

Response predictable?

The study of regional government has almost totally ignored the brief and 2,000 name petition presented by the Actonians for Action committee.

The region committee, headed by Milton mayor Don Gordon, say they expected to hear back from Halton Hills before considering the report.

As for Halton Hills, Mayor Tom Hill said last week that his council just filed the brief. "We didn't feel it concerned us," he stated.

Yet at a regional meeting last week, councillor Pat McKenzie surprised Acton people by saying he supports a review by an independent task force... just what the committee asked for in the first

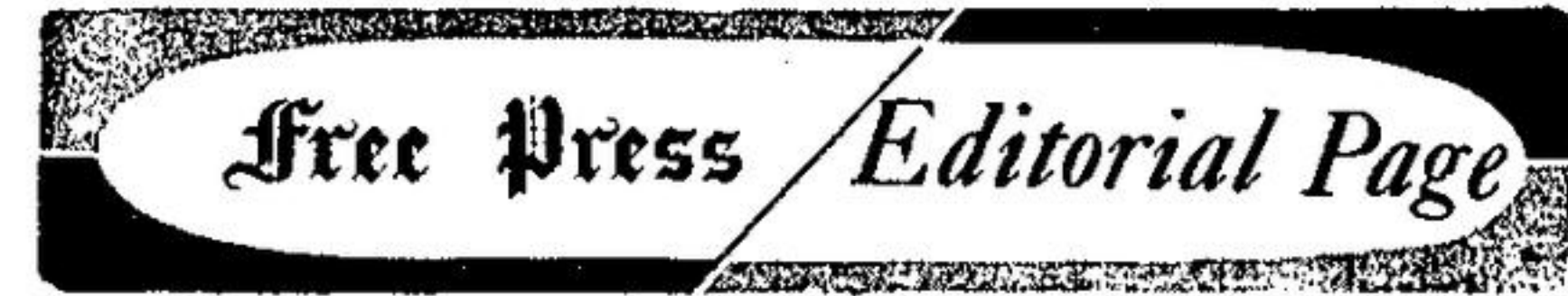
place!
All the people who so readily signed the petition asked for a study. Not to leave the region, as has been misinterpreted. They asked for a study.

One of our councillors has told us he questions the value of petitions. We don't. When people get together it means something. People know what they are signing.

They said they wanted a review, and so they do.

Now their request has been ignored by area, region and province.

Is this lack of response itself an outcome of regional government? Was this result predictable?



4 The Acton Free Press, Wednesday, Mar. 15, 1978

A can of worms

A can of worms... What else can you call the latest in the town hall-fire hall story?

Now the Department of Labour calls the town hall unsafe, calling for implementation of recommendations in consulting engineer Alan Zeegen's report. Mr. Zeegen explains he reported what he saw and made no recommendations at all!

The problem seems to be with the roof and beams.

So what's to be done next?

It becomes increasingly obvious the whole project was entered into with too much haste. We've used those words before; so have others. Why did the fire hall addition proceed before the future of the adjoining town hall was decided? The firefighters haven't got the parking they wanted yet!

If ever lack of co-operation and co-ordination was plain before the public's eyes, it's here at the corner of Willow and Bower.

Conservation vs recreation

The suggestion that the Halton Conservation Authority has to do better planning for the public use of its land than it has in the past is a statement with which we wholeheartedly agree.

The statement is made by the conservation services director for Halton Region Conservation Authority.

However, before the Authority embarks on an extensive \$125,000 planning of their properties for recreational purposes, it is our hope they will go back to square one and determine once again what their conservation priorities are.

We are not in agreement that every or even most property owned by the Authority need necessarily be developed for recreational purposes. If the recreational use of the presently developed parks has reached near capacity it does not necessarily follow in our minds that additional recreational facilities should be developed by the Conservation authorities. The necessity of providing these

recreational facilities, which apparently draw their users from a wide geographical area, would appear to us to be an obligation of the province rather than being financed by the Halton Region taxpayers. Indeed the provincial park at Bronte may alleviate some of the demands on the Authority's facilities.

