

Free Press Editorial Page

Time to respond again

When the announcement was made in the Free Press that Halton Hills council wanted to tear down the town hall to make a parking lot, many citizens were annoyed. When the Chamber of Commerce called a quick meeting, the organizers were amazed at the large number of people who turned out. The same crowd flocked to the next council meeting to protest the hasty decision.

Over 2,000 signed petition sheets asking that the building be saved. Things have not gone the way the Town Hall Restoration Committee would have wished since then. Council decided to proceed with the tearing down of the town hall stage area, to allow for the second storey addition to the fire hall. At that

time, supporters expressed discouragement. Then the Heritage Foundation withheld its decision on a grant until council makes a commitment.

Most of the building remains and can remain. It is usable now and will remain so.

The committee needs money now. They are giving something for it, too. A beautifully prepared print of a sketch of the building, as it was when it was new, in the 1880s. Framed or not.

The committee is counting on the many people who responded so enthusiastically last spring to respond again. Newcomers, too, might realize the importance of their new town's heritage.

Details are in the committee's open letter to the people on page 1.

Unlearning greed

Ten Days for World Development will be marked in Acton again this February. Organizer Eldon Comfort says no-one could put better focus on the theme than the Rev. Douglas Dittich, now the rector of St. George's Anglican church in Kamloops, B.C. This column, written for the Kamloops Sentinel, is reproduced here, with thanks.

Can we unlearn greed in time?
By Rev. Doug Dittich
St. George's Anglican Church,
Kamloops

We of the affluent, industrialized West must take a hard look at our consumption of food, accumulation of goods, wage demands the low quality of life in the cities we build, our destruction of the environment and waste of natural resources. Our frenetic consumption and insatiable demands are unrealistic.

During Ten Days for World Development this year the emphasis is on food. Let's stop moralizing about world poverty and question some definitions of "development," accepting the challenge to adopt a personal lifestyle that reflects a sensible and honest stewardship over God's creation. The crunch will come for us soon anyway. Can we learn to rid ourselves of greed while we still have a choice?

In a thought-provoking book, "Enough is Enough", John Taylor, Bishop of Winchester, compares man's idolatry of growth and all its ruthless and unthinking excess with the Bible's theology of enough. The author invites us to join the creative task of defying the assumptions of today's consumer society.

There is something cynical in the argument, says Taylor, that the best way to feed the poor is to pile even more upon the rich man's table in the hope that bigger and better crumbs will fall from it.

There have to be limits to what we expect and demand. These are set by consideration for others and a recognition of our place in the whole scheme of things. The Biblical doctrine of creation and modern ecology both demand an accountability.

Progress and development should mean people helping people, not exploitation by a technology gone mad and a world of advertising bent on creating a mythical society of contrived need. To those seeking an alternate lifestyle the Church says: seek it in community and sharing. There is growing resistance to being enslaved by materialism. Join the movement! With a greater sense of simplicity we can turn things around.

Many now realize that even the best-intentioned aid given to the Third World changes nothing at all if there is not a change within us. The basic cause of economic and social injustice in developing countries is found right here in the developed world. If we are rich it is only at a cost to others. Are we willing to admit that the world food crisis is not a technical problem but a social one? The know-how and food to eliminate hunger are already here.

The Ten Days program calls us, among other things, to safeguard world agricultural lands. Can agriculture truly be a way for people to produce food first for themselves and not as a means to export income? Escape from hunger will come, not through food distribution, but through redistribution of control over food-producing resources. Much overseas economic aid has reinforced the use of land for export crops. We hardly foster self-reliance when we condone an economic system which plunders the Third World, making us more dependent on importing food from hungry people.

Get back to 3 Rs

Prominence should be given to teaching the three R's. Where did we hear that before?

