

# The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

Don McDonald, Publisher

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## Citizens of year every day

Four Acton Volunteer Firefighters, who among them had compiled over 100 years of service to this community, retired last week.

The contributions to Acton and area of Sam Tennant, Don Van Fleet, Doug Mason and Harry Otterbein have been priceless.

Being a volunteer firefighter here, or anywhere else for that matter, is no easy job.

First of all there are the many hours of work each year just roaring off to fires at all hours of the night and day.

Add to that the countless hours the men devote to working at the Bower Avenue firehall maintaining the trucks and equipment, drilling techniques and field training.

Some weeks being a volunteer firefighter is really a full time job the men who protect us from blazing destruction do, in addition to whatever occupation they have to support themselves and their families.

Add to the long hours of work the emotional strain of being a firefighter when listing the sacrifices these men make.

The men go out, frequently in the middle of the night, never knowing if they will have to suffer the mental anguish of finding the body of a friend or neighbour in the ruins.

It must be a terrible ordeal for the firefighters to see the looks on people's faces as they see their home and belongings licked up by the flames. The volunteers battle the flames and yet sometimes are

helpless to save people's property. Those moments must be quite painful.

There's another strain too, rarely discussed, but always there for consideration. These men risk their lives and chance injury every time they respond to the siren's wail.

Then there is the continual sacrifice in terms of family life by the volunteers.

Perhaps it should be their wives and children who are really honored when the brigade gets together to thank the four retirees.

There is no doubt their families suffer. Many hours other men devote to their loved ones the volunteers give to the department and community.

The taxpayers obviously owe the volunteers a tremendous vote of thanks. The saving to ratepayers is huge.

The firefighter's devotion to duty and community cuts fire protection costs here to the minimum. It is such a costly item many municipalities in both Canada and the United States are reverting to volunteers after paying the price for years for a hired department.

A few years ago the volunteers received a richly deserved honor. They were chosen Citizens of the Year.

But, men like Mr. Tennant, Mr. Van Fleet, Mr. Mason and Mr. Otterbein are really "citizens of the year" every day, of every year.

## Crisis, what crisis?

Crisis, what crisis? This country doesn't have an energy crisis John Bulloch, head of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, said recently on television. All we have is an imbalance. Canada's only problem as far as energy is concerned, Bulloch says, is an overdependence on crude oil.

He notes Canada has an embarrassment of riches in natural gas, coal, nuclear and hydro-electric energy.

All we have to do is shift our dependence away from oil to one of the aforementioned resources.

Bulloch's observation, would appear to be accurate.

Conventional oil is the one source of energy which we don't have gobs of, at least at this time.

But unlike many nations prospects are bright for recovering considerably more oil in this country. Unfortunately mining of liquid gold in the tar fields of Western Canada, the waters off the Maritimes and both the land and sea of our Arctic will be very costly and time consuming. There are also environmental risks.

Bulloch reasons the way to solve our energy imbalance is to make the cost of oil for operating our transportation systems, heating our homes and powering our industry so prohibitive that conversion to other energies becomes economically essential.

This would reduce our dependence on oil, drastically cutting and possibly, eventually, eliminating importation of the resource.

Once the shift took place there would be more than enough oil for transportation, heating and fueling industry which couldn't readily convert to other energy sources, Bulloch figures.

The big question facing Canadians in the weeks ahead is deciding how this conversion can best be achieved without hurting industry so much people lose their jobs or consumer conversion at home is too costly for low and middle income families. It would appear, at least in the early 80s little oil can really be saved, regardless of how expensive it becomes, in the transportation sector since this is such a vast land and so many must travel long distances to work.

The other major question is how the money from higher oil, not all energy, but just oil, is to be divided up and who will spend it.

The politicians will be selling their various remedies for both reducing our dependence on oil, sharing the costs and sharing the revenues until February 18.

Wise politicians would forget about partisan opinions on the energy question and simply borrow the best of all ideas regardless of source, for comprehensive packages the electorate could assess, ignoring regional vested interests.

Assuming that there were no typographical errors, then perhaps it would be wise for Mr. Kamminga to have future letters proofread. I'm

sure that either family members or even Mr. Kamminga's minister would gladly assist if asked.

