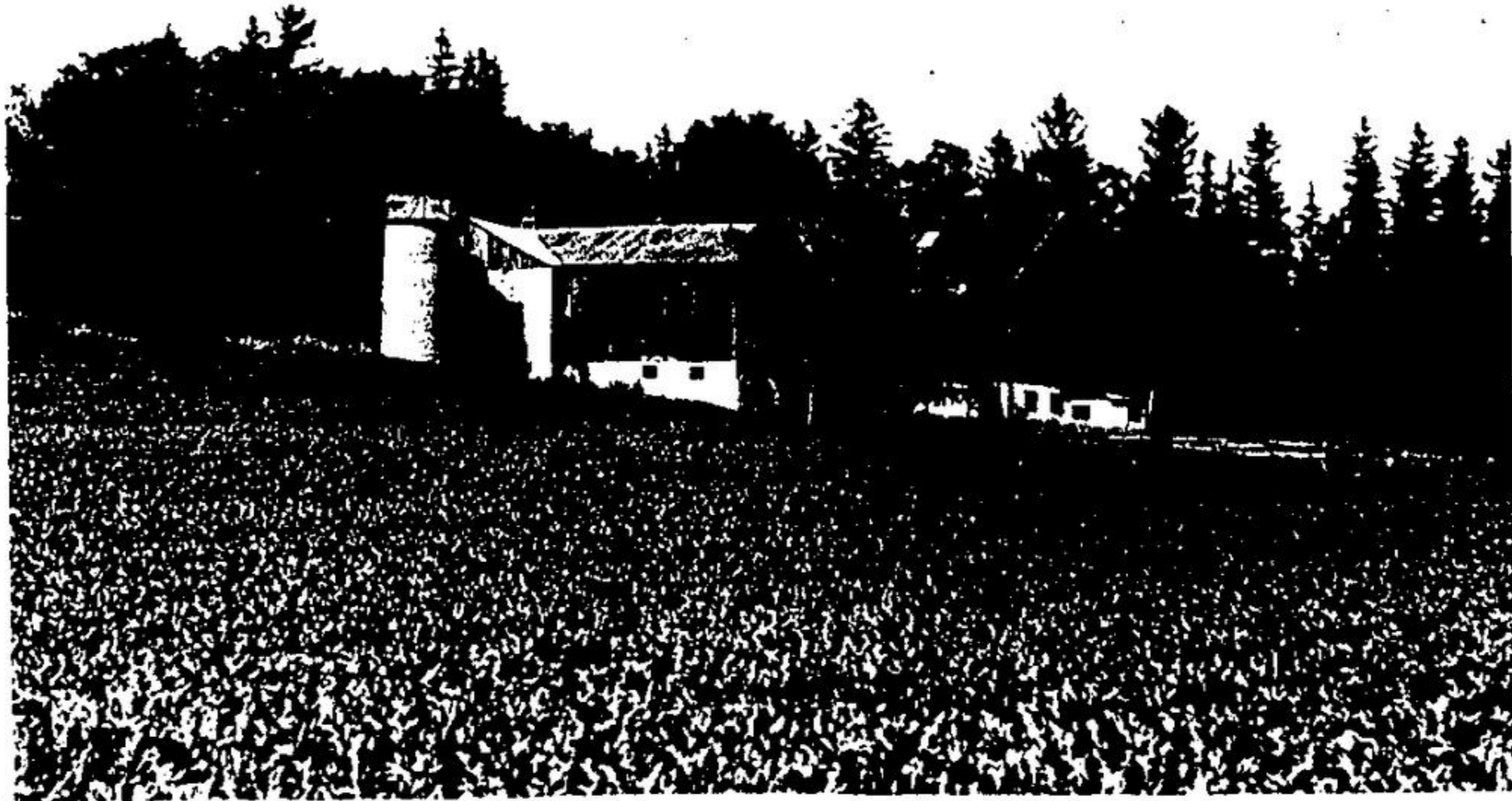


# Celebration Sunday

Thanks to the firefighters and Rotary, who devoted many hours to making a celebration for Acton last Sunday. Their efforts are appreciated. Milton's program was rained out; Georgetown had nothing special planned. Acton's worked out just right in

terms of date and weather. Thursday, July 1, was wet and quiet, with all stores required to close. Most people in industry were at work, though. Many concluded a pleasant weekend by enjoying the program at the park.



