

Free Press Editorial Page

A beautiful weekend

The Victoria Day weekend was hot and sunny, and unusually pleasant for being outdoors. Swimmers and boaters were enjoying Fairy Lake as if it were the middle of July.

A hundred years ago, we read in the files, the holiday produced a memorable community program. Those days are gone. Rockwood, Campbellville and Georgetown are neighboring communities which organized fireworks displays this year, with good crowds and participation. Acton shoots off fireworks for Dominion Day.

Aside from a few backyard displays of fireworks here, the event was not especially observed. Many were away at cottages, battling the hordes of bugs. (Some came back to Acton early, deciding they'd lost the war.)

Still it was a very satisfactory holiday, with pale winter skins turning beautiful sunset red and the fumes of barbecue starter rising in the steamy air. Outdoors was the place to be, and Actonians made the most of the holiday we thank Queen Victoria for.

Regional government issue

Of particular interest here is Liberal leader Stuart Smith's promise that "The Liberal party is the only party that will get rid of regional government."

He was speaking in Hamilton when he promised to tear down the Hamilton-Wentworth regional government structure.

Voters in Hamilton are concerned over their increased tax bills, which are reported to average \$97 more this year, and they blame duplication of services under the regional government system which was imposed three and

half years ago. Dr. Smith said he would replace that regional government with a regional planning authority whose members would be appointed by local councils.

After the meeting he told reporters that wherever people really want regional government to continue, the wishes of the people would be respected.

Regional government was widely considered to be an issue in the last provincial election here, too, when PC candidate Gary Dawkins lost out to Liberal Julian Reed.

Cougars near extinction

There's much interest here in the new 12-cent cougar stamp, designed by Rockwood artist Bob Bateman. There are about 100 members of the species living, under constant threat of extinction by destruction of their environment and hunting. The stamp pictures the eastern cougar in the remote forested area of New Brunswick and the Gaspé.

There are 22 million stamps printed. This was the only stamp portraying endangered species issued at this time.

The cougar is also known as the panther, painter, puma, mountain lion, catamount, Indian Devil, and pi-twal—the long-tailed one. It is one of five cougar races living in Canada. The eastern cougar and its colleagues evolved during the heyday of the sabre-toothed tiger and spread from Atlantic to Pacific and from northern Canada to southern

most South America. The white man drastically transformed the cougar's environment and because of fear or a desire for status as a hunter, killed the animal whenever possible. Soon everyone concluded the cougar was extinct in eastern Canada.

Oddly enough, man's activities inadvertently saved the eastern cougar from annihilation. Logging, farm abandonment and fires changed the character of the New Brunswick forest, making it ideal territory for deer, the cougar's favorite food. The naturally solitary panthers took to the remotest parts of the backwoods where there was plenty to eat and little human activity.

The cougar population stabilized and even increased somewhat, although as few as 100 of the creatures now survive in Eastern North America outside of Florida.

Of this and that

We cannot all be great, but we can always attach ourselves to something that is great.

There's one thing to be said for inviting trouble, it generally accepts.

A fine is a tax for doing wrong, while a tax is a fine for doing O.K.

Why is it that there is never enough time to do a job right, but there seems to be enough time to do it over again.

Every notice that you don't spill gravy on clothes you don't like.

Industrialist to judge in court: "As God is my judge, I do not owe this tax." The judge said: "He's not. I am, you do."

What next department: instant movies will be the new thing soon. The movie camera will be loaded with a cassette, and this same cassette subsequently loaded into a projector. It's a Polaroid project.



Who says it's a dog's life?



EARLY MORNING MIST lingers over picnic tables in Prospect Park until daylight burns it off. Sunny weather is making the Park a popular area this spring.



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

For years I'd been hearing about Canada Day, an annual event at which Canadian writers come out of the woods or from under stones and allow themselves to be pestered for autographs, lauded to the skies and otherwise tortured by hordes of starry-eyed students and eager English teachers.

It was Jim Foley, a leprechaunish slip of a man, who spawned the idea originally, when he taught high school English in Port Colborne. Why shouldn't students have a chance to meet some real, live writers?

First year it was done on a shoe-string. Foley's students raised money by collecting beer bottles and other nefarious means. A few authors and poets turned up and talked to the kids. It was a great success.

Since then, it has grown in both scope and ambition, and is now a singular annual event in Canadian literature circles, with hundreds of students busying hundreds of miles, and a pretty good accounting of Canadian writers, good, bad and indifferent, turning up for their accolades.

Foley, who is no dummy when it comes to raising money, got publishers, a notably reluctant lot when it comes to spending money, to set up displays. He tapped every possible cultural well, from departments of education to Canada Council.

