

Free Press Editorial Page

Region can be better

When regional government was first proposed, Acton councillors joined in its planning, as did councillors and citizens throughout the county.

Proposals were made, plans were prepared.

Acton council wound up its business in a manner designed to use monies at hand in the best way possible for the people. They felt they left their affairs in excellent condition...as Acton has always been run.

When the region was begun in January 1974, Esquesing, Acton and Georgetown were set into one area and reorganization proceeded as intended. In particular, our councillors optimistically faced the problems of the new system determined that they would make it work.

Meetings were run in the usual orderly way and the issues that were "parochial" were talked out. Our mayor has said that no local issue ever failed to pass because councillors from other areas deliberately outvoted our representatives.

However, in Acton the people talked together of their feelings of dissatisfaction. As a result, a group of people got together to put these thoughts down on paper. When the region set up a committee to review regional government, the Actonians for Action committee prepared a brief. It was directed from the region to Halton Hills council, however, as councillors at regional level said the concerns were local. Indeed they were.

The Actonians for Action put out sheets in stores for people to sign, and in short order they had over 2,000 signatures.

They prepared a brief to go to Ontario Treasurer Darcy McKeough requesting a review of regional government. Since legislation indicated a review could be ordered with 50 signatures, they reassembled the required 50.

The request of this group was rejected.

When he spoke to the Chamber of Commerce annual meeting last week, region chairman Ric Morrow stoutly defended regional government, criticized Acton

people and went so far as to refer to "separation."

The Actonians committee asked for a study, not for separation. Although at one point there was some street corner discussion on whether Acton would be better off with Eramosa township, oriented to Guelph, nothing came of this.

Where Mr. Morrow derived his impressions on separation for Acton we don't know.

We have never had as many letters to the Editor on any subject as those with criticism of regional government. Perhaps he has read these.

Our three councillors and the people here have co-operated well with the new system.

The Actonians for Action are indeed speaking for many people but they are doing so in a reasoned, intelligent and calm way. They have been seeking facts, as well as responding to emotions.

Last Wednesday, the Liberal task force on regional government set up its hearing in Milton.

Actonians for Action were there, with their brief, and outlined their case again to the panel of Liberal MPPs.

No councillors from Halton Hills attended this meeting.

The group has had short shrift from the region, their own area council and from the Ontario Treasurer's office.

They responded at a time many here wanted a voice. They have done, and are doing, a most commendable job.

One of the great drawbacks of the old county council system was its inflexibility for change. The one thing that bothers us most now is the continuation of the attitude that there is no room for, and in fact strong opposition to, change at the regional level.

One of the great hopes for regional government was the expectation that change could be made, not for the sake of change, but to improve the system of local government.

We're not opposed to regional government in Acton. We're not considering separating.

Acton we are. Quebec we're not.

Support for the fair

It is surprising to the many hundreds of people who enjoy the fair to realize the board is faced with a deficit of \$7,426. Bad weather was a main reason, with steady drizzle on the Sunday.

New president Brent Marshall pointed out, and rightly, that many groups and individuals benefit

from the fair, yet do not share the burden of organization or financing. Contacts are being made to try to remedy this.

The fair board is planning fund-raising events to try to wipe out some of the deficit. Those of us who enjoyed the fair would also do well to support these events.