It would seem logical that the Authority, instead of developing parking lots and public toilets at each of its properties, might gain a more receptive response from the taxpayers if the recreational planning and development budgets were used to compensate property owners whose land has to be made virtually valueless through the Authority land use restrictions.

The proposed meeting between the Natural Resources Ministry and the Conservation Authority might well consider putting more conservation and less recreational development as a subject of the agenda.

Election will decide

Mad at the government? Not much.

Complaints? Not many. Mitchell Sharp was sent to Acton Monday to hear the concerns of Acton people. Although the question period was short, there seemed to be few pressing concerns in the room that just had to be heard by this distinguished representative of the government.

The chatting was pleasant and the questions the standard ones. Admittedly, Mr. Sharp had all the answers.

The special worries of the leather industry were mentioned by him only in passing.

He spent his entire time here in the United church basement.

Mr. Sharp won't have much to remember Acton by, when the travelling caucus gets back to Ottawa.

He seems to have encountered a pretty contented bunch of ladies and gentlemen.

It's a different story at the meetings of Progressive-Conservative hopefuls, though, when criticism of the government gets hot and heavy. The people of similar opinions seems to have stayed together the past couple of weeks, and not got into each other's camps.

It will obviously be at election time that the true opinions of the people become evident.

Of this and that

People walking in the countryside are unhappy to see fences deliberately cut along snowmobile paths.

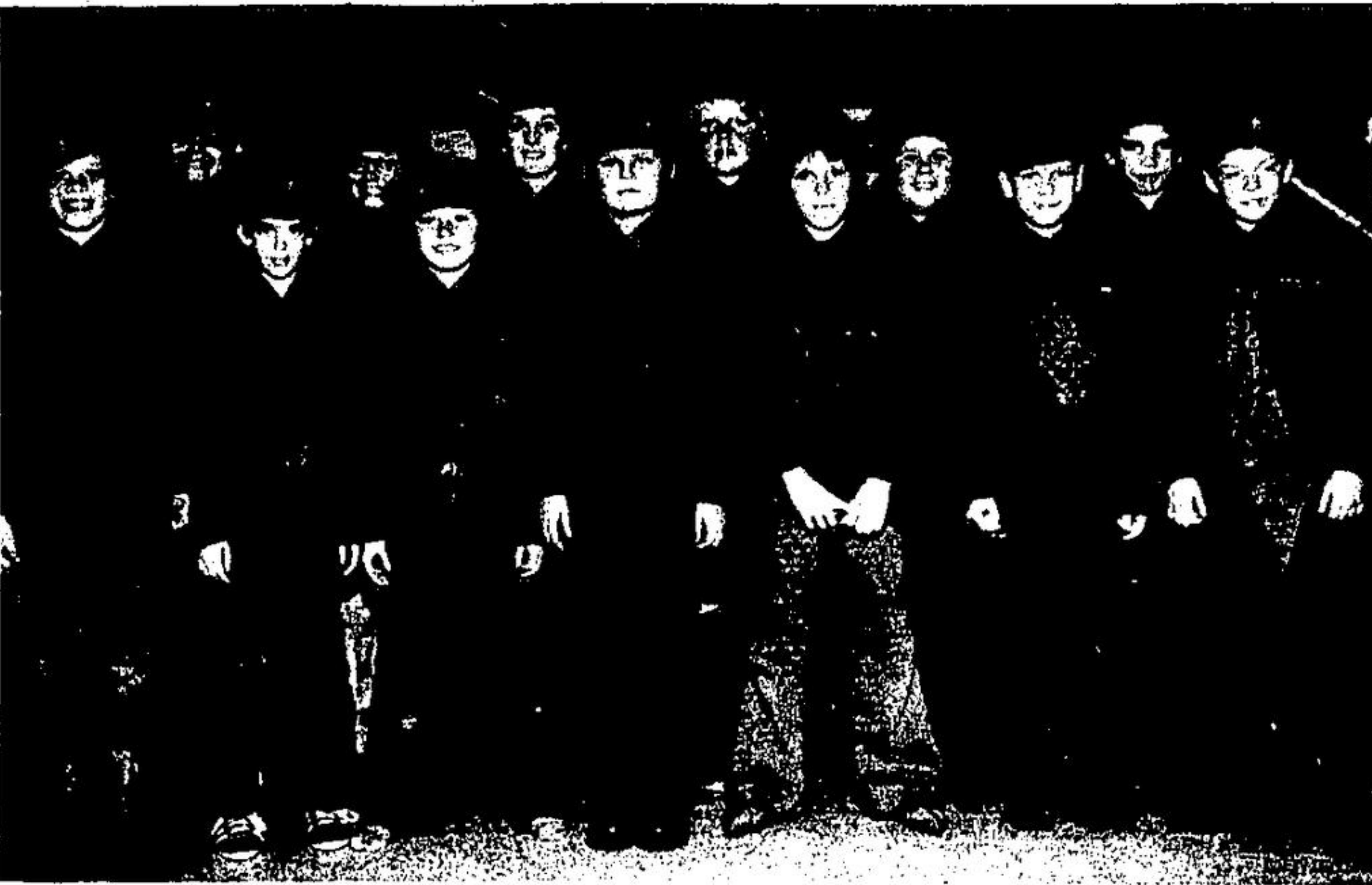
Lakes, small streams and rivers will soon be flooding and these areas can be hazardous to children who have played over them all winter. Spring is on the way, and the mixture of mushy ice, flooding ditches and children can be dangerous.

