

The Free Press
Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Wednesday, February 14, 1968
Acton's pioneer past and burgeoning present are depicted in an 8 X 10 mural which was installed in the library lobby on Sunday afternoon. The talented painter, Mrs. Joe Bray, has been working on her unique centennial project since the fall.
Acton's public school board asked for and received approval for the \$356,425 addition to the M.Z. Bennett school at last night's (Tuesday) meeting of council. They'll apply to the Ontario Municipal Board for approval.
Tentative approval was also given for a proposed library on the Robert Little school at an estimated cost of \$50,000. This was a surprise presentation and left some councillors gasping until trustees, at the meeting in a body, explained the reason for the request.
About 130 enjoyed the Guide and Brownie Mother and Daughter banquet Tuesday evening in the Legion auditorium.
A column from the library is expected to become a new feature of the Free Press. Mrs. Isabel Watson, the chief librarian, has written a column about some of the newest books for this week and hopes to find time to continue.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday February 27, 1958
Disston saws and blades will be manufactured by 150 employees in an 8000 square foot building presently being built in Acton, when the plant opens in mid-July.
Two of the men implicated in the January 23 armed robbery of the Campbellville bank were sentenced to respective eight and ten year sentences with hard labor in Kingston Penitentiary when they appeared before Magistrate K.M. Langdon Tuesday morning. A third man asked for and received a week's remand in the case and a girl held as a material witness in the case was ordered released.
G.A. Dills, editor-in-chief of this paper, was named Ontario Weekly newspaperman of 1958 at the annual convention of the Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association in Toronto on Friday evening.
Two Brownies groups face extinction if leaders are not secured in the near future, it was revealed this week. Mrs. G. Haggitt, president of the Scout and Guide Mothers Association voiced concern over the possibility of stopping the two Brownie groups if volunteer assistance in leadership is not forthcoming.
Miss Cheryl Price, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Herb Price, passed her grade three Conservatory Music exam.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 16, 1928
A canvass of Eden Mills and vicinity for the installation of Hydro-Electric has been very successful and prospects are bright for the completion of arrangements and the building of the line in the early summer.
Messrs. S. V. Ling have arranged for a demonstration of the Pontiac and Buick cars in Acton February 24. Moving pictures and a lecture will be part of the programme and the affair will be held in the dining room of Jockey's cafe.
One of the prominent guests at the Acton Chamber of Commerce 20th annual dinner at Acton, England, was Miss Roberta C. Clark of Acton, Ontario. Miss Clark is one of the Canadian teachers who are exchanging with English teachers this year.
Pancake socials are now quite apropos.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 28, 1878
Considerable excitement was created in town last night by the report being circulated that a ghost has made its appearance in this village. One young man says he saw it about 11 o'clock near the residence of Mr. John McPhee. A number of young men reported seeing it walking around the field. His ghostship is described as having the appearance of a shadow.
Mrs. K. H. Mason lectured to a crowded house on Saturday night last. She spoke with such feeling and pathos as to draw tears to the eyes of her audience. At the conclusion of the lecture over 40 persons went forward and signed the pledge.
Letters to the editors appear in the past three issues on the subject of the skating rink. Rev. Mr. Hobbs of the Methodist Church had preached a sermon in which he described the rink as Satan's Protracted Meeting, denied the necessity of amusement and condemned it for keeping late hours.

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Free Press Editorial Page

More to come

The public meeting last week on the region's draft official plan drew a good crowd of local people, many of them from the rural areas. This was the third public meeting so far, as the planners and council take their proposals to the people.
Most of the questions dealt with generalities. More comments will be submitted by mail.
It's expected this plan, when completed, will go to region council in June and could be before the Ministry of Housing in the middle of the summer.
Also upcoming are similar meetings to debate Halton Hills official plan. Planner Mario

Venditti explains that this plan will have far more detail, which will probably provoke even more interest and comment.
Copies of the region draft official plan are available at the town office for those who would still like to peruse the region guidelines.
It's quite likely that Halton and Halton Hills plans will conflict in some ways.
Planning was the one main area where regional government was to benefit the people of Halton.
Goes without saying, the documents and the public meetings concerning them are of great importance to our future.

