

The Acton Free Press

Published every Wednesday by Inland Publishing Co. Limited at 59 Willow Street, Acton, Ontario. Telephone 853-2010. Subscriptions: Single copies 20¢ each, \$10.00 per year in Canada, \$30.00 in all countries other than Canada.

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Don McDonald, Publisher

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Second class mail Registration Number 0515.

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Shopping ball in merchants' court

It is too bad all Acton shoppers could not have been at the annual meeting of the Business Improvement Area last Wednesday where architect Lloyd Sankey outlined plans for revitalizing Acton's downtown. He used two large illustrations to show what could be done with the downtown core to make it attractive for shoppers and avoid the "mistakes" in other municipalities where border plazas left downtowns desolate.

Mr. Sankey has long held an interest in preserving Acton's downtown since his firm has been actively involved in revitalizing others in places such as Collingwood, Ottawa and Lindsay. He outlined ideas of how Acton's downtown could be anchored with development beside the CN railway tracks and also at the bottom area around the Dominion Hotel and IGA store, utilizing available space and constructing adequate parking lots adjacent to

shopping areas.

His message to merchants at the meeting was clear—get going and do something because the threat of a plaza has not been obliterated, merely postponed. He also told them that Jerry Sprackman, the developer who wants to build a plaza at the corner of Churchill Road and Highway 7, could find a favorable reception at the Ontario municipal board if he takes his case there as he has threatened.

He told merchants they were fortunate to have another kick at the cat and they had better do something about the downtown quickly while the ball is in their court. He suggested they obtain public support for their efforts and involve people in their plans for the downtown.

Mr. Sankey's ideas made sense and it is up to merchants now to show shoppers they mean business.

Need assessment

Home owners in Acton can expect a \$40 increase in taxes on an average home assessed at approximately \$4,500. Education taxes are going up by \$23 while the town's share of the bite will increase by just over \$13. The Region has yet to be heard from and there's no doubt the levy there will also increase.

Analyzing the figures taxpayers should be concerned by the imbalance in the levy presented by Halton Board of Education. Last year there was little difference between the increase from the town and the board. This year education's extra bite is almost double the levy from Halton Hills.

Tax figures point out how im-

perative it is for the town to obtain more industrial, commercial and housing assessment to achieve some sort of tax balance. In many cases people who are buying homes find their tax bill is more than their mortgage payment, a situation which would have been thought ludicrous 20 years ago.

Council and boards of education are caught in a squeeze supplying services and education on a never ending treadmill. Schools are emptying but education taxes keep rising.

The answer, of course, is to even out tax increases with more assessment, more industry, more commercial and more housing to fill up empty schoolrooms.

Notes and quotes

Those who thought the choice of Halton Hills as a name for the Georgetown smacked of cemeteries or golf clubs have been vindicated. One Acton couple reported spotting "Halton Hills Memorial Gardens", a cemetery for all faiths, "on the Guelph Line, half-mile north of 5 Highway (Dundas St.). They took a picture to prove it. Perhaps those who approve of the name Halton Hills could say, "People are just dying to live here." Visitors are welcome both here and in the cemetery.

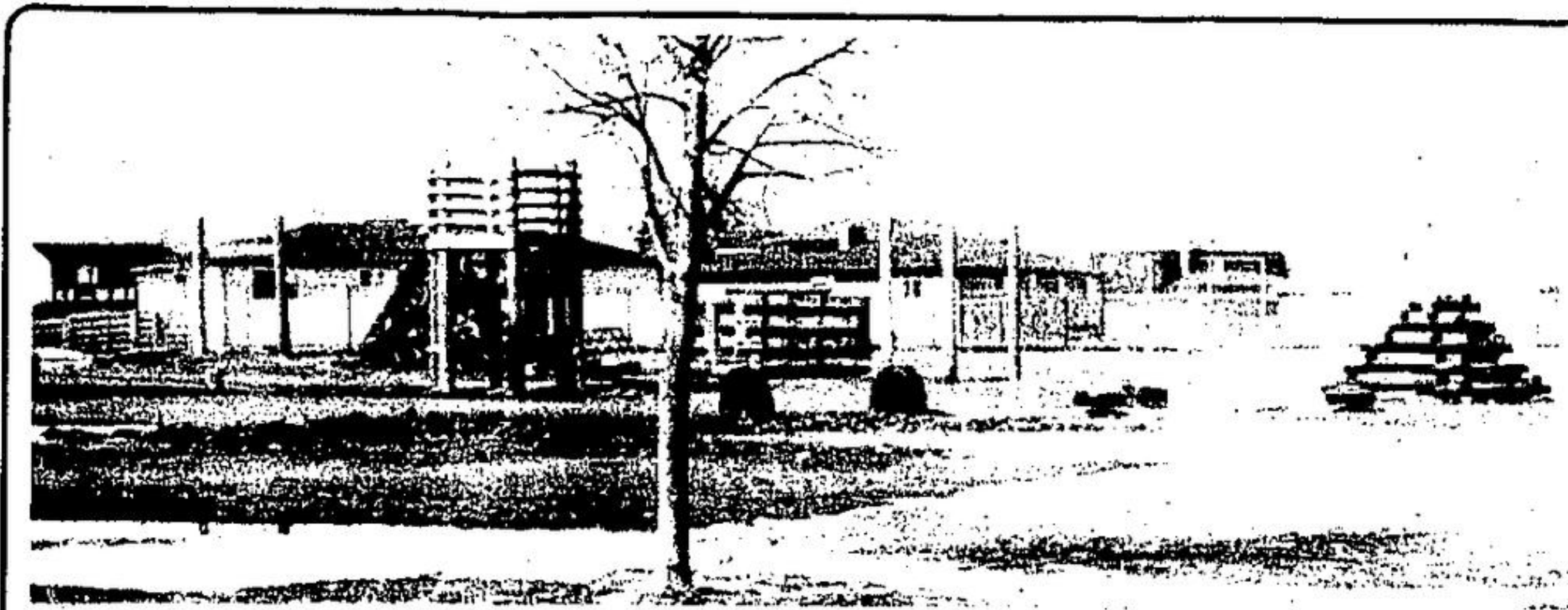
According to the calendar Spring is here and the weather has corresponded with the season. Ice-locked Fairy Lake is tossing off its frozen manacles and the wildfowl—ducks and Canada Geese—are rejoicing as new pools of water appear. The sudden freeze the previous week froze over the only water the fowl kept open with the help of nearby residents such as Louis Bonnette who used garden tools to smash ice in sub-zero weather.

