

Free Press Editorial Page

Notes on a long winter

Those snowstorms could be Mother Nature's way of telling everyone she is still in charge.

The public relations department of the Niagara Parks Commission is rushing out news releases to newspapers this week. "If you've never seen Niagara Falls in winter, this is definitely the year to do so," says the letter. The worst winter of the century has produced the most beautiful scenery of the century there. A significant portion of the face of the American falls is frozen solid. The swirling freezing mist has created a build-up of ice on the rocks at the base of the American falls that is utterly fantastic - nearly 100 feet thick. Even large portions of the turbulent rapids above the mighty Canadian Horseshoe Falls are frozen over. The famous ice bridge is well-formed and extends from the base of the Horseshoe Falls to the Whirlpool Rapids bridge - a distance of two miles.

The Huron Expositor, the weekly newspaper from Seaford, last week carried dramatic pictures of the big snowstorm and several stories. The town was cut off for five days. Emergency calls, fires, chickens without feed, huge snowbanks, closed factories and schools, strangers kept overnight... all are recounted. "Our nicely regulated lives are out of kilter for a few days," writes the editor. Old-timers up there agree it's the worst winter ever. With no mail and nothing much happening, the staff decided they'd better station the mayor on the main street, ready to present a snowball trophy to the first car to make it into town! Snow had fallen there then for 51 straight days. The Ridgeway Dominion also carries tales of the worst storm in decades. The weekly newspaper is the only medium to report on snow conditions in Ontario's towns. Certainly they don't get the coverage Buffalo does, with TV crews right there and a ready and waiting audience of Canadians.

A jester of protest

We have done a good deal of thinking and we have come to the conclusion that cold weather is responsible for the lower temperatures this winter.

It was originally thought that native persons were at the root of the falling mercury as a ploy to drive us out of the land, but this was rejected because the Indians said they didn't do it.

Incidentally, we have spoken with God, and he has agreed that the cold weather should go away sometime. When pressed, he mentioned spring.

Some of the other problems whose cause is believed to be cold weather are snow, population increases, and shorter days. The cold

seems to shrink the actual fabric of time and truncates the normal span of the hours.

Some folks tried to tell us that it was actually the low temperatures which caused the cold weather, and not vice-versa. This is pure hogwash, a clear case of putting the cart before the horse.

We are planning to circulate a petition demanding the end of cold weather in an effort to relieve the low temperatures which plague the area. Anyone interested in distributing the petition and collecting signatures can go right ahead, we won't stop them; we ourselves will not go out in this weather, in a gesture of protest.

—John Bottomley

Of this and that

It does you no good to sit up and take notice if you just keep on sitting.

Thanks to two gals, Carole-Ann Blake and Karen Vanderlaan, who drew a huge Valentine card and sent it to the whole town of Acton, via the Free Press. It is very large and dark, with fine lettering, and wouldn't show up in the paper if it

were printed. It was a sweet February 14 thought, anyway.

Last Wednesday was groundhog day. It was sunny so - believe it or not - spring is far away.

Canadians spend 1.5 hours a day working for Ottawa, and 1.33 hours a day working for provincial and local governments. That's quite a bit higher than the figures in the United States.



OLD MAN WINTER must have had a grudge against this poor truck during last week's storm. Until owners Peter and Jean Hanslip shovelled a path to the door, only the roof of the cab was visible. However, it will be a long time before the snowdrift engulfing this

vehicle is cleared away. The Hanslips moved from England on January 1. Asked about the winter they said they "have never seen anything like it". They live just east of Acton on Highway 7.



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

This week, with no great, stark theme demanding my intense and earnest attention, I thought we'd have some mid-winter musings, for a change. Show me the Canadian who can be fiery in February, and I'll show you a saint. Or a devil.

One thing I'm sure of. They're going to come with a large butterfly net one of these days, and cart my wife away.

She doesn't sleep well. Many a morning, in the pitch dark, when the boy wades through the snow with our morning paper, he looks into our brightly-lit dining room and sees this funny lady in her night-gown, sewing a fine seam at the dining room table, on her new sewing machine.

Last night, or rather at four a.m. this morning, a curious passerby might have been rather intrigued had he looked through our cellar window. There, crouched on the floor, was this peculiar woman, with a blowtorch burning brightly, in her dressing-gown and slippers. She was removing the wax from our skis. It's a good thing we don't have anything resembling a Gestapo in this country. They'd have had her in a concentration camp long ago, on general principles.

