

The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

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Mall on drawing board

It is heartening to learn this week that commercial development plans for the east end of downtown Acton are back in the works, though the project is still on very shaky ground.

It is even better news to hear another of the principles in the deal say the town is being co-operative.

This project is crucial to the future of downtown Acton so it was alarming to hear one of the developers claim the town shot down some of their plans.

Halton Hills staff has apparently been very helpful another source says and planner Mario Venditti says the municipality will continue to do everything it can to make sure some sort of major commercial development takes place on the old Force Electric plant site and surrounding properties.

Residents here have made it clear they want more commercial development and don't really care

where it goes. But in the interest of proper planning and the healthy survival of our downtown it is essential a proposed plaza on the east side of town isn't built.

However, to help make sure commercial development doesn't take place on the fringes of Acton it is necessary that commercial development take place downtown.

Also the developer who proposed a plaza for the east side of Acton, Jerry Sprackman, has demonstrated here and elsewhere he isn't a very good corporate citizen. Through his plan he will contribute little to Acton other than the plaza building itself.

If present dreams for downtown revitalization don't materialize though, we may have to settle for the next best thing, a plaza on the outskirts of town, simply to get the commercial development everyone wants.

Need stops to cut speeding

It's not news, but speeding on residential streets in Acton and using stop signs to slow drivers has been a long simmering issue here.

The issue seems to have come to a head this spring.

Councillors have received complaints about speeding on no less than five streets in Acton this year: McDonald Boulevard, Churchill Road North, Churchill Road South, Cobblehill Road and Church Street.

Residents have repeatedly called for stop signs to slow the traffic, having given up on police enforcement of the posted speed limits.

The engineer is invariably asked to report on the need for stop signs to slow speeding in each and every case and most times recommends against stop signs.

Robert Austin has good reason for discouraging the use of stop signs to curb speeding.

Studies have conclusively proven they don't really stop speeding.

Stop signs result in less speeding only by trimming the traffic count on a street. When stop signs are used to reduce speeding they simply move traffic, and hence some speeders, to another street, causing another problem area.

Stop signs can waste as much gasoline as speeders do. It is a waste of gasoline stopping and starting. People who are prone to speeding roar up to the stop sign, slow, rarely come to a complete stop, and then roar on the next stop sign. Accelerating and applying brakes also causes con-

siderable noise residents must endure.

Yet with all the evidence that stop signs don't really do much to solve speeding, do our councillors have much choice but to install them when requested by residents?

Parents are understandably worried about speeding on residential streets where their children may wander. Speeders also make backing out of one's driveway dangerous.

It is often said the answer to solving speeding on residential streets is stricter enforcement.

Residents have heard this many times.

They are all for stricter enforcement but have given up on ever seeing this materialize.

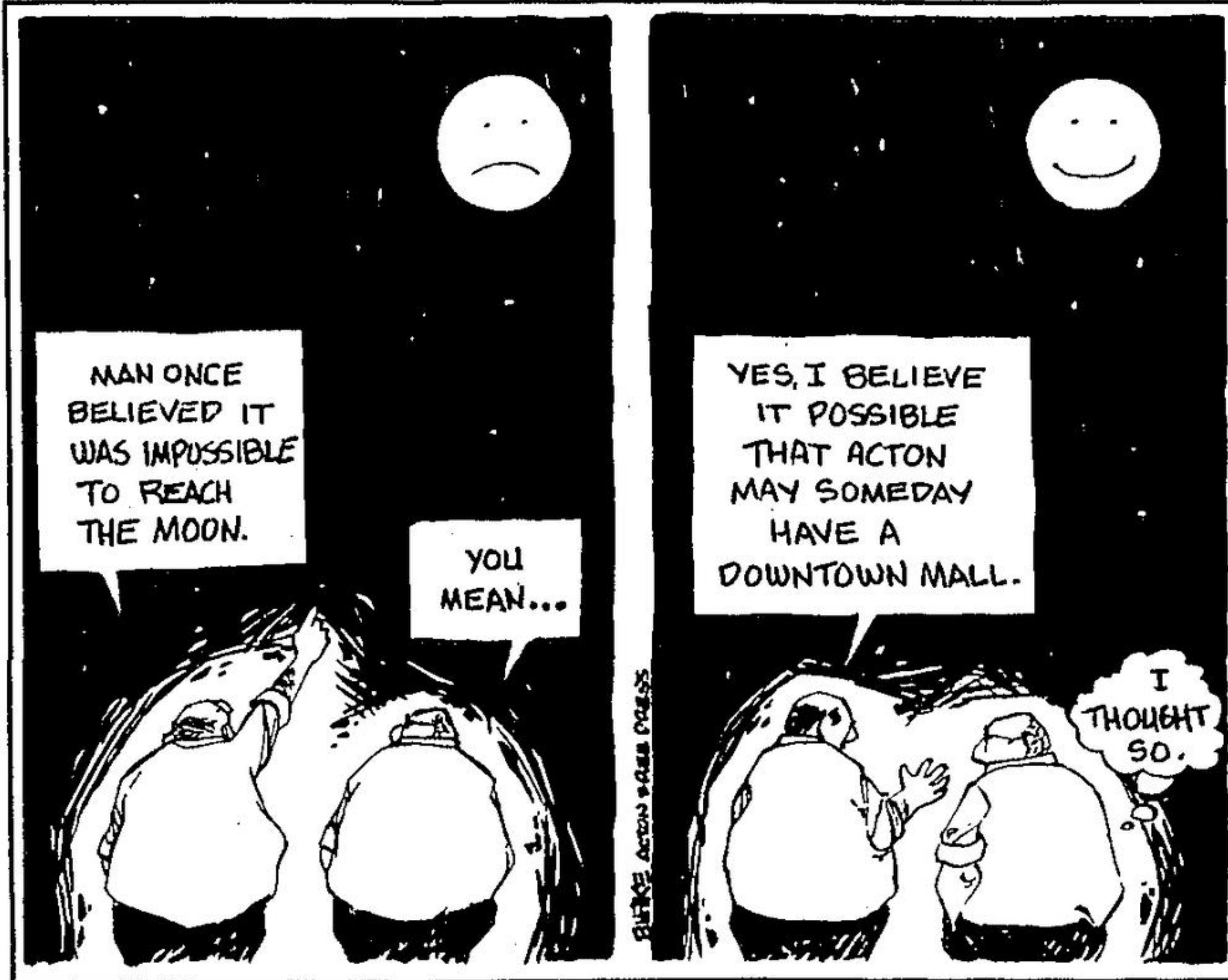
The police aren't really that much to blame either.

