

The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

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Don McDonald, Publisher

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Action needed

Merchants in Acton's downtown have had it up to "here" with loiterers.

Not the people who stand and talk along the shopping area or wait for buses or do business downtown. The problem is with hoodlums who smash windows, curse and swear, throw debris over the streets and generally make the downtown a place to avoid.

Business people have a right to be protected from those who deface and mutilate their property, block customers from entering their place of business, or keep the public from patronizing the downtown.

Police have been hampered in the past by a loitering by-law which has no teeth. They haul offenders to court. The judge often treats the matter lightly and

throws cases out. Naturally officers become discouraged.

So Halton Hills council general committee recommended Monday that council adopt a new loitering bylaw which has been successful in other municipalities, in prosecuting those who just want to be obnoxious to business.

There is a provision for fines ranging from \$10 to \$300 in the by-law. A few of those tacked onto some of the rowdy element would soon clean up the downtown. If it doesn't then harsher measures should be considered.

There's no reason why a few people should be allowed to bully merchants and make downtown streets inhospitable rather than a pleasant place to shop.

Let's have some action. The problem has been around too long.

February holiday

What have a February holiday and the restoration of Acton's old town hall got in common?

Ask Pierre Berton. He knows. Berton is chairman of the board of Heritage Canada which has launched an all-out campaign to make Heritage Day—the third Monday in February—a national holiday.

Few Canadians, Berton says, would quarrel with the idea of a midwinter holiday to help battle the February "blahs!" But why a heritage day and why would a national foundation, entrusted with the building of a built-up heritage, be asking for a holiday?

Berton says preservation is the wave of the future and is also a labor-intensive industry. He says we are seeing the bankruptcy of a philosophy, which held that once a building was written down on the company books, after a brief life of 30 years, it could be dispensed with and replaced by another.

We can't afford that any longer nor waste the energy and manpower it involves.

"It simply doesn't make sense to destroy a building—any building: church, warehouse,

bank, railway station, hall or private home—that is still structurally sound.

All over the country such buildings are being preserved. The past lives on, giving our communities an historical texture, a feeling of continuity and as a bonus provides new jobs for thousands of workmen.

But why a holiday? A holiday makes people sit up and take notice. It provides a chance for celebration—in this case the celebration of our history.

Berton notes buildings are living history lessons. They tell us something about our roots. They remind us of who we are.

That's why Heritage Canada wants a holiday in February, to say nothing of the therapeutic effects of some relief from monotonous winter.

Surely we can take one day out of the year to drive a history lesson home. In Acton we could take that day to celebrate the saving of the old town hall.

That's what a February holiday and the old town hall have in common.

Why high beef prices?

Annoyed at the price you pay for beef? According to the federal minister of Agriculture, John Wise, prices are high because cattle are in short supply and consumers have a preference for beef over other sources of protein.

But just where does the beef dollar go?

The meat packer purchases at auction a 1,000 pound live steer for 71.5 cents per pound, or \$715. After slaughter, the head, hide and offal are removed and are sold as by-products for about \$100 per animal. The carcass is aged and the shrinkage from this process reduces the carcass weight to about 576 pounds.

The packer then sells the carcass to a retailer for \$1.26 per pound or \$725.76. The sale of the by-products and the carcass must cover the packer's cost of slaughtering, chilling, aging and delivery to the retailer.

The retailer converts the carcass into the familiar retail cuts of hamburger, steaks, roasts, etc. About 428 pounds of the carcass is saleable meat. The other 148 pounds are bone and fat which are sold for about \$10.00 to a renderer.

When you divide the \$725.76 the retailer pays by the number of pounds of saleable cuts, you find that this cost is \$1.70 per pound.

The retailer must set his prices at the supermarket to cover his expenses which include labor, refrigeration and packaging costs.

There may be as many as 20 to 25 different retail beef cuts. The average retail price for all cuts works out to about \$2.35 per pound.

It is important to keep in mind that beef prices will vary according to the supply of slaughter cattle and the consumer demand.

Thanks to all

It's over for another year for organizers of the 1979 Santa Claus parade.

The Acton 'Y's Men club have once again brought the first of the Christmas spirit to town, with the financial help of some of the businesses in town. It's a lot of hard work to put on an event such as Actonians were showered with Saturday, and even more last minute worries and hassles.

However, when all is done, the

public is entertained in a way in which a small town has a monopoly. Everyone knows everyone in a parade such as that, if they aren't in it themselves.

Hopefully the Y's Men will continue organizing the annual event. They have done a fantastic job in the past, and will only gain from past experiences for future parades.

Thank's Y's Men. We hope you care enough next year, too. HJM



"A LITTLE HEAVY ON THE EYEBROWS THIS YEAR BUT, ALL IN ALL, NOT A BAD LIKENESS."

We're turning into slobs says Smiley

by Bill Smiley



There has been a tremendous change in the manners and mores of Canada in the past three decades. This brilliant thought came to me as I drove home from work today and saw a sign, in a typical Canadian small town: "Steakhouse and Tavern."

