Free Press / Editorial Page

The optimists will meet

The time has come to not just talk about improving the downtown area, but to actually do something about it.

The impetus for a meeting called for next Tuesday is a government plan called the Business Improvement District. With the assistance of ideas in a book, The Revitalization of Retail Districts, merchants are finding their footing in the eversticky problem of the downtown

The main responsibility for implementing the plan rests with the business people here themselves. There must be co-operation and group action, because the

problems are beyond the scope of any few individuals.

The Chamber of Commerce is organizing this most important meeting.

Merchants who have already agreed to be assessed to pay for more parking downtown have put themselves in an optimistic and forward-looking position already.

Now they are ready to proceed even further.

The plan is a big and important one. It's not the time for pettiness and complaints.

This meeting can be critically important for the town.

Acton's optimists will be at the library Tuesday.

Oshawa's face-lifting

Oshawa is a prime example of a city whose business district is undergoing a rebirth as a result of renewed interest of its own citizens.

There, suburban malls were actually in operation when the downtown merchants and others realized their deep dilemma.

They also took advantage of the provincial legislation which allows for the creating of an improvement area. Acton is considering this same scheme.

In Oshawa, all businesses in the area had their assessment raised by about seven mills. The hope is that assessment will increase and the tax will decrease.

Locking sidewalk was used in Oshawa, too, plus attractive new light posts bearing illuminated glass balls.

New trees were planted inside

ornamental guards. Planters, benches and garbage containers were set out.

Then there was a special promotion program. Entertainment, shopping promotions and Christmas lighting were arranged.

Now other things are happening in downtown Oshawa-condominium apartments, a new hotel, an office tower and a senior citizen housing unit.

More people will be living down-

The Canadian Real Estate Association newsletter reported on the changes in Oshawa, where the man chairing the Improvement District committee is a veteran real estate broker in the city.

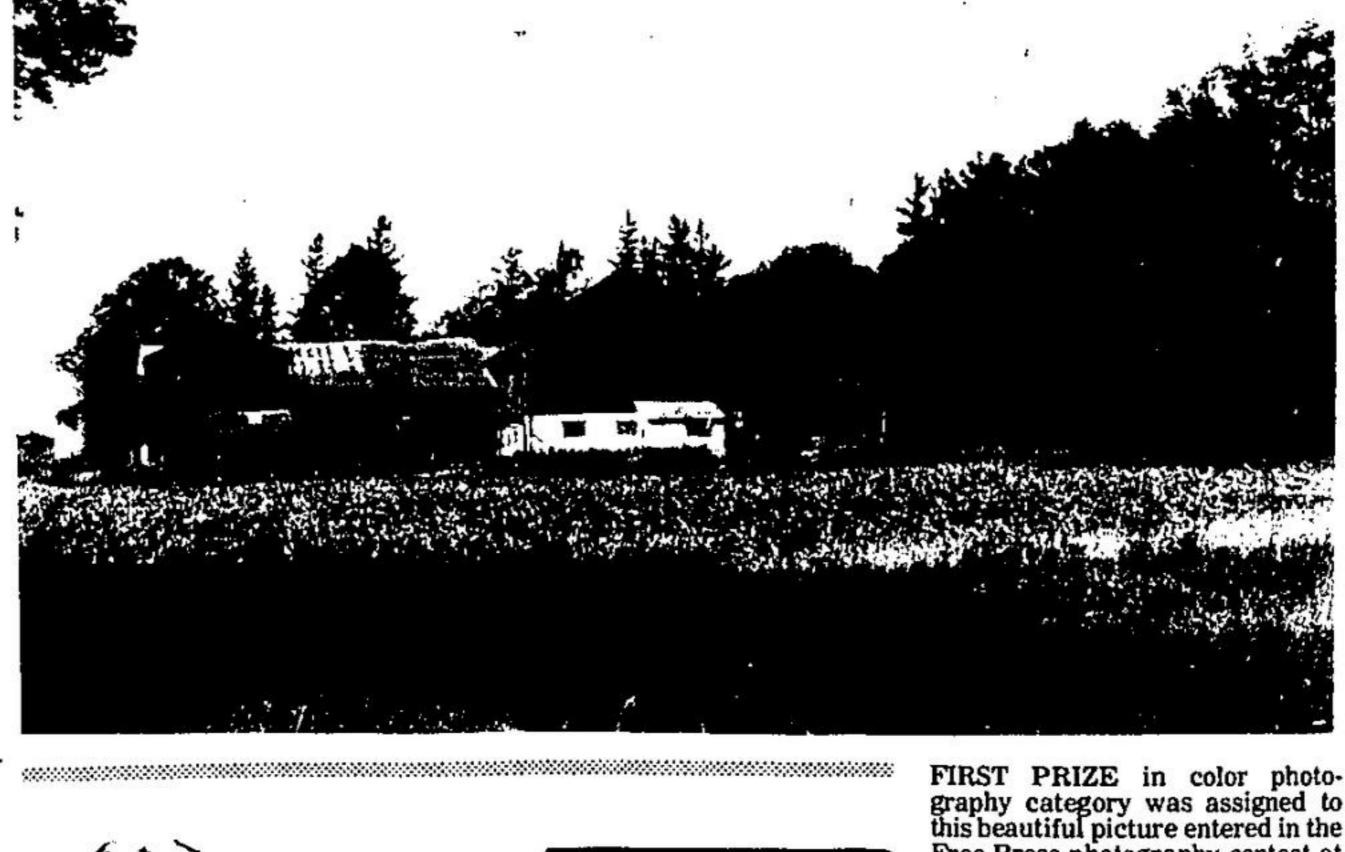
He says any other place can duplicate Oshawa's achievements if there is proper motivation.