Merchants have been getting together to advertise the fact that many of them are open for business on Thursday nights now. It's part of their concern to combat the pull of

the big plazas as best they can. "Shop and Save in Friendly Acton" is their motto.

Young people in town next weekend will be here for the provincial basketball championships. We trust they'll find a friendly welcome here.

For the first time in 20 years or so, there will be no special inter-denominational services here during Holy Week. Churches are continuing to hold their own separate services. It was one of the few times people from various churches got together, but attendance had been dwindling.



Thirteen—count 'em—thirteen

THE LARGEST GROUP of Scouts to be invested in Acton at once passed through the ceremony last Thursday. Thirteen boys—count them—joined the First Acton Scout ranks. Front row, left to right, are Tim Garton, Sean Haefner, Steven Inotai, Derek

Boyle, David Van Der Eyken, Tim Height and David Hargrave. In back, left to right, are Andrew Ferguson, Malcolm McLelland, Adrian Alder, Kevin Hoerig, Wayne Chappel and Chris Luxon.



Sugar and spice

by Bill Smiley

My involvement with the RCAF Association brings back a lot of memories, some a bit grim, some pretty hilarious.

As the old mind's eye wandered back, something hit me like a cold douche. Not that I've ever taken a cold douche.

Why were we so keen to get killed? In this age of dropouts, draft dodgers and deserters, it seems incredible that thousands of young Canadian males, back in the '40s, were almost frantic to get into the air force, into air crew, and into a squadron, where the chances were excellent they'd be dead within a couple of months.

From the point of view of common sense, reason, logic, it was not any brighter than the Children's Crusade of the Middle Ages.

Why? Certainly we had no death wish. We had no deep urge to immolate ourselves in the breath of the war dragon. We weren't even running to the battlements to protect our homes, our wives and children. Most of us were in school, or just recently out, and didn't have none of them there things.

Oh, we knew we had to "Stop that bawstard Hitler!" as Churchill once told us on an airfield in Normandy. We knew rather vaguely that we were defending democracy and unemployment against the monsters of Totalitarianism and full employment, although it was a bit puzzling that Totalitarian Russia was on our side.

