

Free Press Editorial Page

## Voting treasured right

Our right to vote is a treasure that must be cherished. And like good silver, it should be used.

Thursday is election day. It is important for every voter to consider the issues and choose the person to vote for.

The Free Press has given coverage and there have been advertisements, personal visits

and mailings.

The Meet the Candidates night was the main pre-election push here, and the turnout of voters there was about what would be expected.

It would be great if the turnout of voters could be much greater than expected, all across the province, tomorrow!

## Library 10 years old

The town's library is marking its 10th birthday this week. The new building was the pride of the community when it was erected in 1967, as the town's centennial year project.

The location and size, much discussed at the time, now prove that the right decisions were made. Community use was considered thoroughly. Room was provided for

meetings, and expansion when necessary downstairs. The growing population is now easily accommodated.

The centennial gifts presented to the library are still there.

The 10-year debentures are all paid and it's debt-free.

The library was Acton's Expo, and it's more a benefit to the town now than it was even then!

## Retirements of note . . .

A few words of appreciation to Jack and Pearl Rol, who have retired after 17 years of helpful and very personal service at Caroline Nurseries and Garden Centre. They developed a close attachment to their customers and had a mental file of hundreds of people's preferences. They were cheerfully willing to work long and unusual hours to fill funeral and wedding orders. The customers always felt the friendliness there.

The Rols will still be active in the community.

best wishes to Jack McGeachie, who has just retired after a 30-year career in municipal life in Acton and Milton. He sat till all hours with Acton councils and presided over the old-style nomination meetings. He was always helpful with advice and opinions.

He and his wife Helen and their family were part of this community for many years, and are still often back visiting friends and familiar places.

Best wishes for a happy retirement to both these couples.

Acton friends join in extending

## Our roots are different

Many people watched with interest the American television series Roots.

Can't help but wonder how many people are aware of Canada's share in the story. Canada was one of the first places to legally outlaw slavery, and before Confederation there were many blacks in Canada.

At that time, there were more blacks than whites in Kent and Essex counties. Many of them owned farms there and had become citizens.

Their descendants are spread throughout the country now. Many returned to the States after the Civil War.

The Underground Railway was the name of the escape route for blacks. The frightened slaves were

aided on their way, and usually crossed the border at Windsor.

Uncle Tom's Cabin, written by Harriet Beecher Stowe, told of the terrible life of the slaves and gained them much sympathy. (The 100 years ago column records how this play drew a great crowd of Actonians to the Drill Shed on the Queen's birthday.)

Her model for the story was a man who took the Underground Railroad to Canada, and his former home at Dresden is now called Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Although there are many more books about Canada than there used to be, still Canadians are filled with American history through books, TV and movies. Our roots are different and deserve publicity.



BENEATH THE sheltering evergreens, a small detachment of Legionnaires and Legion Ladies' Auxiliary members gather for a few moments before planting geraniums of graves of their comrades. It's

Decoration Day 1977 style—a scaled down version of past formalities. Lower attendance prompted the decision to abandon the parade and non-denominational service this year.



## Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

One of the deepest satisfactions in writing a column of this kind is the knowledge that you are getting into print the angers and frustrations of a lot of other people, who have no recourse for their resentments, and consequently take them out on the old man or the old lady.

How do you know this? Well, because people write you letters cheering you on to further attacks, and other people come up to you, perfect strangers, shake hands warmly, and say "By the Holy Ole Jump-in! Bill, you really hit the nail on the head."

This can be a little disconcerting, as you are never quite sure which nail they are referring to. If the congratulator is a woman, I smile weakly and change the subject. Because sure as guns, though she thought you were one of nature's noblemen for your assault on male chauvinism last week, she'll turn on you like a snake when she reads tomorrow's paper, with the column exposing female chauvinism.

Speaking recently to a class of potential writers in a creative writing course, I tried to pass along the personal satisfaction one gets from this type of personal journalism.

I emphasized the "personal" satisfaction because there's a lot more of that involved than there is of the other kind, financial satisfaction. Columnists and freelance writers have no union working for them, nor any professional association, as have doctors, lawyers, teachers.

They have only their own talent and wit and perseverance with which to penetrate the thick heads and thickers skins of editors and publishers.

But it's a great feeling when you vent your wrath, say, about the rapaciousness of mechanics, and you are button-holed six times in the next three days by people with horror stories about mechanics you can scarcely believe.