My daughter's going a bit the same way herself. After a mere 20 years of education, and only two children, she's decided to enter the real world. She's going to stop being a student and go to teachers' college. Maybe. My son-in-law, who has a measly 22 years of schooling, is no such fool. He knows that when you end your education, you run into the world's dirtiest four-letter word: "work" and he wants no part of it for a few years yet.

"A pound of coffee soon \$5? queries a newspaper headline. Who cares? There's still a lot more mileage in a pound of java than there is in a quart of good rye, at \$7.80. And nobody will force you to drink either. So we still have some freedom of choice in this country. The news story said "People will get hysterical in June, just as the Brazilian winter ends." I doubt it. And if they do, as Marie Antoinette would have said, "let 'em drink brandy." At 12 bucks a bottle.

A Toronto borough is battling to keep unrelated people from sharing a dwelling. Why? I'm not related to my wife, and we've shared the same dwelling, even the same bedroom, for many a year. What's the fuss? The only reason I can think of for the concern is that people start looking like each other if they live together too long. For some, this is a real bonus; for others a nightmare.

Rene Levesque disappointed me hugely when, after first refusing, he gave in and agreed to wear a tuxedo while addressing a bunch of American big shots in a pitch for loans for Quebec. So much for the vaunted independence of the new Quebec.

West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt says Germans are annoyed about the way they are depicted in World War II movies on British television. Tough toe nails, Helmut. How would you like to be represented? As a dedicated band of social workers. A movie about Germans in wartime without a couple of good "Schweinshunds!" in it wouldn't be worth the paper.

A couple of neat items: a judge in Brampton ordered a 20-year-old woman who was defrauding the Unemployment Insurance Commission to donate a pint of blood every six months for two years; a guy in Illinois is living with his family in a cave and his heating this winter will cost

him only \$1.29 for gas and oil for his chain saw. This is the type of stuff that restores my faith in the ingenuity of the human spirit.

The deadly dullness of Maclean's magazine underlines the reasons so many of us read Time and Newsweek, those horrible purveyors of American free enterprise, lively news stories, and excellent book and movie reviews.

The annual NHL all-star game is the least exciting sports event of the year.

British Columbia is talking about giving everyone a guaranteed wage. Why in the holy old jimpin' was I born 30 years too soon?

After spending about 20 bucks on battery boosters from the tow-truck, I installed a block heater in my new old car. Naturally and inevitably, the cold spell ended, and I don't need the thing. Another \$15 down the drain.

When the ice on my roof built up to a height of about 36 inches, I moved swiftly and got a gang in to remove it before we were plunged, willy-nilly, into the basement. They did a great job, for \$50, and threw in a bonus—half a dozen shingles removed, along with the ice.

A columnist says our government is stale and exhausted. I would have used the words Hamlet did: "Stale, flat and unprofitable." It has the same stale demands for taxes, the same flat denial of any reasonable appeal against them. And the only people who ever make a profit from dealing with it are civil servants and bureaucrats.

It hasn't been all bad this winter. There's been some great news from Florida. All those rats who leave the ice coated Canadian ship every winter to bask in the sun have been freezing their butts off this year.

So much for mid-winter mutterings.

OUR READERS WRITE:

"Home town boy" comments

February 2, 1977

The Editor, Acton Free Press, Acton, Ontario.

Dear Sir: As a regular subscriber to your newspaper, I have followed with interest, the reports on the activities of your regional government. The highly competitive election of your regional chairman was especially newsworthy and I note that, in a recent edition of your paper, you quote the new chairman as saying, "It would be inappropriate for the regional chairman to be paid a salary less than that paid to a regional councillor from the City of Mississauga." Your report goes further to state this pay to be \$21,000 a year.

To set the record straight - a regional councillor in Mississauga receives \$10,000 a year plus a further \$11,000 for being a member of council of the City of Mississauga as

well. I can assure you that with the various meetings and Committees of both councils, plus the day-to-day constituency work it is a seven day a week job. The ward that I represent (there are nine wards in Mississauga) has over 35,000 residents.

Having in mind that your new chairman intends to devote three days a week to the job, I would further advise that despite the experience and capabilities of our chairman, he finds it to be a fulltime job.

I look forward to further news items and the developments of your "Actonians for Action" Committee. Even though I've been away for some twenty years, I'm still a "home town boy."

Yours sincerely, Frank Bean, Councillor-City of Mississauga and Councillor-Regional Municipality of Peel

Too cold for the cats

The Editor, Free Press, Acton, Ont.

Dear Sir: Different ones have been asking me how I manage with my large family of kitties, in such a persistently cold winter.

I will admit it has been difficult. Only one small Persian (Coonie) of the family of fourteen, enjoys being out in the severe weather for a short period. The others find it too cold.

