

The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

Published every Wednesday by Inland Publishing Co. Limited at 59 Willow Street, Acton, Ontario, L7J 2M2. Telephone (519) 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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Member of The Audit Bureau of Circulation, The Canadian Community Newspaper Association, and The Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association.

Second class mail Registration Number 0515.

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Compulsory auto insurance

Ontario's new compulsory Automobile Insurance Act came into effect December 1 of this year. Many will agree it was about time. No longer will irresponsible drivers be able to plunk \$150 down and consider they have met all their obligations.

The Act required that all motor vehicles registered on or after that date be covered by a minimum of \$100,000 third party liability insurance. Under the new legislation Ontario drivers can no longer pay \$150 into the Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Fund and register a vehicle for use without insurance.

Vehicle owners will be required to verify in writing that they have insurance before registering a vehicle or renewing registration and obtaining 1980 licence plate stickers.

Consumer minister Frank Drea says the legislation reflects the ministry's view and the predominant public view that everyone on the road must be financially responsible. At the same time it guarantees every motorist in Ontario will have access to insurance coverage.

The legislation calls for the formation of an insurance industry pool for high risk drivers.

Membership is mandatory for all insurers licensed to write automobile insurance in Ontario. Rates created by that association will be subject to approval by the Superintendent of Insurance to ensure high risk drivers are treated fairly.

Another part of the legislation which will appeal to anyone ever refused insurance is the provision for fines of up to \$2,000 to agents who refuse to provide and process an application. Insurers who refuse to provide coverage are liable to a maximum fine of \$25,000.

Drea has decided the Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Fund will remain to handle instances in which claims cannot be handled by an insurer.

Owners of vehicles driving without insurance or permits another to drive an uninsured vehicle will be liable to fines of \$500 to \$2,500, possible suspension of their driver's licence for a period of up to a year, and possible impounding of the vehicle for up to three months.

Tough measures but needed at a time when some drivers avoided their financial responsibility on the road.



"What'll it be Mac, one drop or two?"

Lower hydro rates

Ontario Hydro, with the assistance of municipal utilities, wants to see if they can save customers money by offering lower rates for power consumed during off-peak hours. It sounds like an admirable idea.

Hydro is conducting an experiment to determine whether people will shift their power demands because if they do it could mean fewer power plants and transmission lines will have to be built.

"It's like mass transit. They have their rush hour, and so do we," Hydro's rate manager explains. "A lot of equipment is needed to handle all those people, and it isn't used nearly as much at other times. The same is true of electric power."

He says Hydro doesn't expect people to change their supper hour but they might wait until 9 p.m., for instance, to turn on their dishwasher, or turn their ther-

mostats down during peak hours.

If rates are attractive enough many people will take advantage of the savings but consumers would also be much interested in a Hydro plan to charge rates that reflect their use of electricity—the user pay principle.

Under the present system the user who tries to save on his electrical bills is penalized because he does not use enough power. The system goes back to times when Ontario Hydro had plenty of power and wanted to sell it. Those days are long gone. Conservation is the theme today but the antiquated billing system has not been changed. Large users of power get premium rates.

Conservation would have more clout if it paid well to kick the power habits ingrained through the years. More consumers would flip switches off if they knew it would keep costly hydro bills down.

Looking forward to family Christmas

It looks as though the Smileys are going to have a family Christmas this year, for the first time in quite a few.

As I write, son Hugh is to arrive tomorrow from Paraguay. There's no way we're going to get rid of him inside a month.

Daughter Kim and the grandboys are going to get out of Mooseone for Christmas if they have to hire a dog-sled.

We are a very close-knit family, and it should be a grand occasion. Close-knit. As in pulled together by needles.

Hugh in his inimitable way, has wandered from Paraguay by easy stages, spending a few days here, a few weeks there. He seems to have friends, more commonly known as "marks," all over North and South America, who will put him up for a few days, and feed him, for the sheer pleasure of his companionship.