"The most patient men you'll ever see are the ones who get paid by the hour." Richard J. Needham.

A McMaster University professor has discovered the brains of men and women function differently and indicates the two sexes ARE different. What's new?

Halton MP Dr. Frank Philbrook, doesn't think much of colleague Iona Campagnola's plans to earmark \$18 to \$20 million to provide arenas for professional hockey clubs. He thinks the money could be better used to offer permanent jobs for full door-to-door postal service in rapidly growing parts of the county, including Halton. Dr. Philbrook thinks more letter carriers would be better than more NHL teams in Canada. Maybe he has a point. Especially after the Russians.

By the middle of the 21st century, assuming an average annual wage increase of 5.75 per cent and a 4 per cent rise in prices, wages will be 62 times today's levels and a 60 cent loaf of bread would cost \$37.50. Your retirement salary in 2050 would be between \$260,000 and \$405,000. A \$4500 car would cost \$281,000 and a \$55,000 house would sell for \$3.4 million. The figures were estimated by US investment counsellor James Sinclair & Co.



Spring signs

Signs of Spring were this week as Mother Nature graced the area with near perfect weather for the students' March break. An empty school yard, with puddles of water and deminishing snow banks is a sure sign Spring break has arrived. Folks washing cars and maple sap running are typical of warm

weather. The true signs of Spring however are skateboards and kite flying. Kay Duwess, Connie McCristall and Michelle Jones took to the streets on their boards and Ron Robinson, Dan Robinson and Kevin Brooks tried their hand at kite flying.

Back issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Free Press of Thursday, March 26, 1969

Acton Council heard pleas from several councillors and the mayor to get the industrial park property in the north end of town developed as soon as possible. Two local concerns are seeking to expand on the property.

Enthusiastic endorsement was given to the decision of Acton curling club to provide curling facilities on the building site on Churchill Rd. N. for the '69-'70 season, at the annual meeting Saturday night. Building committee chairman Ted Tyler told members their "dream" can be completed. Elected to direct the operations of the club were past president Ken Marchment, president Andrew McKenzie, first vice John Goy, second vice Harry Otterbein, secretary Ray Evelan, treasurer Bob Drinkwater, chairmen Ted Tyler Sr., Bill Toth, Walter Dubois, Peter Bowman, Mel Jordan, Meb Blow, Allan Ellerby and George Williams.

Strumming songs of love and protest, the unnamed folk trio of Victor Funk, George Beshiri and Lynda Gage made their stage debut at the Cancer Family Night. Over 200 attended.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Free Press of Thursday, March 19, 1959

A valiant attempt by Acton Legion Minor Sports to raise money for the Listowel Disaster Fund fell short of expectations Saturday when a very small crowd attended. Alec Johnson, president said other attempts will be made.

On Sunday the March winds recalled their reputation and started to blow, bringing swirling snow. At the high school a newly-laid cement block partition gave way, followed by the steel scaffolding.

S. H. Lindsay, who has lived all his life on a farm and still tends stock every day, observed his 90th birthday.

A large number of Acton children participated in the Guelph figure skating carnival. Linda Braida and Peter Gibbons played lead roles. Others taking part were Mary Jane Force, Elizabeth Riley, Susan Patrick, Karen Townsley, Loretta McCristall, Sharon Bradley, Ann Quinn, Elizabeth Force, Barbara and Joan Cook, Heather McGeachie, Brenda Aberne and Sally Wilson.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Free Press of Thursday, March 21, 1929

Athletic recreation in Acton was given a new lease of life when a good sized body of keen sports attended a meeting of the Acton Amateur Athletic Club at the town hall. A sanction to hold an athletic meet on Dominion Day was received. Proceeds will be used to aid every branch of amateur sport in Acton. Mr. G. T. Beardmore was elected president; Dr. E. J. Nelson first vice-president; Mr. E. J. Hassard second vice president; Mr. J. H. McComb secretary, Mr. C. E. Knapp treasurer.

