Free Press / Editorial Page

1977 — lucky sevens?

Welcome 1977. . . and may those two sevens be lucky for us all.

Good fortune is easiest to taken when it comes in small doses.

Health, good friends, happy evenings, satisfying jobs done, holidays to remember...all better than winning a lottery.

Anyway, believe it or not, a person is twice as likely to be hit by lightning as to win a million dollars in the lottery. And we didn't think we'd ever be hit by lightning, dia we? But we all thought we might suddenly make a big killing in one of the lotteries. . .

The year 1977 is the year of the snake, according to the Chinese. It's an omen of economic prosperity, with wealth and good fortune throughout the world.

To them, that prediction has nothing to do with those two lucky sevens.

The legend has it that when Buddha lay dying, his human and animal followers came to his deathbed. There were twelve animals in all who came. (The cat did not come - it was a disbeliever!) To thank them, Buddha named the years of the calendar after them.

People born this year or in any other year of the snake are said to be rich, wise and able to find money whenever they need it. They are supposed to be jealous, vindictive and passionate.

Superstitions are enjoyable, but good fortune is usually what we make of things ourselves.

What will it bring?

The new calendars are up. . . clean, neat and full of promise.

What will the new year bring for Acton?

The committee considering Acton's present status wants to hear from the people who can add to their discussions on regional government.

They don't need elaborate or long communications. Jot down a few notes. Their address is Box 741 at the Acton Free Press.

This is one way people can influence the future this new year.

It's a good time this year to think again about our government. Halton Hills councillors want to hear from their constituents.

There is a new council. Maybe this year more people who are interested in issues will go east a few miles and attend some of the council meetings. That is where people with concerns may see the other -de of the story, the problems, and the reason their complaints cannot be dealt with via a snap decision.

Although some people in Acton and district are concerned about politics, apathy seems a pretty popular attitude.

Yet people expect "they" will do things for us-the councillors, the town workmen, the police, the firefighters, the recreation department, the teachers.

As we grow farther from local government in Acton, this attitude is more prevalent.

Many things cannot be done because of the cost. It isn't "they" who pay for these things, it's us.

As for all of Canada, the issue of separatism will be a big one again this year. It seems another apt time to advocate the teaching of French in schools from early grades. The learning of another language adds to mental prowess, as well as giving skill in that particular tongue. It's a way of learning that a young child's brain is easily able to achieve.

No reason why the next generations should always have to turn the boxes around to read the directions in English on the other

Of this and that

More luck...people here are apparently lucky the swine flu clinic in town was cancelled before it began. Suspicion that the inoculation could cause paralysis has made the whole project seem a fiasco. Meanwhile, people keep getting the flu!

Although the new illuminated street signs call Bower Ave. "Bower St." the old original sign at the corner of Bower and Alice records "Bower Ave." as we know

Water at one corner of Grenadier pond in Toronto is kept open for the ... flocks of ducks which winter there. Although poles indicate open water, the skaters last weekend were whizzing along quite close to

the open water. Many people had gathered along the bank to enjoy feeding the birds, as they do each winter there.

It's encouraging to see daily newspapers carrying news about Acton that isn't bad news. The Star reported on Mrs. Isabel Watson's retirement from the library after such a long career, and the Hamilton Spectator this week pays heed to our concerns about the effects of regional government.

It seems that the grosbeaks haven't come this far south yet in any great numbers. They are usually here by this time of year.



PICTURE FROM the past. . . Acton Baseball Club, champions of the Halton Wellington League in the season of 1914. Top row left to right S. Dunn c.f.; F. Hildenbrand 1 b.; J. Clark captain and 1 b.; D. Folster c.; Mac Smith s.s.; lower row left to right F. A. McLean manager and 3 b.; A. F. Allan I.f.; C. Leishman 2 b.; S. Edmonds p.; F. Williams r.f.



OFF INTO THE SUNSET. . . tobogganers consider one last run at Sir Donald Mann park before the sun

sets. It has been a popular spot for winter sports during the Christmas holidays.



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

Could you write a pungent telling essay on The Human Spirit in the new year?

No? Well, that's what my senior students tell me, too. But I know they are wrong, and I think you are wrong also. I'll bet you could write a dandy, especially if you have lived a lot.

I gave my students instructions for an essay, and most of them went into a state of mild shock. They shouldn't have, They are dealing with the human spirit, their own and others, every minute of their young lives.

However, students, like most of us. prefer things to be spelled out. But how can you spell out the human spirit?

You can't touch it, taste it, smell it, weigh or measure it. You can't peer through someone's navel and shout "Tally-ho! There it is! Your spirit!"

