

Free Press Editorial Page

Region and schools

Regional government is affecting small schools just the way it has affected small communities.

The proposal of the twinning of rural schools and town schools concerns the parents in the countryside. They prefer their own school system with its own principal and its own autonomy. They like their own independence.

But the latest suggestion is that one principal could oversee both

Speyside and Robert Little, and one principal Limehouse and Joseph Gibbons school in Georgetown.

The vice-principal would spend time at the smaller school, where he or she would also teach.

It's easy to believe that efficiencies could result. Money could be saved. Again - as in the case with Acton, Esquesing and Nassagaweya - that's not the only concern as citizens see it.

Ask yourself

It's interesting to hear from a newcomer to town that most of the people on her newish street disapprove of regional government here. She pooh-poohed our suggestion that newly-arrived families don't care about the running of the town. They do.

Her friends and neighbors want to ask council some questions, and she had called the Free Press to check out when council meets, and

where. Do the town's old-timers even know the answers to those questions any more?

Ask yourself - where does Halton Hills council meet? When are the meetings? How many councillors are there? What are their names?

Who's in charge of water breaks? Snow plowing? The police? No prizes.

Best buy in town

You can't get much for a dollar these days.

But did you realize that one of the best bargains in Ontario is the Red Cross, which in 1978 will deliver some 16 services throughout the province at a cost of less than 75 cents per person?

The range of these services is wide, and surprising. Few people are unaware of the Red Cross mandate to recruit and collect blood from voluntary donors. Blood donor clinics are regular events here. But there are many other services.

Did you realize that most Red Cross branches, like ours, have sickroom equipment available on

loan? Crutches, wheelchairs, backrests and many other items are available free.

Emergency aid is always available.

Red Cross does not have large financial reserves. Certain programs receive support from fees, and from government and municipal agencies, but the Society believes that its services should be available to everyone who needs them.

Organizations such as Red Cross must rely on the people they serve to support them financially. If each gives according to his or her ability the future of the organization is secured.

This is Red Cross month here.

Another town hall

Fergus council must decide on the fate of two major projects, the restoration of the old town hall and the addition to Groves Memorial hospital.

The presentation to the last council meeting on the town hall proposed an initial municipal cost of \$30,000 and an annual operating grant of \$9,530 for the town hall.

Fergus, like Acton, has a feasibility study financed by the Ontario Heritage Foundation. Grants for the town hall are anticipated.

A fund-raising campaign is estimated for \$40,000.

There is also a fund-raising campaign for the arena going on there.

Fergus council is still con-

sidering its decision on the town hall project.

The Ontario Heritage Foundation is 10 years old this month and its members think it has been phenomenally successful. Its goal is to "preserve the heritage of our province, foster local interest and joint inspiration." The foundation encourages renovation and restoration of historical properties through grants and aid municipalities in setting up local architectural conservation programs.

Last year architectural grants totalled \$1,013,740 and \$53,350 was earmarked for feasibility studies.

Acton may get a Heritage grant yet.



WHEN A WATERMAIN BROKE on Churchill Road last week, it left many signs of its passing. One of the prettier ones was this bridge of ice formed between two trees in one front lawn. Of course, if, due to the

miracle of modern halftone reproduction, the bridge of ice does not show in the picture, you will have to take our word for it.



Sugar and spice

by Bill Smiley

Something rather pleasant happened in Canada recently. Not too many pleasant things have occurred in this country of late, so perhaps we should observe and enjoy this one.

I'm referring to the general decency shown by the press and politicians, neither of them noted for this quality, in the Francis Fox affair.

In case you've already forgotten it, Mr. Fox, a brilliant young cabinet minister and Solicitor-General of Canada, confessed he had committed a minor peccadillo and resigned from the cabinet.

He had forged the name of her husband on a paper permitting an abortion for a married lady with whom he was, apparently, on more than speaking terms. He was caught when another lady wrote the prime minister and squealed on him.

Mr. Fox, a Rhodes scholar, proved once again that you can have a lot of brains and still be a dummy. He not only committed forgery, he committed adultery. And he seems never to have heard of birth control.

That's all right. There are a good many dummies among our illustrious leaders, and always have been. Most of the others just haven't been caught.

But what was rather startling about the whole business was the restraint practised by Fox's opponents in politics, by the press, and by the public in general. Nobody went for his jugular, or that of the government, which is astonishing in these times, when sympathy, compassion, and decency seem to be going by the board.

Had it happened in Britain, the tabloids would have had a field day, and the poor man would have been chased out of the cabinet, out of parliament and probably

right out of the country by the sheer weight of the scavenging that would have taken place.

But no, not here. Political foes expressed sympathy, editorials reminded us that we all have a skeleton or two in the closet, and the head of the United Church wrote Fox a letter hoping that "There is enough grace and understanding in this country that you will not have to live under a cloud."

Such forbearance. A generation ago the man would have been howled out of office. Not so very long ago, as some elderly Tories remember, a number of cabinet ministers of that denomination were smeared rather thickly for exchanging bon mots with one Gerda Munsinger, a German lady with a shady past.