I mean no malice toward Mr. Kamminga; I only like to understand what I read.

Yours truly,  
Sean Aherne

Editors note: It is the policy of this newspaper to allow letter writers to express themselves as they wish.



Snow business is no business

## Couple of oldsters take pot shots at Smiley

Well, our children are gone, and our children's children. I can scarce forbear to tell you what a legacy they left us. A flat wallet. A bowl of sunflower seeds. A guitar with a hole in the body. A telephone that defies the efforts of the repair men. A toilet that overflows. And so on.

But all you need is love. As they say. Well, as I sit here remembering the Hades that is a Canadian bus terminal at holiday time, I am forced to wonder.

Were all those old gentlemen and elderly ladies who kept screaming, "What about me?" full of love? Or perhaps those boisterous teenagers who kept trampling the old men and the elderly ladies?

Since I don't even want to think about anyone under the age of 48 for at least six months, I'll leave 'er lay. I won't even mention that my daughter got her suitcase on the wrong bus, and my son got himself on the bus my daughter was not on, with all the rest of her luggage. 'Gest le bus business.

No, I'm sick of the young. I want to deal, in this column, with a couple of oldsters. One of them takes a very dim view of me, and the other takes a gleeful, healthy look at life.

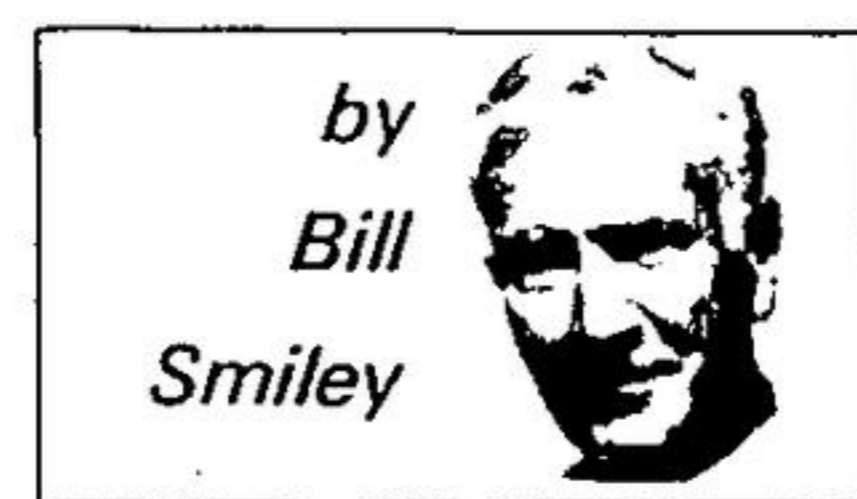
For years I've been receiving Christmas cards from someone who signs himself Your TV Repair Man. I drove me a little nuts. The messages were always lively and salty and blunt.

This year, the TV Repair Man came out of the closet. But not completely. He still wouldn't sign his name.

In the same mail, I received a copy of a long letter written to the editor of the Gazette-Reporter, Rivers, Man.

Both letters dealt with a particular column I'd written. Comparing them might give the gentle reader a cross-section of the philosophy of Canadians. I'll print parts of them, sticking my own ear in whenever I dang well feel like it.

Here's the TV Repair Man: "Hello



by Bill Smiley

Smiley—Merry Christmas. It's that time so her we go again. You really shocked me with this year's Armistice Day column. I have always looked forward to, and backward to, that column. To me, Armistice Day is the most important holiday except Christmas.

"I lost a lot of close friends in both world wars. You said you thought you had said it all and then wound up with the best one of all. You have never said it all nor ever will.

"I have enjoyed your column for many years (thanks TVRM) so maybe you'd like to wade through this. I won't take long and you can scrape your shoes when you're through.

"First, I am an old man—78 last month. (Hell, that's just a boy, TVRM). Second, I am no more TV repair man than you are auto mechanic. Third I am the richest man in the world, if you count friends. (Yes, man, I count friends). I live alone in a shanty I built myself and have everything I need or want and enough pension that I can help people now and then that need it.

"Like yourself, I have grandchildren that are my pride and joy and opened up a whole new life for me. I taught them to swim, fish, skate, garden, you name it, and like you I am proud as hell of them. If that ain't happiness, forget it."