He started out from Paraguay in September. In October we had a letter from Florida, saying he was staying with friends and taking a course in massage or something from an ancient Japanese gentleman. A month later he phones from Toronto, collect, and announces his second coming. Actually, it's about his fourth.

His mother was ready to welcome him with open arms and a half-open wallet. But the more he dallied and dilled, the hotter she grew.

By the time he phoned, collect, she had a full head of steam on, and the conversation went something like this:

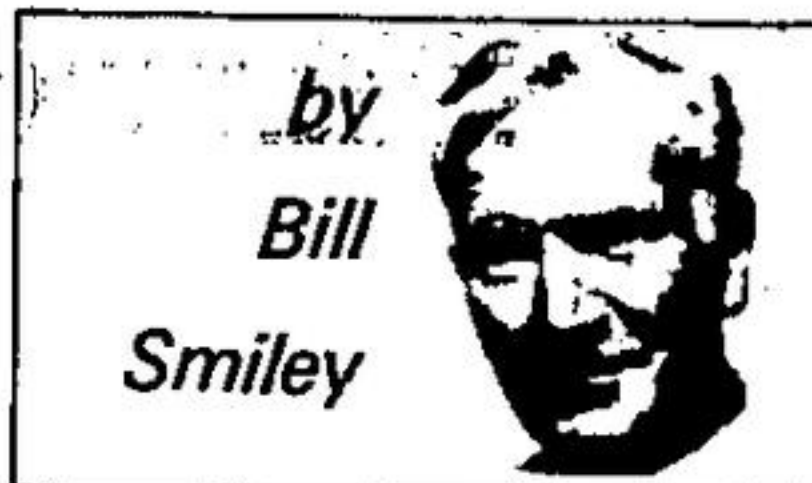
"I suppose you have no money, as usual."

"Right, Mom."

"I don't suppose you have a winter overcoat?"

"No, Mom."

"Well, I'm sick and tired of you kids



by Bill Smiley

(he's 32) coming home without a penny and expecting to be taken in and coddled." And more of the same. Hugh hung up.

My wife, in an agony of guilt, promptly phoned everyone who might know where he'd called from. No luck. Then she called her daughter, who retorted, "Do you want to hear another of your children hang up on you?" And promptly did.

I was quietly watching the Grey Cup game, and wondering why I should be interested in a lot of burly young Americans smashing each other around.

About 24 hours later, Hugh put through another call, this time not collect. He was sticking somebody else for the phone call. He knows his mother. She apologized all to hell. He said, typically, "Mom, you could have bought me a winter coat with all the money you spend on long-distance calls." It made her mad again, but she couldn't help laughing.

That's what I mean. We're a close-knit family. With needles. All I do is hold the wool and try to stay out of needle-range, not always with success.

I remember when I used to tell the kids stories about what happened to me in the war. They liked them better than the usual bed-time stories and fairy tales. Most of them were fairy tales, come to think of it.

I can see what will happen this Christmas. Hugh will be regaling us with stories of swimming a barracuda-infested river, struggling in the coils of an anaconda, being shot at with poisoned blow-pipes. My wife will be wide-eyed.

Kim will be regaling us with stories of the tough Indian kids she's teaching, who arrive spaced out, drunk or pregnant, and the horrors of the unreliable taxi service into town. My wife will be absorbed, terrified, fascinated.

The grandboys will be eating peanut-butter and honey sandwiches all over our brand-newly-recovered chesterfield suits. Their grandmother will be just plain furious.

And I'll be sitting in a corner, relegated to getting some more wood for the fireplace, taking squealing, furious Balind off to bed, and wondering when I can get in a word about the dreadful kids I have in Grade 9 this year, my battles with the administration, and the shrinking of my potential pension through inflation.

In the face of all that exoticism, I'll probably be driven to the grave. If this happens, the turkey won't be prepared, 'cause I always do it.

There'll be rivalry in the horror stories. Both of our children will plead extreme poverty, demur the value of the presents they got, and nip out to visit friends on Christmas Eve, while the Old Battleaxe and I make the gravy and whip the turnips. And beat the grandboys, if we can catch them.