This has been a rough spring for the force. It's hard to find men to free up for radar duty when police are busy with four strikes and the usual fare of vandalism and crimes.

Does it really make sense to have a highly trained police officer, earning good wages, sit in a car on one of these streets all day nabbing speeders? Few residential streets offer the kind of cover needed for a good speed trap. The cruiser is spotted and the speeder slows down. If the police aren't on the street the next day speeding resumes.

It's a tough problem.

However, for the time being, until someone comes up with a better solution stop signs appear to be the answer, albeit not a very effective one.



Oui-Oui, Non-Non boredom

I'm writing this on the day of the Great Quebec Referendum or the Oui-Oui-Non-Non vote (sounds like a naughty game for kids). No results have come in yet, but I find myself viewing the evening news with a monumental calm bordering on boredom.

Hundreds of thousands of column inches of newsprint have been wasted, hundreds of hours of television and radio time expended, exploring, explaining, and exploiting a question that, for true ambiguity, resembles that old-timer, "When did you stop beating your wife?"

Bleeding hearts all over Anglophone Canada, whose connection with the Quebec fact consists of one weekend in Montreal and one encounter with one real, live French-Canadian, have been bleeding all over the upholstery in which the Great Question has been cushioned.

I sincerely doubt that there has been much of this bleeding taking place west of Winnipeg. And I sincerely believe that even less of it has been done east of Fredericton.

In the great Liberal-less west, the vote has some curiosity value, but as far as I can sense, no wrenching anguish at the possible break-up of a great and beautiful country.

In the Maritimes, there have been some valid economic qualms at the thought of a fractured Canada, but no panic, from what I can read.

It stands to reason then, that my "bleeding hearts all over Anglophone Canada" are mostly in Ontario. And the only time hearts bleed in Ontario is when there is some chance that that province will come out on the short end of a deal.

If the question had not been wrapped in cotton wool, I think there might have been some sense of a real potential tragedy in Canada, instead of the bloated, pumped-up phony issue created by pollsters and poli-

ticians, which has produced little but ennui outside Quebec.

I'd like to have seen a ballot with two statements on it, one to be marked with the traditional X. The first would say, "Nous partirons" and the second, "Je reste au Canada." Loosely translated from my execrable French, they mean, respectively, "We quit!" and, "I stay wid Canada."

A straight question like this would test the validity of the Pequist claim to self-determination, and would settle, once and for all, the nightmare of a foreign country stuck like a thorn in the body of this sprawling country that exists only because of Sir John A. Macdonald, the CPR, rye whiskey, maple syrup and the fact that the Americans don't like a cold climate. These are what have held us together; not idealism, mutual respect, maple leaves, or a national culture.

Whichever side wins today in Quebec, it's going to be a hollow victory. If the Oui vote takes it, a funny, little, passionate, rather endearing man is going to think he's the Second Coming, and will press on from one flounder to the next.

If the Non vote takes it, the Oui's are going to scream bloody murder, Federal intervention, Anglo duplicity and faulty reading of the stars, among other things. It appears that it will be fairly even. This solves nothing whatever and serves only to make four million Quebecois mad at the other four million. And this is about average for any Canadian election or vote, so nothing is new.

