

Free Press Editorial Page

Rinks when holidays over

It seems unfortunate that the outdoor ice rinks weren't made in time for the Christmas holidays this year. They were cleared and flooded in good time last year, and they were well used during the school holidays.

However, this year the recreation budget was spent, so the rinks weren't made.

Until January, that is. What a difference a day makes! The day that took the budget from 1976 to 1977 made a lot of difference to the kids.

By January 1, there was money again, and the work began that very week. When the children were back in school.

However, since the men of the works department who do the work on the rinks continue to be paid despite the bookkeeping barrier, it is hard to see why the rinks could not be made sooner. Couldn't they have had priority over illuminated street sign installation?

How about it, treasury department?

An imbalance of ice

In light of the works budget woes this year, we might like to suggest a few solutions. As everybody knows, the folks at the works department are having a hard time making ends of their budget meet, and cited this as the reason for the late appearance of the outdoor rinks. They also, however, have found that snow and ice removal costs have risen dramatically as a result of a cold and snowy November.

This is, obviously a very pressing problem, since an icy road can be quite dangerous and an iceless skating rink is virtually useless.

If the problems were too little ice or too much ice, then the situation would be hopeless, but what we have here is only an imbalance in the amount of ice laying around in different areas. All one has to do is move the ice from the street to the rink, and all parties are happy.

Simply moving the ice from one place to another is surely far cheaper than actually making the ice vanish, an act which requires considerable transmutation of matter into energy, and which only God can do really well anyway.

If tame but very large dogs were hooked up to the ice which covers our streets, they could drag it off to more suitable places: i.e. the ice

rinks, for the price of only a few cans of Alpo, while the men who would normally have spent their time trying to make the roads passable could have a day off.

There is another way to end this problem, one which is less far-fetched. In these days of growing interest in the occult, ESP, and other powers of the mind, nobody can safely ignore the possibility of using witchcraft. Magic can be a powerful agent in snow removal, as well as coming in handy in sports when the home team is losing. Imagine 39 black-robed figures chanting around an open fire and sacrificing cod-fish all on Main St. The effect would be awesome.

Either one of these two methods could catapult Acton into the public eye: we would be world renowned for our innovative and progressive techniques; people would come from all over the world to see us; social planners would come and study us; we could even set up a University dedicated to the removal of snow. Acton would be famous.

These are but two humble suggestions to end a slippery problem. We are sure that people will recognize the merit in them, and put them into action immediately.

John Bottomley

Dissatisfaction—action?

Acton begins its fourth year now as a part of Halton Hills. Our council and all our local boards and committees were dissolved three years ago, in favor of the new system of government which was to bring efficiency and expertise.

Dissatisfaction abounded from the first.

People in Acton were resentful at losing their identity and our own local government, which had been working quite well, thank you.

People have talked from the

beginning about forming some kind of group to convey our protest. Now it has been done. A group of people got together and they are preparing a report.

They want to hear from other people, and they have listed people to phone or write to, if you can add something to their discussions.

The names and numbers are in the paper today. Please contact these people who banded together for this common concern, and call themselves Actonians for Action.

Of this and that

Been complaining about regional government? Don't miss the phone numbers in today's paper. The committee which formed itself to study Acton's problems wants to hear from you. Write or phone them.

a reader phoned up asking us to mention drivers who speed and pass despite the bad weather conditions. He was concerned about motorists who pass on icy roads and kick up snow, adding to the problems of others. Certainly the roads on Monday and Tuesday deserved a lot of respect and caution.

After Monday's big snow storm,



Happiness is a friend



Winter's harsh effects are seen in trees.



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

THERE WAS a grand foafawraw in Ontario recently when the Toronto Globe and Mail, which rather grandly calls itself "Canada's National Newspaper," and is nothing of the sort, perpetrated a piece of journalism that was irresponsible, to say the least, and yellow, to say the truth.

It published a list of more than 800 Ontario doctors who had billed the provincial health plan for more than \$100,000 in the past year.

What's wrong with that? Shouldn't these money-grubbing medics be exposed? Wasn't the Globe doing a public service. Answer: No.

The Globe was doing what it professes to despise in some of our racier newspapers: acting in collusion with some pretty dubious politicians to titillate the public with half-truths and embarrass what to me is still a noble and honorable profession. The action was worthy of some of the muckier British tabloids.

