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Gary Dawkins

Death is always with us. It is part of life, but Acton seems to have been struck with what we may term many untimely deaths this year. Latest was the loss of Gary Dawkins a young man who at 40 years of age just seemed to be starting a talented career in education, community service and politics.

Principal of the McKenzie-Smith middle school, he had a fine record in education, had been in the political arena, participated in worthwhile projects in town and area and was involved in many organizations dedicated to service above self.

The family of Gary Dawkins asked former Robert Little school principal Garnet (Pat) McKenzie to give the eulogy at the funeral last week. Mr. McKenzie had known Gary personally all his life and we think his words help supply some of the answers to the riddle of life and death which plague all of us.

It is in that spirit and one of mourning for a leading son of this community that we print Mr. McKenzie's eulogy in full:

"Often, it seems to many of us as we make our journey through life that God is not merely stern but also hard and unjust. We cannot see behind the sternness and the severity which are designed to keep up our courage, our perseverance, and our determination, and see the gentle tender

heart of God, filled with pity. "God said, "Come unto me all ye that labour and who are heavy laden and I will give you rest." A very positive statement which every human being needs to hear. It offers the gift of peace and the gift of rest.

"As we mourn the loss of a loved one God draws near and abides with us when all else fails. No doubt Rosalee, Mark and Michael are asking, "Will we see our loved one again?". Everyone here has known the deep sorrow of this question. To all who grieve Jesus has given this promise, "Because I live ye shall live also." To all who believe, death does not end it all. Yes, you shall see your loved one again.

"I have known Gary Dawkins personally all his life. I watched him mature and devclop as a student, graduate from university and become in a few short years, one of the most respected and dedicated principation the Region of Halton. His personal integrity and his unselfish service for others is well-known. Through the Rotary Club, the Canadian Legion, the Masonic Lodge, the Board of Managers of Knox Presbyterian Church, as well as his many activities as a teacher and a school principal, Gary has served faithfully. He

loved people. "To his loved ones who have lost a devoted husband, a loving father, a caring son, and an understanding brother it is my belief that each one of us are placed on earth for a purpose, with tasks to perform and when we have completed our work God calls us home. Gary has had in his few short years many major accomplishments. His last one was to take the old high school in town and transform it into a progressive middle school. I know that he was very proud of this accomplishment. I attended many activities in his school and their graduation exercises last June at the Canadian Legion. I was most impressed with the maturity of the young people that

were graduating. "Let me read to you one student's

perception of his principal.

"I think of Mr. Dawkins as a man who always knew what to do and had complete control of everything. At the same time he always had time to speak or smile at the students wherever he saw them. He was a wonderful person."

"His staff knew that Gary was a person quick to praise where due and equally alert to denounce unsultable or inappropriate attitudes or behaviour. His staff and vice-principal commented as follows: "When I think of Gary Dawkins I remember a man possessed of numerous positive attitudes. However the most extraordinary of these were his kindness, sensitivity and understanding. He was a man who exhibited great respect for both the personal and professional worth of his colleagues."

"Gary was highly respected by all his fellow principals and one of them says, 'Halton has lost a trusted and respected colleague in the passing of Gary Dawkins. He was a leader and his record was extensive. He established an educational environment based on the premise that "Kids count". His record stands as a source of pride to his family and as an inspiration to those who worked with him in Halton. Education and his community has been well served by Gary Dawkins.'

"When I contacted the administrative staff of the Halton Board of Education I heard these comments. 'Gary Dawkins was very, very reliable; his was the voice of reason. He was highly respected by his staff. Gary was a people person, with excellent relations with his students. We always enjoyed excellent co-operation from him."

"An active member of the Masonic lodge in Acton commented; 'Gary served well, pressed as he was with other duties he still discharged with distinction the chain of offices that lead to the Master's chair. Here in particular he displayed the qualities of a good man, a good employer, and a good instructor. No finer tribute can be said for Gary than that among the many who knock and are admitted none would have excelled him as a craftsman in our noble arts and sciences.

"A fellow Rotarian feels that the Rotary Club of Acton has lost a most valuable member. 'Since his induction in 1962, he has served on most committees, as a director and has been president on two occasions. Gary was very proud of 161/2 yrs. of perfect attendance. He served "Above Self" which is the motto of

Rotary." "Gary Dawkins joined Knox Presbyterian Church in 1957 and since that time he has served two terms on the board of managers, he has ushered, and just recently took part in the town survey in Knox Second Century Advance for Christ.

"Gary also found the time to be active in the Canadian Legion. He has served on the executive as public relations officer. He was involved in the joint Legion Rotary dinner for Sr. Citizens in Acton. He found time to be involved in Provincial politics and ran as the P.C. candidate for the Halton Burlington riding in 1975. Just recently Gary was appointed to serve on the Georgetown District Hospital Board.

