

No decoration day

There will be no Decoration Day program this year.

The committee, under Jessie Coles, found interest dwindling and attendance lower the last few years.

The preparation of the parade, service, platform, sound system and purchase of geraniums all took a good deal of time and effort.

If the people of the town do not come out to participate, there is not much use continuing to prepare for them.

The tradition of having Decoration Day on the first Sunday in June began over 20 years ago, at the instigation of Lakeside chapter of the I.O.D.E.

The members had been decorating the graves of former

associates on Remembrance Day when the weather was invariably foul. Their suggestion of a spring-time event drew ready support then, from the Legion primarily and from many other organizations.

There was never a rainy Decoration Day in all the years since, but in the last few years fewer people attended.

Times change. Many are away on weekends now.

There are no fewer memories of the family members and friends who were laid to rest in Fairview and St. Joseph's cemetery, and no fewer thoughts of the old citizens in Pioneer cemetery. They just won't be expressed in the same community way this year.

Corrections, assumptions

Assumptions department: some people got the idea the town hall is unsafe. It's not. Some people have inferred the town hall is not used. In fact it is regularly used every day, with the police office and the senior citizens' drop in centre there. The upstairs is used for needed storage. As well, a washroom which can be used by the public is located off the main hall.

Corrections department: in no way did the Free Press last week mean to infer the reason the firefighters need space is because the old fire truck is housed in the meeting room. Much more garage space is needed, for another pumper and a van. The old truck is kept in the meeting room so firefighters can work on its restoration in their spare time. It's

at one end of their meeting hall. Chairs are set up around it.

When and if a second storey is added to the fire hall, the meeting room will be up there. Then more equipment can be parked below, one truck behind the other. There are three trucks there already, one in each of the three bays.

A couple of firefighters mentioned to the Free Press they thought readers unfamiliar with the fire hall would get the wrong impression. We apologize. We agree fully that the firefighters need more space.

Straighten it out department: the town hall is not the town office. The town office is in the Y building. The town hall, on Willow St., is what some newcomers call the "police office." Got it?

Of this and that

A strange jubilee observance: the federal government has for the first time removed the portrait of the Queen from the current first class letter stamp. The parliament buildings are now making the postal rounds. In Acton, a jubilee

tea is being held this afternoon (Wednesday.)

Sugar and Spice was missing from the Free Press last week. We had one comment about it, from a fan.



Aerial view shows present high school (above left) and new high school (centre) under construction on Churchill Rd. N. The impressive new building will be

ready for occupancy in the fall. Outdoor track is complete and students will also use the nearby bush and swamp for studies. Future addition could extend east.

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Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

Watching hockey playoffs lately, and discussing the brutality of the modern game with other former aficionados, I began to ponder on that subject which is of such recent concern to our society—violence.

It is certainly nothing new. History is a long and often sickening record of violence.

In the great Greek epics, treachery and murder and war and killing are celebrated. The Bible is loaded with people "smiting" each other. The Romans reveled in cruel and bloody spectacles. The Crusades of the Middle Ages, under the blessing of the Church, were sagas of loot and raping and fire and killing.

Wares and piracy and vicious

colonization occupied Renaissance man, under the guise of exploration and spreading the faith. Torture and burning at the stake were the treats in store for anyone accused of treason or heresy as State and Church struggled for supremacy in the western world.

And speaking of the West, that great American state to the south, under the various cloaks of freedom, peace and the spreading of law and order, but spurred by greed and hunger for land, practised a ferocious type of genocide on the original natives.

Then came World War I, when slaughter and mud and blood became a way of life, for years, for millions of men, in a holocaust that made a mockery of the notion that man was becoming civilized,

and paled all previous violence by comparison.

Next feature was Son of World War I. While not as devastating in the score of human life, it reached new pinnacles of perversion and horror, culminating in the unspeakable death camps of Germany, and the terror bombings of the Allies.

Things haven't improved. Cold war, with the building of vast stores of deadly and dreadful weapons. Arabs and Jews. The Congo. Ireland. Lebanon. You name it and modern man is capable of it. Hijacking, kidnapping, torture, bombings are commonplace.