What surprised me was the reaction of the public. Setting aside the doctors and their well-heeled medical association, which was naturally outraged, most of the letters to the editor attacked the newspaper for its action.

Whatever demurrers advanced by its defendants after the event, the fact was that the news was slanted, through omission. The doctors named were presented, through innuendo, as money-grubbers, with one hand on a scalpel and the other in the government's (read taxpayer's) hip pocket.

Publication of the names and addresses of those doctors who had billed the health plan for more than a hundred grand was almost a blanket indictment of them.

What the newspaper did not stress was that the figures were for gross, not net income, the net income was a long, long way below the published figures.

I don't hold any brief for doctors. In general, they give me a pain in the arm. There is a certain pomposity, sometimes arrogance, that is donned along with the letters M.D. after the name. This is not helped any by the attitude of so many of their patients—that the doctor always knows best, that the doctor is a special sort of human being, that the patient should practically tug his forelock when addressing his doctor.

It's a fairly short step from there to the point where quite a few members of the profession begin to feel that they are little tin gods. This irks me. I've met too many little tin gods with clay feet to be impressed by the title "Doctor."

There's something archaic, but very attractive about that title. Bachelors of Art don't go around calling themselves Bachelor Jim Smith. Masters of Art don't insist that you address them as Master. Same with engineers.

But when a guy gets a chance to put Doctor before his name, whether his degree is in philosophy, theology or chiropractic, there is no way you are going to stop him from using it.

My personal biases about doctors aside, I have nothing but contempt for those who suggested, every so subtly, that the profession is out to gouge the public ruthlessly.

Sure, doctors make a lot of money, most of them. But I don't envy them. I wouldn't be a doctor for three times the average salary in the medical profession.

Sure, there are a few rotten apples in the barrel, to whom the Hippocratic oath is merely a licence to get rich. Couldn't the same be said about any other barrel, whether it contains union members, merchants, politicians, or preachers. And as

for big business, the doctors are almost saintly when it comes to a comparison of ethics.

Let's look at the facts. A doctor works like a dog to get through medical school. He doesn't really begin to make any money until he is nearing 30, a time when most men are well settled in their fields.

By the time he has established a practice, he is usually well in debt. If his practice flourishes, he works like a dog for 20 or 30 years. During this period, he is making a good income. But his family life, his social life and his cultural life suffer deeply. He works hours that would have a union leader screaming bloody murder. His scanty leisure time is constantly interrupted. The only pension he can look for-

ward to is what he can save or invest for himself.

About the time most men are slowing down or looking forward to retirement, the doctor is burned out. How many old doctors do you know?

And all along the way he is dealing constantly with pain and misery and fear among his patients. No bed of roses, that. Not to mention all the neurotic women and hypochondriacal men he must suffer patiently.

There are a few crooks and a few quacks, but every doctor I've ever had dealings with was a credit to the profession. Let's have fair play for our doctors, as well as fair pay.

OUR READERS WRITE:

On plant closing

Regarding Mr. Ernie Parker's comment on the closure of United Car's plant Dec. 31 '76.

Some of the reasons I have no comments but the one that seemed ridiculous was "The last straw" I don't think Mr. Parker knows the meaning of union. Union means all members not just some.

The few incidents that we did not agree on, were definitely not reasons for the closing of the plant. It is said that Mr. Parker

only had praise for the people that had worked for quite a few years because I feel everyone did their best old and newer employees alike.

I sure hope everyone will find new employment in some other industry where there is a better atmosphere between union and management because it does exist in most factories.

Rochele Waterhouse,
20 John St.,
Milton, Ont.

Drivers responsible

comes into collision with the parked vehicle, or in negotiating around a vehicle parked on a hill or bend, very often on snow or ice covered roads, some responsibility should be placed on the driver or owner of the parked vehicle.

Vehicles are also often left parked on, or over the brow of a hill, giving moving vehicles little or no chance to either take the wrong side of the road, and possibly hit an oncoming vehicle, or hit the parked vehicle.

As the Act now stands, the driver of the moving vehicle is charged as he or she is supposed to be in control of his or her vehicle at all times, but often the driver of the moving vehicle is driving with all due care and attention until he is confronted with some idiot parked just over the brow of a hill or round a bend.

William A. Johnson
R.R. 2, Rockwood.