"When you sacrifice yourself, as Gary Dawkins did, in unselfish service for others you leave a little bit of your heart and soul in your community. This residue which Gary has left behind by his unselfish service for others will cement it together and give it character. Although we mourn his passing, we should be very proud of his accomplishments and willing to follow in his footsteps.

"The sympathy of everyone gathered here today is extended to Rosalee, Mark, Michael and all the Dawkins family who have lost their loved one and I urge them to hold fast to the promise of Jesus when he said, 'Lo, I am with you always'."



mouth of Free Press sports editor Robin Inscoe, so he set it aside. No treat. sooner was the cone on the sidewalk, than Nicki was undertaking an

These are the dog days. However, here's one pussy cat who's dis- investigation. Nicki is Sandra inscoe's pet. Puss ate most of the cool covered a creamy way of cooling off. The cone left a bad taste in the goodle and another Inscoe pet, a dog named Piper, finished off the

Wall writing but nobody's looking!

It's a little like being an observer of the Fall of the Roman Empire.

That's how I feel as I read and hear the latest energy crisis news.

One of these days, in the not-distant future, the last drop of that black stuff is going to drip into the last receptacle. How then, brown hen?

Will we freeze in the dark? Well, a heck of a lot of redblooded Canadians will need every bit of that red blood to avoid doing

It's not as though the handwriting has not been on the wall. It's just that nobody has been looking at that particular wall. We've all been looking out our picture window, instead.

I've been thinking about it during a particularly busy week in which a dentist saved one of my ancient teeth, a doctor gave me an allergy shot, and a barber removed some of my ancient white hair.

Needless to say, I drove my ancient car to each of these places. None of them is more than a ten-minute walk. On my way to one of them, I drove down to the dock, parked, and watched about 3,000 boats trying to wiggle their way out of marinas, so that they could open her up and cut a swatch across the lake with their oilburners.

At the doctor's, people were complaining because the air-conditioning wasn't working. The dentist used a high speed electric drill in his airconditioned office, with all the fluorescent lights on. The barber was sweating, turned up his airconditioning, washed his hands in hot water, and switched on his electric clip-

By George, I though, it's going to be quite a change. I visualized the dentist pumping away with his old foot-powered drill. The doctor giving me a shot by flashlight, because there are no windows in the joint. The barber using the old handpowered clippers and shaving my neck with cold water, in a steamy-hot barber

It wouldn't bother me too much. I was brought up on wood stoves, coal-oil lamps, p block of ice in the refrigerator, and a coal burning furnace.

Smiley

But it sure would bother the doctor, the dentist and the barber, along with practically every human being in North America under the age of 60.

It's going to be quite an auction sale, I

thought, when that last drop of black stuff

flows from the last spigot. Listen to the auctioneer. "Lincoln Continental, 1982 model, like new. Tear out the insides and you have a grand out-door rec room for the kiddies. What am I bid?

Do I hear \$30? "Here's a real steal. A 40 foot cruiser with built-in cupboards, septic toilet, sleeps six. Get a teamster to tow it into your back yard and you have a dandy sleeping cabin for guests. Will somebody start the bidding with \$12?

"And here's another beauty. Three 1980 Thunderbirds, worth \$23,000 the day they were bought. Cut the tops off, remove the wheels, and they'll make beautiful flower beds. Not ten dollars apiece, not even nine dollars each, but the three for \$24.98.

"And here's today's super-special. She's only 35 years old and guaranteed to work day or night, not like those electric things that were always breaking down. An almost automatic dishwasher. Yes, ladies and gemmun, the real thing. This little lady came on hard times. Her husband had a heating oil franchise. She's willing to wash your dishes like sthey've never been washed before. Only \$300 a week."

And so on. Snowmobiles, aircraft. It's going to be a great day for the junk dealers. On the other hand, there's the bright side. Just as people today pay fabulous sums for junk furniture dug out of attics, the good folk of 2010 A.D. might go as high as \$200 for an ancient, beautifullyfinished Cadillac or a fine specimen of four-burner electric stove with infra-red oven. They'd make nice conversation pieces.

analogy to the Roman Empire. But it's there. They had their bread and circuses as the countdown approached. Our arenas, like theirs, are packed solid with sweaty. sadistic spectators watching the gladiators. We don't have enough Christians left to throw to the lions. But we can always fire the coach, which is almost as

Away back there, I failed to continue the

And we have something the Romans didn't. We have an almost-instant view of disasters all over the world. So I guess man-kind has made one giant step backward in the past 1500 years.

