

# Free Press Editorial Page

## Dirty books . . . 1878

Dirty movies . . . dirty books . . . censorship? There's no doubt that films and books are available that most of us would not see or read. Still, there must be a market for them, since they arrive in our country and are sold.

This is where censorship is surely necessary, since peddlers of trash are obviously more interested in profits than in art.

Many book racks show books that are obviously exploiting sex, killing and perversion. Reading ads for movies makes us shudder.

Television could become as bad, if permitted.

Morals must be learned. Good examples must be given to our young people.

For parents and many community groups including churches, aiming for the good is a day-to-day occurrence.

Still, salacious junk is a dandy subject for a long editorial.

So while 1978's editor sat dozing in the sun, the Free Press editor of June, 1878, fires away at the subject and puts fear into the hearts of all right thinking Actonians.

A hundred years ago this week, from the Free Press Files:

"The constantly increasing demand for sensational literature is assuming alarming proportions. The young folks of the present day are instable in their demands for trashy novels, vulgar illustrated periodicals and such like productions incidental to the rapid extension of the field of literature. This is essentially an age of progress. New inventions are continually spring up, and labor saving machinery in every branch of industry are placing many things within the reach of the masses that a quarter of a century ago were considered luxuries. Among others, the improvements in the art of printing have bled publishers to lay before the public standard works, by eminent authors, at such a low figure that all could get them. But, at the same time, an insidious undercurrent of the lowest kind of literary work—work that is a disgrace to the very name of literature—rapidly pushed the solid, instructive reading matter to the back shelves of the book store, and are now glaringly displayed in show windows and on counters in order to catch the eye and enlist the passions of the rising generation.

"Young people now, instead of choosing the kind of literature that will improve their minds and be of service to them in future years, are eagerly devouring the very scum of literary productions of the world. To judge from the immense sale of some of the books published by J. Ross Robertson, of Toronto, such as "That Horrid Girl", "That Husband of Mine" & c, the demand for this light literature is startling.

"So all engrossing and

fascinating do these books appear, that even the ordinary duties of life are neglected in order to make time for the perusal of that which is slowly but surely blunting all the finer sensibilities of their nature, clouding the mind, and rendering it unfit for the reception of anything profitable. If this pernicious practice is continued; if our young men and boys are not rescued from the folds of this wily serpent that is fast tightening its coils about them, where, in a few years, will be our boasted progress, our civilization even? How will these youths be fit to take the place of their fathers in the battle of life? Where will be the fund of knowledge that will enable them to compete with their fellow-men? Echo answers, where?

"This kind of literature is very fascinating, no doubt, but does it instruct the old and the young? No. Will the knowledge of this light literature assist you in securing a good situation, where sound, common sense is required? We should rather think not. Boys, young men, take warning in time and do not waste the best years of your life in the pursuit of pleasure that is a delusion and a snare.

"Think of the time when you will have to face the world and do battle for your daily bread. It is when you grow up that you will regret the time wasted in your youth; then will the opportunities for improvement neglected rise up before you to embitter your life. In vain will be your regrets—the business life will leave you no time to repair the errors of former days. Do, then, young men and boys, cast off the bonds that bind you to this literature; make a determined effort and free yourself, and give your mind to the study of such literature as will not be only improving in itself, but a safeguard against the desire for sensational literature. The immediate evils arising from this depraved taste are fearful to contemplate. The mind is gradually deprived of every good impulse, a laxity of morals is engendered that drags its victims from a position of respect and esteem to the commission of sins that call down the condemnation of all right-thinking people.

"As is very often the case, the young man, led away from the teachings of his parents by a morbid desire for sensational reading begins by pilfering small sums from his employer, intending, so he persuades himself, to refund, but escaping detection, he follows up his evil course by still larger appropriations, till at last he is arraigned in the felon's dock.

"The young girl taught from her infancy the principles of honor and chastity, is led away from the path of virtue by the secret perusal of this soul-destroying literature till she falls from her purity to be the scoff of the world, and brings the gray hairs of her once dear loved parents in sorrow to the grave."

—Acton Free Press, June, 1878

## June tunes

Congratulations to this year's graduates from universities and community colleges. Despite the gloom and doom reports, you do indeed have a fine future ahead of you.