Will shock a horse

Dear Sir:

Here is some interesting information that was passed on to us from a safety engineer: "Danger to horses and riders near high voltage electrical lines. Do not ride or drive horses near or under the ultra high voltage electrical lines planned for this area. Any metallic items in tack (bits, buckles, etc.) will pick up an electrical shock. This in turn will cause erratic unpredictable action by the horse. The voltage buildup in the ground near lines may also cause a current to flow between the front and rear legs of a horse, or between a rider and horse when mounting or handling a horse, or between horses as they touch each other. Riders should not allow their horses to touch any ungrounded metallic objects such as a car, machine or fence. Under a set of un-

favorable conditions a horse could become electrocuted."

The mental pictures this little goodie aroused are wild. Very few riders consider any electrical danger from high voltage wires.

Ontario Hydro feels there will be no danger to the rider if he places insulation under the saddle.

Mr. Inks, an engineer with Ontario Hydro, explained to us that to enable the horse to prevent an induced charge from building up, you are to spray the horse's hooves with special spray—provided by Hydro.

Pat Wilson,
Theresa Manion,
Conn., Ontario

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue
of the Free Press, Thursday,
January 10, 1957

In his apartment above the post office, Cam Leishman heard his name called on a 40 per cent coupon at the Saturday afternoon Appreciation Day draw. He raced downstairs and through the crowd in the required two minutes to claim his \$104. First name called was that of Mrs. S. Brunelle—also with a 40 per cent coupon. She was not there and the draw was made again.

The Robert Little school is the name now given to the present public school. It was decided at a meeting of the public school board last week. Assistant principal W. D. E. Smith was officially appointed principal of the M.Z. Bennet school, which is presently under construction. Colin MacColl was appointed caretaker of the new school. Mr. and Mrs. Roy Ballentine and Mrs. and Mrs. Ross Ballentine and Bobby spent New Year's day at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Dearing, Orton, Ontario.

Work on the Bank of Montreal is proceeding steadily. Hidden under the canvas cover, the foundation is almost complete—a good start for the modern building underway.

After a halt for Christmas and New Year's, night school classes were resumed at the high school this week. Classes are being held Monday and Tuesday evening with full enrolment.

Work progresses speedily at the new M.Z. Bennet school. The roof is currently being tarred.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of
the Free Press of Thursday,
January 13, 1927

John D. Ronald, the manufacturer of the first steam fire engine in Canada, died in Hamilton on Sunday. Mr. Ronald was the maker of Acton's steam fire engine and was here personally when it was demonstrated about 35 years ago. It was stationed at the edge of Henderson's pond and streams were thrown over the Storey Glove factory with ease. Mr. Storey was reeve at the time. The engine was purchased and put into commission. It never failed in doing good service at any fire in town, and is still effective. This was shown particularly during the big fire at the tanneries in August 1924, when its streams were a valuable adjunct to the waterworks and the Beardmore systems.

A number of young people of the town held a very enjoyable farewell dance in the Town Hall on the eve of the departure of Messrs. Lloyd Forbes and Aubrey Allen for Detroit.

The open air rink at Rockwood is well patronized. The promoters and the caretaker are doing all they can for the benefit of those who come from the village and the countryside.

The icemen are busy again. Sleighing parties are popular just now. There is some fine cordwood coming into town these days.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of
the Free Press of Thursday,
January 11, 1877

England looks to Canada for a supply of good beef, and the farmers of this country will be wise to preserve their best young cattle, instead of knocking calves on the head to get rid of them. Beef will be a fine emigration agent yet.

Charles Tate, a temperance hotel keeper, in the township of East Garafraxa, has been committed to the Guelph jail for 30 days with hard labour for selling liquor without a licence.

The Acton Public School opened on Monday with an attendance of 148. In the first department, 50; 2nd, 40; 3rd, 58.

From a letter to the Editor: "Just to think of it! The Editor of a 10th class paper attempting to dictate to the intelligent electors of Esqueping who they shall, and shall not, elect to fill their places of trust."

Thirteen births, five deaths, and two marriages, were registered by the Acton Division Registrar for the six months ending 31st December. How remarkably few marriages have occurred during the past year. Is it because it was leap year?

I wish that farmers would use more milk and cream on their tables than they do, more fruit and less meat, more graham and less fine flour. What is better for breakfast than graham mush, which is made by stirring the meal in water boiling hard.

The new Central School in Guelph will be formally opened on Monday next.

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PHONE 853-2010

Business and Editorial Office



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