

Free Press Editorial Page

Will you represent us?

It's time that some of you people out there consider running for office. It won't be long until municipal election time. Two area seats and one combined regional and area seat will be up for votes. Who will represent Acton for the next two years?

None of our three present councillors will run for the regional seat, or so they say at this point.

This, of course, is a terrifically important one. The person will

represent our whole town both at region council and at Halton Hills council. It's naturally very demanding. Someone without experience would obviously have problems.

It's time for some serious thinking about the subject; perhaps time for some persuasion.

With three councillors now rather than our former nine, the choice is critical.

Personal health program

When polio was reported in Ontario, how many of us knew when we were last immunized?

Obviously many were not sure. Dorothy Craig, the director of nursing for the Halton Health Unit, recommends each family keep its own health records.

When children receive shots at school, a note goes home so the parent is aware.

Yet the health unit was flooded with calls from people who did not know when their children were last immunized.

Now, with so many people

requesting immunization all at once, there is naturally not enough vaccine to go round.

The problem points the finger at the members of the general public who must look after their own prevention program. Once we are adults, no one is going to phone and remind us it's time for immunization.

All too many of us have let these things lapse, and the present alarm will bring many of us up-to-date on our personal family health programs.

Babies then and now

We happen to belong to the generation when people got married and then had babies which makes it hard to understand the present trend. It seems that waiting for marriage is passe, but with all these birth control methods and abortions why are there so many teen-age pregnancies?

Every year there has been an increase in the number of teen-age mothers. In 1972 about 13,000 Canadian teen-agers had babies. Six thousand of them became mothers between 12 and 16 years of age. Of those 80 per cent decided to keep their child. Of the 60,000 abortions in 1977 approximately one third of the women were under 20 years of age.

We're doing all sorts of things to help the younger mother, homes for her to stay while waiting for her baby, clothes for the baby, gifts for herself, welfare so she can support herself and baby, plans for Day Nurseries so she can go back to school. Perhaps we should be thinking more of the effect of this bringing up on the baby. Few young teen-agers are ready to assume such responsibilities.

Now the Vancouver school board

plans to establish a nursery in one of the city's high schools to help teen-age mothers stay in school!

The Metropolitan Board of Health, the school board, and the provincial ministry of human resources are working together to arrange to finance the project. "We definitely feel that these girls should have the opportunity to finish their Grade 12" said Dr. Mirhady, chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Health and a member of the School Board.

We wonder how these girls can find the mental discipline to finish school when they hadn't the moral discipline to keep from getting pregnant. Our laws change as the Police Force can not enforce them. While we are too old now to change our ideas and ideals about pre-marital sex, it seems as a nation we have abandoned all moral restrictions, therefore should we adopt a policy of giving supplies of the pill to each school student along with their text books and notebooks? But there is an option for those 14-year olds, other than birth control or abortions. They could try behaving themselves.

The Ridgetown Dominion

Operate as region

It is easy to understand the frustration experienced by Halton chairman Ric Morrow over the reluctance of regional council committees to endorse uniform water rates.

Morrow feels it is a moral obligation on Halton to adopt uniform water rates across the region but only Halton Hills council is in favor of their adoption. He criticized councillors for showing "petty parochial preferences" instead of considering the good of the entire region.

Typical of the objections to uniform rates for water was that expressed by Milton regional councillor Jim Kerr who said they would mean more loss of control of their own destiny. If it goes regional we get only three votes out of 24, he notes, a philosophy which won't help Milton.

Acton would benefit from the change.

Morrow replied that if Halton is ever to be a regional government and provide services then it is unfair to treat one area differently than another.

He's right, of course, but we doubt all his entreaties will sway the vote the other way unless the rates favored the big vote in the south.

The incident points out the failure of regional government to change the philosophy of municipal representatives who fear they may be helping to pay someone else's way without getting anything in return.

Morrow has a right to be angry: He sees the situation from an eagle's eye view and can visualize the \$2 million in grants the province provides slipping away because of petty regional differences.

However, the display of pettiness also points out that councillors in the south may pay lip service to the philosophy of regional government but are just as loath to put it into practice as councillors from the north, when it suits them.

It is obvious Halton wants only partial regional government and councillors will keep on being parochial, especially in an election year.

Of this and that

The Chamber of Commerce bulletin board outside the town offices bears notices of events long past. Time for a change there . . .

Downtown streets are particularly neat and clean, thanks to the efforts of the summer students.



