

Why a holiday?

Surely it's time to rethink the general holiday given school children, banks and government employees for Remembrance Day. Now that the services are generally held on the Sunday nearest the date, what's the point of having the children on the street, no mail delivery or customs and no banking service? In the case of mail and

banks, the public was three days without service this year.

Certainly none of these people were at the cenotaph on November 11 at 11 a.m. It was a bleak and lonely place.

There was a good crowd the Sunday before, though. People remember.

Free Press Editorial Page

Protection for youngsters

Statistics have certainly shown it was a mistake to so speedily lower the legal drinking age. The decision was made in conjunction with the lowering of the voting age, and with the age for signing authority.

But the toll of the mistake has been racked up in human lives.

The provincial government faced up to the fact this week, and it appears something will be done to change their previous decision.

Drinking-related accidents have horrified the province. Although

finer and driving suspensions are meted out, the drinking drivers still abound on the streets.

For many young people, it's still a joke to be drunk.

Lowering the drinking age will give the police grounds for charging people beneath the legal age.

Like adults, many of them cannot police themselves.

In the case of young teenagers, they can be protected to some extent by the law.

We're conserving

Pilot projects are being set up in three Ontario towns to determine the best ways of encouraging home-owners to conserve energy. Brockville, Lindsay and Stratford will be the location for the homeowner demonstration projects. Homes will be surveyed to discover in what ways heat is escaping.

Many of us have become aware of the need for this ourselves.

This fall is bringing with it many improvements in home heat security. It's easy to spot pulled drapes and blinds during the day in

unused rooms or homes where everyone is away at work or school.

Heat pump signs are noticeable at a couple of homes; solar heating units are seen here and there.

Insulating is a favorite project for people making home improvements. The Christian Reformed church, for instance, has blocked up its large windows for the winter.

Probably people are getting the message to conserve energy without government studies, but the resulting reports will likely be helpful.

The creeping deserts

Man is still killing the land that feeds him. The creeping deserts remain one of the great global ecological problems that seem to defy solution. The challenge for mankind is clear: either we halt what the scientists call desertification, or we risk the prospect of even greater food shortages in future decades.

Deserts do not just happen. The ruins of ancient civilizations in the Middle East prove that poorly managed agriculture and urbanization destroyed fertile lands. Nomads knew centuries ago that moving people and livestock from an area before its vegetation was totally destroyed, would save the land in future years. But far too often overgrazing by livestock, overcutting of forests, abusing scarce water resources and improper tillage killed millions of acres of fertile land.

A recent conference on the spreading deserts held in Nairobi, Kenya, was told that already about 43 per cent of this planet's land surface is either desert or semi-desert. Land is being denuded and

destroyed at the rate of 14 million acres a year. And unless the trend is slowed, about a third of the arable land available to us today will be lost by the turn of the century.

What can mankind do about these mysterious, other-worldly deserts like the Sahara, the Gobi, the Australian and the South Asian deserts? They may look fascinating from the air or in color films. They have played a romantic part in literature. But in fact they are grim symbols of the way men have misused this planet.

The first need is slow reclamation of deserts through replanting and reforestation programs. The lowering of birthrates and more development assistance from richer countries will help. So will education since poor people in those countries, like we in Canada, do not know how to use their land wisely. The creeping desert can be halted. But it will take a global effort by all nations—great and small nations alike.

—Unchurched Editorials

Of this and that

Crawford Douglas is on television all the time now. The former district resident, well-known to many here, is now a Member of Parliament in a very photogenic position. He sits right behind Prime Minister Trudeau!

satisfying, happy and friendly experience. Stores are decorated already and there's no doubt about it, the Christmas rush has started.

The Business Improvement Area will not be providing an integrated plan for the renovation of buildings in town, Chairman Henry Stachyra told the Public Forum. This seems unfortunate, since co-ordinating facades would seem to be an important part of the downtown's attractiveness.

Could the B.I.A. participants agree among themselves to adhere to a certain style, or limited range of materials or colors?

It's Christmas shopping time. The merchants here in town are trying to make shopping at home a



ACTON celebrated July 1 holiday with a variety of gala events during the 1920's. Above is Cox's garage decorated with cedars, union jacks and the words "Canada". It is located where the I.G.A. store is now.



COVERED BUT NOT FORGOTTEN: Even though these wreaths are covered with the first snow of the season, their significance is not hidden or forgotten to people who remember those who were lost during military service.



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

This has been the age of young. Rock music, drugs, dropouts, dirty denim, unisex, swinging singles, discos, and now punk rock. You name it and we've been assaulted by it.

It all began with the Beatles, I reckon, this adulation of youth. And now it's The Fonz, a portrayal of a young hood, that gets the headlines.

To be over 40, in the last couple of decades, has been just this side of being dead, as the media, the entertainment world, and business, salivated over youth.

Well, it's kind of nice to see that a lot of the old timers are still in there pitching, despite the deluge of juvenilia.