We knew joining up was the thing to do, that most of our friends were doing it, that a fellow looked pretty fine in a uniform, that the girls were impressed and the hitch-hiking easier.

But why the air force? And why air crew, where the dice were loaded so heavily?

Did we avoid the army because we didn't want to be exposed to the rude and licentious soldiery and get all dirty and grimy in action? Or the navy because we preferred a fiery grave to a watery.

I just don't know, but most of my friends, and most of their friends, chose the air force, and were dead keen on getting into air crew.

Within a bare few years, most of them were a lot less keen, and many were a lot more dead.

As I recall, it was a real downer for those who failed the tough medical test for air crew. Once chosen, you were filled with despair if you were going for pilot and had to settle for bomb-aimer, just because you were a little cross-eyed.

Once in training, it was a shattering experience to be "washed out" of air crew merely because you had badly bent up one of His Majesty's aircraft by trying to land at 40 feet up, or had wound up 300 miles off course on a cross-country training flight. It was devastating if you wanted to be a fighter pilot and were shipped off to lumbering old bombers.

I have friends who still bear a deep scar on the psyche because they were made flying instructors and spent the rest of the war in Canada. This despite the fact they were chosen as instructors because they were far better pilots than the rest of us.

This despite the fact that many of the pilots they trained were dead, dead, in no time. None of this was any consolation. They still feel they missed something irrecoverable.

Well I know what they missed. They missed the stupidity of senior officers who didn't know whether they were punched or bored. They missed long, deadly dull

periods of training, and short, intense moments of sheer terror.

They missed being shot at, physically, by perfect strangers, and shot down, verbally, by people on their own side.

They missed the utter blind confusion of the amateurs in charge of the war. Migawd, those idiots lost an entire wing of Typhoons for a full week.

Nobody, least of all intelligence, had a clue where it was. I air-hitched all over southern England and northern France before I found the blasted thing, all on my own.

Let's see, have I left anything out? Well maybe I have. First I'll take that back about stupid senior officers. They were plenty of those in Canada, too, so you

didn't miss that.

Perhaps you missed the joy of climbing out of your aircraft after an operation, lighting a cigarette, and talking a wild blue streak of relief and let-down.

I guess you missed the glory of heading off for a week's leave in a strange country, loaded with just a month's pay in your pocket, and the secret sweetness in your head of knowing that nobody would be shooting at you for seven days.

And you did, I must admit, miss the girls. Not all of those fumbings in the blackout were frustrating.

But I still say we were all crazy to volunteer, and even v/e to be killed. Must write a paper on that some day.

Our readers write

The spirit of women's lib

The Editor
Acton Free Press.
Re: The Spirit of Womens' Lib. (From the Legend of Fairy Lake).

It is said that once in a while, usually during the balmy months of wine and roses, the lovely Lady of the Lake emerges from her abyssal depths to scrutinize the current thinking and active divergencies of those among her darling daughters in whom now is vested the political power to change the course of events. This, as always, will be significantly shaped by their womanly will to persist.

When last observed, straightly laced as usual but sporting a creatively updated hairdo, it was thought that the somewhat querulous gaze of the Eternal Mama contained at least a hint of uncertainty. For nearby, battered but still intact, lay a monstrous heap of toppled pedestals. Though barely visible, it was at first glance evident that man's ideal concept of sweet and soft, felicitous and enduring womanhood lay hidden beneath a surge of devious liberations.

Assuming that her next visitation will occur in time for this year's double-barreled electioneering bombardment, it is

reasonable to suppose that the tremendous weight of this lady's influence, no longer underestimated, will bear heavily upon its final outcome.

A glossary of related terms
Conservative: Keeping or tending to keep things unchanged. Leaving things as they are. Upholding traditional ways.

Democrat: Advocate of democracy, whereby sovereign power resides in the people as a whole.