Actonians heard it in 1899 when the Free Press reported:

"The annual report of J.S. Deacon, public school inspector, presented to County Council, presents the following advice for teachers: 1. Give prominence to the three R's, with proper development of the physical, mental and moral facilities, including self-control. 2. Teach literature before reading and thus avoid guessing and stumbling. 3. Insist upon round, regular writing, evenly spaced in every

form. 4. Give no exercise that will tend to deteriorate the writing. 5. Avoid so much transcription that pupils become careless as to form, size and neatness of letters and words. 6. Have all tables learned thoroughly and impress every rule by an abundance of simple problems solved mentally. 7. Teach so thoroughly and keep pupils so well employed throughout school hours that "home work" can be wholly discarded or reduced to a minimum."

A reader who had saved the clipping from the 75 Years Ago column in April, 1974, sent it in this week to share its timeliness.

The blizzard of '78

Since last week's paper, there have been more accounts of experiences during the big blizzard. While conditions were at their worst, it seems that people were at their best. There have been many stories of kindness and helpfulness. More strangers than we knew of last week were welcomed into district homes when they were un-

able to proceed further. Some of them had been involved in accidents. At least one out-of-town man has been back to visit since.

The concerns of the day abated when expected travellers made arrangements to stay where they were, or made it home safely.

Then the night was given over to staying snugly inside. Fortunately,



WHAT BETTER way of spending a stormy Saturday night than watching the Maple Leafs with a faithful companion?



Sugar and spice by Bill Smiley

This week, for a change, I'd like to write a nice, warm, sunny column, after beating piteously in the last one about our dreadful Canadian winters.

It's difficult. There's a raging blizzard howling around the house. The wind moans, then walls, then shrieks in frustration as it can't quite knock down the sturdy brick structure.

If I'd been like the first two little pigs, my dwelling would be flat by now, and I'd be howling across the fields like a tumbling tumbleweed.

Couldn't make it to work this morning. Managed to get the old '67 Dodge started, barreled through a drift on to the road, couldn't make the hill, backed down, got stuck while turning, was pushed out, went the long way around, drove for a bit in pure whiteouts, finally put my tail between my legs, or came to my senses, crept home, rammed the old buggy into a drift, and

dived into the house. My crazy wife, booted and scarved and helmeted, was just starting off for the eye doctor's, five blocks away. She thinks I make too much fuss about the weather, mainly because she stays in when it's dirty, and I'm the one who digs the car out every morning.

I told her to go ahead, but I wasn't driving her down. She stepped out the back door, in the lee of the house, and declared it wasn't bad at all, that she'd walk, implying by tone and expression that I was a big chicken, and that she, raised on a farm was on the real pioneer stock who didn't let a little 40-mile wind bother them.

"Go ahead. Enjoy," I suggested. She stuck her nose in the air, sailed out the back walk, got to the corner, turned purple and almost went flying off like a seagull caught in a squall.

When she crawled back in, panting, I

said it might be a good idea to call the doctor. She did and learned that he, sensible man, had started for town, turned around and gone home for the day, and all appointments were cancelled.

If she'd tried to make it to his office and back, we'd have found her dead in a drift, in about three days.

From my second-floor window, the only one that isn't frosted over, I watch the show. One bewildered bird, tail blown inside out, goes by on the wind like an arrow, slams into a tree, grasps a branch, is caught again by the monster and tossed out of sight into the spindrift. Must be some sort of a miniature turkey, who didn't know enough to go south with the rest of the folks, and thinks he has it soft because somebody is gorging him daily at a feeder.

Wham! Thunk! One of the shutters has torn loose, swings open against the window frame, then slams back against the brick wall. This goes on at irregular intervals all day. My wife knows perfectly well that when the wind dies, the shutter will be in the half-closed position, a real eye-sore, and that nobody is going to wade through that snow with a ladder and fasten it back.

I gently remind her that the same shutter blew off completely last winter, and lay near the front steps until well into September before being put back up.

"Rorrrr!" There goes a snowmobile, hell-for-leather, with someone who thinks he's Captain Marvel at the wheel. If somebody comes out of a sidestreet, that embryonic Evel Knievel will go straight into him at 40 miles an hour. Oh, well. One less.