That's a happy guy, the old TVRM. The other letter is full of cliches, bombast, and another word beginning with B: "Sacrifices; terrible price; home and country; fallen comrades." Etc.

"Jesus, Mom. Help me. Mother! Help!"

## From the editor's desk

I don't watch much pro hockey anymore. Oh sure, the antics of Pat Lal and Punch have piqued my interest a little this year, enough to catch a couple of periods of the action down on Carlton Street over the tube.

But, generally I find the brand of hockey offered by the NHL these days to be pretty poor. The vast majority of the players have few or no skills. Most of the teams had no business even being assembled.

The quality of play admittedly improves in the latter stages of the playoffs. But, even then I don't watch much. Who wins the Stanley Cup seems so inconsequential.

No, I don't care much for pro hockey anymore. I prefer to remember the North American game as it was when skills were paramount, in the late 50s and early 60s.

However, whenever we play the Europeans, particularly the Russians, you can't drag me away from the set.

International hockey is beautiful, not just because of the skills displayed but also the level of emotion involved is thrilling to witness.

Being an ardent Canadian booster I haven't found much to cheer about of late. Those match ups between the Russian club teams and NHL squads we've been seeing since the middle of the last decade have been a bitter disappointment, we've been clobbered most of the time.

Until last February when the NHL's best was humbled by the Russian Nats, I at least thought when our top players were together we could best the pretenders to the world throne from across the Atlantic. When we lost the Challenge Cup I figured it was all over for Canada. Only a drastic revamping of the game at the minor

league level would ever propel us to the top again.

But the sound thrashings Montreal and Buffalo administered recently to the Moscow Red Army have left me optimistic.

Red Army is the best club in Russia. It supplies the majority of talent for the Soviet Nats. Not only that, the Red Army was bolstered by the top line of the Wings of the Soviet.

This leads me to conclude beating the Red Army is almost as good as downing the Russian Nationals.

As for Moscow Dynamo, another top club from the Russian League, well, such powerhouses as the Canadian Olympic slide, Vancouver Canucks and Washington Capitals showed exactly what Dynamo is made of. Not much.

So, based on those recent international matches, I feel now I was premature in writing us off.

There is a lesson in the Challenge Cup and the recent matches involving club teams which I hope the deans of pro hockey haven't missed and will be thinking of when they formulate plans for the second Canada Cup tournament this fall.

All-star teams aren't the way to come out on top of the disciplined, highly conditioned, well drilled and excellently prepared European powerhouses like Russia and Czechoslovakia.

Strong, established teams are the answer. They are the best route to world supremacy.

I'm hoping the Stanley Cup champs wear the maple leaf this fall when we host the Russians, Czechs, Finns, Swedes and Yanks.

Fall comrades my bum. They didn't fall. Mr. G. Mathison of Harding, Man. They were killed.

More of the same pap. "Where was Mr. Smiley when teen-agers were dying on the beach at Benny Se Mer?" I presume he means Benny sur Mer. Well, Mr. M., I was about five miles away, at Ste. Mer Eglise, shooting and bombing the daylight out of the guys who were dying on the so-called beach. Some beach.

"Where was he when the children were coming out of Caen while it was being bombed, hungry children, alone, afraid and with nothing but a black sky full of cold rain to succour them?" Mr. M., after bombing Caen about eight times, and being shot to shreds in the process, I was in a jeep, visiting Caen, and giving those kids my chocolate rations and getting them out of that hell-hole.

"Does Mr. Smiley really believe that it is time to forget the para-troopers of Arnhem, the Third Division Water Rats, the Red Devils of the First Division or the heroes of the Second at Dieppe?"

Yes, I was shot down shortly after Arnhem. A paratroop doctor bound my displaced knee-cap. I met some of the Arnhemers. They were a tough bunch of bastards, triumphant in defeat, undaunted. The "heroes" at Dieppe were a poor bunch of misled, misinformed, undertrained kids led into an impossible attack by stupid commanders.

"I saw teenagers, like the ones he is teaching now, die in the mud at Walcheren (misspelled) . . . and their last thought was a yearning for home. (Canada)."