What in the world has come over us? Why this sudden benevolence toward a fellow human being? Is it some sort of midwinter madness that has crept sneakily into our dour Canadian puritanism?

Or is the whole thing a crafty Liberal plot to snatch headlines and induce sympathy among the women of the country? First Margaret bogs off and leaves that poor, dear man with three boys to raise. Now Francis, with one swell foop, reveals that even a cabinet minister is capable of passion.

If this is the case, what in the world is Joe Clark going to do to counteract all this free publicity, before the election campaign begins? His wife is staying home and behaving herself, and his own past is impeccably dull.

My suggestion to Joe and the Tories, for what it's worth, is that they start looking around for some really rotten people as potential cabinet ministers. What they need in their anxious ranks are a sex deviate or two, a couple of guys who served time for armed robbery, and a few

ladies who were formerly happy hookers. A jam of tarts, as it were. Toss in a child batterer and someone who snatched underwear off clothes-lines, and they'd run the Liberals right off the front pages.

Is it true that we all have a skeleton in our closet, something that would be humiliating were it exposed to the avid public eye?

Maybe there are a few lofty souls with a clean slate, but I'd be surprised if there were enough of them to form a hockey team.

Come on now, gentle reader. Cast your mind back over your life, and take a close look into those dark corners you have managed to almost forget.

Have you never picked your nose when nobody was looking? Have you never, ever smelted your own armpits in similar company? Have you never helped destroy a reputation by repeating gossip? Have you never done a cruel thing or a mean thing in your life? Have you never got drunk and made an ass of yourself. Never said a bad word? Never hawked and spat a gob when nobody was around? Never emitted air from an orifice sneakily?

Well, good on you, as we say in Australia, if you haven't. You must be under six months of age, and even infants can't qualify on all counts.

I could probably count on my toes the people in this country who have not lied, cheated, stolen, committed adultery at least in the head, worshipped the graven image known as a car, or failed to honor their father and mother, at some time.

Personally, I have so many skeletons in my own closet there's no room for more. I had to start shoving them under the bed.

If Joe Clark takes my suggestion with the seriousness with which it is offered, I'd be glad to help. I know some really rotten people.

Our readers write

World gave the answer

Acton Free Press, Acton, Ontario

Feb. 21, 1978
Box 125, Tara, Ont.

Dear Editor:

Mr. Graham's beautiful and moving poem to the Lord, thanking Him for so many blessings was very much appreciated. I am sure, by all who read it.

It is rather sad, however, that Mr. Graham omitted thanking the Lord, for choosing a young maiden, Mary, to become the mother of His dearly beloved son, Jesus.

Surely God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit, elevated the position of women, by this wonderful manifestation of love.

And Jesus, from the time of His birth in that lowly stable of Bethlehem, until His death and agony on the cross at Calvary, respected and revered all women, His Mother above all, Martha and Mary, Mary Magdalene, etc. and was not ashamed to show His deep love.

If He did nothing else, surely His great respect for women would have been justification alone for His all too short life on earth. Yet, He died to save us all. His last thoughts while dying on the Cross were for His Mother, when He commended Her to the care of His faithful followers.

Mr. Graham's cutesy little remark for not knowing the code number, I presume he means the Lord's, to save him from the wrath and/or indignation of women's lib," was a little superfluous. Surely he knows the Lord can be reached in prayer at any time.

It would be most interesting to hear Mr. Graham's comments on the two Irish women who led thousands of women, on a peace march, to protest the slaughter of innocent people in Northern Ireland.

These two women, of different religions, were concerned and were justly rewarded when they were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Were those two women, and the thousands who followed them, trying to bring sanity into that unhappy situation, or were they "just wanting to be heard," or "not world improvers" at heart.

Apparently the world gave the answer when the Peace Prize was awarded.

Cheers! Sheila O'Rourke

Letters welcome

The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Ten years ago today

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Wednesday, February 28, 1968. Council's five year projection of capital expenses was approved at their regular meeting Tuesday evening. The projection is updated each year and submitted to the municipal board. OMB approval of the projection facilitates final approval of the project when it is finally undertaken. The projection also provides the OMB with a better understanding of the municipality's capital requirements in relation to each project.

The traditional nature of the Mason Knitting Company will be retained by the new owner, Brendan Swan and he is also anticipating expansion here. The company which has been in the Mason family for over 40 years was officially turned over to the new owner February 15.

A team of Acton lady curlers placed second in the filly bonspiel at Gall, winning folding umbrellas. Playing on the team with skip Shirley Hunter were Jackie Blow, Phyllis Patrick and Dorothy Anderson.

Mrs. Gordon Thomson of R.R. 1, Acton, is not convinced the life of a TV performer is the idyllic state pictured by most viewers. Chosen to be one of the five women in a documentary on the status of women in Canada, she's been pursued by TV cameras from the time she gets out of bed in the morning until close to midnight. Her everyday activities including her hobbies of riding horses and recreation like tobogganing with her children have been recorded on film for showing, she thinks, on the last Sunday in April.