What are our favorite movies? At least the ones that make money? Disaster films, the bigger the better. Air crashes, earthquakes, towering infernos. Or vicious portrayals of mad killers as in "Taxi Driver." Or seeing two humans punch each other into bloody ribbons, as in "Rocky." Or watching violence, physical and verbal, carried to the point of parody, as in "Slap Shot."

And that brings us neatly, and inevitably, back to professional hockey.

And after thinking over a few thousand years of violence, it's a Sunday School picnic, that spectacle on the ice, in my mind.

Why should I become exercised over it? The owners are interested chiefly in either a big buck or a tax writeoff. Fighting and high sticking and blood fill the arenas. So it's a free country and capitalism is the economic system.

Why should I worry about the managers and coaches encouraging blood and brutality? Those people are mere stooges for the owners. They have to fill rinks and win games, or it's "Slong, Charlie."

Why should I feel contempt for the referees when they fail to honor their hypocritical oath and turn a blind eye on some guy trying to tear out another guy's guts with the modern equivalent of a spear? They don't encourage mayhem, but they tolerate it by ignoring the rule book. If they don't turn a blind eye, they're fired. Simple.

Do the media people and the sports writers attack the viciousness in hockey? Not on your next year's contract with Hockey Night in Canada, buster. They mention it, chuckling.

Should I feel some sympathy for the players, forced into fraudulent ferocity by owners, coaches, fans? No way. I pity them for the punishment they take, but at the same time pity them for being patsies for everybody else; for being dumb, in other words. They're well paid. If they want to be actors, let them act. If they want to be thespians, let them thesp, through their missing front teeth. If they want to be goons, let them goon away, as long as they goon on each other, and not on me.

And should I feel contempt for the fans, who scream for blood, who curse colorfully the opposition when it is winning, who blaspheme bitterly their own team when it is losing? Nope. I feel no more contempt for them than I do for the Roman mob, suckered by the Caesars into going to the Games, instead of asking who is looking after the sto. e these days.

(Continued on Page 5)

The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press May 10, 1967

Replacing Const. Nick Farion, who is seriously injured from an automobile accident and is in hospital, is Const. Dennis Cernius, 28, who comes to Acton after four years with the Oakville detachment. Const. Cernius is single and a native of Hamilton.

At convocation on May 3, Acton United Church's interim minister, John A. May, received the degree of Bachelor of Divinity from Victoria College, University of Toronto. His wife and mother, Mrs. John A. May Sr. of Capreol, were guests at the ceremony in Convocation Hall.

The Department of Highways has made a start on the preparatory work for the reconstruction of Highway 25 from Acton to Ospringe. Two buildings at Ospringe, a store and a house, presently are being demolished to make way for an improved intersection.

Recreation director Howard Pearce will leave Acton on June 2 to take a new position as assistant director of recreation in the city of Kingston.

Mrs. Lois Mackenzie and Miss Margie Mackenzie are spending a few days at Expo and visiting with her brother, Rev. Aitken and family in Westmount. Margie has finished her year at Acadia University and will be working in Guelph this summer.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, May 16, 1957

Harold Reid, 15-year-old high school student, son of Rev. and Mrs. K. J. Reid, 81 Cook St., Acton, received a fractured jaw in a fall from his bicycle yesterday at noon. While riding his bicycle down Queen Street hill, the front tire struck a stone, causing the bicycle to swerve, resulting in a fall to the ground causing painful injuries to his face.

Many residents of the town and district were in attendance at the two rallies in Guelph for John Diefenbaker Monday night and Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent on Tuesday.

Walter Woodburn, treasurer of the Acton Rotary Club Easter Seal Campaign, this week reported a net total of \$980 collected with a few more donations yet to come in. Police this week noted that an out-of-town man who was observed driving at 95 miles an hour on Highway 25 recently, this week paid a \$200 fine and lost his license for six months on a charge of careless driving which resulted.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Crawford motored to Miami this week on a holiday-business trip. Mr. Crawford will be attending the Canadian Leaders' Conference for the Prudential Insurance Company of America. They are staying at the Americana Hotel in Miami beach Florida.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, May 10, 1877

Some local gate hinges will need repairing if this Sunday evening "swinging on the gate" is continued.

