

Free Press Editorial Page

Communicate, please!

Another election day has come and gone, with its usual surprises. Not long after the polls closed, the post mortems began.

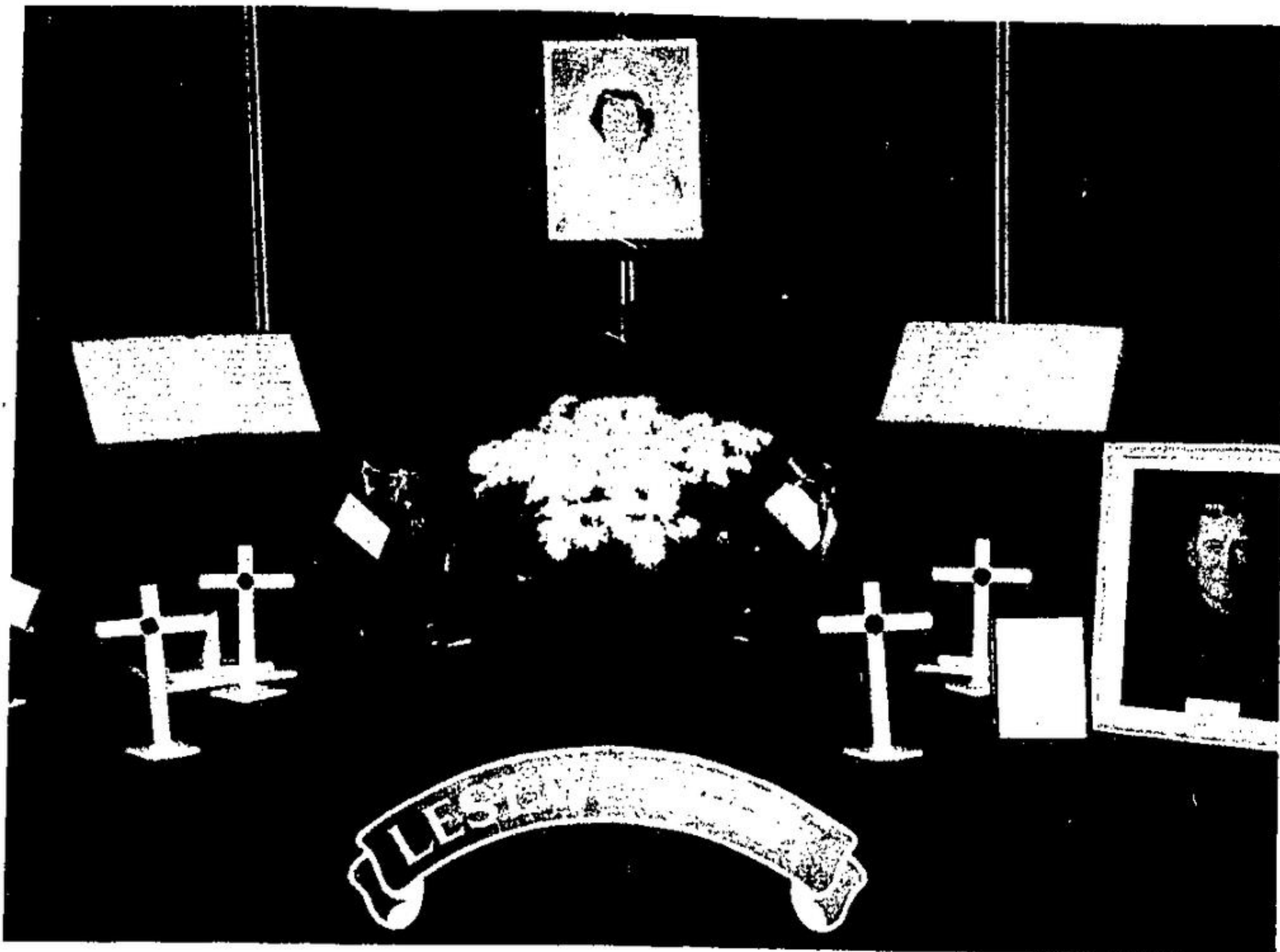
The way of voters are indeed unpredictable. Often personal considerations may come into play, instead of political suitability. People annoyed at a certain councillor will abruptly switch to vote for a newcomer they would scarcely recognize on the street. Just one plank of a detailed platform may be the one that proves a politician's downfall.

And thus come the upsets and the results that will be discussed for many hours. It wasn't simple for the voters to know who will represent our town and townships best. It's not simple for the candidates to make themselves and their thoughts known truthfully to the public. We hope we played a useful part in the Free Press through our interviews with each candidate. The Chamber of Commerce candidates night was also well attended, unless you consider 200 out of a population of 7,500 a little low!