Transportation lacking

A major point of objection to the region's plan as it affects Acton is its lack of transportation planning. Although a new bus service is proposed to run up north to Milton and to Georgetown, Acton will remain isolated.
There is a bus service to Guelph and Toronto, and many people have used it happily over the years. It has been good and dependable.
But people are now realizing that the train service of years back was excellent and it is sorely needed again.
Congestion will become worse and worse.
It is useless for region staff members to say that they do not wish to encourage people in the Acton area to go to work in the densely-populated areas of Toronto. It is going to happen. Our people must get there. And there must be alternatives to the private car and intermittent buses.
Travellers to Britain always comment on the frequent, speedy

trains that zip people in and out of London so efficiently. It can happen here, and it should.
Why was improved transportation not allowed for? Even without Acton and district growing densely populated, the people who are here are on the move, and will keep adding to the terrible congestion of highways.
There is also no recognition of the fact that people here have long hoped for an improved rail service between Guelph and Toronto. Apparently the region planners are content to leave Acton the way it is. The GO train will still end its run at Georgetown.
Transportation to the south will still be non-existent. People going to court in Milton, for instance, have no way of going but by private car or taxi. The same problem excludes people without cars from region offices, region council meetings, and of course those all-important jobs that could be available in the south.

Of this and that

The swans on the lake, who are unable to fly, have a worrisome time escaping from dogs these winter days. They have a very small area of water to escape in. Although they're mute, they spot dogs many yards away and signal the warning to each other. They do their best to keep as much water between themselves and the dogs as they can. The other wildfowl, of course, can fly away from the pesky pets.

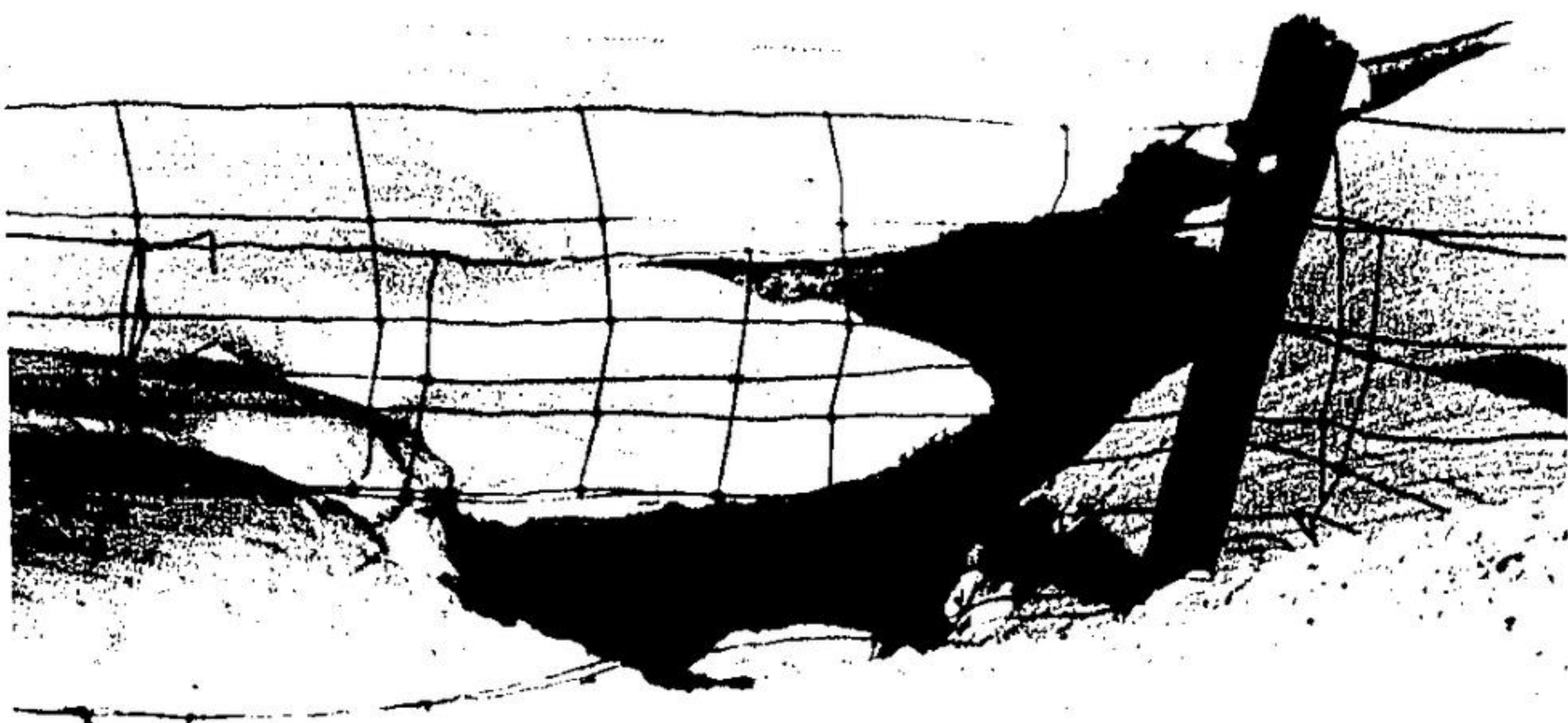
Bill Vaughan: Some idea of inflation comes from seeing a youngster get his first job at a salary you dreamed of as the culmination of your career.
A witty, devastating answer in an argument is like swatting a fly: by the time you've thought of it, the opportunity has flown.