Acton is again clad in its verdant bloom and stands out pre-eminently as one of the handsomest villages in the province.

We are pleased to be able to announce to our readers that the managing committee of Acton Social Club and the Knights of Pythias have been able to secure the services of several ladies and gentlemen of well-known dramatic talents to undertake the representations of the persons in the drama Uncle Tom's Cabin. We are at liberty to mention the names of Mr. and Mrs. Allan Halford and their little daughter Olive of Toronto, the latter of whom renders the beautiful and saintly character of Eva. Plank culverts will be put in on both sides of the road on Church St. to prevent the earth from being washed away by freshets. Mill St. will be gravelled from Main to the station and continue as far as the means will allow this year.

On the eve of Mr. Zolman Hall's departure to Bracebridge a number of his friends assembled at the Dominion Hotel to honor him with a complimentary supper as a token of the universal esteem in which he is held in his native place. The party comprised a large number of our most prominent citizens.

The Acton Division Sons of Temperance are arranging to have a public entertainment on the 1st of July.

Letters to the editor: People power

Look—we're Acton!

Dear Editor: I just don't understand how anyone can even think of tearing down our town hall. I can remember when the old post office was torn down and how empty that street corner looked for a long time. And the little thought that was given to the demolition of the railway station. Maybe someone thought it was an eyesore. But now to think of tearing down our last historic building to put up a parking lot! By demolishing the town hall Acton will lose its identity. That hall says "look, we're Acton." Why the great urgency to tear it down? Look around, what are other com-

munities using their old town halls for? Haven't we any pride left for our town? Isn't it worth the money to fix it up? To make it a centre once again for community life?

Instead of demolishing it we should be restoring it—giving it back some of the dignity time has taken away.

Years from now we'll be sorry but it will be too late... that beautiful old building will be gone.

Yours truly,
One of many citizens who doesn't want to see our last piece of heritage destroyed.

Vaya con dios, town hall!

Dear Editor: A local storm has developed as a consequence of a proposal to bury the former town hall. That it was a seat of local government is a fact; that it no longer serves in that or any related capacity is also a fact. No one can deny that even at its "finest hour" it was not a pretentious building. In terms of architecture it lost its only claim to fame when the bell tower was mercifully removed.

That event was an indicator of things to come—the relentless ravages of time and elements on all things. Time because all things have their season and cease to be—and for any to dare to stay the inevitable is the same as prolonging the agony of the suffering ill. Elements, because sooner or later every brick in those walls must yield to the wind and the frost and the sun in like manner to Mt. Everest and others.

Beyond those remarks I am prompted to question the substance of such abstracts as heritage: tradition and culture. Somehow they have a tendency to evolve into a sort of pudding. Invariably one hears the challenge "have you no feelings of nostalgia for the old place? And in the defence that one raises to parry the thrust of the question it too often becomes the prime point while those other values sort of drift off into the fog.

So let it be with the town hall—nostalgia is the main theme—but for a very small

number of people. Some, and I include myself, have served the town from a seat in the council chamber. It was not comfortable. It was not rewarding as it now is in pay for meetings. It was not a thrill to open the door and walk over the creaking boards to enter an unimposing chamber from whence in to administer the affairs of the town. Culturally speaking I know of no events that ever left any impact on the folk of Acton which can be truly attributed to that building. True we had a nationwide dance one New Year's Eve—but it concerned only a small segment of Acton then and is forgotten by most now. The returning veterans congregated on its stage and received the thanks of the people—but that is not heritage nor culture.

No—dear editor—I think the present sentimental storm is just that. A case of "petra-philoe"—a love of old stones! I say let the building die—Let the old stones return into the dust. It will not be long until some pressing emergency will dictate that its life be ended—So be it.