At the meeting of Acton Free Library Board Father McReavy presided. Mrs. Isobel Watson, the librarian, reported an increasing interest in the library with 104 new readers registered. The number of books was increased by 177.

Mr. Frank Spielvogel, proprietor of the Halton Glove Co., has decided to enlarge his present factory to care for the increasing demand for gloves and mitts.

"Too funny for anything" is the play "Too Much Married." In the cast are Mr. Joe Hurst, Mr. J. J. Stewart, Mr. Roy Johnston, Miss V. M. Hurst and Mrs. J. J. Stewart.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Free Press of Thursday, April 3, 1879

Several good jokes were perpetrated on Tuesday, All Fool's Day by some practical jokers of this town. Among other pieces of fun were the tying up of a brick, making a parcel and placing it on the sidewalk, a parcel resembling a pound of tea was made of ashes and sawdust, etc., and unsuspecting citizens would pick these up and then the shrill words "April Fool" sounded clear and loud. Some first-class lunatic in Acton sent a postcard to a firm in Guelph ordering "four bottles of squinteye, essence of synebob; nine patent whingwhangs for grinding smoke, and an alderman that won't steal."

Mr. W. H. Storey has commended the manufacture of a new spring glove fastener. There are four hands constantly employed in the manufacture of these springs and Mr. Storey deserves thanks for the numbers of people whom he keeps in his employment.

Still another of our old pioneers has been called away in the person of Mr. Robert Barber, who was born in England in 1814.

It ain't my fault, it's genes!

I can muddle around with a metaphor, search for a simile, fool with a phrase, or wait for the very right word to come, by the hour, without expressing any emotion other than benignancy.

But the small, inanimate things that besiege our daily life drive me into a fury that knows no bounds.

It's not the big things, I've mastered them. I can stand behind a mechanic or a plumber and nod knowledgeably with the best of them. Any damfool knows that the driveshaft is connected to the main brake cylinder or the hot pipe is not connected to the coal pipe, or whatever they're trying to tell you.

It's the little things, the things you are too ashamed to get an expert for, but haven't a clue how to do yourself, that make me break things, take the name of the Lord in vain, accuse my wife and

children of dreadful things, and generally act like an idiot.

Who's going to call up a typewriter repairman, for example, to change the ribbon on his typewriter? Or a carpenter to do and screw a couple of tiny nuts into a doorknob that keeps falling off?

My wife has just been through one of my experiences with the little things, and after ten minutes of it, she ran into another room, white and trembling and locked the door.

She bought me a typewriter ribbon at Christmas. We don't usually buy presents for each other, the last few years. The children and grandboys take us for such a ride that we've declared a moratorium. But her love for me was too deep. She bought me a typewriter ribbon. Mainly because you could only read the type of the old ribbon with a magnifying glass. It

by
Bill
Smiley



made an impression on the paper but you couldn't see it. It was more like Braille than typing. But I was hanged if I was going to spend a weekend changing the ribbon, so I just went on.

Finally, she typed out some addresses, broke the ribbon, and practically ruined the whole blasted machine, as I pointed out in a few ill-chosen words.

Well, I had to get this column written (and it'll be late, you can depend on it.)

So I tore into the bloody thing. Half an hour later, the air was blue, I was black to the waist with ink, and the fool thing was typing in red. "Couldn't you just sort of switch the spools around and turn it upside down, or something?" she queried in a very small voice.

"SHUT UP, YOU DUMMY!" or words to that effect. "Aaargh!"

Anyway, there you are. It's not one of my few admirable qualities, I admit it. But I'm stuck with it. And the people who are stuck with me are also stuck with it.

I can start screwing a couple of one-eighth-inch screws into a doorknob, and wind up with somebody locked in the bathroom for a week. I can put an average, standard stapler on the blink in 45 seconds, with staples all over the room, and wire irreparably bound around the thing you

punch.

It's all rather hard to understand. I am not particularly inept or stupid. Nor am I particularly clumsy. I was a pretty fair athlete with bags of co-ordination. I drive a car reasonably well. I learned to fly aircraft with thousands of parts and thousands of horsepower. Yet I go berserk when confronted by a typewriter ribbon.

On second thought, maybe I can understand it. I get it from my Dad. He was a gentle man, and yet I've seen him fly into a fury over nothing. First car he ever had, back in the twenties. I didn't see it, but I've heard the story. The dealer showed him how to operate it, drove around the block a couple of times, picked up his down payment and turned my Dad loose.

He in turn, picked up my mother, drove (Continued on Page 7)