

# The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

Don McDonald, Publisher

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## Need policy on dinners

It's time for regional council to nail down a policy regarding dinners and social occasions paid for by tax dollars.

Recently region chairman Jack Raftis and Public Works Director Bob Moore hosted a dinner for about 55 people at Glen Abbey Golf Club in Oakville, hardly one of the more economical eating establishments in Halton. The tab, being picked up by the rate-payers, is still something of a mystery. The only official word from region brass is over \$1,000. Some sources put it as high as \$1,600 or \$1,700.

This is not the first time controversy has erupted at the region over an expensive meal out for staff and politicians.

Unless council looks at the issue the problem will likely erupt again.

This dinner was well motivated. It was a thank you to the works department supervisors' special efforts to keep things running smoothly during the recent strike by workers.

The supervisors deserved the thank you. They did such a good job of keeping things running smoothly few residents even noticed the labor dispute.

The issue here is not just the

cost of the thank you dinner. More important than the cost is the apparent secrecy surrounding the dinner before word leaked out afterwards.

Two members of the works committee complained they didn't know about the dinner until after it took place. Not only was council not informed prior to the dinner but the committee in charge of the works department was also kept in the dark.

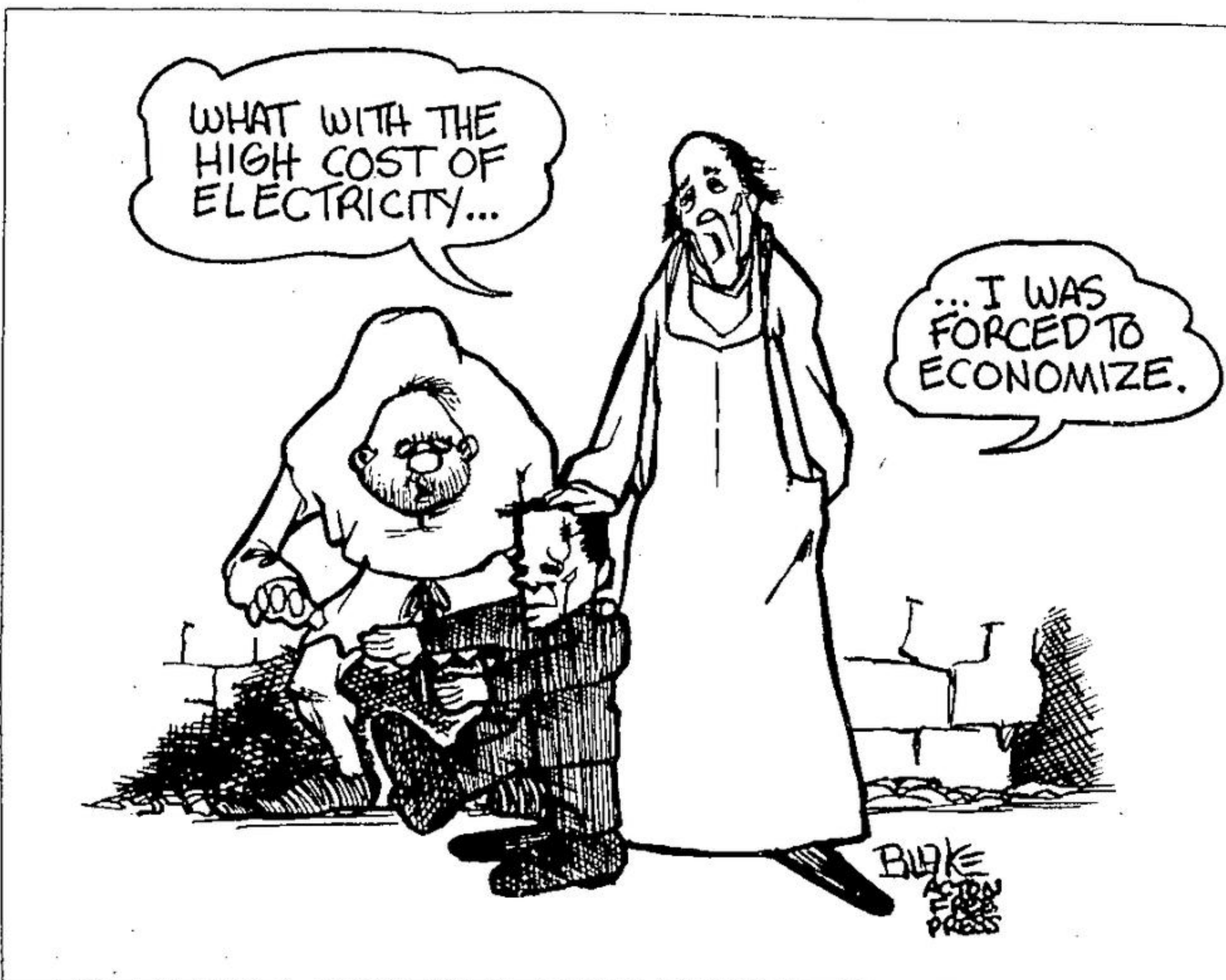
Why didn't Raftis and Moore apprise council of the fact the thank you bash was planned?