Of this and that

A bright motionless object in the northern sky Friday at dinner time brought puzzled people outside in this district. The bright white light was obviously not the evening star. Gradually it turned pink, diminished and disappeared altogether as the sky grew dark.

Meanwhile, the radio reported calls on the light, and an answer from the powers that be: it was a weather balloon.

There goes another UFO story.



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

END of summer notes. Can't think of one, single, useful, constructive thing I did during the past summer. Which is as it should be.

I did threaten, once or twice, to paint the back stoop and the picnic table and chairs. But on the days when I was ready to put the stain on the picnic equipment, it rained, thank goodness. And I never did figure out how to paint the stoop. The cat sleeps there all day. I was either going to have a cat with green feet, or I'd have to tie him to the lilac tree until the paint dried, which I thought was a bit inhuman.

One of the big events of the summer was having an oak tree taken down. It was about 70 feet high and two feet thick at the base. It was quite a thrill to watch the treeslayers, two of them, scrambling away up into the blue of a summer evening, slinging ropes around in all sorts of mysterious ways, shouting incomprehensible directions to each other, like a couple of sailors reefing the foresail around Cape Horn, and lowering the mighty oak in sections.

I now have four woodpiles in my back yard, about six cords of firewood, on which

all sorts of people are casting an envious eye. Forget it, friends. It cost me \$300 to have that oak down, and I'm going to enjoy it, if I have to keep the fireplace burning day and night all winter.

That was a bad week. Just after the oak came down, the automatic washer in the basement blew its guts. The dryer was shot too, so this was another \$700. An exciting installation. The washer and dryer won't go down our cellar stairs. The boys had to rip out the stairs and lower the machinery. But they labored with great good nature and ingenuity. We didn't lose a single man. Nor even a married one.

It could never happen if you bought the outfit from one of the big, out-of-town firms. They'd just sneer if you said: "The stairs have to come out."

That was a \$1,000 week of pure loss. But at was somewhat redeemed the following week when I went to Halifax and won an award which included a handsome cheque for \$500. It made me think God was back in His heaven, after being out to lunch for a whole week.

That Halifax is quite a place. It looks like

READERS OUR

Delegation is bitter seeking some answers

September 28, 1976

Last night, Monday, Sept. 27, I appeared in front of the G.A.C. (General Administration Committee) for the town of Halton Hills (as part of a delegation), on the matter of ice rental rates for Junior and Intermediate Hockey Clubs in Acton.

To the Editor:

The decision arrived at at that meeting sounded the death knell for Intermediate hockey in Acton. The rate of \$30 / hour for practice, \$30 / hour for games and \$35 / hour for playoff games plus the cost of referees would mean an outlay of \$3,000 for the season without consideration for sticks. tape, sweaters, socks, travelling, etc. In order to cover the above mentioned \$3,000 the average attendance at home games would have to be 155 adult paying fans. Unless a sponsor is found who is willing to lay out \$5,000 with a likely prospect of getting little or no return on investment, the Acton Swords are dead!

