

Free Press Editorial Page

We're all affected

Anyone seriously interested in the future of Halton should attend the Acton area meeting to discuss the draft official plan for the Halton planning area. It will be held in the library on Wednesday, Feb. 8.

It too often happens that few people attend this kind of meeting. We're sure the library isn't expecting an overflow crowd.

But the importance of the document is impossible to estimate. Its decisions will affect us for years.

Do we want our population in Halton Hills to increase from 34,000 to 45,000 in 1986 and to 50,000 in

2001? What about farm lands? What about open space, transportation, sewage, water, waste management, utilities, and industry?

The document goes a lot further than these basic issues. It includes a section on our heritage, supporting the conservation of heritage features. On social and health services. Energy. The Niagara Escarpment.

These decisions will touch all of our lives.

We are being given an opportunity to come, talk and ask questions.

Welcome, Canadians

Welcome, French-speaking Canadians!

A list has now been compiled of Actonians who speak French, and it has been distributed to gas stations, restaurants and other places where travellers might be liable to stop here.

If these people have any questions or problems, the proprietor of the business can now refer to the list of local people willing to help. There are seven names on the list, with phone numbers.

It was all Lorna Clarke's idea. A French-speaking man came into the town office recently, looking for the post office. While she was able to communicate fairly well, she thought it would be better to have a list of people who could speak French. She made a few contacts and had some volunteers, and now her idea has become reality.

Acton will be able to give a friendlier welcome now, to French-speaking travellers.

Walking in winter

Many more people than ever before are making a point of enjoying the outdoors in the wintertime. After last week's storm, cars lined the roads near the popular areas for cross-country skiing, tobogganing and walking on park trails.

If you haven't any special equipment, walking is still a delight on cold and sunny days.

Good advice for people on winter trails: Tell someone where you plan to go and when you will return. Don't start out on a long trail late in the day.

Try not to over-exert yourself while getting into shape—tired muscles are easily injured!

Concentrate on exhaling forcibly; it is very effective in reducing the tiring effect of strenuous exercise.

Keep an eye out for landmarks. On longer or unfamiliar trails, carry a compass and map.

Never cross a lake or stream without knowing the ice conditions. Travel with a party of three or more. In case of a mishap, one can remain while one goes for help.

Be prepared for emergencies. When snowmobiling, carry a spare drive belt, spark plugs, tool kit, and first aid kit. (When skiing carry a first aid kit and spare ski tip).

Do not build fires along the trail.

Stay on the marked trail. If you fall while cross-country skiing and damage the trail, repair or re-track the trail. If snowmobiling, avoid travelling on the ski trail.

Carry your garbage. Clothing should be lightweight yet loose.

It is better to wear several light sweaters than one thick heavy one.

Use a backpack or a waistpack when carrying food, wax, extra socks, etc.

Tuck your pantlegs inside your socks; keep them from getting soaked.

Mittens keep hands warm longer. Always take a hat along: if you get cold, put it on. Feeling hot—take it off!

Limit perspiring, if possible. If you sweat now, you will be cold later.

Anticipate becoming cold. Put extra clothing on before you need them—not after.

Eat high energy food and drink plenty of warm beverages.

If you are cold, exercise to increase circulation and body warmth.

Practice the buddy system. Check your buddy's face for frost bite, the affected area will turn white. Usually the first areas affected are nose, forehead, cheeks and ears, those areas exposed to the wind. In colder conditions, the hands and feet can suffer from frost bite.

The safest way to deal with frost bite is to gradually warm the affected area with body heat. Remove gloves or tight boots and put hands or feet of the victim inside your jacket and under your armpits.

A sympathetic ear

The Globe and Mail reporter who attended the Liberal Travelling task force meeting on regional government in Milton titled his column "Singing Regional Blues". "It's still out there, the fierce resentment of this child of the Davis majority years," Norman Webster wrote. "Regional government - or the fear of it - certainly played a part in keeping large sections of southwestern Ontario in the Liberal column last year. . . It's a sore spot - one the Liberals in particular intend to keep probing."

He included Norm Elliott and Lou Bonnette's remarks as well as those of former Actonian Dave Katz.