Opinion

Important decision today

Today's meeting on regional council can be very important for Acton. Regional chairman Ric Morrow will ask council to do away with the chargeback system of paying for water and sewers.
Bob Burt, the reporter who covers region council for the Acton Free Press, comments in the Milton Champion:
Regional Chairman Ric Morrow will be playing with dynamite when he asks regional council to do away with the chargeback system.
Morrow will propose that the region move towards a standard water rate and implement sewer surcharges across the region. Until now, water rates have varied according to the cost to implement systems in various urban communities and sewer charges have been levied against the general taxes.
The other major change would see many roads in urban Burlington and Oakville join the regional road system and be paid from the regional taxes.
The greater number of regional roads has always been in the north. Some northern councillors see that as the north's sole advantage of belonging to the region.
In the past the simple mention of equalized assessment has been enough to send some councillors into a rage.
The chargeback system has become near and dear to opponents of sharing costs. Proponents of the chargeback system claim all areas get what they pay for under that system.
Morrow's quick to point out that what is being presented is not equalized assessment. He's right. Some fine distinctions have to be made.
First, under equalized assessment a householder's bill for sewage is based on the assessed value of his home. Under Morrow's proposal the bill is tied in with the demand the homeowner makes on the sewer system.
In other words, under equalized assessment a single man who happens to be very wealthy and lives in a \$200,000 home pays a greater share for sewers than a man who lives with his wife, seven children, two cats, a dog and a pair of budgies in a \$50,000 bungalow.
With or without the two cats, a dog and a budgie, Morrow's point is well taken. The

man living alone is paying for more than he's using and that, clearly, is inequitable.
But the shift being proposed will have an effect that is far more profound than the inequity that now exists.
It will concentrate power in the hands of the region and more particularly in the hands of the regional staff.
For all intents and purposes now, the decision to go or not to go with a project depends on the wish of the local council as expressed by their regional representatives.
Once the chargeback system has gone, the regional council will want to accept responsibility for those decisions because the region—not the area—is paying the shot.
This is in complete harmony with the spirit of regionalism. But it is the same thing council has fought and resisted since the beginning.
For the north, it would be a matter of convincing councillors from the south that a project is necessary—or relying totally on a strong recommendation from the staff.
Whether or not the proposals are accepted by a majority, Morrow can be assured of a hot day in the chair. "I just hope I don't slip with that damned phrase equalize assessment," he says.
That would draw fire from many councillors for certain.
In terms of proper administration and logic, you just can't argue with Morrow. But the question that remains to be answered is whether or not councillors are prepared to understand and recognize the needs outside of their own area.
With the amount of mutual mistrust and the invective that lives within the council, it is hard to imagine it working to everyone's satisfaction.
The alternative surely is to throw the whole balliwick of water and sewers back to the area councils and leave them to wrestle with the problem the best way they can.
That would reduce the duplicity in decision making and make approvals a one-stop affair for developers or homeowners wanting to hook into the water and sewer lines.
Morrow is forcing the council to choose a course. The outcome will bear a lot more significance than a minor adjustment in sewer and water bills.



Cold weather could not freeze this creek



Sugar and spice by Bill Smiley

After the last couple of columns, you probably think I'm a mean, shrivelled, shrunken, toothless old man who hates winter because he's so mean, shrivelled, etc. etc.

You're right. But not entirely right. It's not winter itself that I hate. How can you hate an abstract thing like winter? You can't punch it on the nose or spit in its face (unless you are rich and can go south).

No, No. After all, I was an ardent curler for a dozen or so years, working my way up through the tortuous passages of the curling hierarchy until I was a Vice-Skip (a Skip in mixed doubles, already) until my disintegrating discs suggested that there were better ways of achieving comfort than hoisting a 40-pound rock around and beating the ice with a broom, bent double.

And for a few years there, I was known as the Terror of the Trails. Ski trails, that is. When people heard behind them a whooping "Schelias!" they got off the trail pretty quickly, I can tell you. They were well aware that Smiley had just roared down a three-foot sloop and was about to run right over them. Mainly because he didn't know how to stop.

In fact, for about three years, I was forced to undergo the torture of the trails, puffing trying to keep up with an agile young wife, who does yoga exercises, until I smartened up.

About last year, I discovered that, with judicious planning, pleading the 'flu, my arthritic foot, my bad back, and my bursitic shoulder, I could stall the skiing until about March.

Then, with any luck, there'd be some freezing rain, a thaw, a blizzard, and another thaw, so that skiing was impossible. And I'd go around smacking my right fist into my left palm, outwardly chortling. And people would sympathize with me, and I'd respond "Yeah! Darn it to heck anyway."