The planters are out again, and a welcome sight downtown. Dawe's real estate office is in the swing of it with attractive planters this summer, too.

A couple of weeks ago we published a list of helpful hints for writers of news articles which are submitted to the paper. We asked for an objective report. Leave out the routine details. "But if the president stands up and says the minutes are slander, that would be news."

The reporter for Knox W.M.S. meeting has taken it all to heart . . . and came up with a write-up that's a delight. You never read about a meeting like it before.

Keep on going and the chances are you will stumble on something, perhaps when you are least expecting it. I have never heard of anyone stumbling on something sitting down. Charles F. Kettering.

By good conduct is meant common honesty in business life, faithfulness to duty, ambition in business and profession, filial obligation, the use of talents, and always and everywhere, simple human kindness and love.—Randolph Bourne

We live in deeds, not years: in thoughts, not breaths; in feelings, not in figures on a dial.

We should count time by heart-throbs. They most live Who think most—feel the noblest—act the best.



Blake '78 ACTON FREE PRESS

What do you mean, you've given up on changing all the time?



## Sugar and spice by Bill Smiley

Quick now. What is exactly like a Quebec politician: always wanting a bit more than there is in the kitty; quick to assumed anger; deliberately misunderstanding feelers of amiability; vaguely threatening separation; charming one minute, abrasive the next. Give up? I thought everyone would get 100 per cent on that.

Answer: a wife. Sometimes, although not often, I wish I had been married three or four times. Not because I am a sex fiend, or because I want a change of cooks every few years, or because I don't like the way my socks disappear in the dryer. No. Just to find out if other men's wives are as crazy as mine.

Back in the good old days before women's lib, men just heaved a universal, brotherly sigh, and groaned: "Women . . ." Everybody who counted (all

adult males and small boys), knew exactly what was meant by the big shrug that accompanied this ambiguous two-syllable lament.

Even the women knew what it meant, and smirked slyly, tacitly admitting they had us by the short and curly, and there wasn't a dang thing we could do about it except endure.

Nowadays, if you get some guy in a dark corner in a bar, and try to tell him your wife is crazy, he's probably so house-trained that he'll look at you in horror, glance nervously over his shoulder, and blurt: "Oh, no! Perhaps a little volatile, a trifle mercurial, but that's all." Then, casting a swift glom around, he might whisper: "No crazier than the sea, which is also affected by the moon."

There's no comfort in people like that.

He's the type who probably scrubs the kitchen floor every Saturday morning, delivers his kids to their music lesson, and mows the lawn himself, even though he knows these are a wife's prerogatives and privileges.

I don't for one minute suggest that my wife is crazier than other wives. I couldn't in all honesty, and without prejudice. I've seen some pretty crazy wives in my day. But I think I'd put some money on her if it came to a contest. And I'm a cautious bettor.

Perhaps the only way I can describe her is in sports' terms. She is like a boxer with a long left jab that keeps you off balance, and a mean right hook that can come in out of left field at any time. I trust I am being obscure. Obscurity is what I have need of, when this appears in print.

It's not that we don't get along. We get along and along and along. Thirty years is a long time to be married to a strange woman.

Perhaps it's the fault of The Lord. He made man in His own image: decent, upright, honorable, straight forward, sense of humor. I can just hear Him saying: "A poor, foked, naked thing, but Mine own."

Then His sense of humor got out of hand. He took one of Adam's ribs (note it was not a tooth or an ear or a toe) and made Woman. Notice the connection. A rib is both concave and convex, just like a dame. Imagine what women would look like if He had taken a toe.

But He wasn't satisfied with condemning men to heart attacks because they were missing a rib, and things are inclined to save in on a chap. I can almost hear Him giggling as He took, not one of Adam's regular, run-of-the-mill ribs, but his CRAZY rib.

This was the rib that Adam couldn't seem to control. Sometimes it made him pant breathlessly. Sometimes it grew a sharp end, punched him in the guts and gave him an ulcer. Sometimes it seemed to float, and when he put out his hand to grasp it, it wasn't there. Sometimes it sang the sweetest of songs, all by itself. At others, it gave him a pain in the arm.