Now this didn't exactly knock me out, alarm me, or discombobulate me in any way, I am a part of all that is in this country, at this time. But it did give me a tiny twinge. Hence my opening remarks.

I am no Carrie Nation, who stormed into saloons with her lady friends, armed with hatchets, and smashed open (what a waste) the barrels of beer and kegs of whiskey.

I am no Joan of Arc. I don't revile blasphemers or hear voices. I am no Pope John Paul II. I am not a Joe Clark, who rushes up to a barricade prepared to jump for some votes, then decides to go back to the starting-line and send in Robert Stanfield, an older athlete, to attempt what he knew he couldn't do. And the "he" is Joe.

I am merely an observer of the human scene, in a country that used to be one thing, and has become another. But that doesn't mean I don't have opinions. I have nothing but scorn for the modern "objective" journalists who tell it as it is. They are hyenas and jackals, who fatten on the leavings of the "lions" of our society, for the most part.

I admire a few columnists: Richard Needham of the Toronto Globe, Allan Fotheringham of Macleans, not because they are great writers, but because they hew the wood for which this country is famous, and let the chips fall where they may. That's the way it should be.

In their homes, of course, the middle and upper class drank liquor. Beer was the working-man's drink, and to be shunned. It was around then that some wit reversed the old saying, and came out with: "Work is the curse of the drinking class," a neat version of Marx's (?) "Drink is the curse of the working classes."

If you called on someone in these misty days, you were offered a cuppa and something to eat. Today, the host would be humiliated if he didn't have something harder to offer you.

Now, every hamlet seems to have its steakhouse, complete with tavern. It's rather ridiculous. Nobody today can afford a steak. But how in the living world can these same people afford drinks, at current prices?

These steakhouses and taverns are sometimes sleazy joints, on a par with the old beverage room, which was the epitome of sleaze. It's not all the fault of the owners, though they make nothing on the steak and 100 per cent on the drinks (minimum). It's just that Canadians tend to be noisy and crude and profane drinkers.

And the crudity isn't only in the pubs. It has crept into Parliament, that august institution, with a prime minister who used street language when his impeccable English failed, or he wanted to show how tough he was.

It has crept into our educational system, where teachers drink and swear and tell dirty jokes and use language in front of women that I, a product of a more well-

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Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Wednesday, November 26, 1969

Fears that a gas explosion like the blast that shook Malton was imminent, caused near panic among some householders in Acton last Friday. Fumes in the Elmora Drive area drove people from their homes. Attempts to reach the United Gas Company were fruitless. It was an hour before residents found out the smell was caused by a chemical in the lines that was relatively harmless. The incident was caused by an "oversight" by workmen.

A drag strip is proposed for the Matthews' farm on the Fifth Line of Esquesing.

The old Tennis Club building was demolished to make way for the new Foodland supermarket.

Becker's and five stores were approved but another plaza was turned down by planning board.

A middle school program for Halton was approved by the board of education.

There will be no election for Rockwood trustees. Lloyd Waddell, Ken Murray and Bert Smith will hold the reins.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, December 3, 1959

For the first time a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous was held in Acton. W.H. Cook was returned as mayor. Les Duby headed the polls for council with others elected George Barbeau, Jack Greer, Hugh Lowe, Ed Pope and William McLeod.

Gordon Mc Gutcherson and Gordon Beatty, two political newcomers, were added to the new hydro commission with former P.U.C. member Ted Tyler and Frank Oakes. The public school board remained unchanged with Tom Watson, Wes Wolfe and Murray Smith returned. Reeve John Goy and Deputy-reeve Jack Hargrave were returned by acclamation.

Nancy Norton will enjoy her first white Christmas this year. Born in South America, she has never known snow at this time. The family is back from Iran for a visit.

Peter Papillon is the new president of the County Liberal Association.

New jackets were presented to Acton Intermediates ball club at a banquet in the Station Hotel. The banquet was sponsored by Sam Brunelle, hotel manager and ardent sports fan.

A bronze plaque was dedicated at Knox in memory of Rev. and Mrs. J.C. Wilson. Their five children attended the service.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, November 28, 1929

The Town Hall was filled to capacity for three nights, for the concerts to raise money for a piano for the school.

The nomination meeting on Monday was well attended. Many ladies were also interested in municipal affairs. All candidates spoke and councillors and others reported on the year's activities.

There will only be an election for school board. A Mason reeve again by acclamation. Councillors are Dr. E.J. Nelson, C. Hansen, E.T. Theodoff, and C.H. Harrison with L.G. King acclaimed to the Public Utilities Commission. Running for the three school board seats are Geo. R. Agnew, E. Beswick, F.S. Blow, A.F. Havill and J.M. McDonald.

Now is the time to join the Majestic Christmas club to provide an electric radio for your family on Christmas morning. Highboy model \$242. W.D. Talbot, corner Mill and Main.

