

Free Press Editorial Page

Determined to proceed

Despite the fact that there is no parking provided for firefighters' cars, workmen began this week to construct the second storey addition to the fire hall. The rear of the Old Town Hall will be torn down to make way for it.

The cost of the project rose to the point where an alternative proposal, a brand new hall at another site, seemed to add up to a sum not too far distant from the eventual cost of this present project.

We are told the subject has dragged on and councillors are tired of hearing about it. But it was actually only when \$200,000 was first mentioned in August that some people began to think a new hall would probably be the best thing.

Town-owned land seem a reasonable solution. It came at no cost; it would eventually be sold for building lots. Other locations are still talked about. The CN property could be expropriated, which admittedly would take time.

Why does council feel there is such a rush about the project they must proceed with such haste, despite all other considerations?

It is not the firefighters who are adamant about the old site.

A new pumper or van could obviously be kept for a while in the town works building, until the best solution was arrived at.

The contract for the second storey will come to about \$210,000, without a neighbouring house yet to be purchased knocked down for firefighters' parking. The total sum could be as high as \$300,000. And it is not known where the parking will be.

Yet parking was originally a prime requirement!

We have been told firmly there is no money to buy land for a new fire hall site. Yet there seems to be no such barrier to buying a downtown house and tearing it down, and the cost can be assumed to be not too far apart!

The project seems to be moving along in amazing isolation.

Perhaps it is true, as one councillor said at council meeting "You can only do one thing at a time."

The town hall restoration committee is very concerned about the loss of the stage. They think it will effect their project adversely. Yet council refused to meet with them, as chairman Dr. Elliott pointed out in a letter last week.

They had the backing of a petition signed hastily last spring by almost 2,000, remember?

The town hall committee has had such grudging and slight support from council, the restored building might have to restrict itself to rentals that would produce the most revenue, rather than the obviously best town uses.

Where will the regional police find their desired new quarters? In a new building, with plenty of parking? Why not in the old fire hall, if the firefighters had new quarters? It's another government that will pay for the police quarters, but that's no reason Halton Hills should ignore the question.

Where is the senior citizens drop-in centre to be? What does council envisage for this group, which has little funding? A grant from council each year?

Councillors paid slight heed to Doug Fread's proposal that his company build a new hall for \$186,000. His blueprints were soon thrust aside.

Then the contract was promptly let for \$184,368 for the second storey, plus 10 per cent for engineer's fees.

Councillor Peter Marks, asked by the Free Press, said he would try to have the start of work delayed until parking was found. The meeting last week was held behind closed doors, with the press and public excluded. The workmen are here now, so he must have lost the round.

Other Acton and district councillors wish to proceed.

The full consequences of this determined action will only be apparent later.

Police not parents

An informal meeting has been held in town to talk over the problem of vandalism, and there will now be more evidence of police patrols out on the street.

Chief Skerrett tells us that vandalism is far worse in other places, and blames the problems here on just a few people.

Certainly every town has its problem people. They are the ones who don't respond to youth drop-in centres, to Y courses, to night school... to anything that offers them a good evening off the streets.

Some people prefer our streets. Organizations cannot be blamed for failing to offer interesting alternatives.

The youth drop-in centre this summer provided enjoyment for many young people but one of the leaders commented youngsters who gathered together in the scout hall and played games together were the ones who would have enjoyed playing games at home,

too. So there we are, back at the home.

It is at home that the start on life is made. Where the examples are set.

Where there is recognition, encouragement, support and love, or where there is not.

With years of experience in police work behind him, Chief Skerrett says "It was never the intention that police should replace parents."

How right he is.

Of this and thats

One good thing about all this rain - it settles the dust that swirls above the road construction for a while.

An employee was handed a pay envelope which accidentally con-



We have it on the highest authority that the fair was a success



Sugar and spice by Bill Smiley

This week, I am perplexed by several questions, and I turn for possible answers to the only people in the world I can trust for honest answers: my faithful readers, all four of them.

For example, by what editorial inanity does the Globe and Mail, which grandly calls itself Canada's National Newspaper, run on its front page a five-column by eight inches photo of Pierre Trudeau getting his hair cut? What is the symbolism, the hidden meaning, the secret code, the deep, interpretive analysis, behind this picture? Can anyone help?

Is Mr. Trudeau symbolically trimming his sails for a fall election? Is it to show that the P.M. is mortal, after all, and that his hair grows, like that of us lesser beings? Perhaps it's a secret warning to Margaret that, despite talk of a reconciliation, he's not going to let his hair grow and become a flower child. I dunno, but it sure has me baffled.