It looks as thought the hand-in-hand waltz of the oil companies and the car manufacturers, which has lasted nearly a half a centuy, is going to become, "Good Night, Ladies."

But the merry Walpurgisnacht of the western world continues its mad whirl as oil companies and airlines and car manufacturers and boat makers furiously advertise their wares. And the rest of us just as wildly rush out to buy them.

Of course, I don't mean a word of all this. Somehow, the human spirit, though at one of its lowest points in centuries, will survive and prevail. We'll find something.

But in the meantime, I'm going to sharpen my axe and get busy installing a windmill. See you in the bush lot.

The wreck 'em boys sure put on a good show at Acton-Ospringe speedway with Cliff Bigger the big winner. An old Limehouse landmark, known as the Beacon Light, was lost when the brick

Back

issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press

of Wednesday, August 6, 1969.

Hoey died of a heart attack while vacation-

ing at Digby, N.S. He had served seven

months of his two year term.

Nassagaweya township reeve W. A. N.

house on the Fourth Line, mysteriously burned to the ground on Sunday morning. The funeral of Smith E. Griffin on Saturday at Churchill Community Church was the largest gathering ever known in the

church. Two teachers at Robert Little school, Richard Coe and Linda Braids, were married in St. Joseph's church.

A meeting of cabinet ministers and about 200 municipal representatives at the Riviera club was mostly a rehash of previous meetings on regional government but it was obvious the deadline has been slowed down. "The admosphere has not been conducive to talking about regional government," Municipal Affairs minister Darcy McKeough admitted.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press

of Thursday, July 30, 1959. Beginning August 1, Acton residents desiring the use of an ambulance will no longer have the community-owned vehicle available but will use the service provided by the Royal City Ambulance of Guelph. It was decided the cost of operating the townowned ambulance was prohibitive.

The diving pier at Fairy Lake swimming area, a gift to the town from the Y's Men several years ago, is doomed to disappear as the Parks Board has deemed it dangerous. Swimming instructor Jim Buckland advised the board some persons were abusing the purpose of the dock.

Council approved the increase in taxi fares from 35 cents to 50 cents per call.

Out of 25, only 11 hard-working youngsters completed the St. John Ambulance junior first ald course. Ann Vale, Christine Blunn, Lynne Vale, Jean Hart, Pat Blundell, Joen Ramsden, Motthew Russell, Jill Morton, David Hargrave, Sandra Hargrave and Robert Watson.

Barry Stewart has enlisted in the U.S.

Ledger's IGA held an open air bingo which attracted a big crowd.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, August 1, 1929

At the bowling tournament at Milton two Acton bowlers carried off first prize in mixed doubles. Mrs. D. H. Lindsay received a china tea set and Mrs. II. Harrison a reading lamp.

Misses Dorothy MacPherson, Catharine Rosze 11, Marguerite Roszell, Grace Skilling, Mary Chalmers, Marjorie Lawson, Margaret Brown and Marjorie Hall, members of the Sunday School class of Mrs. (Rev.) A. C. Stewart, are holidaying at the summer cottage of Rev. and Mrs. Stewart, Bruce Beach, Kincardine.

The matter of engaging a principal for Acton Continuation School was finally settled. The school board has engaged Mr. C. L. Lawrence of Flesherton at a salary of \$2.500 a year.

A combined Acton Tanning Co. and Beardmore Co. ball team stepped into the town team and slugged Bill Naun's offerings all over the park. "Red" Greer and Bill Waterhouse were the heroes of the game. A chicken dinner is at stake in the series.

A number from Rockwood attended the garden party at the Ontario Reformatory. sponsored by the Utoka Women's Institute. Rockwood park is being well patronized

this summer. People have been appearing in summer

scanties during the past dog days. 100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press

of Thursday, July 31, 1879 We notice that Messrs, R. Adams of Acton and William Nichol of the 4th line. Esquesing, have received new threshing machines from Stratford. The workmanship is well done and the machines have a good reputation.

The first threshing and the first threshing machine accident took place at Mr. Ransom Adams' barn in this village on Monday morning last. The horses had just been attached to the power and Mr. John McConnell was leading his horses, as they were not accustomed to the work, when he accidentally got his right hand caught caught between the chain of the equalizer and the pulley, thereby bruising badly three of the fingers, one of which was almost torn off at the first joint. The wound was dressed by Dr. Lowry and the patient is progressing

favorably. Advertisement-Economy is no disgrace. It is better to wear a cool low shoe in haying and harvest than to waste money by wearing long warm boots in the hot weather. A new lot of men's Plow Shoes, Brogans and Coburgs is just to hand at Christie, Henderson and Co.'s, Acton.

An Italian with the usual hand organ and monkey arrived in our town Saturday morning and was followed by a crowd of girls and boys.