Mr. Webster seems to have had a sympathetic ear. "Lou Bonnette from Acton tells a comic-opera story of his struggles with layers of bureaucracy."

"Mr. Katz says the most discouraging thing is that, despite all predictions to the contrary, regional government will not benefit his children and grandchildren and for this reason: it discourages becoming involved,

discourages the assumption of personal responsibility. It is too remote and bureaucratic. . ."

"The point from Dave Katz lingers in the air. Are people increasingly saying 'What's the use?' If history is harsh on William Davis, it will be for these reasons. That, really, was the message from Milton," Mr. Webster concluded.

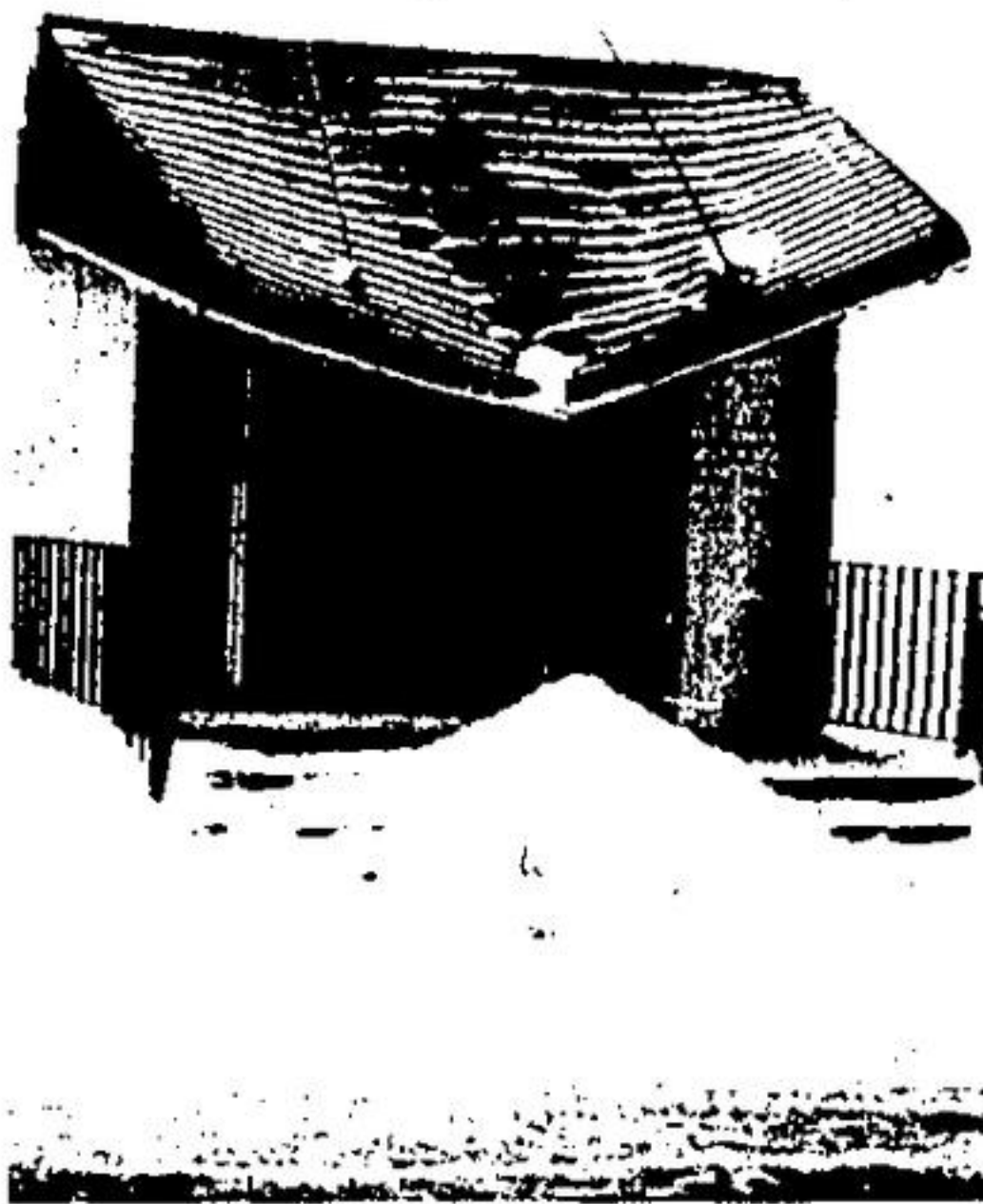
Snowflakes

An Acton man, just back from Hamilton, says anyone who complains about Acton streets should see Hamilton's. Our snow removal is vastly superior, he says.