The "old stories" have served a purpose; not one which will ever gain mention in a national history—but sufficient for the area in which it was intended to be the seat of government and sentinel in times of threat.

Vaya con dios old town hall! Thanks for having been a part of our lives.

C. Rognavaldson,
Another citizen of Acton.

No power like people power

This is to confirm my telephoned congratulations on your first class coverage of the situation concerning our Town Hall and the need for a concerted effort on the part of all interested citizens to save it from demolition—for ANY reason.

I am only sorry that I will not be able to attend the open meeting on Thursday to discuss the situation. However, I have happy memories of the Town Hall which began fifty years ago when at six years of age I attended Kindergarten or Primer class in the room which later served as council chambers for the Town of Acton. Our teacher was Miss Minnie Moore, who also earned for herself no small measure of acclaim as a first class music teacher over many years. I know there are other citizens still living in Acton who began their school years in the school room in the Town Hall.

As Mrs. Oral Norton recalled in her letter to the editor in this edition, the upstairs auditorium of the Hall was the setting for any celebration of importance during all our school years. Most churches and service clubs used the Town Hall at least once each year as the location for major fund raising events. I personally recall the many full houses the former St. Alban's Players, the "Y" Players, the Presbyterian Drama

B.I.A. gives support

The Board of Management of the Acton B.I.A. support the movement to SAVE the Town Hall. The old Town Hall may not be the best representative or architecture of the time but it is the last public building in the Town that is of any age.

Many people old and young, old-timers and new-comers have expressed the desire to keep the building. All of these people have a great admiration for the firemen and are not saying—save the building—to spite the firemen.

The location of the Town Hall is within the designated B.I.A. and could ultimately become a focal point for a revitalized downtown. It is too early for us the first Board of Management of the B.I.A., to project any plans for the property.

For many years the merchants in downtown Acton have been striving for more off-street parking. Also for many years, the volunteer firemen, have been asking for parking. Possibly these two needs could be combined. Perhaps the owners of the two

Club and many other groups performed for. Acton people were wonderfully supportive and warm in their appreciation of the efforts of budding performers.

Those who were lucky enough to obtain the help of Mrs. Bertha Buchanan in coaching their presentations will never forget the extra effort she always put into getting a really polished performance out of the most inexperienced in a group.

I was particularly pleased to read the letter written by a comparative newcomer D. Fread, who not having the sentimental attachment to the building which some of us have, recognizes the historical worth of the Town Hall and spoke out in support of it. Even if no practical use can be found for the building, it has earned the right to be restored and maintained.

Please count on me for full support in any action you take to convince council that our Town Hall—MUST NOT BE TORN DOWN. Again—my congratulations on this week's issue of the Free Press. Keep up the good work and the support will grow. Remember...there is no power like PEOPLE POWER.

Respectfully yours,
Alice A. Duby



adjacent properties would give the Town an option to buy when they are ready to sell or perhaps the Town could offer them a price they would not refuse. One or both of these properties would provide access to the backyards of properties behind the stores on Mill Street. This could open up a fair number of parking spaces which could be used by both shoppers and firemen. If necessary part of the parking area could be designated "Firemen Parking".
Henry B. Stachyra, Chairman
Board of Management
Acton B.I.A.

Woke up in time

Dear Mrs. Dills: Our town hall is saved! Thank you and the Free Press for waking us up in time.

"A happy citizen"

THE ACTON FREE PRESS
PHONE 853-2010
Business and Editorial Office

 
1976 award winner

Founded in 1875 and published every Wednesday at 59 Willow St., Acton, Ontario. Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the Canadian Community Newspapers Association and the Ontario Weekly Newspapers Association. Advertising rates on request. Subscriptions payable in advance, \$7.50 in Canada, \$25.00 in all countries other than Canada; single copies 15 cents; carrier delivery in Acton 15 cents per week. Second class mail registration number 9515. Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with reasonable allowance for signature, will not be charged for but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the applicable rate. In the event of a typographical error advertising goods or services at a wrong price, goods or services may not be sold. Advertising is merely an offer to sell, and may be withdrawn at any time.
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