood by the television industry. It was a crashing bore, right in the midst of a television season that is stultifyingly dull.

Despite the opportunity to show what a fascinating medium television can be, the show, which seemed to go on interminably, had almost nothing to display aside from elegant costumes and fancy coiffures.

Can you think of anything less exciting than platoons of writers or directors, or sound men, or whatever, trotting up to a stage, receiving a shiny trinket, and speaking, every one of them, into a microphone with the deepest sincerity, thanking their wives, their children, their mothers, and eighteen guys named Max and Hymie for the fantastic honor they were receiving?

In an era of women's liberation, it was significant that in this showcase for the biggest entertainment industry in the world, very, very few women won awards.

At least when the film industry presents its Oscar awards, amidst the stream of inanity, one can count on two or three witty masters (or mistresses) of ceremonies. How would you like to be a Mistress of Ceremony, gentle reader? It sounds sinfully delicious.

But the television industry was content to hire two of the biggest grins in the business, John Denver and Mary Tyler Moore. They looked beautiful, and they grinned and grinned and grinned, but the entire evening had about as much wit and sparkle to it as a convention of under-

takers; probably less.

Only attempt at humor during the evening was a feeble one, with a tired stand-up comedian telling the same old tired gags.

There were one or two attempts at dignified speeches amid the tawdriness and the "Gee, Mom! I won!" atmosphere, but they were quickly drowned in the molasses as various personalities lined up to pat each other on the back and burble. "I'd just like to say this was a real team effort, and everyone pulled together, and I just want to thank my director, my producer, my network, our wonderful camera crew, our sound people, our writer for a fantastic script, our tremendous cast," and so on and on.

Some of them thanked everyone but their dog, their dentist and their hairdresser, who probably had more to do with the award than any other factors.

It was pretty hard to take just a week after the Stanley Cup playoffs, when we heard the same sort of sentimental mawk from coaches, players and sportswriters, until some of us, including yours truly, wanted to vomit.

And maybe that's what's wrong with television today. Don't tell me there's nothing wrong with it.

What's your special pleasure tonight, for example? Will it be a re-run of All in the Family or a re-run of Bob Newhart, or a re-run of Cannon or a re-run of Dr. Marcus Welby?

Or perhaps you'd prefer a re-run of a re-run of Adam 12 or Gunsmoke? Or maybe you'd like to see that great movie, Flying Tigers (1942)? For the fourth time.

In this country we have the CBC, for which I once had a good deal of respect. It

produced, first, excellent radio. When television came along, it was right in there with good comedy, drama, and variety. The brightest writers and talent in the country were sought out. Now they're all in Hollywood, and all the good, gray Corporation can come up with, despite its frequent resounding promises, are exhausted antiques such as Front Page Challenge and This Is The Law.

I won't mention such creakers as the Tommy Hunter Show, and Hockey Night in Canada, because I don't want to lose three-quarters of my readers, but surely, surely, just because a show went well ten years ago doesn't mean it couldn't be improved.

Nope. The CBC has turned chicken. It's afraid of parliament, ratings, and controversy.

As for the garbage that pours in over the border, and is so often grabbed by Canadian networks and advertisers, words do not suffice to describe the dreariness of most of it.

Is it too late for television to be saved, or to save itself? In my opinion, yes. Why? Because it has built up, in the past couple of decades, starting with children, a mindless audience which will turn on the tube, let its jaw drop slack, and watch any garbage shoved in front of it. As long as it's in color.

I don't give a rip, personally. I'd rather read a good book any time. But my heart bleeds for the hundreds of thousands of old people for whom it is the only bit of life they have, and the hundreds of thousands of children who will make it part of their lives. They are being treated as morons.

As I said, I don't care. But one more "spin-off" from the Mary Tyler Moore show and I'm going to take an axe to the set.

OUR READERS WRITE:

Writer puzzles over census forms

3 June 76

I received the census form and had to make a comment.

?? or someone made out these forms, had them printed, with decorative envelopes—not to mention the snazzy pencil. (An average home doesn't have pencils to fill out their forms so the government came to their aid—where are they when you really need them—if the computer is set up for special pencils I suppose that was another money saving device one of our workers thought up). People are paid to deliver these forms and on and on and on. Can you imagine the cost of this little deal? Of course some government department has all this information but it wouldn't do for one hand to let the other hand know what is going on.

What I thought was interesting is on the form we received, on one page the question in one column is what month and year of birth, then beside it went into detail and needed to know the year of birth in decades and actual year. I guess to write the 7th month and the 1945th year isn't very plain. Then you turn the page over and they ask if

your 15 years of age or older before June 1, 1961. Again—so much for our educational system.

I would be interested to know why "how many visitors or other persons" who have a usual home elsewhere in Canada stayed over night on May 31 / June 1" is important. If a person isn't living in your home and not a visitor then what are they? The government classes them as "other persons."