No, No. Winter is really a wonderland to me. I wonder how anybody in the land in his right mind doesn't go out of it.

Again, it's not winter I hate. It's putting on my rubber boots. It's ice on the roof. It's driving in snow. It's my fuel bill. It's moving mountains of snow from here to there, and having some zealous civic employee, whose wages are paid out of my taxes, move it back to here.

Aside from these minor and constant irritations, winter can be a joy, an esthetic treat of the first magnitude. I discovered this on a recent bus trip to the city.

We took off just as day was breaking. And we rolled through a winter landscape

that was stunning in its stark beauty. It was like a trip to another planet in the warm, safe cocoon of our space ship, the bus.

That's the only way to travel in winter—by bus. It's a little bit like low-flying, except that you don't have to handle the controls and keep an eye on the altimeter.

Once you've adjusted to the hum of the bus, there you are, morning paper on your knee, flask of hot coffee on your lap, snug and safe while the terrifying and magnificent white and blue and green and black countryside peels by like a film on a screen.

After 40 days and 40 nights of snow and wind, the land was not exactly pastoral, unless you were breeding a herd of polar bears.

But the Great Sculptor had been at work, and the result was a surrealist's dream. Vast sweeps of undulating white, under-carved here and there, chiselled to a cutting point elsewhere.

All this loveliness was overpowering, and I began to drift off into a day dream in which I was a Russian count flying across the snowy steppes in my troika, toward my baronial manor in which the countess was waiting with steaming vodka and a hot shepherd's pie, made of a couple of ground-up peasants who had got out of line.

It was too good to be true. A hoarse voice from across the aisle shattered the vision.

"Hey, you're Mr. Smiley, the teacher, ain'tcha?" It was some young turkey who was on his way to Halifax, having just accepted the Queen's shilling, and for the next hour he held me spellbound with a garbled account of how he had got his Grade 10 after only four years in high school, the teachers he liked and didn't like, the tremendous future he had in the armed forces, all of it interspersed with bad grammar and monotonous profanity.

By the time I got to the city, my mood was sufficiently depressed for it: the filthy slush, the bleak, biting wind, the total absence of any of winter's beauty, the hunched and watery-eyed pedestrians.

It was back to the ugliness of winter. But for one brief hour there, I lived in an enchanted world, frightening but magnificent, where the salt-rusted fenders, the leaking rubbers, the escalating oil bill, and the bloody snow shovel could be temporarily banished to the bottom of my bile sac.

And the city was so windy and dirty I was glad to get home, walk into my own backyard and cast a judicious, aloof fond glance at the picnic table under four feet of white stuff, and the splendid array of sparkling, five-foot icicles hanging directly over my back door.

There was no countess, but the Old Lady was there, and she was glad to see me home, so I had a steaming vodka and believe it or not, she had prepared a hot shepherd's pie. What more could a man want, even if he isn't a count, on a winter's eve in Canada?

OUR READERS WRITE:

Church parade Sunday

February 19 marks the beginning of Scout Week here in Acton. For the past four years we have started the week with a church service which seems very appropriate to me. It has been rather discouraging over the years to see how poorly attended this service is.
All citizens of Acton, especially parents of these children, are invited to join this service.

Since we expect to fill the Legion Tuesday night with over 500 parents and children at our banquet, surely some of you could make an effort to come out Sunday and fill some of the empty pews we've had in the past.
The children march from the scout hall at 1:30 p.m. to attend the service in Trinity United church at 2 p.m.

Mary McVeigh

Ten Days continue

The Editor, Acton Free Press.
Please accept the thanks of those involved in Ten Days for World Development in Acton for the generous publicity given by

the Acton Free Press. Your editorial and Jennifer Barr's column were especially helpful.

The number of people who came last Friday to hear the excellent panel was disappointingly small. Though one cannot impose his priorities upon others willy nilly, the degree to which adult Canadians are becoming more and more preoccupied with themselves is a bit frightening.

At McKenzie-Smith school on Monday a captured audience of 250 students reacted with genuine interest and concern to a filmed allegory of the rich/poor dilemma. The future posture of Canadians in this shrinking planet belongs to the young and that is reason for optimism.

One more 10 Days event is to be held at Trinity United this Friday (17th) at 8:00 p.m. This illustrated chat about a Nigerian experience by Gwen and Jim Johnson should appeal to young and old alike. Refreshments will be served.

Thank you again for the co-operation of the Acton Free Press for Ten Days for World Development.

Yours sincerely, Eldon Comfort.

More Letters to the Editor appear on page 5 this week.



"I THINK, PERHAPS, YOU TAKE THE POINT OF ST. VALENTINE'S DAY FAR TOO SERIOUSLY."