

Free Press / Editorial Page

### Was it worth it?

Was it worth several million taxpayer dollars for Canadians to go all out on Canada Day celebrations? After all, it was only one day, or in some cases, one weekend.

In this time of a national identity crisis, perhaps it was worth it. Not since our centennial year in 1967 have Canadians been made more aware of our birthday celebrations. Was it because 110 years is another milestone in our history, or just a round number, and the powers that be decided it was time for another party? Or perhaps it was the growing threat that next year, or the year after that we might not have the Canada as we know it today? Or was all that money spent so Canadians might get that feeling of pride for their country back again—to show everyone we are not bad off?

Sure the inflation rate is ridiculous, and our work force strikes more than almost any country in the world. But at least in this country, we are given the

freedom of speech, and of choice. If not, then old Rene Levesque in Quebec would never be allowed to do and say the things he is getting away with. Is it going to be Canada's best point which destroys it?

Right now, for most Canadians who really care, all eyes and ears are on Quebec. We as Canadians are beginning to realize just how important each province is individually and all are needed to make up our country.

Feelings are perhaps at a low ebb right now. If the money spent helped Canadians bring back their pride and national unity it was well worth it. At least one person in Acton was reached on July 1. A young child, around nine years old, not even born in Centennial year, rode his bicycle up Willow St., singing O Canada at the top of his lungs. It was a touching scene as he waved his Canadian flag and sang the national anthem.

Perhaps this means Canada does have a future after all.

### Once upon a time

A group of French-Canadians sit around the backyard talking. It is a small town, typical of many in Quebec.

Soon, an argument ensues between a relative visiting from Ontario. "People in Ontario don't pay any provincial tax!" one man shouts.

"Bill Davis runs the country when Trudeau is out of town!" still another cries.

"Ottawa is the capital of Ontario, and there is nothing there for us!" is another exclamation.

The person from Ontario is horrified at her cousins' views. She argues with them, but they become more adamant. Nothing she says will convince them they are wrong, in all accounts, that people in her province are paying perhaps one of the highest provincial taxes in the country. They call her a traitor for moving away, something she did more than ten years ago.

The story is true, unfortunately. This French-Canadian woman, now living in this area, could not believe what her relatives thought. She felt frightened that the terrifying thing about their beliefs, and the knowledge that the stories are not confined to her family, in that one town.

She says those stories, and others even more unbelievable, are circulating throughout most of the small towns, where the majority of

people have never been away from home to realize they are wrong.

The area resident does not know how these stories are getting around. She does not know if they are being circulated by organized groups lobbying for separatism, or whether someone made up a joke once, which someone else took seriously, and the whole thing got out of hand.

Whatever it is, these people are going to one day be putting X on a referendum which is going to be deciding the future of this country.

People who believe these totally untrue rumors and even more, and are given propaganda about how well everything will be with the country of Quebec, are going to be hard to convince they are being fed a pack of lies.

If one plate contained a thick juicy steak, and the other contained a dried up, cold, boiled hot dog, which you had been told was made out of cat meat, which would you choose?

What you don't know is that the steak had been refrozen twice, and was actually horse meat, and the animal died of hoof and mouth disease, and the hot dog was 100 per cent beef.

It's a hard choice and which hopefully Quebec residents will look carefully into each one before picking up a plate and start eating. One bite could be fatal.

### Hydro's help needed

"One of the most bizarre inquiries," is how the hearing officer described the events unfolding before him in Acton's Legion last week.

Hearing officer Donald Meyrick came out with the characterization after Ontario Hydro refused to give his inquiry—into Hydro's proposed Bruce-Milton corridor—information tabled in previous inquiries and in a secret meeting.

Hydro also refused to present for examination any systems planners, the people who decide where corridors go.

Ontario Hydro ought to give Meyrick whatever information the hearing officer asks for, because only through the officer does his superior, Energy Minister James Taylor, receive recommendations concerning all parties in the dispute. Hydro co-operation would make the hearing more normal.

The information, collected at taxpayers' expense, concerns one alternate route to get power from the Bruce nuclear generating station, on Lake Huron, to Essa, near Barrie. The Bruce-Essa route is favored by the Interested Citizens' Group (ICG).

Hearing officer Meyrick pleaded with Hydro for information which led the Solandt Commission to conclude Hydro has indeed studied the Bruce-Essa alternate. Solandt's Commission mainly, investigated the Nanticoke-Pickering corridor. In a secret meeting with ICG representatives,

Hydro also agreed to present data on its Bruce-Essa study. The ICG claims not to have received that information.

In addition to undermining the inquiry process, Hydro is challenging the Supreme Court of Ontario. This province's highest court ruled, in a strongly worded unanimous decision, that hearing officers, specifically Meyrick, are to listen to evidence concerning alternate routes.

A hearing officer is powerless to subpoena witnesses or coerce them to testify under oath. He can only invite contestants to give evidence, on the assumption they speak truthfully.