Well, Mr. C., I saw teenagers go down in flames, plunge into the ocean, and though I didn't have an ear to their chest, as you seem to have had, I heard their last thoughts, sometimes, on radio.

"Jesus, Mom. Help me. Mother! Help!"

Esquering councillors met at Stewart-town and took their oath of office. Geo. E. Cleave, Reeve; Geo. Currie, Deputy Reeve; W.A. Wilson, W.G. Appleby and L.L. Mullin, Councillors.

The call to the pastorate of Chalmers Church, Toronto, to Rev. A.C. Stewart, has been approved, after eight years of successful and faithful ministry at Knox church.

Last Friday was the opening night of the new curling rink. The honor of putting up the first pair of stones naturally fell to Mr. P.A. Smith, who is the veteran curler of Acton.

Norton Motors made their first showing of the 1930 Ford car, which has been much admired.

Jr. I.O.D.E. Pancake Tea and bake sale in the council chamber Saturday.

The annual meeting of Acton Fall Fair showed growth in every department. J.R. Kennedy was elected president, D.D. Waldie first vice president, W.R. Kenney second vice president, W.J. Akins secretary-treasurer.

Mr. V.B. Rumley and Mr. Harvey Norton have been operated on for appendicitis.

The week of prayer services at St. John's church Rockwood, were well attended.

Mr. A.E. Nicklin has put up several handsome pictures of landscape scenery in his oyster parlor, which have a pleasant effect.

During the year 1878 Mr. J.E. McGarvin, registrar for this municipality, registered Births 28, Marriages 18, Deaths 11.

The first regular meeting of Division Grange, Patrons of Husbandry, was held in the Good Templars Hall, Ballinafad. At the conclusion of the meeting a grand dinner was provided by the Ladies of the Grange.

The Assessor will soon commence his tour.

## Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, January 21, 1970

Acton's fourth bank - a branch of the Toronto Dominion - will open a new building on the site of the old post office, if committee of adjustment accepts planning board's recommendation.

A popular spot Saturday night was Eden Mills Community Park, where the annual tree burning took place.

One of the most active adult recreation classes is badminton. About 40 enthusiasts play the game on three courts in the school gym. President of the club is Vic Morris with Joan Morris treasurer and George Lee director of play.

Henry Wheeler has resigned as road superintendent of Erin township, after 28 years.

The Folk Mass service was introduced into Rockwood for the first time at St. John's Anglican church.

Acton now has a Justice of the Peace. Bob Hart's appointment was effective January 15. There hasn't been a J.P. here since Jack McGeachie left.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, January 21, 1960

G.V. Barbeau, manager of the A.P. Green plant, announced the company has received the contract to provide refractories for the new Saturn project at Cape Canaveral.

The ice and Cam Leishman are duelling for control of the post office clock.

Acton board of parks management returned R.R. Parker as chairman and Mrs. G. Fryer as secretary.

Anne Vale, an M.Z. Bennett student, will represent Acton in the Italian public speaking contest. She received the B.D. Rachlin trophy. She competed against six other finalists, Diane Shullis, Gay White, Jill Hurst, Mary Griselow, Marie Huisman and Don Harris.

M.P.P. Stan Hall told the Agricultural Society what Acton needs is a community centre.

Mary Panegoosho, the Eskimo girl who attended school here for a year, is now the Eskimo magazine art editor for the Department of Northern Affairs.

A drive has been launched in Georgetown for a hospital here.

50 years ago

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## Reader writes

### Can't understand letter

273 Queen St. E.  
Acton, Ontario  
January 7, 1980

Dear Editor:  
I have a question concerning an editor's responsibilities in publishing letters from the public.

Would it not be a courtesy to letter writers if they were informed by the editor, that their correspondence was unintelligible?

I am referring to the letter of January 2 titled: "Still no understanding after 2,000 years." After several readings of Mr. Kamminga's letter I was still unable to understand what message he was trying to convey to the readers.

Assuming that there were no typographical errors, then perhaps it would be wise for Mr. Kamminga to have future letters proofread. I'm

sure that either family members or even Mr. Kamminga's minister would gladly assist if asked.

I mean no malice toward Mr. Kamminga; I only like to understand what I read.

Yours truly,  
Sean Aherne

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