Next question. Where do things get lost to? It seems to me that my wife and I have spent more time this past summer looking for things than we have sleeping. Looking for things that were "Right there, right on that counter yesterday."

Looking for things is one of the most frustrating, irritating pastimes in this materialistic society of ours. It has brought many a marriage to the teetering point, and if the union was already teetering, pushed it over the brink.

I tained only a blank check. "Just what I thought would happen," moaned the worker. "My deductions have finally caught up with my salary."

The three R's used to be reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic. Today they are rioting, rebellion and restlessness. If this condition continues we'll have regret, rot and ruin. What we need is respect, religion and responsibility.

A couple of weeks ago, she lost the keys to the car. After a 12-hour non-stop search, no keys. Oh, we had keys for the other car, the battered old Dodge. Only one catch. It was in the garage, and the keyless car was sitting right behind it, immovable.

Twenty-four hours later, I called a lock-picking specialist. He was out of town, but would call me when he got back. Just before he did, and I had to fork out eleven-seventy dollars, the old lady found the keys, without looking. They were in the vegetable bin, with a turnip, a butternut squash, and a bag of cooking onions. It was certainly the logical place for them.

Then my new black \$10 belt went missing. It was the first belt I'd bought for 12 years, and I was rather proud of it. I knew it wasn't really lost, because I always hang it up with my ties. It was obvious that my wife, in her eternal tidying, had stuck it away somewhere, as she so often does with things that I then cannot find. But she swore, as she always does, that she hadn't touched it, mentioning in passing that she was sick and tired of looking for things that I had lost. Naturally, words followed, in which the phrase "ear keys" inadvertently popped out several times.

But the mystery of the missing belt was readily solved when I decided to wear my new, blue, fit-like-a-glove summer trousers. I couldn't find them. High or low. Then with a flash of intuition, I knew where my belt was. It was with the pants, because I never unbelt, just hang the whole works on a hook.

It was quite a relief to know where my belt was. It was equally reassuring to know that the pants were with the belt. But it was slightly dampening to admit that both were lost. They still haven't turned up.

There are only two possibilities. One is that a pantless burglar crept into our bedroom, snatched my trousers and crept off into the night, once more modestly attired. The second I don't even like to dwell on.

The last time I had worn those pants, that belt, was to a party. It wasn't a strip poker party, but it was a fairly lively one.

Did I do a strip tease and forget to redress my little peccadillo?

Did I tear them off on the way home from the party and throw them out the car window? Sounds silly, but the other morning I went out to get the morning paper, and there on my back walk was a pair of brand-new blue shoes, with thick white rubber soles, in a shoe-box, with only the lid missing. Only the Lord knows who, for what mad reason, in what temporary mental aberration, flung them there. But they are just my size and finders keepers.

And this whole probe brings up the Case of the Missing Socks. What in the name of all that is unholy becomes of socks when they are put through the washer and dryer? They never go missing in pairs, always singles. I'll bet I have nine single socks in my drawer, all different colors or knits.

I've gone down with a flashlight and peered, at the machines, into the interiors of those machines. No socks.

They can't go down the drain, or it would be plugged. Do they do a reverse Santa Claus and go up the spout of the dryer with the hot air? It's a little frightening, as though someone were trying to tell me something. About my feet? Someone with a feet fetish?

Just one more question. Where were all the editorial writers who are now screaming about the stupidity of changing highway signs to kilometers instead of miles, when I was lambasting the whole metric-Celsius nonsense almost a year ago?

Can you, gently reader, do a fast bit of arithmetic in your head when you encounter a road sign announcing the speed limit is 45 kilometers per hour? When your speedometer is marked in miles per hour? And will be for years to come?

Will you happily pay your fine when the cop puts the big blue arm on you and claims you were exceeding the speed limit by seven k.p.h.? Must we all start driving with a calculator-computer in one hand?

Now these questions may not be as important as some: How old is God? How hot is it in hell? How long is a straight line? How far does a rolling stone? Whither the Flat Earth Society? Why does everyone pick on me?

But they are, poor things, mine own, and I'd like some answers.