From the Editor's Note Book by Hartley Coles

Have you seen where Halton Hills has decided all garbage collections from Acton residential properties will now be handled on Wednesdays?

Good gosh, what ever has happened to tradition? In my end of town garbage has been collected on Mondays since time immemorial. Shifting the date to Wednesdays means my Mondays are going to be all screwed up. Starting out the week without putting out the garbage is like going

out without clothes. I know Monday comes after the weekend. If it has been a remarkably tiring weekend or an ordinary one, I automatically know the garbage goes out the next day. Something clicks up there and I am out on the street sometimes before 8 a.m., the crack of dawn for newspaper people

used to tolling nights. But Wednesdays? What am I going to do to remember to put out the garbage on Wednesdays?

Tradition has been shattered. My schedule has gone haywire. My life is ruined, as they say in the soaps.

I bellyached to a friend. No sympathy. "Just remember," he said, "Wednesday. comes after Tuesday and you'll be home

free." But I know Wednesday comes after Tuesday. It is remembering to put the garbage out on Wednesday instead of Monday that is putting my timing gear out.

I'm afraid, Mr. Garbage Man, you are going to get some awful stale garbage from our end of town until the new morality penetrates my thick skull. I'm sure I'll keep putting out our gar-

bage on Monday and by Wednesday there won't be anything worth saving, if this heat stays around.

Darn regional government, anyway!

The phone rang. It was a man about a

This particular gentleman was being bothered by a barking dog. He works nights driving. After a long night and part of a day at the wheel he usually crawls between the sheets around 3 p.m. in the afternoon. That's when the dog started to bark. It ruined his sleep. It ruined his

disposition. It ruined his day. He finally picked up the phone and dialed The Free Press, hoping someone here could help him. He got a sympathetic car here. There's nothing worse than a barking dog to interrupt someone trying to

sleep. He is right. The neighbors should see to

it their dog does not stay outside and bark. Just out of courtesy to neighbors. As he says, "I hate to bother the neighbors with my complaints. It causes fric-

tion. But I can't sleep." If you've got a barking dog bring it in. It could be the one bothering this driver. If there's anything a driver needs it is sleep.

Lorne Youngblut phoned the other day to note that the amateur gardener column published in The Kitchener Waterloo Record had an item about Vera and Jim Inglis. He was kind enough to bring it around so I could peruse it.

Sure enough Bob Hoops, the gardener, was astonished to learn that his mother was right. There was such a thing as a plant with flowers that opened before one's very eyes at night. She found somebody who would give him one of those plants and it turned out to be Mr. and Mrs. Inglis of

Hoops says: "The whole idea of a flower opening while you watch was more than my brain could absorb. The only time I ever saw it happen was in Walt Disney's Living Desert. I can still see the cactus and other desert flowers opening after a rain. But that was controlled by human tech-

nology, a speeding of the film. "I, of course, jumped at the chance to

get one. In fact, I even made a special trip to Acton, 50 kilometres down the road. That, in itself, was a trip to rememberthunder, lightning, rain and wind. Now, I'm not a superstitious person but thought more than once that someone didn't want me to have those plants. By the

time we arrived the rain had stopped. "The magic plants, looking like a bunch of dandelions were growing in a flower bed beside the back door at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Inglis. They were loaded with buds on long stems although none appeared to be ready to open.

"Mrs. Inglis had always heard the plants called eight o'clocks and her husband said his mother called them evening primroses. It was a fascinating challenge for me trying to find some reference or clue in my files or gardening books.

"They weren't listed under eight o'clocks and the pictures and descriptions I had of evening primroses didn't look like the plants given to me.

"When I arrived home, I placed the baskets in a protected area of the garden since it was pouring as well as dark. But I set the alarm for 5 a.m. the following day. There · was I all alone at the crack of dawn plant-

ing the primroses as well as some coral bells and flowering kale that the Inglis's had given me. "At first the primroses didn't do any-

thing. A couple of them sent up buds but

they never opened. Then, all of a sudden, they seemed to take hold and each plant produced a large number of buds. "But once the buds on our plants began

to fatten, we watched them carefully. And sure enough, in a period of five minutes one evening, we watched as the bud case split and the large, pale yellow flowers unfolded. By mid-morning of the following day, they were dead. Ours bloom between 7.30 and 9 p.m.

"I've decided they're definitely prim-

So Mr. and Mrs. Inglis made one amateur gardener ecstatically happy. I wonder how many other unique plants they have in their garden.

To those renders who have called and expressed either sympathy, or empathy or made obscene remarks about the Coles' new swimming pool, I send my warmest regards. It is still there—the biggest catch basin in Acton and an eyesore.