Many supporters have expended their best efforts on behalf of friends and family, and people they sincerely believed in. Other people who deserve appreciation are all those who voted. Hundreds of those eligible didn't bother. Well, now it's time to look ahead.

The people who have won the election are all going to do their best to represent us well. For the newcomers, this will not be accomplished in a meeting or two. There is much to be learned. We know, from years of reporting, that our representatives truly want to know what we, the people, are thinking. There will be irate phone calls, tedious people with repetitious complaints. People who don't—and sometimes won't—understand the situation will be determined to lambast the government. Many will refuse to listen to the other side of the story. We know; it happens to newspapers, too.

So please, electorate, let your councillors and school board member know what you think. Letters to the Editor are a good way. Most reasonable people realize that too many phone calls are intrusive in the private life of the representative. Since there are only three councillors representing us, personal contact on a casual basis is not too likely. Sewers aren't the best thing to talk about at church. May we suggest quick notes written and mailed to the representatives? The notes needn't be literary gems—just jot down what you think. Please tell them when you think they have voted correctly, or something is good for the region, town or township. Please communicate.



Lest we forget

LEGION HALL was specially decorated for the innovative church service there on Saturday morning, using components from the Remembrance Day window at Acton Home Furnishings store. Missing are the wreaths which now ring the cenotaph. Names

of Acton servicemen killed in active service are hand written in the books in the background. At the front is a portrait of Col. John McCrae, the writer of the poem In Flanders Fields.



Sugar and spice by Bill Smiley

If this column appears in your favorite community newspaper two days or two weeks or two months after Remembrance Day, don't blame me. Blame the post office. As I write, the most arrogant, obnoxious union in Canada is at it again.

In fairness, the posties have their grievances. But they are so intransigent that they have lost any vestige they might have retained, of public support, after so many strikes in so few years. And their erstwhile leader Monsieur Parrott, was full of crap when he declared there was union solidarity. Even as he said it, hundreds of small-town post office staffs had either not gone out at all, or were back to work, obeying the law.

However, that has little to do with Remembrance Day, 1978. Unless it happens to strike a responsive chord in all those veterans who went to war thinking they were fighting for freedom not anarchy.

A couple of years ago, I thought I had fore sworn writing columns about Remembrance Day. I thought I'd said everything I could about it: the memories, the lump in the throat as The Last Post was played in the chill November air; the swapping of enormous lies at the Legion Hall after the parade.

But this year, I was a bit miffed when a zealous Zone Commander down in the Brockville area accused me in the press of "knocking" the Canadian Legion, just because I did not genuflect every time the name came up. I retorted, also in the press, that it was rather odd that a chap who was invited on an average of twice a year to address Legion branches, should be so accused.

Well, it all caught up with me. This year, in a weak moment and harassed by two old buddies who were well into the grape, I agreed to guest speak at the first Legion

branch I ever joined, on Remembrance Day.

My wife wasn't that hilarious about the idea. She recalled a few instances when I had been up to no particular good with that "knocking" of the Legion. Like the night I got home at 4 a.m. after a turkey raffle, tottered up the stairs, called, "Look what I brought you, sweetie," and flung a 30-pound turkey, neck, legs and all onto the bed beside her. Which promptly collapsed leaving her on the floor in the embrace of a very cold, very dead turk.

As I recall, we dined not on hot turkey, but hot tongue and cold shoulder, next day.

Or the time I brought home four Indian guys, good legionnaires all, insisted that they'd made me an honorary chief, and tried to explain to her why we had to put them up for the night.

Or the time I went off to a one-day zone rally with a neighbor, a Great War vet, a charter member of the Legion, and a respectable citizen. And we arrived home two days later looking like skeletons and acting like a couple of veterans from the Boer War.

But that's not, of course, the kind of thing I can use in my speech. No. I'll have to talk about comradeship, the flag, the Queen, the fallen, throwing the torch, the many scholarships the Legion provides, the lovely dinner prepared by the Ladies Auxiliary, and all that jazz. Lest we forget.

What I'd really like to do is discuss topics closer to the hearts of the average legionnaire: what you could get for a pack of smokes in Antwerp in 1944; how come a colleague of mine, who fought with Hommel in North Africa, gets a bigger war pension from the German government than I do from the Canadian; how many girls there were to the square yard in Pleasidilly Circus on a summer evening; how anybody who believed in democracy and equality could volunteer to serve in such a fascist outfit as the military.

But no. That would never do. Not with the Ladies Auxiliary hanging around, drinking in every word. And making sure their spouses drank in nothing except words.

I'll probably have to drop in a few heroic and imaginary personal experiences, stress the importance to the boys in arms of Those At Home, toss off an anecdote or two about Churchill, speak in hushed and reverent tones of those who got the chop, and belabor the government for not giving veterans a pension that would put them within a stone's throw of civil service pensioners.