It was a bit of a jolt to hear of the sudden death of Bing Crosby recently, at age 74. But the Old Crooner was still giving some class to the shoddy world of show biz right up to the end.

Octogenarian John Diefenbaker has published another book of his memoirs. Haven't read it yet, but it's said to be as delightfully malicious and wrong-headed as the first volumes.

Mortley Callaghan, well into his 70s, recently published a new novel, to critical acclaim. Callaghan, one of our finest writers, isn't getting older, he's getting better. Ignored or sneered at for years by fellow Canadians, he just kept hacking away at his vocation of being a first-class writer.

Just finished a novel, The Intruders, by Hugh Garner, and although parts of it are bad, when the dialogue becomes polemical, he still has that sure touch of realism, an ear for the talk of ordinary people, and the ability to tell a good story. Garner is no chicken either. Must be in his 60s, about half way.

Scott Young, another cracking good writer, has abandoned a daily column of trivia, with which even he was becoming bored, and has gone back to writing what he does best—honest sports stories. He's over 60.

Pierre Trudeau is not yet an ancient combatant, but he had his 58th recently, and is certainly no pushover for the young blood-thirsty wolves in the political pack, as anyone who watched the opening of Parliament could see.

And how about the Queen. She is no teenager, and she's beginning to show it, but when it comes to poise and grace and charm, very few of the young chicks can hold a candle to her.

One of my colleagues, a former officer in the German Army, is into his 60s, but could out-ski, out-swim, and out-walk most of the staff members 30 years younger.

I have another friend, about 70, who could out-think, out-drink, and out-swear 98 per cent of men in their 20s.

My father-in-law was a little disappointed to learn this year that a by-law had been passed stating that retirement was compulsory at 65, and he'd lose one of his jobs.

He's 85 and is quite bewildered when he hears talk of young fellas in their early 60s who can hardly wait to retire.

Played golf with an old, gray-haired geezer a few weeks ago. He is retired, but only because of a heavy heart attack. He plays 18 holes a day and then knocks back a few whiskies before dinner. His score was 88, mine was 108. He swims all summer and bowls twice a week in the winter, as well as working like a navy around his home.

I don't really know what I'm getting at here. Maybe I'm just sick of the youth-

worship cult to which we've all been exposed (including the young) for far too long.

Maybe I'm tired of living on a continent and in a culture in which the very people who were the salt of this country's earth are shuffled off, without honor and without shame, into places that are called things like Sunset Rest, Final Heaven—everything but Last Chance Saloon.

Maybe I'm fed up with the interminable excuses, sloppy service and half-assed work we received from so many young people whose grandparents and parents gave full measure, and believed in such hoary adages as "A job worth doing is worth doing well."

I sometimes wonder why we are so eager, in this country, to slough off the wealth of experience and wisdom our elders have to offer in our society.

Why aren't the older tradesmen used as teachers, at a decent remuneration, to pass on their skills to the half-baked young tradesmen we so often encounter when we want a job done?

There is a crying need for more day-care centres in this country. Why aren't they filled with volunteer grannies, who could love and pet and teach the children, as only they do so well?

Nope. It's easier to sweep them under the carpet; into lonely rooming houses, nursing homes, senior citizens apartments, or, in extreme cases, the Senate.

We don't want to see wrinkles and white hair and trembling hands or mouths. We want everything to be the way it is on TV.

Well, don't try to shuffle this old boy off, when the time comes. I intend to go right on being arbitrary and obnoxious.

Unless I'm offered a seat in the Senate.

Our readers write

Band explains position

The Editor:
The Acton Citizens' Band will not be playing for the Acton Santa Claus parade this year on November 26. This is not because the Band does not want to play nor because the Band does not understand its obligations to the Town of Acton. We would like to participate in this year's parade but we cannot. This letter is an explanation of

why the situation has arisen.
In other years the Acton parade was always the second Saturday in December, Georgetown's parade was the first Saturday and Milton's the last Saturday in November. When Georgetown contacted the Band in May for their parade and Milton in August we did not know of any changes in Acton's plans or expect any which would prevent us accepting either of these requests. The Band was therefore committed to appear on those dates in Georgetown and Milton.

It seems the organizers of Acton's parade had decided on a date change and asked Council for permission to have the parade on the new date but they did not discuss this with the Band or even notify us before the end of October when they announced the date for the parade. The Acton Band has been playing in the Milton parade for about 15 years and as well has never defaulted on a commitment to appear. The Band's and the Town's good name must be preserved and even though we would like to be in Acton we will appear in Milton. In future we hope that organizers of the Santa Claus parade, and other events requiring a Band, will consult with the Band well in advance so we can avoid the conflict of engagements we had this year.

Yours truly,
Keith Thomas,
President,
Acton Citizens' Band

Halton Hills— people's choice

We just want to go on record as saying that we liked your editorial "Quit Your Complaining."