This would have been a good year to have help in plowing main sidewalks, from the town. Council is considering snow removal on sidewalks. Although the work superintendent says the interlocking paving can't be plowed, there are other sidewalks that would benefit from some help alright. Especially this year.



And the snows came



Sugar and spice by Bill Smiley

W. O. Mitchell, well-known and respected Canadian writer came out with something on a national TV interview with which I wholeheartedly concur.

He suggested, more or less, that everything that is wrong with the Canadian character can be blamed on our Canadian winters.

After a couple of months of winter, we feel harassed, persecuted, and vaguely wronged. We become insular, grumpy, gloomy and generally unfit to live with.

When it has snowed and blown for a couple of weeks on end, or a couple of months on end, as it has around our place, you are ready to kick the cat, complain about the cooking, snarl at your children, or quietly climb into the bathtub and open your wrists.

I haven't any figures, but I'll bet our suicide rate soars after the holiday season, when we face three months of being cold and being broke. (I wouldn't insult anybody by making this bet in Canadian dollars. Make it yen or marks or francs.)

I would like to expand on this and make the bet on divorces and deaths. People get to the point, about the end of January, where they can't stand themselves, let alone their spouse, so they split up. Old people and sick people, huddled at home or in hospital, get so sick of living that they just up and die.

You will retort that a lot of affairs begin in mid-winter. This is true. But it's not love. Most of them are among the apeski crowd, and it's sex or a desperate measure to keep warm.

I can't imagine anyone falling in love

while whizzing through farmers' fences on a snowmobile or shoving a car out of a snow-bank.

What I can imagine is a sober, decent citizen, perhaps a kindly retired clergyman, committing murder with a shovel after the town plow has refilled his driveway for the fourth time in 24 hours.

I can contemplate, with some sympathy, the ordinarily happy housewife and loving mother being hauled into court for child-battering just after her kids, with friends, have trooped in with half a ton of snow and slush on their boots and marched across the kitchen floor she has scrubbed three days in a row.

You may think I exaggerate. I do not. I, one of the mildest, sweetest chaps you'd ever encounter, have seriously considered mayhem when some turkey with bald tires starts up an icy hill ahead of me, skids sideways across the road and leaves me there with my wheels spinning and smoke coming out of my ears.

I'm not against winter in principle. I'm just against winter in Canada. They can have all the winter they like in principle.

Nor am I unaware that there is a tiny, benighted portion of our populace that thoroughly enjoys winter.

Children, on the whole, love it. Instead of going through red lights on their bicycles and being killed by cars, they can dart out from between two snow banks into the path of a car that is sashaying along on glare ice.

Teenagers, another notoriously unstable group, also seem to like winter. Instead of breaking their legs riding motorbikes, or their necks in speedboats, they can break

their legs riding snowmobiles and their necks on a ski hill. At any given time in any given winter, half a dozen ski bums are clumping around in the average high school with casts on their legs.

Curlers, too, don't seem to mind the winter. They drive in a heated car to a heated and often luxurious curling club, where they can run up and down the ice for two hours in their beautiful tight pants, and then sit around drinking and discussing every rock thrown ad nauseam. The only thing more boring is a golf foursome going over every shot in the bar. But at least they have the sense to do it in summer.

One other segment that professes to love winter is the swinging singles. Every weekend they pile out of the city in their thousands heading for the ski hills. And the chalets. And the big drinking sessions. And the chance of meeting Mr. Big or Ms. Boobs. And on Sunday night, after spending perhaps two hours skiing, often none, they pile back in their fast cars and head for home, a menace to everything on the road.

They're in the same category as the same singles who do the same thing in summer, except that the ski mob, the city slickers, don't know how to drive in snow.