One can only suspect, considering the fact funds for the dinner weren't budgeted, that the organizers feared they wouldn't get council's blessings.

A policy requiring approval of council for any unbudgeted dinner or social function costing above a certain figure, say \$200, should be established.

Taxpayers, who are cutting back to pay soaring taxes aren't happy to see civil servants and politicians feeding lushly at the public trough.

It makes them even angrier when they learn there are no guidelines over feasting at the trough they fill.



## What happens if Quebec vote is Oui?

What are you going to do if the voters of Quebec say, "wee-wee-wee" all the way home?

Are you going to pack everything into a covered wagon and head west, the only refuge any more for Anglo-phones?

Are you going to grow a beard, obtain some false papers, and slip across the Quebec border some dark night, to fight in the underground?

Or are you going to sit on your duff, go right on trying to take care of your own life, and let the politicians sort out the whole sordid scene?

I would venture that 93 per cent of English-speaking Canadians will choose the third of the above alternatives.

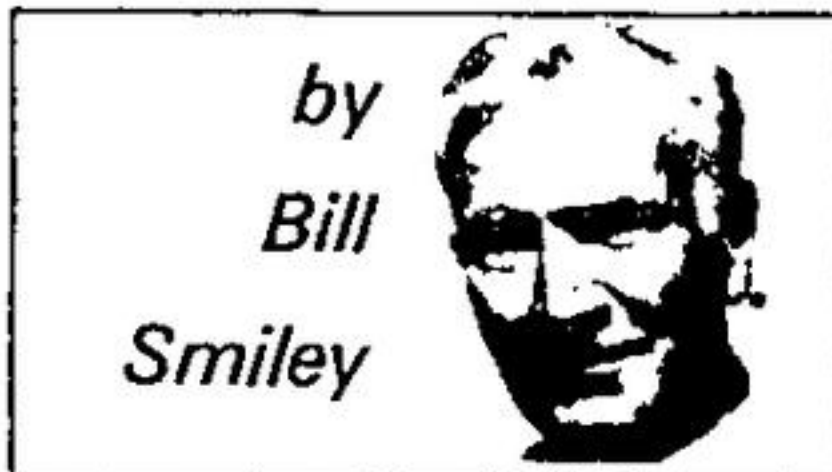
Certainly I will. I have no intention of fleeing into the right-wing arms of Alberta, or the moderately left-wing arms of Saskatchewan, or the materialistic arms of B.C. or Ontario, or the salty, slow embrace of the Maritimes. Or even the hearty bear-hug of the Yukon.

I'm gonna stay home and cultivate my own garden. It may be all weeds, but that doesn't give me the right to point in scorn to the wrecked cars and dirty gravel that make up my neighbor's yard.

You may have noticed that I have not addressed myself to the topic of Quebec separation in the past couple of years, except for my opening salvo, which said, more or less, "Let them go... no big deal."

I cited historical parallels: Britain backing gracefully out of India, Ceylon, Burma, and a dozen others; the French being badly burned in Indo-China and North Africa, where they tried to hold on by force; the Americans trying to fight ideas with napalm and bombs in an ill-conceived and ill-fated war in Viet Nam.

And I still feel the same way. If a majority of the people of Quebec think they would be happy if they kissed the rest of



by Bill Smiley

the family goodbye, then let's return the kiss, throw in a hug, and let them go. No names. No recriminations. Just a gentle severing of the ties, which, after all, are only a little over a hundred years old, a mere flyspeck in the history books.

There's been a great deal of bewilderment and belated sentimentality over the possibility, among English-speaking Canadians. There's been a lot of sloppy soul-searching that resembles nothing so much as a rotten mother whining, after her kids turn rotten, "What have I done? I always meant the best for them."

"What do they want? Why do they want out?" are the pitiful cries of the complacent Anglo majority.

I know why they want out, or many of them do. They have managed to retain their pride of race under two hundred years of subservience and second-class citizenship.

Why did the Irish want out of the British Empire? Why did the Indo-Chinese want out from under the benevolent rule of France? Why did the Philippines, and now the Canal Zone, want to kick out the Yanks?

Yep. Many, many French-Canadians volunteered and served loyally and gallantly, in World War II. Know what they were called, almost invariably? Frenchy! With condescension.

I was at a "bilingual" newspaper con-

vention a couple of decades ago, in Quebec. The announcements were made first in English. Then, when they were repeated in French, the mainly English-speaking editors were all babbling away, drowning out the French. This is the sort of thing that creates fury among proud people.