Ah, but it'll be grand to have the family together again. There's nothing that can touch getting up on Christmas morning, hung, and looking after the grandboys for five hours while the "young people" sleep till noon.

On the other hand, there just might be. I am investigating a return ticket to Hawaii, single, for the holiday season.

If I left quietly, without fuss, and nobody knew where I was, I could come back on January 2, knowing full well that my wife would have kicked the whole mob out.

Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue Acton Free Press Wednesday, December 7, 1969

The Latin banquet at the high school was a unique success, thanks to the Latin Club and Mrs. Martindale. Bob Krul and Nancy Shaw won prizes for the best togas.

Theo Papillon received a gift in recognition of his many years on Beardmore fire brigade.

Incumbent councillors returned in Eramosa were D. McPhedran, Warren Parkinson and Bill Adsett.

Curriers started using their new club this week. Vice-president Johnny Goy delivered the first ceremonial rock in the absence of club president Rev. Andy McKenzie. Tom Nicol and Jack Lovell performed the sweeping duties.

For the first time, The Free Press features a four-color section.

The first compulsory breathalyzer test was administered by Cons. Roy Wood Saturday. The system came into effect Dec. 1.

The former Anglican rectory is being pulled down.

20 years ago

Taken from the Acton Free Press Thursday, December 17, 1959

John A. Ladouceur was elected from 15 applicants to become Acton's first assessor.

An innovation was started at the post office when a night shift was started to cope with the volume of mail. Vic Bristow and Dave Dogson are working nights.

The Robert Little auditorium was jammed to capacity for the musical Christmas concert directed by Glenn Banks assisted by Doug Copeland. Children who read Scripture were coached by Mrs. Gwizdala. Among those with solo parts were Billy Pendleton, Colleen Perkins, Timmy Coles, Scott Watson, Eileen Myers, Jane Watson, Brenda Denny, Michael Frame, Donna Pendleton, Nancy Rogvaldson, Vivian Smith, Sharon Bradley, Timie Witbard, Jane McCrae, Karin Hillier, Betty Findlay, Janice Woodburn, Ricky Henderson, John McNabb and Danny Arbie.

The O.P.P. investigated the first accident on Highway 401 Tuesday.

A large crowd attended Knox Presbyterian church Sunday School concert Saturday night, undeterred by the ice storm and power failure.

Osprey church supper was eaten by candlelight, but the concert was cancelled. The Y's men are selling Christmas trees.

50 years ago

Taken from the Acton Free Press Thursday December 12, 1929

The annual oyster and chicken supper of the Everton district beef ring took place at the community hall.

William E. Ramsden was named secretary-treasurer of the new arena and curling club.

When Mr. and Mrs. H.P. Moore were married here 50 years ago, radio had not been discovered, there was no electric light, no telephone, no motor cars, no motor driven machinery nor airplanes, there were no motion pictures, let alone talking pictures and television pictures, street cars were propelled by horses and farm tractors were not even dreamed of. Will the next 50 years show as great advances?

The winter season of Chataqua concerts have been arranged to be given in Acton this year.

The new curling club is being favored with a good membership list.

Eden Mills is to be made a Police Village by Wellington County Council.

A large crowd attended the turkey social at St. Alban's parish hall.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, December 11, 1879

By-law no. 76—a by-law to raise by way of a loan the sum of \$350, to pay the purchase money of land for a Public Cemetery.

It appears the village collector is experiencing considerable difficulty in collecting the statute labor tax from young men over 21 years of age. The money collected in this manner is used to keep the roads and sidewalks in proper condition.

The concert under the auspices of the choir of the Methodist church was fairly attended. Prof. Harrington of Guelph led the choir. We understand a supper was provided for the singers after the concert but we were not present to make a report.

A few cords of Beech and Maple Cordwood will be taken in exchange for new subscriptions to the Free Press.