This year I attended, along with a young colleague who is a budding poet, and we had a good time and came home dropping names all over the place and buffing our cultural fingernails all over ourselves very ostentatiously.

"Well, after Margaret Laurence gave me a big kiss," I noted, "the whole weekend was just one mad whirl." This made my students sit up.

"Michael Ondaatje's beard is neater than mine," contributed my friend Roger, "but I'm a better poet, and I told him so."

"At least half the writers there are regular readers of my column," I commented smugly. Three or five of them actually are, but wotthehell.

"We had breakfast with Mavor Moore and drove 'him' to his seminar," Roger tossed in. And so we went on.

As a matter of fact, some of those things did happen, and some others that I have no intention of revealing.

Some rather interesting contrasts popped up. For example, the novelists seems to be rather a steady lot, in comparison to the poets, who had a tendency to get into the grape.

Age seems to have little to do with ability. Leslie MacFarlane, the grand old man who wrote the Hardy Boy books (and received about \$50 each for them as total royalties) away back when, was honored at the same time as young Jack Hodgins from Vancouver Island, who has just published his first novel. There's close to 60 years difference in their ages.

And by the way, there's a young fellow to watch—Hodgins. He was exhausted from a combination of jet lag and too many interviews in too short a time. But he gave it everything he had, in panels and quiz sessions. He's very handsome, very eloquent, and very enthusiastic, and I imagine the teenagers were swooning over him. Let's hope he doesn't get caught up in the snarling and backbiting that too often stains the Canadian culture scene.

Canadian publishers, on the whole, showed their usual uninventiveness, coming out of what seemed a deep lassitude only when John Roberts of the federal cabinet said something about more help for publishers. That's the only thing that

seems to stir them. Exceptions are a few small publishers, who show some verve and imagination in design and quality of books.

Farley Mowat's beard is almost as long as he is, but he has a nice wife. Pierre Berton is still combing his sideburns over his bald spot, but looks healthy and self-satisfied as ever. Suave Hugh Macleannan makes most of the other writers sound as though they'd just left Hayfork Centre.

Yves Theriault, a popular Quebec writer, has a new and charming second wife who seems to like him. Lloyd Person, Saskatchewan novelist, still thinks I should devote a column to a review of his book if he sends me a copy. Mavor Moore doesn't comb his sideburns over his bald spot and looks fine just as he is.

Poet John Newlove has eyes like two boiled eggs at a certain point in his progress. Some of the young fellows from

Newfoundland put on the liveliest show of the weekend, with music and poems. Max Braithwaite and charming wife, fit and tanned, are just back from California, and they're making movies of a couple of his books.

Uh, let's see. Irving Layton is getting old, just as he threatens in his poems. I don't know why Mrs. Jim Foley doesn't go out of her nut, running interference for Jim. Politicians, about eight of them, insisted on welcoming everybody, to everybody's dismay.

Al Purdy looks as though he needs a week in a rest home. Poet Don Gutteridge's wife, Anne, enjoyed driving us back to the motel when my driver ran out of steam.

There you are. Just a few notes from the literary scene by a non-hero-worshipping weekly columnist who knows that when you peek behind the talent, the writer is just a dogsboddy, like the rest of us.

OUR READERS WRITE:

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, May 24, 1877

Expresses gratitude for award

The Acton Free Press
Acton, Ontario.
Dear Editor:

Through the pages of our Acton Free Press, I would like to thank sincerely the Ontario Division and the local Acton group of the Canadian Cancer Society for the honour bestowed on me with the presentation of my Certificate of Service. This I feel is a very great honour but I must repeat and repeat again the success of our service

could not have been so praiseworthy if the dozens of local volunteers had not come to our aid in time of need.

In expressing my gratitude for this award I would also like to express my great admiration and gratitude for the innumerable volunteers without whom our efforts would be in vain, and with whose help we will valiantly carry on the Fight Against Cancer.

Sincere thanks
Velma West.

St. Alban's Dr. and Detroit

The Editor,
The Acton Free Press,
Acton, Ontario.

Dear Mrs. Dills:
St. Alban's Drive is a narrow, short street, fitted to be a one way street. It has blossomed out, being used two ways, but also used as a by-pass road where long trucks with the utmost difficulty negotiate the narrow turns, so far without accidents. It is no help now that it is being used as a main street, that parking is allowed on the south side, mostly occupied by the overflow of cars waiting for servicing at the garage since their area is occupied by new cars. On the north side are "no parking signs", often ignored by those who can find no parking space on the south side while awaiting servicing.