Quebec is one of the most vibrant and lively societies in the western world. Its residents have kicked out the iron paternalism of the Church, exposed and scored its corrupt politicians. It has produced more in art and music and writing, proportionately, than all the rest of Canada, in the past decades.

It has also sent wise men, and a few fools, to Ottawa. Rene Levesque is no Idi Amin, a buffoon leading clowns. The province has vast national resources. Its leaders are no jumped-up parochial politicians, but intelligent, far-seeing, opportunistic maybe, but tough, practical men and women. You can't toss all that aside with a few sentimental platitudes about one-country.

On the other hand, many, many Quebecers don't want to leave the family. I'm more worried about Quebec being torn in two than about Canada breaking asunder.

Two years ago, on a bus tour, in France, a lady from Montreal who spoke little English, told me vehemently, "I no Pequist. Rene Levesque win, I go Ottawa. Take my business."

Again, it's like a family. We've all been brought up, including the people of Quebec, to the idea that we are one, that we stretch from sea to sea, that we are "different" from the Yanks and the Brits, and the French.

In a family, some are willing to see one go. "He's a bum, a drunk. She's a trolop, a tramp." But at the least sign of reform or a change of heart or habits, the outsider is welcomed back, smothered with kisses. So may it be this time.

Association wants to help you. A Withdrawal clinic is planned for May 26 to 30 at Sheridan College in Oakville, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. To register call 827-7973.

Anyone who has seen me lately will probably wonder why my eyelids are reaching my knees. It's lack of sleep. I miss my quiet rural living of Norway.

Those who don't have a hankering for country music should take a drive out anyway. The only thing I like about a country music song is when it is over. However, a few years back I sat through six long hours of a special Grand Ole Opry Christmas special in Nashville. The tickets were a gift from my mother, the trip was on our way to Florida, and the whole idea was a big bore. However, I was fascinated. To actually see the greats like Johnny Cash, June Carter, Mel Tillis, Hank Snow, Marty Robbins, Tammy Wynette, and many, many more was one of the best concerts I have ever been at. And to think, you can save the drive to Tennessee by seeing it all (or a lot of it) in Campbellville.

Since moving to Acton I have not had one decent night's sleep. I just can't sleep without a street light shining in my eyes, or gravel trucks barreling down the road at all hours of the night.

I miss them blaring their horns if they should happen to reach my house and still have a red light. (They honk their loud horns to warn oncoming traffic rather than stopping.)

I can't sleep without cars stopping in front of my house at the stop light with their loud radios blaring out the top twenty

## Wasted school study

The first layers of the finest dust are settling on the latest, and at \$7,000 one of the most expensive, documents funded by Halton's Board of Education concerning middle schools. Unfortunately the study fails to pay off with new directions for educators.

The most useful results from the study have nothing to do with the organization of schools. The seven grand revelation is that bigger schools are better than smaller schools in terms of program.

Size rather than organization means the most concerning the education opportunities which can be offered to youngsters in middle schools.

In the summary of the middle school study there is also the disturbing discovery that there exists in the minds of educators only a vague notion of what a middle school is.

"Confusion and contradictions," states the summary, "among standards and criteria which characterize former Halton middle school reports, are problems which are common in reference to middle schools on a wider scale. The lack of a uniform definition of middle schools within Halton and among educational circles in general, is probably the most glaring example of this

tendency."

That confusion reflects the variety of schools in Halton which carry the designation of middle school. Some schools teach Grades Six, Seven and Eight exclusively. Others have Kindergarten to Grade Five wings. Still others contain only students in Grades Seven and Eight.

There are a number of reasons for this variety. The main one, according to the paper entitled Executive Committee Position on Middle Schools is "the lack of convincing research evidence that a middle school organization clearly resulted in superior academic achievement, improved pupil attitudes towards school and learning, and improved concepts of self-worth in the pupils of a middle school as compared to those same factors in a K-8 school."

That was the extent of knowledge prior to the most recent study. Seven thousand dollars later educators are no further ahead. It was a waste of taxpayers money.

As the months pass the middle school study will be layered with more dust. The coating will be uniform because no one will need to again disturb its pages.

## Our readers write

### Appreciate publisher's help

Don McDonald  
Publisher

Dear Don:  
On behalf of the Trinity Activity Group, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for your time, co-operation, the use of the building, the tow lift and operator on the Friday, that you so generously gave us for our fertilizer sale

on April 12. Needless to day our sale was a great success, and our proceeds will be used for our church renovations and missions.

Without your help, our fertilizer project could not be handled as easily.

Thanks again,  
Gloria Coats  
Fertilizer Project Convener  
Acton.

### Thanks for Profiles

Jennifer Barr:  
Thought I would send you a small note thanking you for your kind words in that wonderful write-up you gave me. You sure

can put words together. So many thanks again.