There are some other points, however, I would like to make and some questions I would like answered!

Point (a) - Recreation Director, Glen Gray, referred to Junior and Intermediate Hockey as "private enterprise" and, as such, small gates and high costs were not his "problem" but ours and "we were not doing a very good job at fund raising if we were in financial difficulties". Even though Councillor Ric Morrow insisted Mr. Gray's remarks were taken out of context, I think the matter deserves some attention.

In Acton in particular, such a thing as "private" or "free enterprise" in sports as he stated, does not exist. A few queries by Mr. Gray would indicate that as few as 20 individuals in the Acton area help coach, manage and look after Minor Hockey, help with the Figure Skaling Club and its carnival and also serve as directors, coaches and managers for both Junior and Intermediate Hockey, run equipment exchanges during hockey registration, and all for the privilege of spending ten to twenty hours of their free time a week at the arena with no thought of remuneration. In many cases money out of their own pocket help keep the organizations operational.

So much for "private" or "free enterprise" with the instruction that both Junior and Intermediate Hockey is operated to make a profit. Point (b) - The comment was made

during the meeting that Industrial leagues and the like pay less because they are recreational and are on a local level. I think hockey is recreational regardless of the level played and those that play Junior and Intermediate have just as much right to the facility as the players in other leagues and at the same price otherwise they are being discriminated against as a group.

Point (c) - Since the facilities are supposed to be used for local recreation at the lower price, are all Industrial Hockey players in the Acton and Georgetown Industrial leagues from the Region of Halton?

Now the questions: The statement was made last night that Acton Arena would run at a deficit of some \$30,000 to \$35,000 this year without any Capital Expenditures. The city of London, Ont. has approximately 14 arenas under the recreation commission - last year the average deficit/ arena was \$8,000, all arena employees are paid union scale wages. This year the projected deficit per London rink is \$7,000, the Ice rental time is \$18 / hour for minor hockey and figure

skating and \$22 / hour for everyone else. The City of Guelph has a number of orenas under its Parks and Recreation department including the 3,000 seat Memorial Gardens. The rent for an outside team for this latter facility i.e. The Acton Junior Hockey Club is (\$27.50) Iwenty-

seven dollars and fifty cents per hour. (a) How can a facility such as Memorial Gardens be rented chea per than the Acton rink? The Gardens is far superior to Acton. (b) How can the City of London rent any

of their facilities out less expensively yet pay higher wages than the Town of Halton (c) What makes up the awesome deficit

for the three arenas in Halton. Incidentally, the Region of Halton Hills is not alone in charging high prices for prime

ice time, the Region of Peel is worse. (d) Are the people whose salaries are paid by the taxpayers ignorant of local conditions and inequities such as Acton or don't they care?

I dare say there is a damn sight of difference between putting 700 fans into the Alcott Arena for an average Gemini game last year versus trying to find parking for even half that number of fans around the Acton arena!

Perhaps some of the bitterness that some of us feel over last nights' decision can be assuaged by some common sense answers.

F. R. Buchanan, President.

Acton Swords Intermediate Hockey Club.

Limehouse residents concerned

Following is a copy of a letter sent to the clerk of Halton Region regarding excessive speed of vehicles along Halton Road 20, formerly 22 Sideroad, September 20, 1976

R.R. 1, Limehouse

Garfield Brown, Esq., Regional Clerk, Regional Municipality of Halton,

Dear Sir.

I live on the north side of Halton Road 20 between Esquesing Township sixth line and the Village of Limehouse. The purpose of

this letter is to inform you and the members of the Regional Municipality of the grave concern felt by myself and my family and neighbors following an incident on Thursday, September 14 last: when a young girl of 17 was hurled from her bicycle and slightly injured by a speeding vehicle at 4.30 p.m. in front of my residence.

The incident was prompty reported to the police in Georgetown, whom I understand are investigating.

