

The Acton Free Press

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Founded in 1875
Don McDonald, Publisher

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Out in the cold

If ever there is a month when Canadians need a holiday it is in February when the snow lies deep and wind whistles through the country with deep freeze on its breath.

But the mandarins and the cabinet ministers who run the country from Ottawa have decided Canadians who stay and face the freeze can't afford another holiday.

They should have been told we can't afford not to have one.

A week ago Monday was Heritage Day. Except for a few trade unions who have it written into contracts, and venturesome firms who set the trends, life went on as usual in Canada.

There is no month in the year in

which Canadians feel so low as in February. Just thoughts of a holiday at midwinter could make the difference between dreading the final six weeks of winter and having the courage to face them with a smile and a song.

Heritage Day is perfect for such a break. We could put out the Christmas lights, and have a gala winter carnival a la Quebec City.

Alas, MPs who tell us to shiver in Shawinigan as they flee south for the cold days have no mercy. Let them freeze in the dark, they say.

It's time we told them we want Heritage Day a national holiday, even if it means not having Groundhog Day off.

Write your MP and tell him.

He likes downtowns

Members of Acton Business Improvement area (BIA) are shaking their heads as they brandish a paper written by Henry W. Joseph on Canadian Downtown rediscovered. Mr. Joseph is the same man who is planning for a plaza in the east end of Acton for Landawn Shopping Centres.

Downtown businessmen wonder how Mr. Joseph can square what he wrote with what he has been touting for Acton.

In his paper entitled The Downtown-Rediscovered, Mr. Joseph deplors the decline in importance of the downtowns. He notes the Provinces with some help from the federal government have strongly encouraged respective municipalities to place particular emphasis on the revitalization and rejuvenation of existing downtown properties.

He says, actual land use planning for the downtown area must take into account the specific character, vitality and economics of the respective blocks and individual properties, noting also that results of negotiations between the municipality and redevelopment groups will have a significant effect on the tax base for both existing land owners and the principals in redevelopment.

He says, "The largest Canadian cities have had the benefit of the introduction of substantial mixed-use developments in their downtown cores concurrent with major suburban growth and are generally in a much better position with respect to the quality of their downtowns. The challenge and the opportunity remains accordingly with the medium size and smaller communities.

"Every indication suggests that we will

be faced with slow economic growth in the Canadian market over the next five years and that the major demand factors for residential expansion will diminish substantially. Municipalities faced with escalating municipal costs and reduced population and employment growth must utilize this remaining opportunity to upgrade their existing downtown real estate assets and to process the approvals of new real estate projects with a comprehensive understanding of their impact on municipal financing."

Strong words from Mr. Joseph but he has a loophole. He also says:

"Municipalities must accept, however, in many cases, a changing role for their downtowns. Significant shifts in population growth and the evolution of suburban commercial facilities in many cases make it impractical, if not impossible, to return the existing Central Business District to the dominant role it originally had."

"In many situations, municipalities must carefully evolve a changing role for the downtown with considerably less reliance on major retail activities and more reliance on increased residential density, together with strong office growth and the integration of community service facilities. If not we can expect to see major retailers locate in adjacent urban areas, drawing the retail shopping dollars to another community. Considerable thought and attention must be given to the unique fabric of each community and the appropriate type of re-development."

Different strokes for different folks, but his argument in favor of revitalizing the downtown is convincing. We'll leave it to him to explain why he favors moving commerce to the east end of Acton.

So others may be helped

The Canadian Red Cross Society is a vital part of the community and the nation. Through association with the League of Red Cross Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross it has obligations to help people throughout the world.

The love of man is best exemplified in his willingness to help others in time of crisis.

Innocent victims of conflict and disaster in its many forms look to the Red Cross for help and hope. When death, destruction and misery take their toll you are there through your Red Cross.

You are not alone when you voluntarily support the Red Cross and its many programs and services in your community. Everybody helps and everybody benefits.

Isabel Anderson remembers the old Crewsons Corners Church

Dear sir,
The photograph in the Free Press of the little, old church at Crewsons' Corners, although looking nothing like the original, recalled a few nostalgic and affectionate memories.

When I was a small child, I lived with my parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Anderson, and my sisters, Emma, who became Mrs. Carl Hansen, and my sister Mary Ellen (Nellie) who became a missionary to the Korean's in Japan and also served in Guyana.

Our farm was about a mile up the road from the little church at the Corners and, although my parents were staunch Presbyterians and always attended Knox Church, Acton, they used to drop us children off at the little Methodist church, as they passed. This was because of an excellent Sunday School conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wansbrough, for the children of the community, before the church service.

It was a lucky day for all of us who happened to be on the road (sometimes we had to walk) for Mr. Wansbrough gathered us all in and, by the time the Wansbrough vehicle reached the church it was overflowing with children. It was a large high democrat and was drawn by two large horses. Because I was small, I was always lifted into the front seat and there I sat, both thrilled with delight and cringing with fear. The horses were so big and I was so small!