It states this form is of fundamental importance to your community, your province and to Canada as the census figures are used extensively in the determination of government financial grants.

Please don't forget to mail your forms in or they may not give us the grants they have before and if that should happen our taxes may have to go up to compensate.

Thank you for your time.

M. Thomson

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, June 7, 1956.

Tears of excitement in her eyes, 15-year-old Jean Manes became Acton Rotary club's second Queen for a Week Saturday. Before a crowd of 250 in the Roxy Theatre, Jim Ledger announced the name of the winning girl as delighted applause broke out. Other contestants were Wendy Mackenzie, Jean Lidka, Claire Lambert, Donna McMillan, Betty Bean, Margaret Nightingale, Joy Peal, Marilyn Rognvaldson and Anne DeForest.

After writing his examination in Guelph last week, Jack Holmes Tuesday received his real estate brokers' licence.

Slight damage was caused to the kitchen at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bert Rognvaldson yesterday afternoon when a pan of doughnuts took fire on the stove. Mrs. Rognvaldson suffered minor burns on one hand when she attempted to control the fire. Acton firemen, who answered the call, treated Mrs. Rognvaldson after the small fire was put out. The home is about two miles south of here, on No. 25 Highway.

George Lucas, R.R. 2, Acton, was the operator of a panel truck which was involved in an accident Sunday on Highway No. 7 near Rockwood. Damage to the truck was estimated at \$300. Mr. Lucas was treated in Guelph General Hospital for lacerations to the head and an injured back.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, June 10, 1926.

The weather for the annual I.O.O.F. decoration day parade was rather unsettled on Sunday but in spite of the showers a good turnout of the local and visiting brethren assembled at the lodge room and Fairview cemetery. The Duke of Devonshire chapter of the I.O.O.F. are holding a garden birthday tea at the home of Mrs. Fred McCreary, Church St., Friday afternoon.

In the death of Mrs. John Stalker this community lost a very choice spirit.

At convocation ceremonies at the University of Toronto last Friday Acton was honored with having four of her young people among the graduates, Misses Marie Mowat and her sister Miss Jessie Mowat, and Miss Margaret MacDonal who received the degree of B.A., and Mr. W.G.C. Kenney, who graduated in medicine. Miss Clara Lantz graduated in pharmacy but did not attend. Miss Jean Kennedy and Miss Edna Henderson attended as well as the families. Dr. Harold Mowat came across the continent from Los Angeles to be present at the graduation of his sisters. He presented each one of them with a gold watch.

Mr. J.B. Mackenzie's new bungalow at the corner of Church and Victoria is nearing completion.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, June 1, 1876.

The fifty-seventh anniversary of Her Majesty's birthday was celebrated in the usual manner last week. The day was ushered in with the booming "cannon", firing of squibs and general uproar. Everything betokened a grand gala day. During the afternoon a great many people were on the streets amusing themselves in various ways. Great interest was taken in the athletic games and events which were well contested.

In the morning a baseball team was expected to arrive by train from Guelph but as none came it was resolved to choose two mixed nines from our local players under Messrs. Thos. Kennedy and James Nicklin to contest for the \$10 prize. Sports events included heavy stone, light stone, tossing the caber etc. In the evening the concert given by Acton Brass Band was well attended.

Two murderers have escaped from Cayuga gaol.

The old Methodist church building has been purchased by Mr. Ranson Adams for about \$800. He speaks of putting up a two-storey brick building on the vacant space between his residence and Mrs. Storey's.

Council met in the Temperance Hall Saturday night but as the hall had been let for a lecture they adjourned till Monday. They assembled but couldn't get in for want of a key, the caretaker having given it to one of the members of the band, it being their practice night. The band commenced their practice but at the request of the reeve kindly gave up their right of possession and the business of council was proceeded with.

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PUPILS OF THE LATE Robert Little posed at the school for their portrait during their reunion July 13, 1894. This picture belonged to the Kenney family. In the photograph are rear row James Matthews, Hattie Speight, John E. Farmer, Jennie Symon, Ida Nicklin, Charlie Cook, Emma Matthews, John Hutchinson, Lizzie Cameron, Zalman Hall, Martha Cummings, John Moore, Annie Grant, John Secord, Jennie Hynds, Lewis Matthews, Bella Gordon, George Hynds

Hynds, Maggie Moore; second row Edw. Cook, Samuel Worden, Albert Moore, Janie Speight, Ed M'Garvin, Nellie Hill, John Hill, Eliza Cameron, Richard Thurtell, Maggie Kennedy, Betsy Milne, Maggie Hemstreet, H.P. Moore; 3rd row Geo. Worden, Sam'l Clark, Mary Vincent, Alonzo Worden, John Douglas, Mrs. Little, Austin Tubby, Lizzie Kennedy, Al Nicklin, Jennie Cameron; front row Ed Matthews, John Worden, Chas. Davidson, Geo. Wilds.