SIXTY-EIGHT Canada geese and one "dumb duck" landed on Frank Freeman's pond last week, the most he's ever seen at one time. Where are they going? Where are they from? Do they know something we don't?



Sugar and spice by Bill Smiley

A few years ago, I picked up a paperback novel entitled, I think, The Last of the Crazy People, written by one Timothy Findley. As usual, I turned to the back cover to find out something about the author. There was nothing, and I, a voracious reader and a teacher of literature, had never heard of him.

I began reading the novel, and soon thought, "Oh boy, this is an excellent writer. Who the heck is he?" And that was the end of my curiosity.

This year, I read in the paper that one Timothy Findley had won the Governor General's Award for a novel called The Wars. That suggested he must be a Canadian writer. Never heard of him, but remembered the name and the other novel I'd thought so good.

Since I've read The Wars, it is powerful, sensitive, beautifully structured. Probably the best novel that has won the G.G.'s. Some of the other winners were sleaze.

Recently, Findley wrote a newspaper article in which he pointed out the appalling lack of ability among Canadian critics. I don't blame him. He was right on. With a few exceptions, I find our critics to be narrow-minded, nit-picking people who approach anything new with pre-conceived prejudices only exceeded by their desire to reveal how clever and witty they themselves are.

But the point that interested me most in his article was its concluding one. He stated, unequivocally, that we are in the midst of Canada's golden age of writing, and suggested it was a pity that no one would say this until 50 or 100 years from now.

Not quite golden. There's some dross among the glitter. But absolutely huggable, with the occasional diamond popping up, and a lot of silver threads among the gold. Fair enough?

What is a golden age? It's writing it, a time when a rich vein of talent is discovered, and mined, and turned into vessels and shapes and pieces that will delight and enhance life for many years.

England had one in the late 16th century, when Marlowe and Ben Jonson and William Shakespeare served as fuel, brilliant witnesses to the vagaries, foibles, and magnificence of the human species.

Russia had one in the 19th century, with Tolstoy, Chekhov, Dostoevsky and a dozen others.

America had its golden years in this century, with Willa Cather, Steinbeck, Dreiser, Hemingway, Sandburg, Frost and a host of smaller fish cruising along in their wake.

A golden age in writing is not something planned. It cannot even be foreseen. It can only be backseen. It's a seemingly spontaneous outburst of literary fireworks, for which there seems no provocation.

OK. End of thesis. But, as I so seldom do anything useful in this column except expose the darker side of our national psyche, crazy wives, rotten kids, bewildered politicians, perhaps today I can render a service.

A little digression. I teach a Grade 13 course in contemporary literature. First term, all Canadian; second term, all American; third term, all British. At the

end of this year, I had the kids write an assessment of the course, no names, no pack drill. About 80 per cent of them said the Canadian section was the best, that they'd become acquainted for the first time with great Canadian writing, and that it should be extended for the full year. This was after meeting perhaps 20 Canadian writers, in print.

What does that tell you? First, our own children don't know our own writers. Second, their parents don't have any Canadian books in the house. Third, Canadian publishers are lousy promoters.

End of digression. It's summertime, time for reading. Time for my public service bit.

If you can take your eyes for a moment off the golden shoulders of all those golden girls, check this list, when next you decide to pick up a paperback novel. If the store doesn't have it, demand why, hotly.

If you like Westerns, read anything by: Jack Hodgins, Paul St. Pierre, W. O. Mitchell, Robert Kroetsch, Rudy Wiebe, Margaret Laurence. Every one is a genuine artist, and I've missed others.

If your taste is with the effete East (Ont. and Que.) read anything by Morley Callaghan, Hugh MacLennan, Alice Munroe, Margaret Atwood. And three dozen others, including Marian Engel (Bear).

Not to mention, all from Quebec: Mordchai Richler, Marie-Claire Blais, and Roch Carrier. And forty-four others, like Yves Theriault.

Way down east, Ernest Buckler, Alden Nowlan, Ray Guy and 14 more.

The book will cost you a little more than porno U.S. novel with the cover of a girl being raped and whipped when she's stuffing pills down her lovely throat. That's because our publishers have a small market, because people like you don't buy their books, and have to charge more.

But you'll be doing our writers, our country, and, more importantly, yourself, a service that will make the Canadian Golden Age of Writing a fact, not a footnote in the future.

OUR READERS WRITE:

IMPORTANT LAWS
My precious little set of wheels,
Has become my daily curse,
One thing for sure, as I grow poor,
Each day is getting worse.