Upon rare occasions, we were allowed to go on to church in Acton. Then we would sail grandly past the little church, feeling very sorry for, and superior to, the band of

children gathered outside and waiting to begin Sunday School. Once, when Mother could not go to church, we told our father that she had said we might go to Acton. So he took us, but we did not feel very grand as we neared home.

Mr. and Mrs. Wansbrough worked very hard in the interest of the Sunday-School and I hope that, in their lifetime they received the praise they deserved. Mrs. Wansbrough played the organ and led the singing, while Mr. Wansbrough taught an adult Bible class.

The little church was filled with children and adults. They came from miles around and many fine lessons in Christian living, honor and truth were taught there. The children I remember vividly (but I was young) were the Wansbrough girls, Leila who became Mrs. Day, Nettie who became Mrs. MacKay and Anna who became Mrs. Smith and is now living at Hallon Centennial Manor; my sisters, Emma and Mary Ellen (Nellie) who had just started to Sunday-School, if she went at all, (being too young) when we left the farm; Arthur Taylor; my cousins, Emerson, Irene, Willie and Flora Cripps, Dalsy Bennett who became Mrs. Charles Lambert; Grace Brown, a sister of Herbert Brown; Orrie Lamb; Katie and Wesley Gray; and Vida and Morley Ramshaw whose father had the blacksmith shop.

The children were divided into classes according to age. My earliest recollection of the Sunday-School was of my teacher, Mrs. W. Y. Gray. I loved Mrs. Gray. She was pretty and, according to my childish fancy, very stylish. So, when the classes were reorganized and Mrs. William

NEWS ITEM—FIRST MOVIES TO BE
SEEN IN A GEORGE TOWN THEATRE
IN 21 YEARS WHEN "CINEMAS 3"
OPENS IN MARCH!!

I HAVEN'T SEEN A "MOVIE" IN YEARS—WHEN WILL YOU BE SHOWING FILMS BY—

MARY PICKFORD, KEN MAYNARD, CHARLIE CHASE, GRETA GARBO, MILTON SILLS, RUDOLPH VALENTINO, BEN TURPIN, CHARLIE CHAPLIN, SLIM SUMMERVILLE, POLA NEGRÍ, BUCK JONES, GLORIA SWANSON, JOHN GILBERT, RIN-TINTIN, LAUREL AND HARDY ETC. ETC.

MR. MANAGER PLEASE COME TO THE TICKET OFFICE I'M HAVING TROUBLE WITH A TURKEY.

From frying pan to fire

When I leaped from the swamp of editing a weekly newspaper into the quagmire of teaching in a secondary school, I didn't realize it was frying-pan to fire.

Like most people, I had a stereotyped idea of a school teacher. Someone who had quit work while I had still two hours plus overtime or night work, to go. Someone who was fairly bright, rather shabby, not well paid but never really poor, looking forward to a steady pension after a mere 35 years of work.

Someone who always had a modest home and a second hand car, the required two or three children, a dowdy and modest wife, and a simple, rather sedentary profession that would enable him to live and collect his pension until he was 90.

But most of all, someone who had a week's holiday at Christmas, another in March and two whole months off in the summer.

I am forced to admit, as well, that I rather looked forward to having a touch of authority. I had none over my kids, because I loved them too much. I had none over my wife, because—well any of you married men know.

True, I had been an officer in the RCAF, which suggested authority. But fighter pilots had no authority. An army lieutenant could scream and curse at his men and degrade them. And himself. If we tried that with some ground-crew chap, he'd merely give us the finger. We were merely

by
Bill
Smiley

the curious young chaps who flew the things. They were the people who made the things fly.

Only once did I have a chance to be a leader of men, and thus throw my weight around. It was after I'd been shot down and captured. I wound up with about 40 Canadian soldiers. Shortly afterwards, their only two officers, who cursed and screamed and treated them like peasants, escaped. I was the only officer left.

I was pretty keen to show that I was officer material and leadership calibre. I talked about morale, and trying to escape. The only comment was made by a grizzled sergeant, who said flatly, "Screw that!" The others merely laughed.

So I found out that my authority consisted of cutting loaves of black German bread into equal portions of six, with a dull knife, under the guillotine eyes of 38 of the rude and licentious soldiery. And the only reason I had the job was that they didn't trust each other.

So much for authority. But I knew it

would be different as a school teacher. I would be firm, but just, a wise and benevolent father figure, but one who would brook no challenge to his decisions.

Yes, a regular Mr. Chips, accepting confidences, doling out gentle but profound advice, having tea with my students, my wife hovering in the background, enjoying the way I twitted the youngsters.

What a pipe dream! I "went into" education, as it is nefariously known, just about the time of the big baby boom at the end of the '50s. New schools were being built, and looked like, a chain of new shoe factories.