Well, that's what my old lady is like. I don't know about yours, but I suspect.

We head out to a party with friends, and she tells me I have the most beautiful blue eyes in the world, after Paul Newman. I tell her she looks pretty good, too. Five hours later, after I have delivered an extremely lucid lecture on sex after death, polygamy among penguins, or the iniquity of high school principals, she tells me that I am a rotten father, husband, and grandfather, that she's sick of hearing me click my "partial lower plate," and that my eyes look like those of an alligator crossed with a sleepy parrot.

We used to go to church on Sunday morning, and have our sins washed away, or at least slightly rinsed. Nowadays, we have a Revival Meeting on Sunday mornings. From a long list, meticulously hidden in that floating rib, she produces sins of omission and commission that make me a combination of Attila the Hun and Henry

(Continued on page 5)

## The Free Press Back Issues

### 10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of June 5, 1968

The future of Churchill United Church is still unsettled following a meeting of the congregation Tuesday, May 28. Called to decide the future of the building, a historic landmark, the meeting revealed a split in the congregation over the Presbytery's decision to close the church.

Six husbands of 325 Wolf Cubs, parents, leaders and friends from North Halton happily headed off to the Buffalo Zoo Saturday, but returned home over five hours late with tales of frustrating problems and complications. Parents expected the boys home between six and 6:30 but they didn't arrive till after midnight. Bus drivers said minor repairs had been made to some buses at a required mechanical pit inspection and the one containing some Acton boys had been grounded.

The Decoration Day program has always boasted fine weather through its past 13 years. Despite a few drops of rain, this year's parade and outdoor service on Sunday afternoon brought the mildest weather experienced so far in a wet and chilly spring.

### 20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of June 19, 1958

Ted Hansen was inducted as president of the Rotary Club of Acton on Tuesday evening when retiring president Bill Mattocks turned over the gavel.

The barn of Wolfgang von Richthofen at Haltonville, one of two large barns destroyed by fire Monday evening during a furious wind, will be rebuilt as a horse barn, it was learned Wednesday. Mr. von Richthofen's barn and the barn owned by J. T. Allison, almost half a mile north-west, were levelled during the Monday night fire which threatened the small community three miles north of Campbellville and caused an estimated \$50,000 damage.

Acton Board of Parks Management gave the nod of approval for an investigation into the possibility of a lifeguard at Fairy Lake on Sundays following an enquiry by letter, at their meeting Tuesday evening. A letter from Mac Symon, commending the board on the improvements at the park, also expressed alarm at the increasing number of users of the lake for bathing and pointed out the dangers of a fatality.

### 50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of June 14, 1928

Interest in baseball circles has been very lively for the past week. Teams from the town and the plants of Acton Tanning Co., and Beardmore and Co., have been having some real sport in both hard and softball and spectators have been taking a lively interest in the proceedings.

Among the graduates at Toronto University last week were a couple of Acton young ladies, Miss Isabel McNiven and Miss Jean Kennedy. Both graduated in the Arts course and received the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Mrs. (Dr.) McNiven and Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Kennedy attended the exercises and witnessed the conferring of the degrees. Both young ladies are congratulated by the home town folks on their attainment.

The first band concert of this season in Acton is announced to be held in the park on Sunday evening. Acton's Citizens' Band will provide a splendid programme of band selections, commencing after the evening services in the churches at 8.15 p.m.

### 100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, June 13, 1878.

On Wednesday a large and enthusiastic meeting of 300 ratepayers was held in the Temperance Hall to hear the political questions of the day discussed by four district members of parliament.

The Acton Brass Band Boys have commenced to fix up the skating rink, with a view to having promenade concerts during the summer.

Another of our young men has "went and done it". He got married yesterday. Our grief at his loss from the ranks of bachelorhood is great. We hope Ike will make a good husband as he has been a friend to the boys, and we trust that the broomstick and rolling pin may never be brought to use in this case.

A solemn mass will be said and first communion given to children at Little Dublin church Sunday.

Mr. James Ryder has commenced to build his new carriage factory. A beautiful top buggy was sent from the factory to Hamilton this week.

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