No cars about now, after a few idiots tried to make the hill, and all wound up backing ignominiously down.

There goes the oil truck, lumbering through. Wish I owned about four of those and I'd be sitting in my southern condominium right now, chortling as I waited for the mail to arrive so I could count my cheques.

Taxi company has obviously taken the phone off the hook. Don't blame them. Send a driver out for a dollar and a half call to some crazy old lady who wants to go shopping, and wind up with a \$15 towing bill.

There goes another tow truck. They're having a field day. And they can have it. I'm happy, sitting snugly at home, waiting for the soup to boil. Called the school. Hardly anybody there. But we teachers are like the Pony Express. We're supposed to get through. I could walk. It's only a mile, uphill, and I'd probably only get a heart attack or pneumonia. They'll probably dock me a day's pay for not trying to get through in my car and going in the ditch or running down a pedestrian.

There's that poor devil down the street, shovelling. Every time I look out this window, he's shovelling, tirelessly. Can never be sure he's real. More like a ghost who has been assigned this job for eternity, instead of coal in the Other Place. This is worse.

Wife worries about sister-in-law, living alone in the country. Worries about her father, hoping he won't try to get around the rural mail route today. Worries about her daughter, who must bundle herself and The Boys up and venture into the storm to deliver them to day care, herself to practice teaching assignment.

Tell her not to worry. There's nowt we can do about it. In fact am rather enjoying the storm, the cutoff feeling. The not going to work feeling.

A good storm is rather like a purge. Cleanses the spirit of that daily grumbling about the weather.

VALENTINE'S DAY

"Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love that makes the world go 'round," said the Duchess to Alice in Wonderland. Indeed, love is a many splendored thing. The romantic affliction comes bubbling to the surface every year when Cupid delivers weapons, almost as powerful as his arrows, in the form of Valentine Cards on Feb. 14.

A Valentine Day Card can be bright and saucy or sweet and sentimental. Any way, the thought is basically that of Euripides who wrote, more than 1300 years ago, "Love brings bewitching grace into the heart."

The manner in which love has been expressed for several centuries has been compiled from the archives of the Gift Packaging and Greeting Card Association of Canada. Here is a selection:

"Love comforteth like sunshine after the rain" wrote Shakespeare, who also cautioned young lovers that life was fleeting when he wrote, "What is love? 'Tis not heretofore... Come kiss me, sweet and twenty, youth's a stuff will not endure."

Love and kisses were inseparable to Robert Herrick. "Give me a kiss," he wrote, "and to that kiss a score; then to that twenty add a hundred more." In the late 17th

Century in France, Rochefoucauld observed, "Lovers never get tired of each other, because they are always talking about themselves."

In 1810, W. Perks wrote on a Valentine Card to his loved one, "The fire of love consumes my heart; hasten comfort to impart." The object of his affection replied, "Your Valentine so full of flame, I put into the fire."

It was Scotland's Robert Burns who wrote, "But to see her was to love her. Love but her, and love forever. Had we never lov'd see blindly, never met, or never parted... we had ne'er been broken hearted."

"'Tis better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all."

Some American writers didn't view the subject quite so romantically. "Scratch a lover and find a foe," wrote the acerbic Dorothy Parker. "Love is like the measles—we all have to go through it," someone said before the discovery of antibiotics.

Robert Frost put it differently. "Love," he wrote, "is an irresistible desire to be irresistibly desired."

Perhaps the most popular message of Valentine's Day has been and may always be a simple, "Will you be my Valentine?"

Who's surprised

Thursday was mostly sunny, so the groundhog would see his shadow. Another six weeks of winter. Who's surprised?

As far as the farmers are concerned, they'd rather the groundhog stayed sheltered all year round. For them, groundhogs are a downright nuisance, causing mil-

lions of dollars damage annually.

The groundhog—Marmota monax—is found all over North America. It eats a wide variety of wild plants, clover, alfalfa and garden vegetables. Their natural enemies, the bears, lynx, wolves and cougars, are scarce around here, and the groundhogs pretty well have the fields to themselves. Groundhog holes are treacherous, too.