From the beginnings of thought, our great writers and thinkers have explored the human creature in an effort to pin down this clusive thing.

Some philosophers have believed they had put their finger on the slippery little devilonly to find that it has squirted away.

Cleries are more apt to call it the soul Psychologists pin nasty names like id and ego and libido on various aspects of it.

Writers give examples of it. Artists try to depict its highest aspirations.

The human spirit exists in all of us. II, along with the power to reason, is what raises us above the level of the beasts. Its presence is allied to all that is good and great in human kind: loyalTty, integ-

rity, compassion, honor, courage, dignity. Its absence represents all that is bad in the human race: greed, cruelty, prejudice, indifference, treachery.

Given the right fertilizer, the human spirit reaches out to other human spirits, and mankind moves another inch toward the stars.

Without proper nourishment, the human spirit shrivels or warps, turns in on itself, rots, and spreads like a cancer.

In certain periods, the undernourished spirit produces the great psychopaths like Attila the Hun, Napoleon, Hitler, and we are led into darkness.

But after each of these sombre intervals, the resurgent human spirit roars back, fanning the embers into a blaze of glory, and once more man is on the march.

This is all very inspiring, I'm sure, but it's pretty abstract, and I prefer the concrete. Let's see if we can find some examples of the human spirit in action.

When a two-year-old child, normally good and obedient, sticks out his lip and flatly refuses to do something reasonable. and defies threats of spankings, he is not just being stubborn. He is exhibiting, to the world, his sense of self, of independence. That is the human spirit.

When an 80 year old man, or woman, prefers to pig it alone in poverty and discomfort, rather than be shuttled off to a cosy senior citizens' home, he or she is doing the same.

When a man or woman has enough guts to say "No!" at a time when all about are saying "Yes!" that's the human spirit at

But let's get down to an example we can all understand. When a man gets up after his old lady has knocked him down five times, and advances on her, arms out-

stretched, and says: "Darling, let me explain just once more," that is the human spirit at its best.

Don't get this human spirit thing all mixed up with sentimentality: the cooling of a baby, which might be just a gas pain. the radiant smile of a bride, which might be just vanity. Or gloating. No, let's keep it on a high plain.

Here are the instructions I gave my students. See how they grab you.

"This essay is to be an examination of the human spirit (soul, self) as it acts and reacts under stress, in inter-play with other human spirits, in conflict with society.

"The essay should reveal something of what the student has learned this year from exposure to the ideas of first-class writers concerning the human spirit.

"Ideas expressed should not be merely emotional claptrap or mystic foofawraw. Nor should they be a mere recording of examples of the human spirit in action, taken from the books read. They should rather represent the student's own human spirit reacting to the stimulus of what has been read and pondered.

"Any reasonable - and even some unreasonable -- approaches to the topic will be encouraged.

"Students may choose one of the following exhortations from their glorious leader:

"Good Luck"

"Eat Your Heart Out."

Aren't you glad you don't take English from me?

Our readers write

Open letter to Premier

R.R. 2, Conn. Ont. December 27, 1976 An open letter to Hon. Wm. G.

Davis Premier of Ontario

On the 16th of Dec. a Brantford FM radio station CKPC carried a telephone interview between myself and the Minister of Energy Hon. Dennis Timbrell concerning the proposed Bradley-Millon 500Kv corridor.

On that program I voiced what I consider to be very legitimate concerns for the health and safety of myself

and my three small children. These concerns are greatly increased because Ontario Hydro is still insisting on crossing our land from corner to corner.

Mr. Timbrell however called me "highly irresponsible" for being worried about my future and that of my family.

Has the time finally arrived when a member of your Cabinet can ridicule honest fears by Ontario citizens, especially when he cannot

prove these fears are unfounded? Do you as Premier think it

is proper for a Minister of the

Crown to call a citizen irresponsible" simply because he or she voices concern for the future? I would appreciate an early

reply to my letter as I do NOT think Mr. Timbrell has any right to talk like this, especially since the facts do not support his statement!