Of this and that

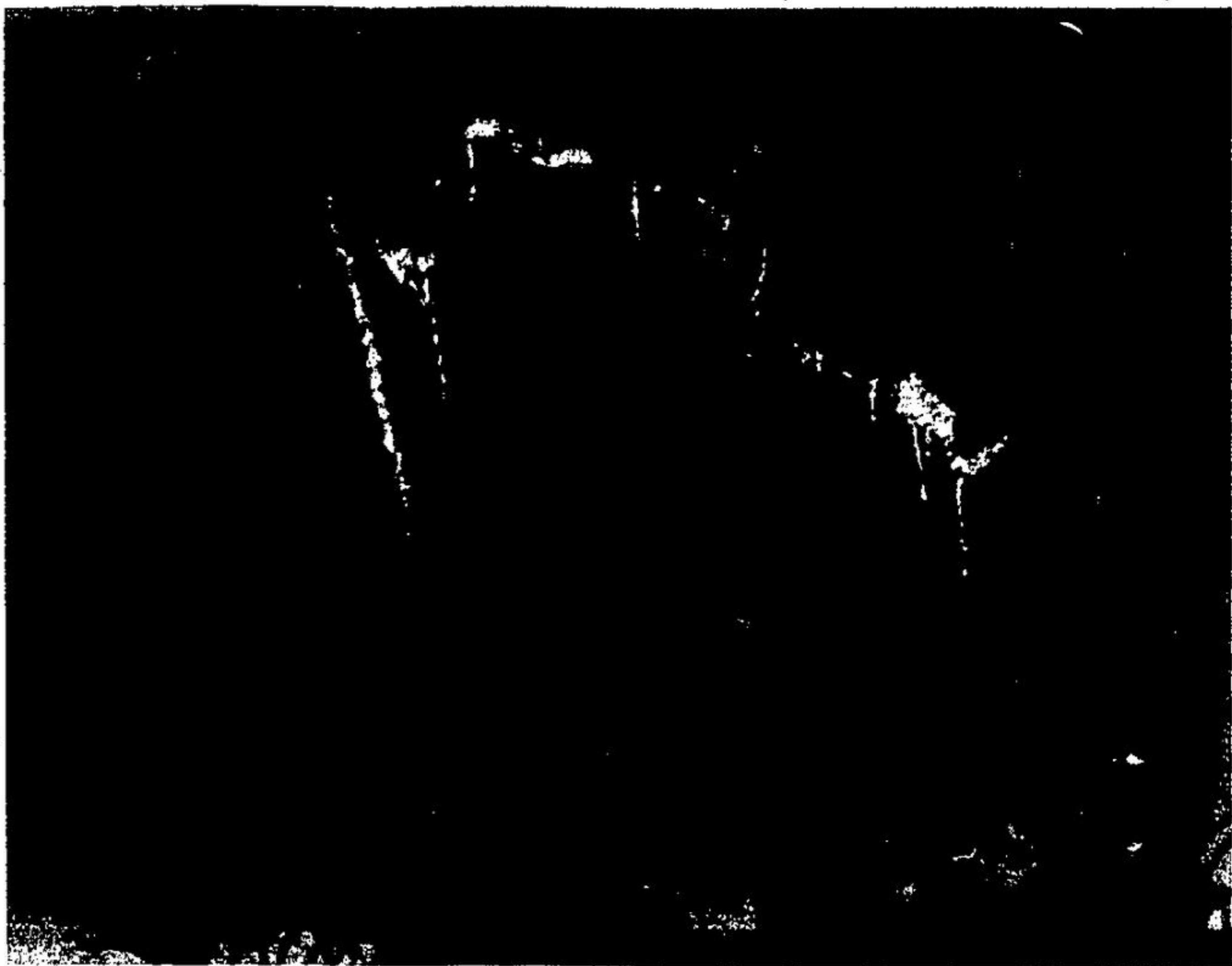
Surely we received our last Christmas card Tuesday of this week. It was mailed in Scotland on November 16... and the past week we received Brian McCristall's Abbotsford B.C. newspaper, well over a month old...

There were 60 Meals on Wheels delivered last week!

In case you forgot to make your New Year's resolutions on the first of the year, it's never too late. Start compiling them any time, and then do your resolving on any of the following New Year's days: Chinese—February 18; Persian—March 21; Siamese—April 1; Mohammedan—April 26; Alexandrine—August 29.



STONE SWAN HAS SEEN more than one winter, and has not fared well at January's hands. Fate of the inorganic swan mirrors that of Fairy Lake's live waterfowl, who are crowded into a small area of open water now, and probably not enjoying the experience very much. After all, ducks can never tell their grandducklings "I remember the blizzard of '78 very well." This is because ducks can't talk. They just quack.



ICICLES GLOW IN THE sun as warmer temperatures returned, at least for a while. Watery stalactites were photographed Thursday afternoon, but had melted by evening the same day.



Sugar and spice by Bill Smiley

One of the most pleasant experiences in the world, for those of us who, if not over the hill, are at least sitting at the top contemplating with a mixture of dismay and scared exhilaration the slippery slope we have climbed, and the greasy one we are about to descend, is getting back to normal after lurching through the "joys" of the holidays that end the year.

And if one of my students gave me a sentence like that last one on composition, I'd probably tear it to ribbons for lack of coherence and unity.

But perhaps those very things—coherence and unity—are the things so lacking in the holiday season, and to which we return with a sigh of relief in the short cold days and long cold nights of January.

We had a rather bleak Christmas this year. Our hearts were in the right place, but my teeth weren't. Several of them had joined that little limbo where your teeth go when they decide to leave you to your own devices, otherwise known as gums.