This accident is, however, the culmination of a series of "near misses" experienced by local residents and their children, particularly over recent months. Because of our concern for the safety of pedestrian and cyclists on this stretch of raod, a petition addressed to you as Regional Clerk is presently being circulated in the Limehouse area and you may be interested to see the draft copy of it which is enclosed. The final signed copy will be forwarded shortly.

1. In the 14 months that I and my family have lived on Halton Road 20, there appears

to have been an increase in the number of trucks and cars using it. There are noticeably more speeding vehicles than a year ago and vehicles travelling at estimated speeds of 50 - 60 m.p.h. (in the 30 m.p.h. zone) are a common daily occurrence. Motor vehicles travelling at the legal speed limit are very few and far between.

2. My children and those of many of my neighbors have no option but to walk to Limehouse Public School or to the sixth Line to catch school buses each day.

3. The hard shoulder, which is almost non-existent in places, is very narrow at best and affords totally inadequate protection to pedestrians and cyclists who use

4. Provision of cautionary signs and/or more speed limit signs might be effective to some extent, but I would strongly recommend that a more frequent police presence in the form of radar traps and/or more frequent surveillance would be the most effective and prompt deterrent.

In conclusion, I would stress that it is likely to be only a matter of time before a further accident occurs if the speeding is not curtailed and I and my neighbors are fearful that next time someone (most likely a child) will be seriously injured or even killed.

Please, therefore, bring this matter to the attention of the appropriate public authority so that urgent and immediate steps are taken before lives are lost.

> Yours truly David L. Mullins.

Parking in No Parking zone

Acton, Ont. Sept. 24, 1976

The Acton Free Press, Willow St., Acton, Ont.

Dear Sir:

For several years now the lack of available parking spaces in the downtown business section has created controversy. And, for several years, nothing has been resolved but to investigate the situation further. The controversy continues.

Except for one businessman, that is. Judging by the fact one merchant's vehicle sits parked for hours without moving, in front of his store, he has taken the matter

into his own hands. It stands to reason that, were there sufficient parking spaces, this vehicle would not have to park illegally for such lengthy periods every day.

Since spaces are limited, perhaps this policy of parking in no parking zones without consequence should be extended to all shoppers in many of these presently banned areas. Most customers do not spend four hours in downtown Acton. Think of the potential customers these newly created areas might attract. Who knows how many people might be tempted to refrain from spending elsewhere, if he parking areas were replaced with restricted areas.

Just another ridiculous suggestion to add

this beautiful picture entered in the Free Press photography contest at the fall fair. Murray Smith took the picture, which would make a perfect calendar illustration.

a city in Germany, circa 1950, that has been badly bombed, and is rebuilding. Beautiful new buildings rising right next to deadly, three-storey slums, with winos hanging out the windows.

Last time I was there was in the spring of 1942, on my way overseas, and Halifax was real crud then. Cold, wet, dismal, blackout, poor food. England looked like paradise after war-time Halifax. Now it's a swinging, lively city.

Had a fine trip on the Bluenose II, all sails set, spanking along in the sunshine. Don't miss this, if you're there. Watched in fascination as a prominent western editor fell asleep, not once, but three times, during a speech by Joe Clark, a potential prime minister.

Humored an eastern editor who, armed with a credit card from the Grand Trunk Railway, personally signed by Sir John McDonald, thought he could finance a trip for several of us to Paraguay.

Listened to a number of editors of my vintage tell me they're rich, retired and work one day a week, "just to keep my hand in." Which, of course, means interfering with their sons, or daughters, who are trying to pay off the old man the tremendous sum he wanted for the

Gave sage advice and a bottle of rum to a young woman called Alic B. Toklas, who assured me she had quit running around with Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway and Scott Fitzgerald and all those rotters.

And then, of course, we've had The Boys, as they are now called. The Boys are the two grandsons. When they are here, it takes four adults full time to keep things even minimally sane. One is at the hell-onwheels stage. The other is at the crawling, "if you can't eat it pull it over on your

. And every time our daughter leaves, with The Boys, we are cleaned out. She goes away with a big, green garbage bag full of steaks, chicken, pork chops, a box full of canned goods, and a pillow case stuffed with new clothes for The Boys and herself. Next morning, we have to go shopping to get enough grub for our own breakfast.

Then there's been the golf. No matter what she does, my wife is an enthusiast. She believes that nothing succeeds like excess. So we've played golf every day. She is really a rotten player, because she reads books about golf and practices her swing. I am just ordinary rotten.