But ask anybody sensible if he loves winter. Ask a hydro lineman. Ask a snowplow operator who has to work a double shift. Ask a cop. It's not necessary, I believe, to ask a guy who has a fuel oil franchise.

Aside from the sights of winter—red, runny noses, slush and salt all over your front lawn, 800 pounds of icicles hanging from your eaves—there are the sounds.

Hacking coughs on every side. The clunk and rattle and slam of the window at 4 a.m. The sweet howl of the wind about your windows. The crash of falling ice. The thump and gulp of the furnace sucking its life blood.

My solution? Either give it back to the Indians, poor devils, or send everybody over 40 south for six months, and let the other idiots revel in it. And pay the bills.

This and that

Thursday is Groundhog Day! Winter can't get worse, but it can get longer. Check the shadows tomorrow.

February . . . the month of love and affection.

Neighbory News and its Over 90 birthday club mentioned Acton several times during the year. The CBC program is heard Sunday mornings.

The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Wednesday, January 31, 1968. More than 200 residents crowded into Ospringe school to learn details of the proposed dam and lake at Everton. The dam, proposed by the Grand River Conservation Authority, would cover 850 acres of land north-west of town. The Everton site was one of three surveyed. Hespeler and Guelph were also considered. GRCA officials said. The Authority thought it could do the most with the least amount of dollars from the Everton site.

The town engaged Ernie T. Marks as building inspector. A resolution was also passed that the building inspector be paid 100 per cent of the building permit fees, with a minimum yearly salary of \$500.

The annual meeting of Eden Mills United Church heard from treasurer N.S. Marshall who reported an increase in envelope donations off set an increase in expenses. The books balanced with some credit.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press February 13, 1958. Ricky Ironside, 11-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Ironside, had the misfortune to receive a fractured shin bone while skiing near Acton last Sunday. Convalescing at home with his leg in a cast, Rick claims he intends to raise money for the Red Cross by charging for the privilege of autographing the cast.

Acton Model Railroad club sponsored a teen dance at the Y on Friday with over 70 boys and girls present.

Over 300 attended the annual Junior Farmer drama festival at the Robert Little school on Friday. Mrs. Dunham of Acton acted as adjudicator. The Norval group had the best play.

A new store and apartment building is being constructed at the corner of Mill and Elgin St. by Albert Van Gils.

Members of Rockwood C.G.I.T. who received awards were Kay Lavery, Joan McConnell, Eleanor Hosking and Marjorie Edwards.

Mrs. Buckner's Music and Movement group of children will appear on Kitchener TV. Helen Benton and Jon Hurst will be singing solos.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 2, 1928. From Clerk Farmer we gathered the following vital statistics for Acton for the past year. There were 39 births registered in Acton last year; 20 marriages were recorded and 17 deaths. Clerk Farmer issued 19 marriage licenses.

To keep in close touch with the growth of the plant of the Acton Tanning Company here it seems to be imperative to pay frequent visits to this manufacturing establishment. Starting last week another new department was added to the plant. The Free Press found that the new department was just getting here. This new part of the plant will manufacture from the leather produced at the tannery, skate straps, slicker straps, and in fact any description of straps, in quantities, pump washers and valves, from the largest to the smallest.

The Mason Orchestra have this year arranged for a dance to celebrate St. Valentine's Day. It will be held on Friday evening, February 10, in the Town Hall here. Bert Davidson is the floor manager. The posters promise a good time for young and old and the prizes will be allotted for old-time as well as new-time dances. The Mason Orchestra will provide the music.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 7, 1878. Georgetown skating rink is to open with a grand masquerade February 6, and it is to be hoped that the entertainment will be infinitely better than the shabby posters which announce it.

The school board has appropriated \$30 to be used in supplementing the public library.

A farmer named John Butts from near Crewsons Corners took a load of wood to the G.T.R. station in this village on Saturday last and while returning, when directly opposite the Disciple Meeting House, one of his horses fell dead. The horse was a valuable one.

The New Presbyterian Church at Hornby was duly opened last week. The proceedings were entirely in keeping with the known dignity of the Presbyterian body; there was no soliciting or subscriptions. The furniture and all the necessary fixtures was about \$1,600. This has all been provided for.

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