ROW ON ROW OF healthy green corn stalks stand straight and high in this farmer's field which abuts Edens Mills Presbyterian Church on the outskirts of the village.

## Free Press Editorial Page

### Starving the birds

The "No Feeding" signs are up now at Fairy Lake. When the lake was declared a bird sanctuary several years ago, all birds were welcome. No longer. There have grown to be too many of them. They were fed, sheltered and watered, and they wanted to stay. So each winter, a few more just hung around Acton and didn't feel the urge to migrate south at all.

So the official decision has been made. Don't feed the birds—when they begin to starve, they'll remember about migration. The people who have grown to love these delightful birds are sick at the callousness of the decision. To starve birds that have been tame for several seasons, and hope they will move on, is surely not the kind of tactic that spells "conservation". Yet it is the decision of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority.

If Esther Taylor says the birds are hungry, we believe it. She says at times they are overfed, they then ignore food. She wonders if there is enough food for them here at any time.

Feeding had been done regularly, with the town paying the bill some of the time. Compassionate neighbors—in particular Miss Taylor fed them themselves when the town did not. Feed isn't cheap, either.

It is easy to understand not feeding them in the summertime. For the past two years some of the birds have been caged and fed in the winter. But to suddenly abandon the birds we encouraged to stay, and refusing to feed them, seems needlessly cruel.



### Teach French early

Well, harrassed Canadians can fly again now, after the latest disruption in public service has been temporarily settled. The costly program of bilingualism introduced by the government met with only mild complaints around here, but with the pilots' issue people became more critical. They tell us bilingualism isn't the issue, but to most people that's what it seems to be. With our post office signed in French, listings in French in our phone book and labels in French on

many things we buy, people here seem to think that's enough. Despite what we learned in school, the language of French still seems foreign to us. N'est ce pas? Certainly it doesn't give us any feeling of its belonging to our "heritage" or "culture". The best solution would surely be to teach French thoroughly to school children beginning in the earliest grades. Children who are more bilingual would hopefully not feel as strange with the other mother tongue as we do.

### A retirement prayer

An "Amen" to Senior Citizens' week is this apt prayer. "Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself that I am getting older and will some day be old. Keep me from getting talkative and particularly from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from trying to straighten out everyone's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody. With my store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all, but Thou knowest, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end. Keep me from the recital of

endless details; give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on many aches and pains; they may be increasing and my love of rehearsing them may be becoming sweeter. I ask for grace to listen to the tales of others' pains. Teach me that occasionally I may be mistaken. Keep me reasonably sweet. I don't want to be a saint—they can be hard to live with, but a sour old person is impossible. Help me to extract all possible fun out of life. There are so many funny things around us and I don't want to miss any of them." Amen

### Teenagers and jobs

Of the nearly 700,000 persons out-of-work in the latest Statistics-Canada figures, almost half of these are under 24 years of age. The grim picture painted by the statistics still does not fully reveal the anxiety of those who, before they even enter the labor force, are faced with the kind of desperation that comes from a lack of meaningful employment. Add to the already dismal statistics the influx of students seeking summer jobs to help them through next winter's studies and

we face a situation that could thoroughly dishearten some of the most important people in our society. Homeowners and others will often resort to the uncertainties of the yellow pages rather than hire responsible summer students eager to provide services ranging from babysitting to housepainting. In Acton an attempt is being made by the Community Services Centre to help these energetic young people.



## Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

Had a letter this week from a former student who has to present a seminar in a journalism course she's taking. She didn't want much — just how to become a syndicated weekly columnist, and some anecdotes about being editor of a weekly newspaper.

There's no problem about the first one, as I tell the eight or 10 people who write me annually about it. All you have to do is be in the right place at the right time, with the right material. In other words, lucky. A second ingredient is to be cheap. I was both, when this column began to circulate.

I began writing this column when I was editor of a weekly. After a couple of years, I had grown sick of the lack of freedom and creativity in what I was writing. Any damn fool can write a news story, if he gets the facts straight. And many damn fools can and do write editorials, regardless of the facts.

And I was having trouble with the weddings and obituaries I had to churn out.

One searing experience in the weddings department was my assertion, right there in black and white, that the bride and groom had left for a honeymoon in Bermuda wearing a green corduroy suit. I didn't say who was wearing the top, and who the bottom, but my reputation among the mothers of brides was definitely sul-  
hed.

Same trouble with the obituaries. I never committed the classic: "The deceased was borne to his final resting place by six old friends who acted as pallbearers," but I did have my moments.

