

Free Press Editorial Page

Pride in our schools

The opening of school brings a host of changes to Acton children this week.

Most impressive is the fine new high school building, which will be an asset to the whole town.

For the first time Acton has a middle school, a concept which has proven its worth in other centres. The senior grades will all be going to classes together in the former high school.

The Robert Little and M. Z. Bennett schools now house just the grades from kindergarten to five.

The town has a separate school, for the first time. Catholic children are leaving their former schools and attending classes in the stone school beside the Robert Little. Acton is the last town in the region to have a separate school.

The fine new quarters will inspire enthusiasm and pride this week. The Free Press will continue to make a point of reporting the news from our town and district schools on the Youth Page each week.

All you reporters

A reader said to us this week: "Maybe you're not interested, but..." Yes, we were interested. We are very grateful to people who tell us about things that are happening in the town and district. We can't do without you.

We are also happy to have people write out items about their holiday trips and visitors. Or call and let us know. Others like to share this happy kind of news.

We don't mind being phoned at home if there is something special. We had a frightening few moments two weeks ago when a middle-

the night caller started out "Thought you should know there's been an accident..." Turned out it wasn't a family member, but the two police cruisers which had collided on Highway 25. What a relief.

One of the other newspapers in the area had a reporter who said to us once, "I always thought you must have 60 reporters working there." It's true... more than 60! Many people give us tips and ready-written stories, bring in pictures and cartoons. We appreciate it all.

Strikes against us

During the air traffic controllers' strike comes word there could be another post office strike before Christmas.

Both government and the unions seem quite prepared to let the public and businesses bear the brunt of their arguments.

The majority of Canadians do not even belong to unions. And many feel strongly that the government should replace the right to strike in essential services with some kind of compulsory arbitration.

Public service unions have shown the kind of regard they have

for the public. Who suffers? All of us, in a kind of general blackmail.

The Federation of Independent Business asks everyone to write to the Prime Minister on the subject. Our Member of Parliament Dr. Philbrook also asks to hear from his constituents.

The Prime Minister's address is simply Parliament Buildings, Ottawa. Dr. Philbrook's address is Room 118, Confederation Building House of Commons, Ottawa.

The government must know what the people are thinking.

The teacher's creed

What should be the teacher's creed? She or he must believe in girls and boys, the women and men of tomorrow; believe in the curse of ignorance; in the efficacy of schools; in the dignity of teaching; in the joy of serving others; in wisdom revealed in human lives as well as in pages of the printed book; in the ability to work with the hands as well as to think with the head. Teachers should believe in the present with all its opportunities and in the future with its promises for living at one's best. Teaching is a continual and dif-

ficult occupation but most rewarding and should be done by kindness, by watching, by warning, by precept but, above all, by example. One has to remember that the teacher is the book that will imprint her or him most upon the youthful mind. Education is not teaching youth the shape of letters and the tricks of numbers, then leaving them to turn their literature into lust and their arithmetic into roguery. On the contrary it means training them to exercise their bodies and minds prudently.

Strikes concern MP

Dear Sir: The recent air-controllers' strike has once again raised discussion on the larger subject of strikes in "essential services", however that may be defined. Last time it was the inside postal workers.

While all fair-minded people would agree that legal strikes are an established part of the collective bargaining process, that the worker has a right to protect himself economically, and that all workers should have the same rights without discrimination, there is obviously general and serious public concern about the effects of strikes in some areas.

Those areas characteristically involve the deadly combination of a virtual monopoly function plus the right to strike. They have serious effects on the expenses and convenience of individual people, on businesses, and on the economy in general. They involve areas such as the public service, transportation, communication and security. They can result in serious civil disorder and economic loss.

While most contract negotiations in both the private and public sectors have been settled without strike action or lost time, strikes in these crucial areas have had devastating effects in recent years. This was not what the government had in mind when, with the best of intentions, it legislated the right to strike for these groups a few years ago, nor has it now. It cannot in future tolerate or permit serious harm to the public from such strikes and loss of essential services, especially those in the government sector. The public has made it clear that it simply will not stand for it. The economy has made it clear that it simply cannot stand it.

to remove a right once it has been granted, even though this may be necessary. The alternative is some other acceptable collective bargaining mechanism to replace the strike, such as binding arbitration or the "last best offer" system. Governments have been seeking such an answer for some time.

Some people believe that it is impossible to legislate against legal strikes because they will only become illegal strikes or other disruptions. I suppose this is one of the tests of a modern civilized industrial nation. But surely, if government has to be continually legislating workers back to work each and every time a strike is called, to keep order in the country, it would be better to know beforehand that the strike is not a permitted part of the ground rules. Surely overwhelming public opinion can appeal to the inherent sense of responsibility of our unions, of both their rank-and-file members as well as their leaders.