One bitterly cold night, I thought I had them all under cover, nice and warm in the fairly spicuous kitchen. At around three a.m. I heard a plaintive mew. I arose and opened the door immediately and there was Coonie, bedraggled and cold. He begged to

be taken up. I took him in my arms, tried to warm his stiffened toes, and prepared him a drink of milk. He recovered, but another hour would have finished him.

I remembered that Jesus had said; — "Not a sparrow falleth, without he knoweth". If I haven't accomplished much this winter, I have at least saved the lives of fourteen of His little ones. For what purpose? He alone knows.

Yours truly, Millicent Milroy.

P.S. - The original mother, was a homeless, unwanted cat who later, saved me from snake-bite, so the kitties do not owe me anything.

Calculators in Gr. 4

Dear Editor:

I was appalled and shocked to hear recently on radio station C.F.R.B. that the Peel board of education was going to allow "calculators" to be used in grade four, in their schools.

The good Lord gave us brains to think

with and use. What if He takes this power away from the human race, if we no longer need or use it?

I shudder to think of it!!

Concerned Mrs. Lillian Thomas R. R. 1, Campbellville

The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, February 8, 1967.

All but one or two members of the Acton Legion Chorallers will be attending Expo when the choir is slated to sing Sunday, July 2 and Monday, July 3. (Another visitor there the same weekend will be the Queen). Champion rural correspondent of the year, honored this Friday at the annual convention of the Ontario Weekly Newspapers Association, is Mrs. D. G. Robertson of Ospringe. Mrs. Robertson has been writing her regular column of news from her area for the Free Press for the past 33 years.

Plans for transferring about 9,000 volumes from the old library to the new building have been tentatively set. The library in the Y.M.C.A. will close Friday, February 24 and the library in the new building will open for business on Monday, March 6—about a week and a half later.

Acton O.P.P. constable Bruce McArthur lost a race to the stork in the early morning hours, Thursday. Called to take an R.R. 3 woman to Guelph General Hospital after her husband's car was ditched in a snowbank, Constable McArthur didn't make it. A premature baby was born in the back of the police cruiser at 5 a.m. on Highway 25 about three miles north of Acton. Father of two small children himself, it was the first time the constable had assisted at a birth.

Two babies were baptized at the United church Sunday morning, Catherine Alice, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Coats and Will David George, son of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Morrison.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, February 10, 1927

The annual carnival of Acton Skating rink had that co-operative spirit this year that has made so many public events in Acton successful. There were costumes of all sorts and a costumer from Toronto did quite a business renting costumes at Johnstone and Co.'s store all day. Best costumed couple were Mr. and Mrs. V. B. Rumley, D. Parker and Minnie Blair; best skating couple, Grenville Masales and Miss Nephew, J. McGregor and Pearl Richardson. Winners of the gents' race, Alf Bishop, Tom Mochrie. Other winners included Joan Beardmore, Rigby Cross, Alfred Beardmore, Doris McDonald, Kathleen Cook, Helen Ostrander, Isabel Smith, May Bruce, L. Marshall, Grace Skilling, Mrs. N. H. Garden.

After the carnival Mr. and Mrs. G. T. Beardmore were host and hostess to those who had taken part. A delightful dance was given at their home "The Beverly House". Acton now has 354 enrolled in the public school.

Drivers of autos have done more stunting on the streets the past month than the tumbling bears we used to see about the streets.

Old Bruin had no difficulty seeing his shadow on Michaelmas Day.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, February 8, 1877.

At the meeting of Esqueping township council a resolution was adopted fixing the sum to be paid for tavern licenses at \$90. It was \$65 last year.

The park lot, on the north side of the railroad track, at the head of Mill St., known as the Ismond property, has been purchased by Mr. P. S. Armstrong for \$800. It would be a good idea for the corporation now to open up Mill St. across to the third concession, as we understand from Mr. Armstrong that he is willing to give a grant for the necessary width of land for a mere nominal sum.

The escapade of Mrs. McNair has created quite a sensation in town during the past few days. Her numerous friends here were greatly surprised and pained to learn she made her escape to Detroit, leaving her affairs here in very unsatisfactory condition. We shall say nothing of the ugly rumours that are current. It is hoped they will not turn out to be true.

The Conversazione under the auspices of the ladies aid of St. Alban's church was well patronized. A novelty was labelled a "fishing pond" where, with a silver bait of five cents and larger, the fisherman threw his line and hook into the pond and drew out a prize; this amusement continued for an hour or more.



DUSTING OF fresh snow covers tree branches and transforms Willow St. into a winter wonderland.

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