A line from a wedding would pop into the funeral, and it would come out something like this: "The remains of the deceased, who was in his 78th year, are resting at the Sunset Funeral Home, in a clinging gown of yellow voile, with a garland of white stephanotis and a large bouquet of forget-me-nots." Pretty fancy funeral, what?

I never did get much flack from the deceased, but I sure caught hell from the "survivors," as they were invariably known.

After a series of such setbacks, I decided to start writing a little column in which I didn't have to cope with the dull facts of the news story, the supposed objectivity of the editorial, or the pitfalls of the wedding-obituary quagmire.

This began "Sugar and Spice" as it was first named, a humble little corner of the editorial page where one Bill Smiley could spoof the world, needle his wife, damn all politicians, and give vent to his rages. In short, where he could say whatever he wanted, without hiding behind the anonymity of the news story or the editorial "we". Although that's a pretty slim thing to try to hide behind in a small town, where everybody knows exactly who wrote the editorial, and what's wrong with his head, to have such an opinion?

Anyway, the column caught on, for various reasons. One was that men enjoyed me pointing out how peculiar women are. Another was that women enjoyed me

### Of this and that

The town flags weren't up for Dominion Day (Canada Day?) Some homes had their small flags flying, though.

"McKenzie Smith" is one name suggested for the new middle school. Obvious - former principals G. W. McKenzie and Elmer Smith. An old timer suggested the other name - W. H. Stewart school. Mr. Stewart was principal here over 50 years ago, but some remember him with affection.

pointing out how stupid men are. Everyone enjoyed me pointing out how abysmally idiotic politicians are.

There were other reasons. I didn't mind calling a spade a ruddy shovel. I didn't mind exposing what an ass I was. I wrote about all the horrible ordeals that ordinary people go through: loved ones dying; music festivals, Christmas. I wrote about parents and children, sailors and legionnaires, grannies and young mothers, farmers and fishermen.

And I had good friends. Notably George Cadogan, still a power in the weekly business in the Maritimes. He urged and encouraged and recommended to friends. Under his exhortations, I gradually changed a ragged column of anecdotes, barbs and personal opinions into a short essay that tried to say something, without seeming to.

Next thing I knew, 88 papers were running my column. Then, of course, the syndicates got interested. They are not, by the way, much interested in beginners, which makes it mighty tough to break in.

Satisfaction? Oh yes. Not from writing it. That's hard work. If it weren't, it would be hard reading, and if it was that, it wouldn't be read for long.

## OUR READERS WRITE:

### Calling wartime crews

To the Editor: The second Commonwealth Wartime Aircrew Reunion will take place in Winnipeg September 9 to 12, 1976. We are sure that many of your readers will be interested in this event as there is scarcely a corner of the world where aircrew veterans of the Commonwealth are not to be found. After a similar reunion in 1970, the only major complaint received by the organizers was from those who had not heard

about the event until after the fact. We are attempting, therefore, to ensure that this time the word gets the widest possible distribution.

If you would like to have more information, please contact us. Yours truly, Alex Baumann, Publicity Chairman, P.O. Box 1702, Winnipeg

### Men, we need you!

Can you help us? The Wellington County Museum needs men with a knowledge of tools and construction methods to help develop a tool-oriented program. If you know about tools either wood working, or leather and have a few hours to spare,

please give us a call. We would like to hear from you. To volunteer your assistance, please contact Mrs. Ellen Langlands at 846-5169.

Ellen Langlands

### More spice than sugar

The Editor, Free Press, Acton, Ont.

Dear Sir: Mr. Smiley's article "Sugar and Spice" May 12, is noticeably lacking in sugar, but it is spicy and interesting, and gives the reader food for thought.

My thoughts are not in accordance with the writer's. Unlike W. Stewart in McLean's magazine whom he quotes, I believe a large percentage of Canadians are still quiet, sober, decent people. He mentions violent strikes in Canada as proof that we are not the decent people we once were.

But how many working Canadians have never engaged in a strike? How many have quietly continued with their work on too small pay for these expensive times, rather than make a fuss? How many have run the chance of losing their homes, because of a desire to be quiet and sober, rather than step out bravely and voice their complaints? "It's the wheel that does the squeaking,

gets the grease", and there is a lot of truth in this old adage. When teachers and postal workers, everyone of them educated, and none of them violent, are forced to strike, there is something wrong with the manner in which both departments are conducted. Don't you think so?