While meditating on this continuous theme (it goes on from dawn to dusk except over national holidays) I chanced to read in

that most prestigious of American periodicals "Saturday Review" of the rehabilitation that is taking place in downtown Detroit, where formerly the murder rate was twenty times that of Toronto, where unemployment was 14 per cent, where tourists in stalled cars on expressways were robbed—a new idea has emerged. It is from Henry Ford, and is resulting in the construction of Renaissance Centre, costing \$337 million, all private money (politicians please note) and is intended to lure the population that fled Detroit core back from the suburbs.

The astonishing thing is that the idea emanates from Henry Ford, that it is a better idea, and forgetting the highly untrue jingle he did not put it on wheels. Are you not astounded?

Thanks,
George Harrap

Views on immunization

23 Young St.
Acton.

wasn't my children who spread it all over the school. They knew they were contagious and stayed home.

I have a cousin who is crippled for life and has had numerous operations because he caught polio from his second shot. He was only two at the time and the doctors admitted it came from his immunization. His mother still swears to it he got his other shots.

As I say, I would not say one word against any mother or father who feels safer with immunization and I want the same consideration. If immunization is such a marvellous protection, why is the unimmunized child such a threat anyway? He can't do them any harm. They're "protected"?

If they make this compulsory, they had better be prepared for a lot of law suits. We may only be a 25 per cent minority but we are citizens and have a right to protect our families from harmful germs (as well as any other threat) to the best of our abilities. The rest we leave to God.

Mrs. R. Atkinson

The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of
The Free Press of Wednesday, May 24, 1967

A three-car collision at Dublin and Suffolk Sts. in Guelph Thursday morning involved two Actonians, Terry Slaven, R.R. 4 and his passenger, Mrs. Robert Anderson, Cameron St. The two returned home following treatment in St. Joseph's hospital.

Construction in Acton is going all out to meet the tremendous demand for houses. Lakeview subdivision is experiencing a boom which will produce half a hundred new residences. It's a hive of activity with shovels, bulldozers, chain saws, block layers, cement trucks, carpenters and bricklayers all contributing to the din.

Quite a few of the buyers of the new houses in Lakeview are from Toronto and will likely be commuting. Miss Barbara Norton flew to Winnipeg to spend the holiday with her aunt, Mrs. John Valby, Mr. Valby and daughter Peggy Ann.

In appreciation for the work he has done here for girls Charlie Thomson and the girls' softball teams are arranging a Howard Pearce Night at the park on Friday, June 2.

Despite cold, and rain that turned to snow, many opened up their cottages or went north to cabins on the holiday weekend. The veteran campers stayed out despite the abnormally cold weather.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the
Free Press of Thursday, May 30, 1957

Acton was invaded with a television camera set up in the Bank of Montreal corner, last Friday at noon. CKCO television Kitchener, sent Jack Phillips, photographer and Ron Hill, director and interviewer, to interview some Acton citizens for their program "Gadabout". G.A. Dills, editor of the Free Press, first to be interviewed, reviewed the history of Acton and gave the estimate of the population of Acton. He was followed by Wm. Davey, manager of the Bank of Montreal, who gave a brief outline on a few of Acton's industries. Misses Esther Taylor and Lorraine Taylor were also asked for their views on Acton.

A very quiet ceremony last Monday afternoon saw the cornerstone at the new M.Z. Bennett school laid, with Miss M.Z. Bennett and members of the public School Board officiating.

Darlene Johnson, aged 7, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. D. Johnson of Acton, received two fractures of the skull, a broken collarbone and lacerations to the right temple, when she was a passenger in a car that was in collision with a truck at the corner of Churchill Rd. and No. 7 Highway last Friday morning.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the
Free Press of Thursday, May 24, 1877

Mr. John Maney has fitted up the stone hotel in this village in handsome style and is now prepared to accommodate travellers and boarders.

Queen's Birthday in Acton, May 24. Baseball match, games, Grand Parade.

Uncle Tom's Cabin at the drill shed will be the principal attraction tonight. The Acton Social Club proposes having a dance after the close of the Dramatic entertainment to which they respectfully invite those inclined to participate.

Ice Cream, Pine Apples, Lemonade and other refreshments will be furnished.

A \$4 bill was lost on Main St. Monday evening. Finder please return it to Mr. M. Spelght.

The post office will hereafter be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
A mammoth egg was laid a few days ago by a hen belonging to Mr. Danforth Swackhammer of Esqueving. We are informed the egg measured seven inches in circumference.

The fine bell for the Congregational church arrived from Troy last week and has been put in position in the tower. It would be a boon to the village if somebody could be paid to ring the bell at certain hours.

The long-looked for atlas of Haton county is nearing completion.

THE ACTON FREE PRESS

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Business and Editorial Office



CNA

1976 award
winner

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