Mr. E.J. Hassard has sold his residence on Church St. to Mr. and Mrs. W.A. Young of Erin.

Mr. T. Seynuck has sold his light lunch and confectionary business and will devote all his time to Seynuck Valley Oil Wells.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, November 27, 1879

The workmen on Messrs. W.H. Storey's and Robert Little's new residences have succeeded in getting the sheathing on the rooves.

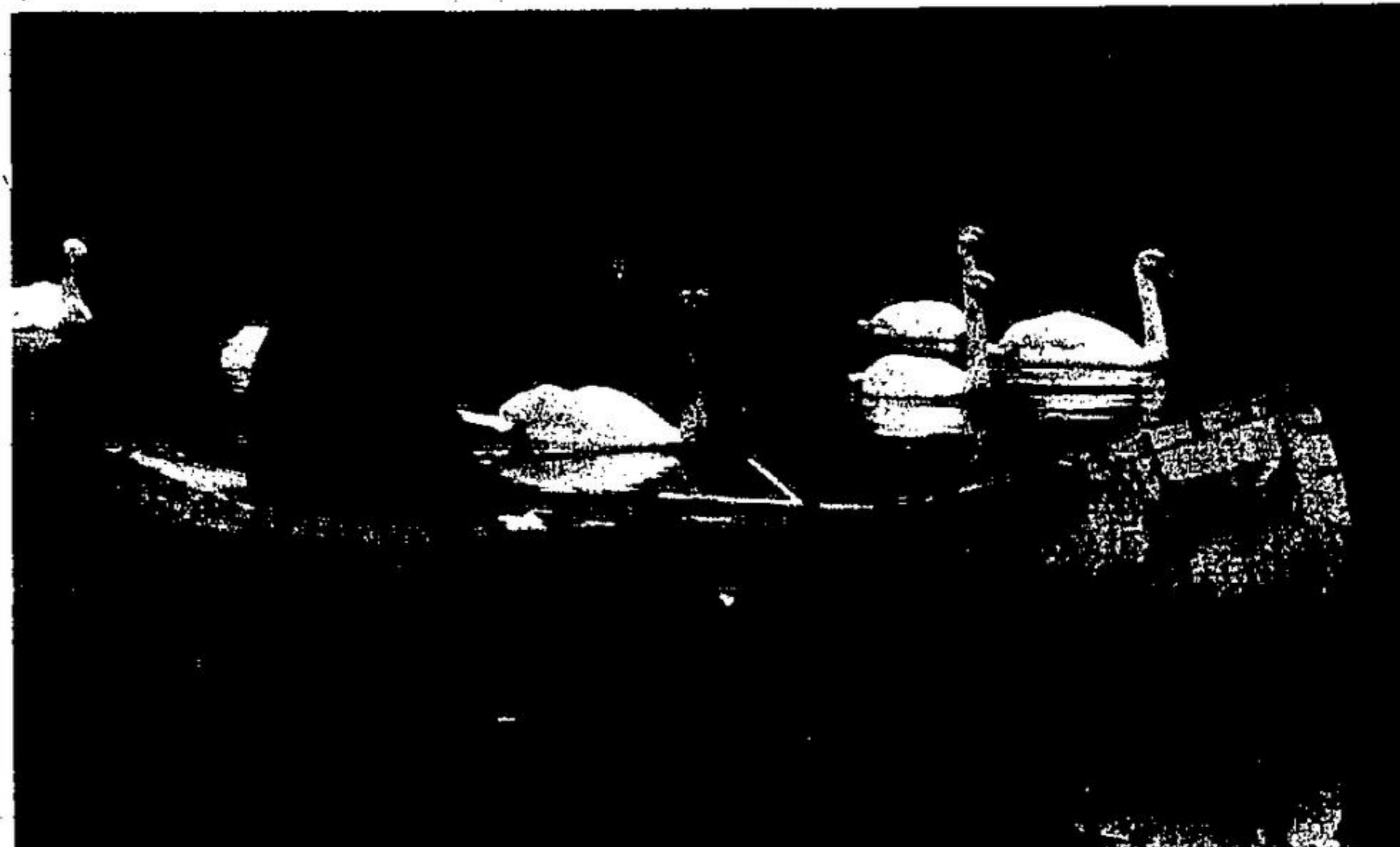
Our local sportsmen, Messrs. M. Speight and E. Nicklin, brought home three deer from Muskoka.

Since we have no public bell, it would be a wise move to secure the use of the Congregational Church bell and appoint some party to ring it regularly.

England seems unable to frame a law that will be just to all parties in the Irish land rent problem.

In Ireland, some tenants seem to get more lawless and bloodthirsty over their problems than their English brethren.

The crop of xmas slippers is getting ripe. Acton is said to be one of the prettiest villages in Ontario. Why deface its beauty by allowing its streets to become a storage place for waggons, huge piles of wood for winter consumption, and other articles?



(Photo by Eric Elstone)

Few ice free days left for fishing on Fairy Lake.