To continue, he infers that our Canadian soldiers in England in World War II were unmannerly and vociferous. In turn, the old boys could retort with:—"The one place where we had real hospitality was in Scotland."

One day a group of boys, back from the dirty, muddy, unhealthy trenches, were resting their weary bodies on the beautiful grass in a park in England. A policeman spied the restful scene, and ordered them off. Not a move was made.

"If we are good enough to fight your battles, we're good enough to lie on your grass."

There, I have given "Sugar and Spice" of May 12 the drubbing which it deserves, but I shall continue to read this thoughtful, spicy column.

Yours truly, Millicent Milroy

## The Free Press Back Issues

### 20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press July 5, 1956  
Bruce Andrews won the mile and a half midget race when members of the Guelph Legion track club met some of Canada's top competition at the ninth annual Blue Water marathon at Warton on Dominion Day.  
Keel's Bodo, a German Shepherd owned by Fred Heifetz of Acton, won three first awards at the dog show in Burlington last Saturday. The dog placed first in the senior puppy class, best of Canadian breed puppy in breed and the walking class.  
Jack Walker was present in the Roxy Theatre Friday evening when his name was announced as the winner of the \$50 in the tennis club draw. He had bought his ticket No. 809 for four cents.  
Conservatory of Music examination results were announced this week in Guelph. Several Acton piano pupils tried, their results follow: grade four theory, first class honors, Delmar Watson; grade three theory, pass, Helen Landsborough; grade two theory, first class honors, Ella Jay; grade nine piano, pass, Helen Landsborough; grade seven piano, pass, Margaret Armstrong, Joe Jay, Elizabeth Jay; grade four piano, Robert Armstrong, Lesley A. Daby; grade two piano, first class honors, Mary Kobylka, honors, Karin Heller, Steven Wolfe; pass, Barbara Symon and Paul Wolfe.  
Visiting relatives in Bracebridge over the weekend are Mr. and Mrs. Rino Braida, Janet and David, and Mrs. S. Braida.

### 50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press July 8, 1926  
A very pretty wedding was solemnized in Dovercourt Baptist church Toronto, on Monday, July 5 at high noon when Margaret Sophia, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Gibbons, Cameron St., became the bride of Ernest Wilfred, only son of Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred Coles of Acton. The bride wore peach crepe de chine and picture hat and carried roses and lily-of-the-valley. Miss Nellie Gibbons, sister of the bride, wore orchard crepe de chine. Mr. Fred Gatehouse, Preston, assisted the groom.  
Some of those who were promoted with 75 per cent, and did not have to write examinations, were: Teddy Hansen, Harvey Hassard, May Chisholm, Claire Garden, Louise Leatham, Vera Vickers, Margaret Arnold, Annie Gibbons, Lois Cripps, Lorraine Joque.  
For many weary months Miss Lottie Speight lay in pain and accompanying mental anguish with an incurable ailment at the home of her sister, Mrs. H. P. Moore, Moorecroft. Her end was peace.  
She was a daughter of pioneers of this town and was born in the Speight homestead at the corner of Willow and Agnes in 1858. She qualified as a school teacher and taught at Limehouse but when her sisters married she was needed in the house. For about 30 years she was organist in the church.

### 100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press June 29, 1876  
The street and sidewalk committee of the village council have let contracts to Mr. Zimmerman for repairing the hills on East-Main St. and for making a sidewalk on a portion of Mill St. We learn that the work to be put on Hynds' Hill is to only cost \$3. This is a poor kind of economy. The hill is in very bad state and being one of our leading thoroughfares certainly deserves something better than to be trifled with.  
The opening of the new Methodist church and the entertainments connected with there will probably be the principal events in our village on Saturday next. Elaborate arrangements are being made for the entertainment of large numbers of people.  
A grand dinner will be served, Saturday at one o'clock in the basement of the church. Roast turkey, chicken, beef and lamb with all other necessities for a first class dinner will be provided in abundance. Tickets 50 cents.  
In the evening at 6 o'clock there will be a strawberry festival.  
A large sum is yet to be made up to complete the payment of the building.  
The annual meeting of the Disciples of Canada has been held at the stone church on the 6th line of Erin. We are told there were at least two thousand people present. There were several noted preachers there. Births - At Crewson's Corner, the wife of Mr. Morgan Crewson, of twins, daughters. One of them has since died.

## THE ACTON FREE PRESS

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