I put a good face on it, as it were, trying to conceal from my wife, with her flashing white teeth, my mental, spiritual and physical humiliation at having to exist on pea soup, soft-boiled eggs and medicinal brandy.

But it didn't work. We had the usual fight about the tree, finally getting it up after four hours of recriminations, tears and explosions of rage and frustration.

This year we put it in a bucket of wet sand, after years of trying to set it up in piles of coal, in various tree stands, and on a flat board nailed to the trunk. As usual it toppled heavily in all directions but the right one, and we had to tie it to the wall with string.

Every year my wife says other people get their tree to stand without using string.

And every year I defy her to show me one tree in town that isn't trussed to the wall in some way.

For Christmas dinner, I'd bought a fat duck. But the old lady didn't like eating an entire duck by herself. So we sat around rather vacantly and stared at the huge pile of parcels under the tree, which could not be opened, of course, because 90 per cent of them were for "the boys," and the boys weren't expected till the day after Boxing Day.

So the day they did arrive, noses running freely, we cooked the duck and a roast of beef, and a happy time was had by all, trying to put front-end-loaders and fire trucks and other plastic monstrosities together.

You know, there was something to be said for those old days during the Depression, when kids got a pair of mitts or socks and maybe a 15-cent bubble pipe.

At least the adults didn't have to spend hours trying to find parts for Tinker Toys and Leggo and Sesame St. scattered all over the living room. They didn't have to try to get together stuff that would have taxed Leonardo da Vinci.

However, the boys were a roaring delight, as always, and their Gran spoiled them silly, and their mother told me what was wrong with my entire attitude to teaching (she's been at it three months and has all the questions and most of the answers), and their father drowsed quietly during the piano concert that followed, and yours truly ran out every hour to scrape 10 inches of snow off the car.

But this is not normalcy. How joyous it is to get back to the old humdrum routine. To hear that thrilling, drilling sound of the alarm clock at 7.15, totter to the bathroom with arthritic joints giving out cracks like

maple trees in a deep frost, and to emerge in three-quarters of an hour, smelling of shaving cream, toothpaste and honest soap, another chapter of a novel read.

How very pleasant it is to wade out to the garage in the barely lighted morning, snow flying in all directions, scratch the ice off the inside of your windshield with your finger-nails, and try to start the old beast, which emits a couple of grunts like a lady moose in labor, and falls totally, unforgettably silent.

How thrilling to get back to work, the salvation of many a man and woman, and exchange witty repartee about losing your boots at the New Year's Eve party, and whose snowmobile broke down, and why Jack's nose is swollen with grog-blossoms, and how much white gunk there is in the driveway.

And then there's the delight of getting home after work, and sitting down for one of those intimate chats with your wife, who tells you, at interminable length, how to place a "dart" in a pattern for sewing, when all you know about darts is that it's played in a pub.

And to discover that for dinner you're having hamburger and onions, which you had in the cafeteria for lunch. And that the bill for the furnace repairs came to \$48, and that the man wants 50 bucks to clean the ice off the roof, and the paper boys claims you owe him for six weeks.

I don't know about you, but I can't stand too many of these holidays: the slothful lying-in in the morning, the staying up until three to watch a late movie, the one-hour coffee breaks morning and afternoon.

It's debilitating. It contributes to moral delinquency. Far better the comfortable horror of the regular routine of a Canadian winter.

Our readers write

Thoughts on leaving Acton

January 18, 1978

Dear Kay:

It was the spring of 1968, nearly 10 years ago, when I drove into Acton for the first time. I was looking for new accommodation for September, when I was to begin my position as head of guidance at Acton High School. One of the first families to welcome me was the Dills. Both you and Dave made me feel quite positive about my move to Acton.

I am now in my final weeks of employment at the High School, after having resigned last month. Although I am excited and enthusiastic about my move, I find myself becoming reflective and somewhat sad to leave the community in which I have lived, worked, and made so many friends and acquaintances. I moved to Guelph several years ago, but I have maintained my ties with the people of Acton as a result of my work in the school. When I leave at the end of January I will continue my private practice in the personal, marriage and family counselling field. In addition, I will be working as a consultant to business and industry in this area.

I would like to thank all the people of Acton who have made our stay in this area both active and enjoyable. Some names that I would like to mention for special thanks are Russell, Margie, and Carol

Patterson, Kaye and Bellamae Reszell, Peter and Joanne Marks, Sue Sales, Gloria Coats, the Acri family, plus all the present and former students and staff members of

Acton High. Thank you for contributing in significant ways to my life. Yours sincerely,

Brian D. Skerret

January 19, 1978

Acton Business Association Halton Hills (Acton) Ontario

Dear Sirs:

We would like to comment on your statement "If the Banks were open Friday night and Saturday, it would be good for the whole business community."