It is interesting to see in the 50 Years Ago column that bears were depended upon then to predict the oncoming spring. Wonder how that change came about?

Anyway, over the years, Canadians have maintained a natural interest in the length of the winter ahead.

the power stayed on except for a short interruption in one area. If it hadn't, we would all have been in need of those wood-burning stoves extolled at the library last week.

Storm after storm has struck this area this winter, but January 26 brought the worst of the bunch. People will be telling their grandchildren what happened to them in "the blizzard of '78."

The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Wednesday, February 7, 1968.

In a special presentation Acton District High School Board was given a gavel, though this is the final year of the board's existence. Fifteen-year board member Duncan Moffat was given the walnut gavel and base by secretary Fred Salt. Mr. Moffat is chairman of the board. Former secretary Billy Middleton simply used to borrow the public school board's gavel for the inaugural ceremonies.

The department of education gave tentative approval for the proposed addition to M. Z. Bennett school. Acton Public School Board trustees heard that grants were available on \$277,482 of the estimated cost of \$356,425.

Steven Van Fleet and Diane Bousfield were judged to be the best public speakers in town. Steven was announced to be the top speaker with his speech about "The Atomic Bomb". Diane was in second place with her speech on "Music". Both attend Robert Little School. Other finalists are Barbara Pratt, Ron McGinn, Joanne Pavli, Jean Matanic and Robert McMillan.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday February 20, 1958

Acton council at their regular meeting on Monday night agreed to engage a firm of solicitors to draw up an agreement with Canada Packers and Beardmore Company regarding the installation of a sewage treatment plant.

Charles Alexander "Sandy" Best, the man Halton voters sent to Ottawa last June with a large majority over his closest opponent, was given the nod once again to be the Progressive Conservative standard bearer for the March 31 federal election when 500 jammed into the Milton town hall for the Friday nomination meeting. Mr. Best's nomination was unopposed by those in attendance and they cheered and whistled as his acclaim to the position was announced.

Ken Dick, Milton solicitor was chosen Liberal candidate for the upcoming federal election at the nominating convention Saturday evening which political observers described as enthusiastic.

Fred Salt has left on a four to five week business trip taking him to Mexico, Panama, Honduras, Jamaica, and several other places in that area.

Mr. and Mrs. C.M. Beswick and the Wm. Dick family spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Donald McLean and the Don Brown family, it being the 41st wedding anniversary of the Beswicks and McLeans.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 9, 1928

The I.O.O.F. play was greeted with a full house. The cast included Frances Hurst, V. B. Rumley, Mrs. A. K. Ostrander, Eugene McPherson, Jessie Norton, Jessie Anderson, Charles Kirkness, Vera Hurst, James Adamson, Marie Lantz and Mrs. Ray Agnew.

At the regular meeting of the Lakeside chapter of the Jr. I.O.O.F. Mrs. James Adamson was elected regent. Mrs. V. B. Rumley and Miss Jessie Anderson vice-regents.

There seems a difference of opinion as to whether the bear saw his shadow or not. The icy roads have made motoring almost impossible. The open air rink at Rockwood is pretty well patronized.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 21, 1878.

The second masquerade carnival came off on the Acton skating rink on Tuesday evening. The attendance of spectators was large and that of the maskers was a large increase over the last carnival. The Acton and Milton brass bands were in attendance. Some of the costumes were gorgeous while others were comical in the extreme.

We would like to see some of our town loafers take a buck saw and make themselves useful. But in general loafers are high-toned folk; they are above such menial professions.

A tea meeting will be held this evening in the Methodist church, Silver Creek.

Mr. D. R. Lec, the dentist, left Acton on Saturday last for London where he will remain for about three weeks. Any person having a toothache can call on him when he returns and have it extracted without pain.

These evenings young ladies and gentlemen may be seen studying astronomy, after the skating rink has closed.

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