At any rate, with more such strikes anticipated in the essential services, e.g. the inside postal workers, transportation groups, and perhaps others, this subject will undoubtedly continue to be a hot topic for discussion in caucus, Parliament and among the public over the next few years. Most people obviously do not want their essential services disrupted. Neither do I.

I would appreciate hearing my constituents' views, either in direct correspondence or the media, so that I may represent you even more effectively on this crucial subject in Ottawa.

Yours sincerely,
Dr. Frank A. Philbrook,
Member of Parliament,
Haltou.



Sunset silhouettes ducks as summer becomes autumn



Sugar and spice by Bill Smiley

You can't hardly turn your back these days but one or other of our old traditions has either vanished or changed for the worse.

This great thought came to me for no known reason, as I was speeding down the highway the other day, swiveling every time a big transport nearly blew me off the road, shouting opprobrium every time some punk in a sports car cut in front of me, emitting those vile noises reminiscent of a bear with the dire rear.

"You know, Bill," I said to myself, rather querulously, "one of these fine days, you won't be able to find a farmer who can drive a team of horses. Fix a tractor, yes. Drive a bulldozer, likely. But not knowing the difference between 'Haw' and 'Gee'."

Well, this thought, in its very profundity, made me sort of gloomy, and the gloom deepened as day after day came further evidence that our whole society, as you and I knew it, Mabel, is disappearing behind our very backs.

I was saddened when I took my two grandboys out to a local farm the other day, to pick some corn and beans. Plunked them down between the rows of corn and they were bewildered. The littlest howled with terror of this alien corn. They'd never been on a farm before, and may never be on one again. Quelle dommage!

I must admit they weren't baffled for long. In five minutes, Nikov was lost in the corn patch, locatable only by the piping "I found a big one, Granddad!" and little Balind was sitting in the damp clay, happily picking and eating yellow beans.

But I felt a twinge of pity for them, that they'll never ride on top of a load of hay, never get a squirt in the face of warm milk right from the cow's teat, never have the fun of turning the handle of a separator, never see a farmer sharpening a scythe on a grindstone, or a farmer's wife beheading a chicken that was to be dinner.

I didn't grow up on a farm, but in that most pleasant of all places for a boy to grow, a small, tree-lined town in old Ontario, with farms all around it. My uncle bought a farm just on the edge of town, and few of the aspects of farm life were a secret to me.

It was a grand old place, formerly the estate of a gentleman farmer of means. There must have been 15 different out-buildings, most of them in a state of dilapidation. There was a huge old house, boasting several fireplaces and even a butler's pantry. Sort of a run-down Jaina, but a great place for a boy to visit.

As it turned out, it was a lousy farm, and he lost a fair chunk of his shirt when he finally sold it and bought a real farm. But for

a romantic kid, who read a lot, going out to the farm was the equivalent of visiting relatives who had come down in the world a bit, but were still aristocrats.

My uncle, a hardy old Irishman who lived to be 94, bought a farm then on the other side of town, but it was just a plain farm. Its great redeeming quality was that on the bank of the river that flowed through it was fought the last duel ever fought in Canada. Many a time I searched the ground for bullets. Some years later I even took a girl down to that river bank, probably hoping that the atmosphere (the duel was fought over a lady) might have some effect on her. It didn't.

Summertime, before the Great Depression put an end to such frivolities, we went to a cottage up in Quebec, on a small, beautiful lake.

Just up the hill from the lake were two farms, and I spent many hours jumping in haymows, helping bring in the cattle, turning the separator, helping to load hay on the wagon, drinking from the dipper in the pail in the kitchen, and staying for supper and fresh blueberry pie, if I could wangle it.

At Belshers' farm, the nearest, we got most of our grub. Fresh produce picked from the garden. Daily milk at 10 cents for a five-pound honey paid full. Uthomogenized. Unpasteurized. Delicious. A couple of fat fowl for Sunday dinner, if relatives came, and they did in droves, at 50 cents each. Unplucked. Unviscerated. Delicious. Eggs at 30 cents a dozen. Uncandled. Unsorted. Delicious.

The Belshers were the nearest thing I ever had to grandparents. They were elderly, their own family grown and gone. Mr. Belsher was a huge, raw-boned man with a magnificent moustache who could hit a hen at 10 paces with a squirt of tobacco juice. He knew about kids, and let us fork hay, handle the reins, feed the chickens, and give a pail of milk to a greedy calf, a robust experience.

His wife was as tiny as he was huge. Worn with toil, deaf as a doorknob, sharp as a tack. And gentle, generous, warm. She knew perfectly well that small boys do not have stomachs, but bottomless pits.