It's going to be tough. I am not a reverent person. I still think it will be a great day for Canada when there are only five legionnaires left in this country, all of them in their nineties, and they get together and sell the \$28 million of assets of the Canadian Legion, and squander the whole works on a three-week trip to Gay Paree. It will mean we haven't been in a war for 50 odd years. And it will probably mean that, after three weeks, there are no more Canadian legionnaires on the face of the earth.

But I'll do my best. I can always give the Germans a verbal thumping, and bewail the fact that after being thoroughly laced, they could buy the whole of Canada tomorrow, if they wished. That should go over.

Day of remembering

Remembrance Day observances at 11 a.m. on the 11th proved a good decision for this year. An excellent crowd attended the ceremonies on Saturday and the weather was fine. Bitter cold beset the participants in Georgetown just the next day, on Sunday.

Instead of the usual church service, there was a community service in the Legion and it, too, was well attended. There should be more of these interdenominational gatherings.

Many children were evident at the service. Members of youth groups joined the parade and lined up right in front of the cenotaph, so these boys and girls could easily see everything that went on. Wreaths were laid by some of these

young people as well as by representatives of many groups.

These wreaths are set out at the cenotaph throughout the year, a few at a time, lasting until next Remembrance Day.

For some, Remembrance Day was Monday. These were federal government employees and bank personnel, who had Monday off since the holiday fell on a Saturday. Although schools have the 11th of November off, they did not have the "make up" a holiday. Teachers and students were in school Monday.

Lack of banking and postal services to the rest of the working populace on Monday seems questionable.

Of this and that

How come...there are more dances here than ever before, but never any square dancing at them?

Ears perked up when candidate Ed Wood said at the Meet the Candidates night there's a suggestion around that the police office here would be closing up entirely. What a disservice to the town that would be!

Remembrance Day and election day are very close together this year. There's plenty to think about in that close association. What did you do for your country Monday?

The Meals on Wheels program has been in full operation for exactly a year. What a boon it's been! There have been 3,400 meals delivered in that full year, an average of 12 a day. Through emergencies, holidays and problems, people who could be helped by home delivery of hot meals got their orders. Much appreciation to organizer Terry Grubbe and her corps of volunteers!

No one knows what it is that he can do until he tries.—Publius Syrus

Get ready...November is fish and seafood month. Yep. The government decided it.

Any group has four kinds of bones:

Wishbones: Those who spend all of their time wishing someone else would do the work.

Jawbones: Those who do the talking and very little else.

Knucklebones: Those who knock everything anybody else tries to do.

Backbones: Those who get under the load and do the work.

What kind of bone are you?

With the annual problem of what to do with leaves, many people have been wondering if they are able to burn them. The answer is—no. It is against the law in Halton to do so in an effort to protect the environment.

Some people who do not usually exercise their votes decided it was about time they did something other than complain. One handicapped woman in town, who had not voted in many years wanted to see a change in local politics and realized that her one vote along with that of many others who feel the same way, can actually change things. She managed to visit her polling station in a wheelchair, in spite of the cold and rain, in an effort to vote for the candidates of her choice. Did any healthy and able people use the weather as an excuse not to vote?

Happiness comes of the capacity to feel deeply, to enjoy simply, to think freely, to risk life, to be needed.



with Nancy Gordon

Dear God:

I remember in 1960 my husband Jim, and I lived on a farm on Seventeen Side Road near Guelph. We lived alone as our two sons, Ted and Gordon, were married with their own responsibilities. Our doctor discovered Jim had cancer and he was unable to work on the farm. We had no money. No help of any kind. I prayed for a job and I thank You God for your help. I got a job. I started to work at McNair Mushroom Plant near Acton, in 1961. But as I recall things became worse for me. Being a very stout woman and neither young nor well—I worked the irregular hours that were required for this job—from six in the morning until one or two the next morning—to finish picking and packing each crop. This meant a lot of ladder climbing and stooping. On top of this I had the care of my husband who was worse by this time and the care of a large house. But God I managed with your help.

My troubles multiplied. Our youngest son, not being able to get work, moved in with us in 1961. So God we had their problems as well. He had a family of three young children and another on the way. Five years later Jim, my husband had deteriorated and so after a month in the Guelph General Hospital You took him home.

I needed help again God, and You were there. In 1969 our son Ted started to work at Jack Ridley Cartage Company in Acton, which eased my load. Thank You. I couldn't keep up with my job because my legs had become very swollen and painful and ached all the time. Finally my son insisted I quit. The pains in my legs were so bad that I had no choice but to do what he asked.

One night when I was in the bathtub relaxing a large blood vessel in my right leg burst. It was terrible! I was sitting in a tub of bloody water! I was so terrified I screamed. My daughter-in-law was in the house at the time, and she came running. She immediately put a tourniquet around my leg. With great difficulty she got me out of the tub. I was rushed to the Guelph General Hospital and began the long and painful road to recovery. If You were not with me, God, I would not

be writing this letter today.