Anybody of any sex, and I mean any, that was warm and breathing and had anything approaching a university degree, was being dragged off the streets and stood up in front of 30 or 35 kids who were just getting into drugs and permissiveness. Every third student was a barrack-room lawyer.

Hair became the thing for males. Jeans so tight a touch would have blown them up, and T-shirts with messages so explicit a marine would have blushed, became the thing for females. Language that would curl a sailor's hair became the thing for both. And not only among the students.

Teachers ranged from fitness freaks to alcoholics anonymous, from pedants to pederasts. They started appearing in long hair and desert boots, in gasp-revealing

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Back issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, March 5, 1969

Patricia Jordan is the winner in the name-the-park contest, with the name Sir Donald Mann Park.

Some Esqueing township ratepayers object to a proposed airstrip and flying school on 17 Sideroad at Rosslake Resort. Owner Joe Ross reluctantly decided to abandon his plans.

The architect hopes the M.Z. Bennett school addition will be completed by St. Patrick's Day.

Big guns of the Acton Lions in the final game of the playoff series were Pete Marzo and John Mason.

Winner of the Ben Rachlin trophy in the afternoon Ladies' curling league were Gwen Tyler skip, Mark Marks, Norma Robinson and Donna Aitken.

The Acton Redmen came home with the first basketball CWOSSA championship in the history of Acton high school. On the team are Henry Oehrlich, Bill Land-sborough, Dave Brostead, Jim Lee, George Wallis, Mike Marcoux, Steve Robb, Lloyd Smallwood, Phil Dupuis, Bob Turkoz, Fred Flisnik. Brian Skerrett is coach. They enter the finals at Peterborough.

The last minute rush for license plates at Watson's Music Store "wasn't too bad."

Newly-inducted members of the Y's Menettes are Shirley Brostead, Lynne Robertson, Carol Bomans, Kate Elliott, Donna Bateman and Louise Clark.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 26, 1959

During the night school display Saturday evening, spectators commented on the increasing attractiveness of the display each year. Highlighting the evening was the fashion show. Mrs. Lillian Brown, one of the teachers, acted as commentator. Under the direction of Major H. J. Newman and Frank Black, students undertook sketching as well as oil painting this year. Shop work instructor was Phil Caddick. Two students, Miss Betty Lemon and Miss Lorraine Spiece, demonstrated their typing ability. High school teacher Mrs. Jessie Galloway taught two typing classes. Old furniture got a new outlook in the upholstery class under T. H. Briggs. There were 18 in the metalcraft group taught by Mrs. E. Leyland. Enrolment at night school this year was 225.

On the committee with chairman Mrs. Leyland were Roy Gatenby, Mrs. Bill Toth, Mrs. Jack Creighton, Miss Florence Wilkin, Mrs. David Dills, George Bowman, Mrs. John Chapman, Miss Bella-Maye Roszell, Mrs. Bill Coon, Mrs. H. Helwig and Mrs. J. Inglis.

Local industries have been swamped with inquiries from Avro workers seeking jobs as a result of the general close-down last Friday of Malton. A self-help employment bureau is being planned and a special meeting is called for the Legion hall Monday at 9 a.m., according to Dennis Lawler. Some of the unemployed have driven to the United States looking for work.

50 years ago

Taken from the Free Press of Thursday, February 25, 1929

Beardmore and Co. tendered a complimentary banquet to the members of their tug-of-war team, who are the industrial and Dominion champions this year. Mr. G. T. Beardmore and superintendents Mr. N. H. Garden and Mr. J. M. McDonald and the heads of various departments were present. Each member of the team was presented with a silver cup and group photograph. Members of the team are W. S. Eccleshall, Trainer and Manager; A. Molozzie, Frank Gibbons, John Lambert, H. Thompson, John Scriven, George Lazenby, Garfield McFadden; reserves J. Lawson and R. Irwin; Herbert Ritchie, coach.

The transient guests of the municipality have this year been more numerous than ever. Rarely a night passes but Chief McPherson has some of the variety commonly known as "Tramps" to give shelter to at the Town Hall.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, March 6, 1879

We have a new heading for the Acton Free Press, just arrived from Chicago, wider columns and smaller type. Now all these changes have added considerably to our expenses and therefore we request all our patrons who owe us money to pay up as soon as possible.

Professor Smith gave a Sclipticon Entertainment, embracing upward of 150 views, in Waterloo school in Esqueing 19th inst.

The British people seem determined to Christianize Africa. It has been found that the most satisfactory means of extending trade is to send the Gospel in advance.

Mr. R. Nicklin of Matthews and Nicklin's livery stable, trotted a horse from Speyside, Acton, a distance of five miles in 17 mins., 30 sec.

To bathe tired eyes and keep

Isabel Anderson