The hearings are adjourned until next month. When they resume, Ontario Hydro will have an opportunity to change its tactic of resistance to one of co-operation.

Hydro needs to change, after all; what is good for secret meetings, is good for public hearings.

### Of this and that

Again we apologize for the lack of our popular 50 Years Ago column. Our files have returned from the microfilm completely unbound, in loose sheets. We hadn't anticipated this at all, and must now wait for the slow process of rebinding. The 50 Years Ago column will be back as soon as possible.

For the summer decorators—one thing the inventors can't seem to get the bugs out of, is fresh paint!



"YOU'LL HAVE TO ROLL it tight", says Rich Rocher, playground and daycamp supervisor, in photo on left. Rick helped about 50 leaders, leaders-in-training and youngsters learn the basics of overnight camping, nature studies and orienteering at Blue Springs Scout Reserve Thursday and Friday. In top

right hand photo, Rick helps leader Karen Glenn wash dishes. Tents are down in bottom right photo, but the poles have to be carried back to the pavilion at Blue Springs. David Allen, 11, did just that during the rainy overnight campout.



### Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

You were probably surprised and a bit shaken by that recent CBC television show "Connections," all about the permeation of Canadian society by organized crime: the Mafia, the French Connection, the Hong Kong Connection, and so on.

It neither surprised nor disturbed me. I've known all about it for about four decades. In fact, I'm amazed that the CBC didn't interview me, if they wanted something authentic about the beginnings of organized crime in this country. I was there.

Of course, at the time, I didn't realize what I was getting in to. I was in my early teens. But the pattern, looking back, was obvious.

There were two families in my home town, the Salvatis and the Guaracchis. Showing little originality, both operated behind the front of a fruit store. They were both from Sicily, and they were bitter enemies. If Sammy Salvati ran a special on fresh asparagus, you can bet your armor-plated vest that Joe Guaracchi, after sending one of his boys down to check the prices in the store window, would undercut him by a dime.

Back and forth went the skirmishes, but our ordinary small-town punks caught only once in a while the savage internecine warfare that went on behind the fruit store fronts.

The Salvatis, for example, tried to assimilate. They joined the United Church, to set up another front, and it's been rumored that they "laundered" a lot of their ill-gotten gains by syphoning them through that organization as donations.

On the other hand, the Guaracchis went on speaking Sicilian, threatening to murder their kids if they didn't work harder, and muttering about their "connection" with Rome.

At the time, I belonged to a gang of young hoodlums who hung about in the town's two pools rooms, those of Bob Loblaw and Sylvester O'Toole. One of our gang, the Chinese connection, was Joe Hoo, son of the only Chinese family in town. As you can see, it was quite a cosmo-

politan municipality, although the population was only 4,000.

We were a pretty vicious crowd, but it was Depression years, so that we didn't have the opportunities of today's punks. There was no point in snatching purses from old ladies; there was nothing in them. No point in mugging elderly gentlemen for the same reason: broke. We didn't drink, because our fathers couldn't afford to have it around the house to steal.

Helling around on motorcycles, of course, was out of the question. But we did terrorize a few neighborhoods by riding our second-hand bicycles on the sidewalks and occasionally right across someone's lawn.

I don't want you to think for one minute that we weren't taking out our subliminal frustrations and latent aggressions against society. We were.

At least once a week, we'd lean out the third-floor windows of the local Chess, Chowder and Cribbage Club, which we were allowed to use, as junior members, from nine to 11 on Sunday nights, in exchange for janitorial duties, and spit on passersby below. There weren't many passersby, that is—on a Sunday evening in a small town, but occasionally we'd hit one, shout "Tally-ho!" and toast teach other in Pepsi.

But it was through our other thuggish (yes, I admit it now) activity that we became deeply involved with The Mob. This activity was stealing from the outside stands off—you've guessed it—the town's two fruit stores.

From the outset, it was obvious that we'd come under the wing of one of the two Families. It didn't take long to see where we were heading. The Salvatis kept a good lookout, shouted loud, in English, and would chase you all the way to the river to get back a lousy peach.

But the Guaracchis, although they too shouted, in Sicilian, were fat and couldn't run. And we had an ace in the hole. One of our gang was one of their boys, Phil Guaracchi. We terrorized him into utter submission by threatening to expose his

membership in the club to the Godfather, Joe Guaracchi, who would have thumped him into a very small pizza, indeed.

So we had an inside man. He'd tip us off when his old man was off with the truck to Buffalo, where he had a close connection with the Bananas gang. We knew exactly when he'd arrive back with a truckful of bananas, grapes, you name it, and laid our plans as carefully as the IRA.

The minute the new fruit was put on the outside stands, one of our gang would go into the store and ask Mama Guaracchi if Phil could come down to the pool room. While she was haranguing him, the rest of us would stuff our shirts and head for the park for a gluttonous gorge.