The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, September 20, 1967
Acton's Centennial fair will go down in the annals of the agricultural society as the one which broke all records. Record crowds—estimated at from 11 to 12,000—flocked to the three days of events and gate receipts were up to a new high. Personable Brenda Spear, 15, shed tears unashamedly when judges picked her as Miss Centennial Queen of Acton Fair at Friday night's performance. Nearly 2,000 were on hand to see the Miss Acton Fair contest judged by Big Al of Kitchener TV station, Allan Young of the Guelph radio station and George Atkins of the CBC farm broadcast. Runners-up were Jackie Lee and Elaine Johnson. Last year's winner Maggie Given did the crowning.

A second motorcyclist this week was injured in an accident with a car on Tuesday evening. During a rainstorm about 8:30 p.m., Keith Locke, 17, of R.R. 1, Orton, struck the side of a car while driving his motorcycle north from town on Main St. N.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, September 26, 1957
Sparked by the excellent weather, over 5000 local and district people filed through the gates at Acton Park last Friday and Saturday to enjoy the Agricultural Society's annual autumn presentation of exhibits, competitions and entertainment. W. McAdams, from the office of the planning consultants, was present at the regular meeting of the Acton Planning Board on Tuesday to present and explain the revised statutes of the proposed zoning bylaw. After completing the revised bylaw and recommending further changes, the Planning Board are taking steps to have a public hearing on the bylaw.

The increase of one cent a quart in the price of milk in Acton was announced Tuesday by the two local dairies, to become effective October 1. The increase brings the cost of homogenized and pasteurized milk up to 23 cents and quarts of chocolate to 24 cents.

Robert Landsborough spent several days last week with relatives in Toronto while making arrangements to attend the University in Toronto where he will be taking a four year course in electrical engineering.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, September 22, 1927
When the curtain rang down long after darkness had fallen on the 1927 Acton Fall Fair there seemed to be not one dissenting vote in the verdict that this year's was the best fair ever held here. President McDougall was radiantly satisfied.

The program Tuesday night brought more than usual in attendance. Winners of the public speaking contest were Misses Isabel Switzer and Audrey McComb. In the harmonica contest Tommie Nicol, Joe McGeachie and Donald McDougall carried off honors.

Messrs. Beardmore brought eight horses from Toronto which gave fine exhibitions.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, September 20, 1877
If you want to see how the principles of communism are spreading, pull out a paper of tobacco in a small crowd on the corner. If that tobacco is not held "in common" times are improving.

The Acton Plow Company have been awarded a bronze medal and diploma at the Intercolonial Exhibition held at Sydney, Australia, for their plow.

The grand jury last week reported that there are only three prisoners confined in the county jail, and the Herald is constrained to lament that they are all from Georgetown.

The Knights of Pythias, some 30 in number, held a torchlight parade Thursday to their lodge rooms above the post office. The Grand Chancellor of their order was visiting as well as numerous brethren from other lodges. (Four columns of type are devoted to this account.)

There has been no other local occurrence during the past week demanding our attention so that we cannot be fairly charged with having neglected matters of more general local interest.

Mr. George Levens the barber wishes to state to those of his customers who have not paid for their shaves for the past several months that if they don't ante-up immediately he will find a way to make them do it. Hereafter he will trust no one except his regular monthly customers.



HIGH SCHOOL students of 1923 or 1924 line up for their portrait. The picture has been loaned to the Free Press by Bernice Reid, now of Guelph. She has identified most of the students. Left to right, front row, Ralph Henderson, Art Hackett, Morris Starkman, John Gibbons, Charles Bell, Olive Cooper, Kitty Savage, Jessie Morton, Vera Hurst, Edna Henderson, Olive McLaughlin, Miss E.E. Knapp (teacher), Nellie Hall,

Genevieve Clarridge, Madeline Gibbons, Agnes Mann, Miss James (teacher), Addie Hurst, —, Annie Martin, Jean Orr, Minnie Blair, Clarice Boyd, Stan Mackie, Jack McDougall, Matt Tyler, Pete Reid, Eugene McPherson, Willard Smith. Left to right, back row (standing) Hector McDonald, James Matthews, Donald Kennedy, Bill Indlay, James Ross, Angus Kennedy, Leslie Gregory, John Dunn, Dora Lambert,

Beatrice Blair, Jean McDonald, Muriel Crossman, Margaret Young, Helen McDonald, Bernice Reid, Ada Nellis, Thelma Gamble, —, Maxine Webster, Annie Wiggins, Jennie Wiggins, Laura Murray, Annie Dunn, Violet Crossman, Orville White, Russell Ross, J.C. Lindsay, Jordan Lawson, Alf Bishop, Joe Hurst, Archie Kerr, Harvey Rawson, Charles Landsborough.