The surgeon operated extensively on my right leg. It did not heal properly, and required skin grafting. Two weeks after surgery I was sent home. I was completely alone and unable to get around on my good leg. And being stout made it even harder. Just imagine all that weight on one leg.

A week later my son Ted came to visit me. He was shocked to find me crying with unbearable pain. He called the doctor and I was returned to the hospital immediately. Oh God I was so afraid I would lose my right leg! Being so heavy I had no idea how I would manage.

I was so confused and dissatisfied with our physician, God, that I'm afraid I told him so. I said, "Don't you dare touch me or come near me again."

Forgive me for my lack of patience and understanding. But the possibility of losing my leg filled me with fear and hate.

I had severe infection in my leg and unbearable pain which took months of intensive treatment—skin grafting, whirlpool treatment, and therapy. Finally my leg healed.

Since then the blood vessel in my left leg burst and the same surgery was performed on it. This time everything went smoothly. Today I am living alone in my own little home. And I have my own two legs. They're not perfect but I am able to do everything. My house is always full of activity and the laughter of my grandchildren and friends. And I can get into my little car and go anywhere I want.

Thank You for my legs. Thank You for the gift of patience I can even accept my limitations. Thank You God for being so close and dear to me. I am truly one of Your own.

Martha Rayner Acton, Ontario

This letter is shared with you because there are many people who do not know that God's help is an everyday experience. Please share with us what God has done in your life by phoning Nancy at 853-2195 or write of your experience and mail to:

SHARING P.O. Box 57, Acton, Ontario

The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, November 13, 1968. In his maiden speech to the House of Commons, M.P. Rud Whiting criticized the decision to close Acton station.

Pupils at M.Z. Bennett school watched their new Elmer flag raised marking their fifth year without an accident. Corp. Ray Mason presented Larry Quinn, head of the safety patrol, with another bar for their plaque. A presentation was made to John Bruce, now in his 80th year, who retired after being crossing guard for 12 years.

Mrs. Anna Wilson has retired after 30 years behind the counter in the general store at Eden Mills. Regional government is inevitable, says Warden William Hunter.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, November 20, 1948

Micro-Plastics plant in Acton has been closed as the result of what company officials termed "illegal strike" by several employees on Monday morning. Officials of the local United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers AFL/CIO/CLC, of America, claimed members were justified in their three day suspension last Saturday of the afternoon shift working at the plant.

Welcoming an audience which filled the public school auditorium for the annual high school commencement exercises Friday, principal A.E. Hansen declared "We have reached our capacity in our present building. Perhaps by this time next year, we will have our own auditorium."

Council approved a call for tenders for paving and laying storm sewers in the Glenlea Subdivision following a recommendation of the road committee at the regular meeting Monday night.

Acton fire department received a call at 7 a.m. Tuesday morning to the home of Pat Dunn, 60 Main St. S. when an over heated oil burner caused some alarm to the residents.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, November 15, 1928

The wet and disagreeable weather did not deter a large crowd from attending the Memorial Service Monday at the town hall. The grave of each soldier at Fairview Cemetery was decorated with a silken flag.

The opening meeting of the Literary Society took place on Friday. The ukelele orchestra played "Get Out and Get Under the Moon." A talk on Armistice was given by Miss Helen Ostrander. A piano solo by Miss Isobel Switzer and a mouth organ selection by Jim McGeachie received hearty encores.

Mrs. Archibald McTavish has sold her shop and business at the corner of Mill and Elgin to Mr. George Benton.

Tomorrow is tax day and your chance to help keep Acton ship-shape.

100 years ago

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

Wonderful discovery! Empress Relief, the Friend of Mankind. Balm for every wound. It cures rheumatism and Neuralgia and cures all pain instantly. It cures toothache, earache, headache, neuralgia, rheumatism, sprains, swellings, inflammation, burns, cuts, bruises, pain in sides, pain in back, pain in chest, pain in shoulder, coughs, colds, frostbite, chilblains, diarrhoea, dysentery, summer complaints. It will cure the most agonizing pain exterior or internal, in one instant of time. Price 25 cents per bottle.

C.W. Hill has just received a new supply of mottoes, size 17x21, with the Doxology and the Lord's Prayer. They are really beautiful.

The skating rink has been prepared and as soon as the weather gets cold enough skating will begin in earnest.

Roads are fearful just now. Mud! Mud! Mud!

Everybody is thinking of petitioning council for sidewalk in their particular part of town.

Clothes lines and wood piles have been frequently robbed of late. Several of our villagers have missed some of their clothes, and a quantity of wood. It should be looked into.

THE ACTON FREE PRESS

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