As I travel down the asphalt paths
And round the concrete turns,
With bumps and squeals, my precious
wheels,
Are the cause of seatbelt burns.

I have a big red blister,
Around the shoulder part,
With my stomach squeezed, my seatbelt
enslaved,
I can hear my thumping heart.

Although this pace is killing me,
As each day I gasp for breath,
In my funeral home, what could be worse,
Than be barbecued to death.

As I travel to my "salt-mine"
To earn my daily bread,
Will they always press, for more progress,
Until the day I'm dead.

Though my neck bone's dislocated,
I'm tethered to my seat,
With my ruptured tub, from the seatbelt
rub,
It's getting hard to eat.

Now with the seatbelt tightly fastened
and my taxes paid for gas,
I'm prepared to try, or even die,
To keep the lawns they pass.

Victor Smith
R.R.2, Rockwood.

The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of August 14, 1968

Councillor Bob Lawson, indignation showing, tried unsuccessfully to resign as Esqueing representative on the Georgetown Fire Area last week following charges by fellow councillor Pat Patterson about the condition of the township fire truck.

The mails finally got through—the strike ended—and Acton postal clerks were back on the job last Thursday at midnight a few hours after the vote to end the strike was known. By Tuesday, despite mail volume double the normal rate, Acton postal workers were "right up to date" said postmaster Gord McKeown.

Constable Roy Wood has commenced his duties with the Acton O.P.P. this week. He has come here from Downsview.

Rain, a weather hazard which has threatened and spoiled playground finales for years did another job on a decorative and energetic playground effort again this year.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of August 14, 1958

Approval was granted for the purchase of the Willow St. substation from the HFCPC at a cost of \$17160 when the Public Utilities Commission held their regular meeting on Thursday, August 7.

Denis Gibbons, high school student, son of Mr. and Mrs. Neil Gibbons, 74 Main St. S. received word this week he had won the Rocky Nelson Home Run Contest. The contest was sponsored by a Toronto daily newspaper. Entrants were asked to guess the day, inning and time that Rocky Nelson, Toronto Maple Leaf ball player would hit his 35th home run of the season. Denis won the contest with his guess "August 10, eighth inning at 3:55 and was correct with the exception of the time, which was 3:56.

The strike which hit Ontario Breweries Warehouse retail stores this week took its toll at the local store at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday afternoon when the stock ran out. Recent visitors at the home of Rev. and Mrs. C.L. Poole were Mr. and Mrs. George E. Poole and Miss Nancy Poole of Toronto.

50 years ago

Taken from an issue of The Acton Free Press of August 16, 1928

At the services at Knox church next Sunday, Rev. H. D. Cameron, M.A. of Oakville, will be the minister. Mr. Cameron is the son of the late Rev. Lachlan Cameron, who was for several years the minister of the Acton congregation. The congregation will indeed be pleased to hear this son of a former beloved pastor.

The Ladies' Aid of Knox church held a most enjoyable picnic at Blue Springs Park on Wednesday afternoon. The weather was very favorable, and a very enjoyable time was spent in playing football and running races. The following are the winners of the races. Ruby McPherson, Wilhelmina Kinnawin, Laura Hall, Miss Jean Paul, Archie McPherson, Donald Ryder, Roderick Ryder, Mrs. B. Davidson, Mrs. Gervais, Wilmer Davidson, Olive Cooper, Mrs. E. Gamble, William Hall, Miss R. Walker and Mrs. A. J. Murray.

After the races a bountiful lunch was served by the ladies.

The annual Garden party of St. Alban's church will again this year be held at the beautiful grounds at Beverly House. Mr. and Mrs. Beardmore have graciously granted use of the grounds and are arranging the programme for this event, which will be held next Wednesday, August 22 afternoon and evening. Refreshment booths and a variety of games, guessing contests and amusements will be scattered throughout the grounds to amuse and entertain those who attend.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Free Press of Thursday, August 15, 1878

Mr. Little, Public School inspector of this village, left yesterday, for Algona, where he will spend about a month inspecting the schools.

The streets in the Village presented a very busy appearance Saturday evening. A great number of farmers having finished their harvest, took the first opportunity to come to town and see what was going on.

Private letters from Manitoba state that all the young men who left the vicinity of Acton a short time ago for that province are doing well.

The harvest hands employed by the farmers in this vicinity are nearly all out of work, and the Village again has its usual number of loafers.

A new fence is being built in front of the Congregational Church in the Village. The camp meeting season has commenced.

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"I, for one, would not be disappointed to see the Halton Regionals move out of town."