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Founded in 1875
Don McDonald, Publisher

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6 The Acton Free Press, Wednesday, Jan. 3, 1979

Let's save the town hall

Now's the time for Actonians, and anyone interested in preserving this community's heritage, to put their money where it counts.

The Acton Town Hall Committee is making a pitch for funds to save the historic red brick town hall on Willow St. from the wrecker's hammer. The building was the scene for much of this community's history and the committee feels there is enough interest in preserving the old town hall that the people of Acton and district will furnish \$50,000 to \$75,000 needed for the restoration that won't be covered by grants.

Restoration of the time-worn edifice will cost an estimated \$236,000. When it is finished Acton will again have a heart, albeit an 19th century one missing its bell tower.

The committee has worked hard and against some large odds in their efforts to preserve the old town hall. We feel there is enough interest and pride in this community's heritage to save the building from the fate of all other interesting Acton historical heirlooms that have perished in the name of "progress."

However, human nature being what it is, some of us are inclined to leave the fund-raising to others or wait to see the enthusiasm or lack of it which attends most campaigns. Acton has long been noted for its enthusiasm for causes which require the participation of the entire community. We have another on our hands now that will show Halton Hills council there is still plenty of community spirit and autonomy here.

Let's all get behind the Acton Town Hall Committee in their efforts to save the old town hall from destruction. Let's have the town hall renovated so it can once again be an active centre for the community—one we can be proud of and to which we can point with pride.

The best way to do that is to take out cheque books and greenbacks and make sure the building is saved. Otherwise the last remnant of this community's history will be reduced to a pile of red dust. Memories will haunt us when we pass along Willow St. wondering why we didn't fork over a few dollars to help save a community landmark from the iconoclasts.

What others say

School, home team

A story in The Vancouver Sun in late October pointed out it is up to parents to know the basics about the schools their children attend. Simple basics, really. Like what the rules are at school about being late and using the library equipment and going outdoors at recess. Like who your child's principal is and what he/she is really feeling beneath the rough exterior. Like what your son or daughter should be learning this year in the various courses of instruction being taught.

Probably most Goderich and area parents are at a real advantage when it comes to sorting out this kind of information. But it is very likely surprising the numbers of parents who really couldn't care less about such things and make little or no effort to learn about the school's personnel and programs.

Educators know the value to children who come from homes where parents really care about their children and their progress at school. That's why parents get regular invitations to attend the school and to see first hand what's going on in the classroom where their sons and daughters spend so many hours out of each school day. And parents should know their

rights, too. They should know how to go about making a formal complaint to the school. Or that they can withdraw their children from programs which offend their values. Or that they should be drawn into any crisis which is developing between the teachers and their children... or their children and other students.

Teachers also know the importance of parents who send children to school after they have had plenty of sleep, good food, proper medical and dental care as well as encouragement from home to listen and learn while at school. They know the need for a quiet, comfortable place to do homework as well as those gentle reminders from mom and dad to get the work done. And teachers couldn't put a price on the words of praise which parents give to kids and which sends youngsters into the classroom with a more positive, co-operative mind.

There's so much truth in the Vancouver Sun story which tells parents that schools are only as effective as the homes from which the children come. It really is essential that home and school work together toward a common goal.—Goderich Signal-Star.

NEWS ITEM—THERE WILL BE NO TOPLESS WAITRESSES IN HALTON HILLS NOW THAT OUR COUNCIL HAS ENDORSED AN OAKVILLE—UH—MOTION.



by
Bill
Smiley

Here we are staggering into another year, and nothing done, not a single resolution made. Ah, well, I don't believe in resolutions anyway, except for the fun of breaking them. A man does the best he can, and all the well-intentioned resolutions in the world won't make him do any better.

Looking back over the last year, I find it was much like any other: ups and downs, topsies and turveys, ins and outs, sideways and backward, no real progress, but no real retreat, either.

My son managed to survive another year among the piranhas and pythons and poisonous snakes of Paraguay. He is now a graduate masseur and acupuncturist, hoping to make enough from his new trade to come home for a visit, after five years.

I can hardly wait for him to arrive. My teeth and hair are still falling out, my arthritis is giving me hell, I have a bum back, and I could use a little free massage and acupuncturist. Even though I'd prefer a masseuse. And an acupunctress.