20 years ago

20 years ago today

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, March 13, 1958. Construction in Halton of a \$2,000,000 provincial school for the deaf on 97 acres recently purchased from A.T. Kingdon, immediately south of Halton Manor in Milton was revealed late Wednesday afternoon by Stanley Hall, M.P.P.

Halton County Health Unit announced a summary of reported communicable diseases for the month of February, showing a total of 35 cases contracting six types of diseases. In Acton, it was revealed there was one case of German Measles, one of mumps, and one of Scarlet Fever, during this month.

Sticky ice was no handicap for the eager beaver youngsters last Friday evening at the Acton arena, when the champions in the various leagues were crowned for the season, witnessed by only a handful of parents.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, March 1, 1928

C.N.R. officials have granted the request of the Chamber of Commerce and the train passing through Acton at 6.17 p.m. from Toronto will now stop here. The matter of an enclosed rink was also discussed by the Chamber.

Women of Acton heartily united in the World Day of Prayer. Taking part were Mrs. (Rev.) Sawyer, Mrs. McCleary, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. A. T. Brown, Mrs. McLean, Mrs. S. J. Reid, Mrs. Kirkness, Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. W. J. Baxter.

Last week the deaths of a couple of former Rockwood Academy boys took place, in the persons of Dr. James McCullough and Mr. W. D. Williamson. At one time Rockwood was looked upon as an educational centre, before collegiate institutes came into prominence.

Mr. and Mrs. Jockey moved their hotel equipment into Sunderland House.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, March 14, 1878

There has been great dissatisfaction in the province of Quebec, and the government has been forced to resign. Straw hats are beginning to be used in this village.

The additions to the jail and court house at Milton are now completed.

The subject of a bonus to Mr. Beardmore's lannery in this village was discussed at council meeting and a public meeting will be held in Matthews hall—(Note: above Holcher's bakery).

The streets in the village are presently in a very muddy condition, about as much as they are in muddy Milton. The roads in the countryside are almost impassable.

On Monday, 4th inst., Messrs J. Arthurs and E. Post, near Acton, cut a pine log, with a cross-cut saw, 42 inches in diameter, in 17 minutes. Pretty quick work.

It's Lent. We don't refer to our umbrella; it's stolen.

Opinion

Pat McKenzie at region

by Bob Burt at region council

Criticizing regional government is probably one of the most popular preoccupations of our day.

Local councillors do it, regional councillors do it, taxpayers do it and in our meany-mouth tradition, reporters do it. For those familiar with the pitfalls and weaknesses of the system, it is difficult to resist the occasional sharp remark. But it is even more difficult to acknowledge the advantages and strengths of the system.

Of the 24 members of regional council there is probably no-one who stands to win more political brownie points by being critical than Acton councillor Pat McKenzie.

But McKenzie resists the temptation to attack and exploit the follies of regionalism. Instead, he has taken a positive stand, accentuated the good parts and worked his butt off to make sure the people who elected him get a fair deal for their dollar.

It must have been tempting for McKenzie to throw his lot in with the critics. He could have done that and received terrific press in Acton.

Being pro-regional is particularly difficult in the presence of such articulate opponents as the Actonians for Action Committee.

That group has carried its protests about Acton's amalgamation with Georgetown and Esquesing far and wide. Former Acton

Councillor Norm Elliott is a key member of that group and often speaks for the committee.

McKenzie doesn't support the group's contention that Acton was dragged into regional government kicking and screaming.

"That's just not right. There was no member of Acton Council in 1973 who wanted to go it alone. Norm Elliott was on council then and he never uttered a word.

"In fact, Acton favored one town including all of North Halton but Brian Best wanted Milton on its own and Anne MacArthur said Nassagaweya should stick together and all go one way or the other."

McKenzie recalls tough financial times in Acton prior to regional government. "We sold two lots and took money from capital contributions to offset mill rate increases."

That's a no-no in any treasurer's books. You don't have to talk to McKenzie long to know that he has spent a lot of time and effort studying the pros and cons of having his people a part of a larger town.

Politically, McKenzie could be writing his own farewell note by openly supporting regional government, especially with the vociferous opposition from the Actonians for Action Committee.

McKenzie acknowledges the fact that Acton did lose something in the shuffle to regional government, but he contends it is wrong to say "Acton disappeared."

"If Acton has gone, so has Georgetown,—but that just isn't so." McKenzie sees the Actonians for Action Committee as the vocal minority in Acton. That's a statement only the electorate could ratify.

"Right or wrong, I have to live with myself and I have to make sure the facts come out. I could be as emotional as Norm Elliott but I'd hate to see the town forced to a position where it couldn't support the needs of the people," he said.

"Listen, I'm proud of my town. I love it as much as the next man. I'm proud of its past and I see a real future for it."

McKenzie is not a highly polished orator or a dynamic politician. He won't rise to his feet and let fly with a speech that'll leave mobs cheering.

But he will take a stand. He will speak when he's got something to say, and he should be credited for his straight talk. There is room for more of that in government.

McKenzie is one of few councillors who has shaken the chains of parochialism and has been able to view issues with a regional perspective.

His effort on the home front has been tireless and his attendance at the regional level has been faithful, something not everyone can say.

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