It was only a step from there to getting into the Godfather's cellar and homemade wine when he was out of town. Next thing you know, a couple of us were running dances, at 50 cents a couple, with beer in the back room in a tub of ice. We used to promise the orchestra \$25 and then beat them down to \$15. The money just rolled in. Some weeks we made enough to pay a little off on our bill at the pool room, where we habitually played on our "nerve." That is, without funds to pay for the table, if you lost.

There was only one direction we could go, and we'd have wound up more debased and debauched than the Dubois brothers of Montreal, if the war hadn't come along.

Some of us got killed. Some of us had a worse fate. We stayed alive and got married. The old gang broke up. But don't tell me about the Mafia. I was there.

### OUR READERS WRITE:

#### Good things in schools

June 27, 1977

Mrs. Kay Dills, Acton Free Press, 59 Willow Street North, Acton, Ontario.

Dear Kay:

Just a note to express my appreciation and that of the entire staff of Acton High School for the very comprehensive and fair coverage of our school that we have received in the Free Press. Please convey to both Helen and Eric my appreciation for the job which both of them have done in covering school activities.

With so much in the newspaper lately which is critical of education, it's very gratifying that a paper such as yours depicts so very well, some of the good things that go on in schools.

Thank you for your help in the past and I look forward to your coverage of the new school next year.

Yours sincerely,  
Dean Fink,  
Principal.

More letters on page 5

### The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Wednesday, July 12, 1967

Roy McFadden, 29, of 121 Poplar Ave., is in satisfactory condition in Guelph General Hospital following a collision between his new motorcycle and a hydro truck Friday morning at the corner of Mill and Elgin Sts.

High school teachers aren't getting far away from their profession during the summer vacation. Three are marking grade 13 exam papers in Toronto. Mrs. Marion Reed, Bill Coates and Joe Bray. Miss Elizabeth Atkey is recreational summer program director in Acton. Paul Martindale is taking a special geography course at McGill University and Pat Sullivan is taking a course at Waterloo University. Attending courses at Ontario College of Education in Toronto are Miss Carla Vandergrift, Mrs. D. Huniken, Mrs. Hargit Laslo, Bruce Andrews, and C.L. Rognvaldsen.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Maddeaux have moved from Toronto to 223 Elmire Dr. with their young child. Mr. Maddeaux works in Woodbridge.

Newcomers to town are Acton high school teacher H. Swallow and Mrs. Swallow, who have moved from London to 186 Tyler Ave.

Mr. and Mrs. John B. Frank daughter Dianne and friend Beverly Norton are returned from a trip to Expo.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, July 18, 1957

A former student of Acton public and high schools, Aldo Braida, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Braida, announced this week the opening of a law practice in Guelph and Acton. For the past two years he has been in Toronto with a law firm there.

Near noon today, Harold 'Mike' Coxie fell off a ladder when checking the heating system at the new fire hall, and was sent to Guelph General Hospital in an unconscious condition. He was later released to his home with a wrenched body and severe bruises. According to Dr. J. Scott, no bones were broken.

The Acton Chamber of Commerce held an outing at Belwood Lake last evening (Wednesday) and enjoyed a night of boating, water skiing and surf board riding. Between water sports, the men enjoyed a lunch provided by themselves. No submarine diving has been reported on this trip, so it is assumed Roy Goodwin got up on top of the water with the skis.

The Acton Y Board announced this week that over 150 boys and girls registered for the swimming classes being conducted in the park during July and August. To date, seven instructors are handling the various groups and an urgent appeal is made for another two instructors.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of Free Press of Thursday, July 12, 1877

The first ten years of confederation ended with the last day of June. They have been years of prosperity for Canada. The future is beaming with bright expectation.

A telegram from London on Saturday stated it was rumored the Pope was dead. Enquiry failed to elicit any confirmation.

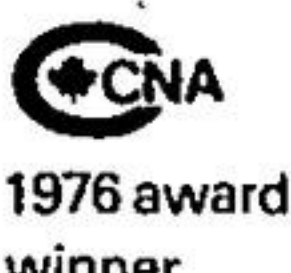
Mr. Robert Denny applied to Erin township council for a sum of money equal to the loss which he had suffered in the breaking of his plow while at Statute labour. The application was dismissed. Wm. R.C. Chisholm was paid \$3.75 for keeping traps.

No local events have occurred the past week worth recording and we can't get up enough energy to invent anything. Our local columns this week are woefully barren. (One page of the four-page paper is devoted to world news and news from across Canada)

The Milton News, after a trace of several months, has again made its appearance in the land of the living, having been resurrected by our friend Mr. T. J. Starr. Late of the Georgetown Herald. It will doubtless continue to be the organ of the Conservative party in the county and being alone in that capacity ought to receive a full measure of support.

Who stole the church beef from Mr. Ryder's cook stove Friday night?

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 Newspaper 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. Carriage charges in Acton 15 cents per week. Second class mail Registration Number 9203. 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 squaring, will 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. Dills Printing & Publishing Co. Ltd., David R. Dills, Publisher

Key/Dile Editor  
A. Cook Advertising Manager  
Copyright 1977.