Trouble is, they all want you to write another column about mechanics, and but some real meat into it. This means, in effect, that they would happily stand in the wings and applaud when you were sued for libel.

Some readers would like you to be constantly attacking whatever it is that they don't like. Capitalist friends are aghast when you refuse to launch an assault on capital gains taxes. Welfareist friends think you are a traitor and a fink when you won't attack the government for not providing color TV for everyone on the take.

I am not by nature an attacker, and I think there is nothing more boring than a writer of any kind who tries to make a career of being a "hard hitting" journalist.

Once in a while my gently bubbling nature boils over. Throwing caution and syntax to the winds, I let my spleen have a field day and try to throw some sand in the grease with which many aspects of society are trying to give us a snow job. And that's one of the finest paragraphs I've ever written, if mixed metaphors are your bag.

Fair game for the hardhitter are: garage mechanics, plumbers, postal workers, supermarkets, civil servants, and politicians. Most of them can't hit back, and everybody hates them, except garage mechanics and their wives, plumbers and their wives, etc. etc.

Smaller fry are doctors, lawyers, teachers, used car salesmen. They all squeal like dying rabbits when attacked, but nobody pays much attention to them except doctors and their wives, etc. etc.

There are a few areas that even the hardest-hitters avoid. When have you,

lately, read a savage attack on greedy farmers, callous nurses, or unloving mothers? And yet, there are lots of them around.

One of these days, perhaps, one of these hard hitting writers will muster enough guts, after about five brandies, to launch an all-out attack on the audacity of women, thinking they're as good as men. Boy, that fellow will learn what real hard hitting is all about.

Personally, I can't stay mad at anybody long enough to be a voice of the people, or a public watchdog, or any of those obnoxious creatures who try to tell other people how they should feel.

The only constant in my rage is the blatant manipulation of self-seeking politicians who will twist and warp and wriggle and squirm and bribe for self-perpetuation in office.

Otherwise, I get a great deal more joy from touching the individual than in-

flaming the masses. When I get a letter from an old lady in hospital, crippled with arthritis, who has managed to get a chuckle out of my column, it makes me feel good.

Recently, I got a letter from a young Scot who has immigrated to Canada. He says: "I have learned more about Canada and Canadians through reading your column than all the accumulated wisdom from the Canadian newsmagazines, novels and TV programs I have absorbed."

Now there is a man with his head screwed on right. If I, as a newcomer, tried to get my impressions of this country from newsmagazines and TV programs, I'd catch the first boat or plane home.

So, I guess I'll just try to go on talking to people, getting sore, having some fun, bragging about my grandboys, looking for sympathy in the war between the sexes. That's what life is all about, not plumbers and politicians and other horrors of that ilk.

Dave Ryder

## OUR READERS WRITE:

### Sees need for parking

Being a former resident of Acton for some 27 years, I felt as did many others that reconstruction of Mill Street was long overdue. When I heard that the much needed reconstruction and widening program had been completed, I was anxious to see the new and better core area.

I am sorry to say that apart from new sidewalks and asphalt the greatest problem was still present. That problem is traffic and parking and is as atrocious now as it was ten years ago. With buses, trucks and cars parked on both sides of the street it becomes an obstacle course to find your way from one end of town to the other. To restrict parking to one side of the street is a

solution that immediately comes to mind and no doubt causes some problems, but surely the main objective of this reconstruction is to modernize the downtown area and to overcome the past problems.

People are not attracted to a congested, dangerous area such as you now have, unless they are forced to. I'm sure that local merchants realize that decentralized parking would better promote customers and business in the town.

Planning is good only if it is effective. If the present situation remains I feel that the town has stepped backward at a great cost to its citizens.

### Reunion at Gravenhurst

To the Editor: Gravenhurst, Ontario, was incorporated as a village in 1877. This means that we are celebrating our Centennial in 1977.

We know that former residents and friends of our town are scattered across Canada and around the world. We invite them all to join us for a Grand Reunion on Friday, July 1, the beginning of our Old

Home Week. For more information, please write Centennial, Box 2132, Gravenhurst, Ontario POC 1G0.

Thank you for the use of your space.

Yours sincerely,  
Cyril Fry,  
Chairman,  
Centennial Committee.