I'm afraid we're going to be thrown out of the golf club. If anyone had tried to tell me that my sweet, shy bride of a few years ago would come out with the language she uses on the golf course, I'd have said: "Sir, pistols at dawn, or nine irons at nine. Take your pick."

I try to help, in a gentle, sincere sort of way. When she flubs a shot, I merely point out that her grip was slack, her stance sloppy, her backswing too fast, and her head went up like a toilet seat, and she screams at me, right across the fairway.

I heard one elderly lady golfer saying to her husband, quite concerned: "Mark my words, she's going to kill him. Why do you think she takes her seven iron home every day, after they play? I hear he's well insured."

All in all, it was a pretty fair summer. I

to those already discussed over the years, . none of which has brought about action.

Sincerely,

C. Moore

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press October 4, 1956

Rebuilding the century-old rear wing of Acton public school, charred and blackened Tuesday noon when fire ate its way through seven rooms in two storeys, seems unlikely this week as Board officials await a report from the Ontario Fire Marshall's office which is scheduled to investigate the ruins today. A board member said yesterday following a meeting Tuesday afternoon that Inspector L. L. Skuce doubted very strongly if the Department of Education would permit repair and re-occupation of the old

Mrs. Margaret Wallis of Acton was hospitalized Monday evening following a two-car accident about two miles north of Milton on Highway 25, suffering a suspected chest injury, fractured ribs and head and hand lacerations. Her car had been in collision with another car driven by Robert Kerr of Main St., Milton.

Acton firemen were called late Saturday night to the farm home of H. Bessem, on the town line north-east of Crewson's Corners, when an oil stove became overheated and set fire to the wall and ceiling near the unit.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, September 23, 1926

Another gratifying success has attended Acton Fall Fair. This is the usual experience. Strange as it may seem, despite the fact that the dates have for years fallen upon the autumn equinox, when weather disturbances are expected, almost invariably the weather has been favourable.

The display in the show building had numerous attractive features. The exhibits of flowers and culinary preparations and the ladies' work departments, were unusually good.

There was a magnificent showing of horses yesterday and the entries for cattle, sheep and pigs were large. The exhibit of poultry commanded the attention of poultry raisers and fanciers during all the day. The improved entrances to the park and exhibition grounds and buildings were very

favourably commented upon. The facility of ingress and egress, without the usual dangers incident to crowing was at once manifest. Mr. John M. Warren, a former esteemed resident of Acton, figured quite prominently at the laying of the corner stone

by His Honor Lieutenant-Governor Cockshutt, of the new York Township High School on Vaughan road. At a special children's service Sunday, at St. Alban's Church, prizes were awarded to Jimmie Jones, Herbert Hinton, Joan

Beardmore, Blanche Smith, Ester Taylor, Phyllis Mackie, Lillian Perry, Lona Waterhouse and Olive Rooks. C. K. Browne, late manager of Acton Co-Operative Store has opened a new company

of Acton Produce and Grocery. Miss Madge Chapman has succeeded Mr. Browne as Manager of the Co-Operative Store.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday. September 28, 1876

The Township of Esquesing Agricultural, Society's ploughing match will come off on . the 20th of October.

The attention of the Esquesing Council is respectfully directed to the bad state of the crossroad leading from Speyside to the 6th line. The culverts and bridges are sadly in need of a thorough overhauling. Indeed it is said that this is the worst piece of road in the township-and that is saying a good deal. The council meets on Friday of next week, and our Speyside friends should make a special appeal to have the road "fixed".

Village Council meets on Saturday

Evening. Mr. Duncan Morrison and his wife, of Nassagaweya, returned from their trip to the Lower Provinces on Friday. They were away for six weeks, and expressed themselves as highly satisfied with their jour-

There will be a social at Mr. P. S. Armstrong's on Friday evening, in behalf of the building fund of the new Congregational Church, to which the general public are invited. The damage to the property of Mr. Jos.

Fearnley, caused by the recent fire in his bush which was started on the adjoining farm of Mr. Thos. Davidson, was left for settlement by arbitration. The arbitrators have assessed the damages at \$150 and awarded that against Mr. Davidson, with costs \$13.50.

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