First, has anyone given a thought to the bank employees. Some might be surprised to learn that they do not go to work at 10:00 a.m. and leave at 3:00 p.m. They put in a full day like everyone else, including being open until 6:00 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays. Bank employees are not human. Nobody believes that they like to spend time with their families or enjoy a meal with them. The opinion is that they are only there to serve the public, and don't like to

lead normal family lives. We would like to suggest the merchants of town stay open until midnight so the bank employees can do their shopping after they get off work!

Several years ago, the local banks extended their hours until 6:00 p.m. We feel this is adequate for this town. Many of the people who work out of town also bank out of town.

It is outrageous that the Business Association would use extended banking hours to bribe the people to shop in town. Wake up and smell the coffee boys, until this town gets some decent shopping facilities, better quality, selection, and decent prices, the banks could be open 24 hours a day and people would still shop out of town. Anonymous c.c. Acton Free Press

The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 24, 1968

Only grandmother in a group of 22 graduates, Mrs. Nan Hurst received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Guelph.

The town office has been moved into the council chambers for a few weeks until their quarters are renovated.

John Goy was returned as chairman of the parks and recreation committee with Brendan Aberne as vice-chairman. Ted Tyler told the committee they have to make a decision on what to do with Lelsham Park. Parkland along the lake on Elizabeth Dr. was also discussed.

Bob Drinkwater was elected to head the planning board for 1968, with Sid Saitz as vice-chairman and Iain Williams as secretary-treasurer. Cranston Griese was present concerning a plan of subdivision for his property.

The U.C.W. presented a life membership to Mrs. Veldhuis.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 30, 1958

G.W. McKenzie, principal of the Robert Little public school, was officially appointed International Director of the Ontario Region of the Y's Men's clubs on Thursday January 23 at the regular meeting held in the Y.

Bill Gauld, of London, past international director, presented the new director with the official pin of office.

Progress over the past year in the Acton Citizens' Band will be quite noticeable to residents of Acton, when the band commences their summer engagements. Added to the ranks recently has been a new drum section with approximately 15 new faces playing bass side and snare drums.

Principal E. Hansen told members of the North Halton school District Board Monday that an additional teacher might be required in the fall to accommodate the increasing enrollment.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 28, 1928

The first session of the Halton County Council was held on Tuesday afternoon. The main item at this initial meeting is always the appointing of a Warden. Ex-Warden Agnew was present at this meeting and with the promptitude that has characterized his municipal activities, presented the customary photograph of the County Council of 1927.

The choice of the Warden was an unanimous one for Mr. Thos. A. Blakelock, Reeve of Oakville.

The chairmanships of the committee were allotted for 1928, as follows: Finance Committee—W.H. Morden, Trafalgar. Road and Bridge—T.L. Leslie, Esquesing. County Buildings—A. Mason, Acton. Printing—M.L. Near, Georgetown. Education—Edmond Holby, Burlington. Special Communications—E. Syer, Milton. Railway, Legislation and Agriculture—F. McNiven, Nassagaweya.

The Ontario Bakeries, of which Mr. C.K. Browne is the Acton representative, have placed a bright new delivery wagon on their bread route.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 24, 1878

Since the last municipal election, affairs have taken a rather curious turn. Mr. Storey, who was elected by a majority of four, has disclaimed the election on account, as he says, of the bitterness of party feeling which prevailed. We regret that this election has caused so much ill feeling. Persons who were formerly on the very best terms are now bitterest enemies. If this kind of thing is permitted to prevail respectable persons will refuse to allow themselves to be drawn into the municipal arena.

The meetings in the Disciples' chapel are still continuing from night to night. The attendance is large.

At present there are a number of pigs parading our streets. The pound-keeper should see that they are impounded immediately.

The Rockwood Dramatic Club presented Ten Nights in a Bar Room in the Union Hall, Nassagaweya. It was well-rendered, each member fulfilling their part creditably. They showed most vividly the harrowing scenes connected therewith, and it should serve as a warning not only to those in the habit of frequenting such places but also to those in the business, that liquor has the power to transform all that is good and beautiful into that which is unholy and wretched.

The thermometer yesterday stood at 28 degrees below freezero.

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