> A very worried Mother Theresa Manion

Book in library

Frog imbedded in log "Stranger than Science"

The item in the 100 Year ago column recently brought national recognition to Acton in the book Stranger than Science, which is in Acton high school library. Frank Edwards wrote the book which was published in 1959 originally. Under its chapter heading Living Fossils it read:

"Living creatures embedded in solid stone: Science says it can't happen . . . but the evidence indicates that it does . . . and more frequently than most people are

The author goes on to tell several tales of worms, beetles and frogs found inside rock. Then he goes on to say:

"The living fossils turn up in the oddest places. For instance—the Brown and Hall Sawmill at Acton, Ontario, was sawing up a huge pine log in October, 1893. The outside slabs had been removed and the next slice of the huge circle-saw exposed a dark spot on the wood. The workmen stopped the saw lest the dark spot turn out to be some piece of metal embedded in the wood-and ruinous to costly saw blades. But instead of metal, they had merely taken a thin slice off the outside of a four-inch cavity, from which the head of a live toad now emerged, a toad that had barely escaped being cut in two by the sawteeth. The cavity in which

the creature had been trapped was perfeetly smooth and almost spherical in shape, as though the toad had been scrambling in it. The tree itself was about 200 years old, and that particular section was some sixty feet above the ground. Before the saw finally freed it, the toad had been surrounded by solid wood about thirty inches thick." .

"There are many records of living toads cropping out in strange places, including some which may have been embedded in concrete, but many of these instances are subject to question."

"Well documented-and baffling-is the case of the giant blocks of granite removed from the underwater footing of the docks at George's Basin in Liverpool in 1829. One of the blocks had to be cut up to make new steps, and the cutting disclosed a small toad which was liberated by enlarging the hole around it."

"The creature lived for a few hours, during which time it tried feebly to rise a few times before it finally sank down to rise no more. The British scientists who examined the toad and the tomb could only shake their heads. There was the evidence, but it clashed with dogma; so it had to be shrugged off-and it was."

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Free Press of Thursday, January 3, 1957

It was a weekend of contrasts for Acton firemen. While most of the town slept, they were fighting two fires all night long for two nights in succession. From ley cold of the street, they plundged into the holocaust of smoke and flames in their attempts, not only to extinguish the raging flames, but to save nearby buildings.

After hours of practice, they were faced with both their trucks out of order in one night. In their determined effort not to leave Acton unprotected, they encountered the most marked contrast of all when they went at 2 o'clock in the morning to Georgetown to arrange to borrow a pumper. From their garage beside the town hall, where they had been laying their ice stiffened coats and waterlogged dirty hose in the space available around the fire truck and receiving warmth from a space heater. they went to the modern, efficient Georgetown fire hall. The next afternoon, they were called to assist in the saving of a house at Eden Mills. Then, late Sunday evening the siren sounded again. Businesses and apartments on Mill St., were ablaze, and firemen were up all night for the second night in a row.

The next evening-New Year's Evethere was more contrast. While most people were gaily celebrating the arrival of 1957, most of the firemen were sound asleep-

exhausted.

Ten people were homeless and three businesses were evicted when flames ripped through the Barr building on Mill and Elgin St., causing an estimated \$33,000 loss, during the year's worst storm early Monday morning. .

50 years ago

Taken from the Issue of The Free Press of Thursday, January 6, 1927

The annual meeting of the Acton Fall Fair will be held in the Council Chamber. Acton, on Wednesday, January 19th, commencing at 2.30 o'clock. The annual report will be presented, officers and directors will be elected, and other matters of business will be discussed. All members

should make an effort to attend. Reeve Mason has workmen engaged in excavating for a basement under his knitting mill on Willow Street. This will give a large area of additional space, which will be well-lighted and well-drained This spendid business is growing, and its development will mean additional building in the near future.

Do not get discouraged if you make and break your good resolutions. They are in reality inspirations of the best there is in you. People who do not make and break good resolutions are usually, very fond of themselves and never reach the limit of their ability. "She tried and failed, and tried again and failed, and one day discovered that her failures weresuccess."

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Free Press of Thursday, December 28, 1876

Don't forget to deposit your vote next Monday. Nominated for reeve are Dr.-McGarvin and John Second; for councillors are Dr. McGarvin andreeve are Dr. McGarvin and John Second: for councillors D. D. Christie, C.S. Smith, H.J. Hall, Eli Snyder, James Mathews, Edward Nicklin,

James Ryder, and D. Henderson. A soiree and literary entertainment is announced to be held in the Temperance Hall, under the auspices of the Acton Sons of Temperance, on New Year's Day.

Particulars are given in posters. The entertainment on behalf of the English Church Sabbath School, on Christmas Day, was quite successful and enjoyable, Proceeds \$34.

The Milton Champion argues in favor of re-establishing the High School in that town. It was started in 1856 and closed a few years ago. If Christmas Day on Monday be. A great winter that year you'll see. It is understood there is a petition to have a third tavern in this village. . We trust our readers will accept this

Christmas half-sheet (a two page paper) with as good a grace as they are able to assume. Printers, you know, require an occasional holiday as well as the rest of mankind.

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