The other farm was the Kelly's. The name was right on. They were like something straight from the gold sod. Maggie had pure white hair and the classic features of a Deirdre of the Sorrows. She was stuck with a brother, Jim, who had the worst stammer I have ever heard. He sounded retarded, but I think it was only the stammer. He loved kids.

At Kelly's, we got drinking water and worms. They had a well of such pure, icy water it would shame champagne. Behind the barn was a spot where we could always get worms, those skinny, red wrigglers ideal for catching speckled trout. No charge for water or worms. Today's farmer would want 50 cents for a pail of water and a dollar for a dozen worms.

We never bought much at Kelly's. I think Maggie was too proud to sell to the summer people. But she let us play with the lambs and feed the pigs. Perhaps we were the only children she ever had. She never petted us or played with us. She was taciturn, almost grim. But once in a while the piercing blue eyes softened into something like the nearest should come to a grin.

Ah, my poor grandboys, back to their home in the city. Noise, heat, smog, violence, confusion. Ah, fleeting years. What wouldn't I give to be 10 years old, digging worms beneath the manure behind Kelly's barn!

The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, September 6, 1967
Councillor Bob Drinkwater was elected chairman of Acton's new planning board with Sid Saltz as vice-chairman. The men will take over from the previous planning board which resigned en masse over council's decision not to accept their recommendations.

Hilton's Dairy Princess, Carol Swackhamer of Acton went all the way to the finals in the Coliseum at the CNE, but was edged out by Northumberland's Maria Battaglini, making her third entry in Ontario competition.

Mrs. Garnet Kay, Mrs. Art Hawes and daughter Karen are away on a three week trip to Saskatchewan and Alberta.

George Carr has returned to England after spending two months with his sister Mrs. Ben Bayliss and family.

Diane Swackhamer has returned to Mary Glen Residence and classes at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Toronto.

Both drivers suffered head cuts when cars hit head-on on Mountainview Rd., near Guelph St., Georgetown, Monday, August 28. Ron Guyette, 12 Prince Charles Dr., Georgetown was driving north and Harvey Young of Acton was southbound when they collided according to police. Both cars were write-offs.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Acton Free Press September 12, 1947

On Friday evening, Acton Fire Department responded to a call at Beardmore Tannery to extinguish a small fire believed to have started by someone dropping a cigarette butt between the ties on the railway bridge. With the assistance of the efficient tannery fire department, the fire was extinguished in short order with little damage done to the bridge.

A large barn recently converted into a modern warehouse belonging to the Michigan Bulb Company near Rockwood was completely destroyed by fire last Thursday evening. The fire was first noticed by neighbor Rod Downs who noticed what looked like steam coming from the building. No flames could be seen at first. He called owner Gordon C. Goodman, owner of the bulb co. who was watching television. Firemen from Rockwood were called and were there in a few minutes, but nothing could be done to save the building. Miss Wendy MacKenzie, Terra Cotta, former grade 12 Acton high school student, sailed from Montreal September 3 on the Empress of England to attend Neuchatel Junior College in Switzerland.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, September 8, 1927.

The schools here opened on Tuesday and although the registration was not all completed, upward of 400 pupils started in their studies in the fall term.

The attendance was as follows: Miss M. Z. Bennett's classes, 40; Miss D. Folster's classes, 40; Miss M. Orr's classes, 39; Miss G. Clarridge's classes, 40; Miss A. MacDonald's classes, 35; Miss N. Anderson's classes, 36; primary classes Mrs. Moore and Miss McMillan, 80 pupils. The high schools have a registration of over 70. The primary classes have been divided in two sections and the room at the town hall is still being used. One class goes at 8:30 and the other in the afternoon from 1 o'clock to 4:30.

In the Labour Day Sports at Eden Mills, Alfred Bishop of the Hercules Athletic Club, Acton, was winner of the 100 yards open and the 220 yards open and Gordon Cooper of the same club won second in these events.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, September 13, 1877

A young man named Thomas Gardner, Cabinet maker, for a long time in the employ of Mr. Henry Burnett Sr., died rather suddenly last Thursday evening. He was troubled with a rupture and on the day of the circus at Brampton got rather the worse of liquor, as was a too frequent occurrence with him, which aggravated his complaint, and took him off suddenly.

Two young men from the country started quite a melee in front of the post office Saturday evening by drawing one of our peaceable villagers into a general scuffle. The villager's better half joined the tussle with a potato masher in her hand and she disabled one of them from further action.

Married men, don't fail to take your wife and children to the entertainment in the drill shed this evening.

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Business and Editorial Office



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