My daughter lurched from one crisis to another, as is her wont, but managed to chalk up another degree and charm or weasel her way into a job as a high school teacher, after six months of dearth. Any year, or any decade now, she won't be expecting handouts from the old man.

My grandboys got a year older, survived various fatal diseases, acquired some very colorful expressions that I cannot repeat, and elicited from one beleaguered babysitter the statement that they were the worst kids she'd ever tried to handle.

The Old Battleaxe and I battled it out for another 12 months, lost a little skin here and there, each won a number of skirmishes, but neither won a decisive battle, and the war goes on, sometimes cold, sometimes hot.

We had a great trip to Europe that lasted three weeks and cost me so much that I won't be able to retire until I'm 83, at last reckoning.

Everything went up again: insurance, taxes, heating. And everything else came down: snow, ice off the roof, the Canadian dollar, the confidence of the Liberal party, branches off my big oak tree, and the number of years left to live.

It was a year like any other: fraught with terrors and horrors and pain and misery and depression and loneliness all over the world and in our private lives. But also replete with simple joys and sudden happiness and special moments and overwhelming love and occasional peace.

Wonder what '79 will be like. Heck, I don't have to ask. I know. It'll be the same as last year, only more so.

My two rotten old rusty cars will be even rottener and rustier and I'll have to buy a third-hand turkey to replace them.

My students will be even thicker in the thatch than this year's crop, and I'll have to reach even further into the well to try to motivate them. There's only so much water in that well. Then it turns to mud. So be it.

My wife will go on thinking that listening to her worry about her daughter, her son, her brother, her father, her grandchildren, her sister-in-law, are more important than reading the paper.

My grandboys will go on being a source of utter delight and utter despair to me, sapping my strength at the same time as they give me new life.

My pay will go up six per cent and inflation will go up 13 per cent. So I'll stop eating beef, which is hard to mangle with a partial plate, anyway.

I'll make about 800 decisions. Based on past performances, 738 of them will be wrong, according to my wife. She will make 400 decisions and 400 of them will be right on.

My son will wind up with a total of \$24 profit and wire me for air fare home for a visit.

I'll lose a few more chunks of my corpus. This past year it was a few teeth and a piece of nose. In '79 it could be anything: gall bladder, liver,

(Continued on Page 7)

From the back issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 8, 1969.

Four new members joined Acton council at their inaugural meeting. Taking the oath of office for the first time were councillors Bill Coats, Peter Marks and Orval Chapman. Jack Greer returned to council after an absence of several years. Clerk-treasurer Joe Hurst also administered the official oath to returned mayor Les Duby, reeve Dr. Frank Oakes, deputy-reeve Ted Tyler Jr. and councillors G. W. McKenzie and Earl Masales. Rev. Harry Dawson led in prayer.

The farm home of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Craven was completely destroyed by fire. My telephone is turning to jelly on the wall, groaned Mayor Les Duby at council. The subject was snow removal and the many problems in removing tons of snow.

Esquering council members are reeve George Currie, deputy reeve Tom Hill, councillors Wilfred Leslie, Russell Miller and Ken Marshall.

After a lengthy illness Miss Margaret MacDonald died in Toronto. She was a teacher for many years and principal of the high school here.

Christmas was saddened in many homes by the death of Mrs. Fred Anderson.

Nassagaweya township councillors are reeve William Hoey, deputy-reeve Mrs. A. MacArthur, councillors James Watson, Gordon Agnew and Art Gibson.

Next holiday for school children is the new-type winter holiday in March.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 8, 1959.

Eight Acton Scouts braved zero temperatures to spend three days and two nights under canvas. Taking part were Patrol Leaders Glen Barr, Bob Hinton, Brian Otterbein, Ricky Currie, Second Paul McGeachie, Troop Leader Peter Newton, A.S.M. Laurie Duby and Scoutmaster Hartley Coles.

Mayor W. H. Cook informed the new council they would be called upon to make decisions that would affect the municipality for the next 15 to 20 years or longer. He outlined the necessity for council to give thorough investigation into the pollution of the town water supply on the south side of Acton, acquaint themselves with information in order to assist with enquiries from industrialists and to give consideration to the Fire Department taking over the ambulance service. The inaugural service was conducted by the Rev. K. J. Reid and Rev. H. B. Stokreef. Councillors are J. H. Hurst, B. D. Rachlin, J. H. Goy, J. Greer, F. Watts, W. J. McLeod, H. Lowe and H. Peal.