Bob Stewart  
Acton



On the Leavell

With Helen

Organizers of the annual bike licence sale Saturday at the police station were disappointed with the poor turnout.

Only 34 people showed up to renew, or purchase new licences, compared to almost 130 last year.

Halton Regional Police Officers Tom Roduck and Bob Ustrizycki and civilians Pop Main and myself sold the licences for \$2 each, which are good for the lifetime of the bike, as compared to other years, when it was renewable annually for \$1.

The owners' names, serial numbers and make and color of the bike are processed through the Bicycle Guild in Montreal, and if stolen, and later found, can be traced much the same as automobiles.

Yvonne Courtine of RR 1 Acton won the bike licence donated by Home Hardware, and An Leung Phung, of Mill St. won the gift certificate from Stedman's.

Anyone wishing to purchase their bike licence may do so at the municipal offices, Mill St.

Want to quit smoking? The Halton Lung

## Back issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Acton Free Press Wednesday, May 27, 1970

In a face-to-face confrontation, Acton Chamber of Commerce charged that the poor policies of council had cost the town industries and revenue this year. John Shadbolt and the Chamber executive feel there is a lack of progress in the industrial park. Mayor Les Duby said the delegation was ill-informed on some matters.

Excavating began Monday for the first industry in the park, Acton Box Company. Frank Unterharrer had been located in the building on No. 7 highway, formerly Don Timmings' dairy.

Vera Denny and David Scott received BA degrees. Tom McKeown received his B. Sc. degree.

A group of five boys including Chris Schults, John Hansen, Scott Somerville, Joey Schults and Bernie Taylor was the first Acton contingent to complete the 32-mile walkathon that raised \$6,000 for the Ontario Farm Home for the Deaf at Milton.

Miss Fern Small received a gift from her CGIT girls at the Mother and Daughter banquet. She is leaving Acton.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Acton Free Press Thursday, May 19, 1960

Tony Seynuck brought in the biggest gas well of his career Tuesday morning and it is estimated to produce 1,000,000 cubic feet of gas. The well is on the farm of Bill Thompson in Trafalgar township. This is well No. 33 for Mr. Seynuck. Over 50 spectators were illuminated by great rushes of burning gas from the top of the 58 foot tower. He started his career in 1929 when he spent six years drilling his first well.

Mrs. W. Finley was re-elected Legion Auxiliaries' zone commander during the zone rally here.

Nell, a 19-year-old Belgian mare, knows her way all around her route with Masales Dairy wagon. She has rarely missed a trip in 14 years.

Reception was staged by Lakeside chapter IODE for 57 new Canadians after they received their citizenship papers at Milton court house.

Susan Wilson was the Rotary sponsored student for Adventure in Citizenship in Ottawa this year. She received her citizenship papers from the Hon. Ellen Fairclough.

Parks board engaged W. Roszel as gate attendant and Ruth Landsborough as wading pool attendant at the rate of \$1 an hour.

The St. John Ambulance Brigade under Superintendent Bob Hart is holding courses each day for Save-a-Life week.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Acton Free Press Thursday, May 22, 1930

A record crowd was in attendance at the third annual Music Festival in Milton and considerable improvement was noted. Acton choir, directed by Mrs. M.R. Moore, placed second.

The Duke of Devonshire chapter will hold their annual Empire Day concert in the town hall.

Rev. H.L. Bennie was inducted as the pastor of the Presbyterian church, with a banquet served to the congregation by the ladies of the church afterward. The household effects arrived from Halifax this week. Mr. and Mrs. Bennie and their two children motored from Nova Scotia.

There was a splendid attendance at the annual meeting of the Amateur Athletic Club. Every feature showed progress. The Hockey Club had a most successful season. G.T. Beardmore was re-elected president and W.K. Graham vice-president.

Messrs. Guild and Ayles erected a new garage in Rockwood to accommodate their many patrons on the highway.

Messrs. A.T. Brown and Ernest Coles attended the convention and banquet of radio dealers at the Royal York, Toronto.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Acton Free Press of Thursday, May 20, 1880.

Now that the Credit Valley railway carries mail, the people of Nassagaweya expect to get the Milton newspapers on Thursday instead of Friday as formerly.

In the summer not only do cows play havoc with gardens in the village, but they make the side walks in a shocking dirty condition. The council would have the thanks of the majority of ratepayers if they would have carried out the by law prohibiting cows from roaming the streets.

Council approved paying the sum of fifteen dollars to the band to pay for the erection of a band stand.

Don't invest in fire-crackers, or you may be arrested for firing them. Council are bound to put down the nuisance.

A runaway on Mill St. Sunday caused considerable excitement. One of the occupants - a lady - jumped out of the buggy and was badly bruised. The driver was a stranger.