Franchise: The right to vote. In politics, the right to vote for the election of a qualified candidate, an individual, for membership in a state's legislative body.

Independent: Autonomous. Free to follow a chosen course without any degree of subservience to the dictates of "party" allegiance.

Liberal: Not rigorous. Openminded, unprejudiced. In politics, favourable to constitutional change.

Rights: Entitlements. Elements of that vastly expansive aspect of social justice within the scope of which the very essences of human dignity may be ground to a pulp—when lost among the intangibles of morality, privilege and legal wrangling.

Sincerely,
Norman Courtney.



The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Wednesday, March 13, 1968
Fire which apparently broke out in an egg grading room, destroyed most of the front end of a modern poultry barn and 3800 chickens, Friday morning. The destructive blaze was on the farm of Alfred Newman, R.R. 1, Acton, while Mr. and Mrs. Newman were away on business.

Northern Tackle plant in Rockwood was completely destroyed by fire Tuesday night during a driving snowstorm. The factory is housed in a converted freight shed by the Rockwood station. The old building was one of the village's landmarks.

Nearly 200 donated blood at the regular clinic in the Legion hall on Monday. Appointments had been made in advance, following phone calls but anyone was welcome.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, March 27, 1958
Rev. H. Costerus of the Acton Baptist church announced this week he was leaving Acton to take charge of churches at Delhi and Teeterville.

Committee rooms will be buzzing Monday night when the election results are announced. Liberals are represented by Ken Dick and the Conservatives by Sandy Best. Jack Henry is the C.C.F. candidate.

There will be five nightly inter-denominational services during Holy Week. Ernest West will speak on Sunday evening.

A photographer's camera, being used by Bob MacArthur of the Manitoulin Exhibitor at Little Current, was stolen from beside the pulpit of the United Church there during a farewell party recently.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, March 8, 1928

The Acton Continuation School Literary Society held a meeting at the school on Thursday evening, March 1, to determine a winner of the Oratorical Contest. Marjorie Switzer and Jessie Young had both tied for first place.

A trio of Acton motorists had a bad experience on the winter roads on Sunday afternoon. Mr. and Mrs. A. Inrig and Mrs. F.E. McCleary had left Sunday about two o'clock and at the Silver Creek Hill on the Seventh Line, ran into a snow drift from which it was impossible to get the car. Two other Acton motorists came along and proceeded to shovel them out. They were good motorists but were not prepared for breaking in a snowstorm. The buses came along, the one from the east and the other from the west and they were obliged to transfer passengers as the road was completely blocked by stalled cars.

To have lived nearly a century and seen nine generations of his family was the remarkable experience of the late Jack Beaton whose death is reported. About 20 years ago, he left Oakville where he had made his home.

From Oakville, Mr. Beaton went to Dakota where he died recently in his 99th year. Mr. Beaton lived to actually see nine generations. He knew his great-great grandfather, his father, his brother and sister, his grandchildren, great grandchildren, and his great great grandchildren. Thus, he knew four generations before his own and four succeeding generations.

100 years ago

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

Who is going to give the next band social? It is well known that the Acton Brass Band does not receive the encouragement which it deserves from the private citizens of this village. The Band requires several new instruments which will necessitate the outlay of a considerable sum of money and it is to be hoped that our citizens will come forward and lend a helping hand. Don't all speak at once.

A wedding procession passed through town yesterday.

On Friday morning at two o'clock the carriage works of Mr. James Ryder, corner of Mill and Elgin, was discovered to be on fire. An alarm was immediately sounded from the Congregational Church bell. A large crowd of villagers assembled but there being no fire engine in the village they had to carry water in pails to throw on the flames. The two-story frame building burned with a fearful rapidity. The house soon caught fire and burned to the ground along with the factory. The loss amounts to \$15,000. Insurance covers \$3,500. Mr. Ryder intends to build a brick building which will be an ornament to Acton.

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