Mr. W.C. King, one of the kid finishers employed in Mr. James Moore's glove leather manufactory, left last night for England to visit an aged mother who lies at the point of death. His family remain here. We hope he may have the pleasure of again meeting his respected mother on earth.

Guaranteed mileage

If you are old enough to recall the early days of our love affair with the motor car you may also remember how car owners would brag about the performance of their iron steeds.

Old Albert proudly announced that he got his Gray Dord up to 45 miles an hour on the Centre Gravel and Uncle Louis said his Hupmobile could climb the highest hill in the neighborhood in high gear. In other words, when you bought a car in those far-off days you took your own chances on performance.

As the years sped by automobile manufacturers took much of the hit-and-miss out of car buying by guaranteeing mechanical efficiency. Today we enjoy manufacturers' guarantees for so many miles

on the engine and so many more on the power train, etc. More recently there are even guarantees against body rust for the given length of time.

Things are changing, though. Tomorrow's car buyer is going to have one overriding interest. That will be miles per gallon on fuel consumption—fuel which is desperately expensive and may possibly be in short supply.

Car owners, like almost everyone else in the consumer field, are going to become very demanding. The car manufacturer who recognizes this factor and is prepared to protect his customers will get the lion's share of tomorrow's market.—Wingham Advance Times.

and to have an adequate standard of living and education.

Much of Amnesty International's concern rests on violations of human rights related to law. One measure of such violations comes by putting oneself in the victim's places. For example, arrest without charges or trial. That was what happened to Gerard Toussaint, a school teacher in Haiti in 1969. The Guelph group of Amnesty International took on the case of Gerard Toussaint in January 1974. After more than three years of organizing letters from America, Europe and other parts of Canada plus enlisting help from the Canadian Federation of Teachers and politicians, Gerard Toussaint was released from jail—still without charges and without trial.

The Guelph Amnesty International group is made up of ordinary citizens from

many walks of life. In six years the group has helped gain release from prisons 16 prisoners of conscience in such countries as South Korea, Chile, Philippines, Pakistan, East Germany, Brazil and the United States.

Prisoner of conscience is an Amnesty International term for men and women who are imprisoned for their beliefs, color, ethnic origin, language or religion, provided they have neither used nor advocated violence.

So far you have read of 4,153 prisoners of conscience for this year.

Guelph is an adoption group which means that at any time members are working on cases involving someone from a Western, an Eastern or a Third World country.

Abuse of human rights has spread to form a world wide pattern, according to

Amnesty International's annual report, which was made public Sunday. The 220-page report indicates that incidents of arbitrary arrests, political imprisonment, torture and the use of the death penalty are spreading.

Political dissenters, warns Amnesty International were facing an increasing threat of murder or execution in countries with widely different ideologies.

Amnesty International Secretary General Martin Ennals acknowledges the organization's reports on human rights arouse controversy. He went on to say, however, "when governments change and regimes fall, the criticisms voiced by Amnesty International are normally found to have been cautious understatement of the situation which in reality existed."

(Continued on Page 5)

Fourth Estate

Typewriters help free 'prisoners of conscience'

The pen is mightier than the jail key. That is the image which reflects the efforts of Amnesty International volunteers. They mass their typewriters to unlock prison doors and free people, who by international standards, deserve to enjoy their rights.

Amnesty International is a non-government organization which tries everyday to keep significant the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

So what, you say? Another do-gooder outfit, right? Right!

Human rights is one of those concepts which appears vague when all is well, but when one or two disappear, the image quickly sharpens. Amnesty International's specific role is to provide practical help for people whose human rights have been overlooked or violated.

Human rights generally covers a range of concerns, however, the most commonly accepted statement is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. It contains 30 articles of declaration. It seems opportune to mention some of them because Monday was Human Rights Day.

Here are some examples from the declaration: the right to life, liberty and security of person, to equality before the law without discrimination, to freedom of movement, to freedom of opinion and expression, and to freedom of peaceful assembly. Also established in the declaration is that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his or her country, to work, to receive equal pay for equal work, to receive just and favorable remuneration, to enjoy rest and leisure,