We also liked Mr. Force's letter for his positive tone in which he said something good about Halton Hills, Acton. It was a pleasant change from the destructive criticisms we have been reading.

If as many people as now complain put as much effort into making our Government work Halton Hills, Acton could be an enviable place to live, laugh and learn.

The complainers have three options; agree with the system, change it by democratic process or relocate where the Government suits them.

Thanks to Regional Government we have lower taxes than many other areas. Check out comparable properties in Scarborough, Oshawa, Trenton to name a few.

We have a good Police Department, a good Fire department, excellent Medical centres and schools second to none.

Acton was good; it still is good, but with Halton Hills, Acton, we have no complaints.

Identity is a state of mind and each of us loses no dignity whether the name of our locale be Halton Hills or whatever. This thing called rivalry between Acton and Georgetown exists only in the minds of a few diehards. For many of us it is a meaningless attitude which came off the hockey-ice and ball-fields of the old days.

Happy Citizens

The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from an issue of the Acton Free Press of Thursday, November 15, 1967

School children had special ceremonies on Friday for Remembrance Day. M.Z. Bennett students observed the event in their own classrooms, since they have no auditorium. At the Robert Little school there was a program in the auditorium for senior grades.

Acton Legion Choralliers have been filmed singing "Tipperary" for a movie depicting various Legion activities coast-to-coast.

Cathy Hinton, grade eight student at the Robert Little school, was successful in the contest held last year by the Educational ABC's of Canadian industry booklets sent to all schools.

Bearing with them a huge wooden cheque, a hundred children from the Robert Little school raided the Y's Men's meeting last Thursday evening in the Y basement. Their cheque painted on wood by Ken Marchment measured eight feet by four feet and was sign-painted to indicate the sum of \$520.15.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, November 21, 1957

Approximately 75 men and women are busy at the high school Monday and Tuesday evenings during Night School classes. Phil Caddick is teaching wood-working, Mrs. F. Leyland is teaching copper tooling, Mrs. H. B. Galloway is teaching typing, Mrs. E. M. Hartley is teaching tailoring, Walter Pope has bookkeeping, Mrs. L. Brown has advanced sewing and Donald Bothwell has a class of new Canadians ardently learning English.

About 400 attended the high school commencement in the Robert Little gym. Bruce Andrews won the trophy for the student who made the greatest contribution to the school. Honor graduation diplomas were presented to Bob Landsborough, Joy Peal and Elizabeth Jany. Joy was valedictorian. Secondary diplomas were presented to R. Braida, J. Brown, Frank Cooper, Helen Landsborough, E. McEnery and B. Smith.

Chosen to represent Acton in the North Halton public speaking finals was Mary K. Gibbons. Other finalists were Carol Eison, Mary Beth Elliott, Helen Beard, Janet Rognvaldson, Susan Henton, Carmen Woodburn, Robert Meyers, Neil Franklin and Theresa Papillon.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, November 17, 1927

At last the public has been allowed to see what the new Ford car looks like. It comes rather late, however, in the year for demonstration purposes, unless equipped with snow navigating facilities.

Wednesday was the annual meeting of Acton Citizens Band and the boys were all present. Honorary president is J. C. Hill, bandmaster A. Mason, assistant N. F. Moore, past president R. Spielvogel, vice president George Simpson, committee G. A. Dills, George Smith, Eugene McPherson, J. McGeachie.

Acton is in a splendid financial position, the annual reports indicate. Acton Community Glee Club will hold its first meeting at the town hall.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, November 15, 1877

The skating rink is fast becoming a literal fact. The outer walls are completed and the roof will be on in a couple of days. Mr. John Cameron is the builder and the cost is \$400. The shareholders are Messrs. John and Charles Hill, Edwin McGarvin, John Cameron, James Nicklin and Albert Nicklin.

A Winnipeg Free Press special says 15 lodges of Sitting Bull's band are encamped 40 miles from here. They came north for fear of being turned over to the United States. Sitting Bull declares his undying fealty to the Queen.

A New York wife was driven to suicide by her husband's intemperance. The new brick store and dwelling on Main St. belonging to the McNair estate, was sold for \$1,800 to Mr. Robert Agnew.

We understand that Mr. James Symon, formerly of the firm of C. and J. Symon, intends to open a dry goods establishment in Agnew's new brick store.

The Sons of Temperance purpose holding a first-class soiree on New Year's evening. It has rained six consecutive days and now we have a cold snap.

THE ACTON FREE PRESS

PHONE 853-2010

Business and Editorial Office



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 Newspapers 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, carrier delivery in Acton 15 cents per week. Second class mail Registration Number 0515. 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 signature, will not 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 hereby offered to sell, and may be withdrawn at any time. Dille Printing & Publishing Co. Ltd. David R. Dille, Publisher

Ray Dille Editor Bill Cook Advertising Manager

Copyright 1977