License plates may be obtained at the home of Jack Hargrave, Arthur St. He purchased the first number of the series himself.

C. Leishman began his duties as crossing guard at the Mill-Willow corner.

Elaine Buckner and a group of Acton ladies will be demonstrating keep fit exercises on Elaine Coles' television program. Those appearing will be Mrs. J. E. Dowding, Mrs. T. Fleming, Mrs. J. Hurst, Mrs. W. D. Mason, Mrs. C. J. Pope, Mrs. M. Stancliffe and Mrs. P. White.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Acton Free Press of Thursday evening, January 3, 1929.

Pastor Baxter preached his farewell ser-

mons at the Baptist church. He was Scoutmaster and pianist for the Glee Club.

After carrying His Majesty's mails from the mail trains at the C.N.R. station to the Acton Post Office for over 11 years, Mr. L. E. Atkinson relinquished his duties at the end of the year. His successor is ex-Reeve George Barber.

The Women's Institute decided to supply the Science Room at the high school with towels, and to supply milk to a needy family for another month. Mrs. George Lantz reported on the convention she attended. Women's independence from their husbands began when they stopped wearing dresses with 24 buttons at the back.

One of Esquering's oldest residents Mrs. John Scott died in her 94th year. She was the last remaining member of her family and had eight children.

There is an epidemic of influenza in Ontario.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 2, 1879.

Owing to the great pressure of job work, this issue of the Free Press is several hours behind.

OUR READERS WRITE:

Questions left unanswered

Filed with this newspaper for publication:

Mrs. W. Bielski, Chairman
Ontario Telephone Service Commission
3025 Dufferin Street, Suite 200
Downsview, Ontario
M3K 1Z2

Dear Mrs. Bielski,
On behalf of the Committee for Better (telephone) Service I wish to thank you for calling a public hearing in our area. We trust that the meeting was of value to your commission.

Although it was a standing room only crowd the weather and poor driving conditions did keep the attendance down. The Committee for Better Service (C.B.S.) has been contacted by numerous people expressing regret that they were unable to attend the meeting. The presentation made by the C.B.S. and the additional concerns of those in attendance did however cover all of the many telephone problems found in the Erin and Hillsburgh exchanges.

The fact that the Community Telephone Company of Ontario was again largely unprepared came as a disappointment to us, bearing in mind that they had prior notice of our problems. Indeed, the content of the meeting was almost identical to the one held four years ago. The fact that they still did not offer us any solutions or even suggestions is most discouraging.

In that light, a small number of our committee who would represent the concerns of all the subscribers would appreciate another meeting with the telephone company and the commission to discuss our problems. We would request that such a meeting be held within the next two months and it could be in your office or theirs. As indicated at the hearing the C.B.S. would be pleased to meet with Community Telephone

of Ontario if such a meeting would prove worthwhile. In order that such a meeting would bring results we feel that your presence is necessary to act as a catalyst and we can learn what progress they have made with respect to solving the questions we put forward—point by point.

We do not feel that we are an irresponsible or an inconsiderate group. If we see steady progress being made to solve these problems I am sure we would be satisfied. Unfortunately we feel that without your attendance such a meeting would bear no more fruit than the previous one. The attached list of questions were left unanswered.

At a recent convention of telephone companies in the United States, Walter R. Light, President of Northern Telecom Ltd., had this to say "There is a revolution under way in technology for telecommunications. Companies that take advantage of the revolution will prosper, those that don't will be absorbed by others. To succeed in future, Light said, "Independents will have to pay special attention to finances and customer service." Light repeated "Customer service will be the key to a telephone company's future. Telephone companies will have to improve their network planning."

We believe that we understand the position of the commission and feel that in turn your commission understands ours. As stated on the 718 name petition any rate increase must be in conjunction with improved service—equal service to our neighbors on surrounding exchanges and at comparable cost.

Yours truly,
Jeanette Cox

On behalf of the
Committee for Better Service



Along the rail fence