### Of this and that

A Foodland employee was understandably upset Friday when she discovered her car in the parking lot had been damaged by a hit and run driver—for the second time in four months. Such thoughtlessness is hard to understand.

There have been many comments about the cheery-looking new interlocking sidewalk stones. We erred somewhat last week in calling them bricks. In fact, they are made of cement and are extremely durable. It is something of a surprise to see they are not laid perfectly flat but rather in an undulating way along the length of a street. We had supposed the earth

below would have been perfectly level first. However, good reports on them come from other places, and they certainly are attractive.

It looks as if our merchants care.

More congratulations to Nancy Wong and Kevin Parker, who picked up more honors at the Halton Hills awards program last week.

Pie in the sky politicians usually use our dough.

The smallest good deed is better than the grandest good intention.

## The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, of Wednesday, June 7, 1967

Fred Dawkins completed his course in Commerce and Finance at the University of Toronto with first class honors, standing third in his class. He was awarded the W. E. Rundle gold medal in Commerce and Finance by Victoria College.

Fred Salt was hired as the new secretary-treasurer of Acton district high school board at their meeting on Monday evening. He replaces Billy Middleton, who is retiring from the position but will assist his successor during the summer. Mr. Salt has retired from Beardmore and Co.

With a crowd of about 250 joining in formal dedicatory responses, Acton Centennial Library was officially opened under summer blue skies on Saturday afternoon. The happy occasion, culmination of three years of hopes and planning, brought townspeople and special guests to cluster around the fine new building for the ceremonies.

Mr. and Mrs. Doug Mason and Mr. and Mrs. Will McEachern are attending the Ontario Hydro convention in Cornwall this weekend.

Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Elliott enjoyed a few days at Expo. While they were away, Mrs. Laura Dittrich kept the stationery store.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, June 13, 1967

A fire, reported to have started by someone throwing matches in the outside letter drop at the post office, was discovered before serious damage resulted Monday. Noticing smoke in the post office corridor, Mr. C. Leishman, caretaker, and Mrs. Leishman, investigated, and found the bin where the mail is deposited on the west side of the post office, in flames. The fire chief and local police were notified and loss was confined to the letters in the deposit box.

"Sandy" Best was named Halton's Member of Parliament Monday when he was swept to office by the county's largest plurality representative. The 35-year-old candidate, representing the Progressive Conservatives, rolled up an 8666 plurality, defeating Kenneth Y. Dick, Liberal candidate and Jack Henry, C.C.F. candidate.

Dr. and Mrs. A. J. Buchanan left yesterday to attend the annual convention of the Canadian Dental Association being held in Winnipeg next week. They will travel by motor and by boat from Port McNicol to Fort Williams.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Free Press of Thursday, June 7, 1877

A medium-sized fellow, about 25 years of age, with spectacles, arrived in Acton last Saturday afternoon. After looking around the village for a short while he went in to Maney's hotel and ordered a good meal and the best room in the house. He told the landlord confidentially that he was a member of Allan Pinkerton's detective force of Chicago and he was working up a robbery case. He then went out for a walk and entered Agnew's hotel where he gave a similar order and waited till tea was ready. He partook of a hearty meal and then strolled back to Maney's and repeated the operation, being bound to have enough to eat at all events.

He went to the Montreal telegraph office and sent an unpaid telegram. Whilst waiting a reply he went to Leven's barber shop for a shave. In the meantime Mr. Maney was informed one of his table napkins was missing. Mr. Maney went to the barber shop and pulled forth the napkin from the vest of "Mr. Detective". He immediately wilted and began pleading for mercy. He was let go with a tongue-lashing and the front part of a man's boot. He had to pay for the shave by pawning a five-cent watch chain.

The answer to his telegram awaits him and also the bill for two suppers. He appears to be not only a professional dead-beat but also one of the meanest kind of sneak-thieves. Such characters need watching.

## THE ACTON FREE PRESS

PHONE 853-2010

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1976 award winner

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FIVE BY THREE. These ten week old quintuplet sheep at the Nodwell's farm in Hillsburgh take a lot of looking after by, left to right, Linda Wright, son Gordon and sister Nina Nodwell. The sheep were delivered by caesarian section at the Ontario Veterinary College on March 6. The mother nursed three and two were cared for by a foster mother and milk bottle supplement.