Pundits talk about lack of communication, as though it had just been invented. Of course there is. But I'll bet there's more communication and a closer rapport between a French farmer and an Anglo farmer than there is between a Gaspe fisherman and a Montreal banker, or between an Albertan construction worker and a Toronto stockbroker.

all more than we expected.

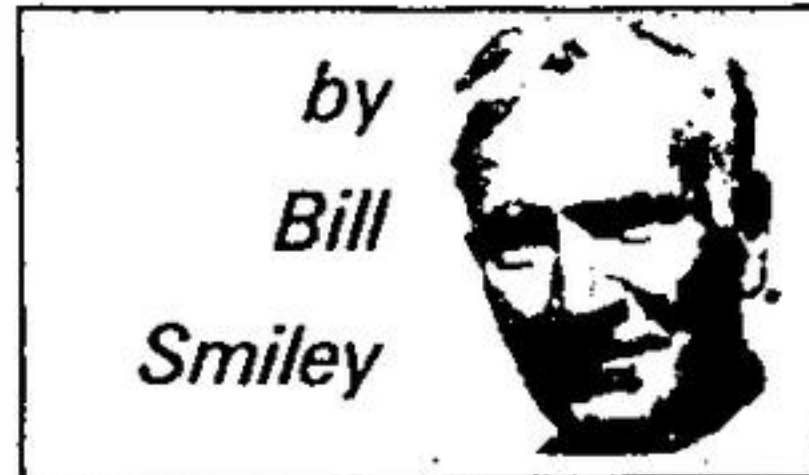
And to top the day off, I met my media hero. No, he's not Walter Cronkite, or even Harvey Kirk or Lloyd Robertson, or gorgeous Gord Martineau, but (uncle) Jim Brady of CFR radio, Toronto. Anyone who listens to his morning show has to admit he's a real eye opener first thing in the morning. When commuting from the big city of Norval, Uncle Jimmy, as he calls himself, helped me wake up more than once.

I had a hurried, but nice chat with Mr. Brady, but I think he thought I was a bit weird. But I only called him Uncle Jimmy once, and asked to be introduced to his twin girls, and asked him to give another disc jockey a message for me. Is that so strange? And it only looked as if we were following him later on—honest. After all, he was walking behind us, and not vice versa.

Anyway, in spite of my making a fool out of myself in front of a complete stranger (which wasn't the first time), I had a great time. The Safari is just a short drive from here and is frequented by many adults as well as youngsters.

The University of Guelph recently conducted an energy study in Acton, the results to be released soon. I am consciously doing my bit for the energy crisis, but for some reason everyone laughs at me.

Now that we're living in Acton and living



by Bill Smiley

They talk about two different cultures. Of course there are. But there's no hang-up. There's a whole of a difference between an Oxford professor and a Scottish highlander, but they manage to stagger along under the same crown and constitution.

You can't tell me that a playboy in Nice has the same moral values as a shepherd in Breton, but they are both Frenchmen. A resident of the Bronx in New York and one in Hayfork Centre, Mississippi, have less in common than a dog and a cat, but they are both Americans.

Personally, I have a certain affection for Quebec. I spent my first two years, and all my holidays into the teens, in that province. But I am equally, or more fond of Edinburgh, London, Paris, North Wales.

I don't, and I don't believe many Anglos do, want to take away the language, culture, religion of the Quebecois. They can all go around in their bare skin and smoke Cuban cheroots, as far as I care.

At the same time, I don't want to be bullied into learning another language, at my age. I don't want some member of the family treated better than the others. I don't want to be told by some flaming-eyed radical that I represent a class and a nation that has no soul, that exists only to gouge others. Some gouging I've done from Quebec.

When all the smoke settles, will there be any fire? Quite possibly. There is ignorance and fear on both sides. But I'm not envisioning civil war. Quebec politicians, like those of the rest of Canada, are happier when there is a marshmallow at the end of the rapier.

only a few blocks from the office, I've traded in my '78 four wheel subcompact, for a '63 two wheel, sub-sub compact. When Santa Claus delivered my new bike to me 17 years ago, he threatened me to take care of it, and make it last because it would be the last one he was going to squeeze into his bag for me. Well, it's still around, but for some reason, everyone is making jokes about it. My father has used it for the past five years, and he painted it bright red, and put a funny-looking seat on it. But when I collected it from Collingwood a few weeks ago he put the seat down. I was actually able to reach the ground—something I never managed to do while I used it to get to school.

So now I can be seen pedalling down Wallace Street, with the five and ten speeds zooming past me. Sure it's embarrassing, but when I think that I have a half a tank of gas in my car, and haven't been to a gas station in two weeks, (and have gone to Toronto twice and Georgetown three times), I just keep my chin up and remember the energy crisis.

It's a busy few weekends for Acton and Georgetown residents. This weekend is Summerfest and Pioneer Days in Georgetown, and next weekend is Back to Acton Days. A lot of hard work has gone into both weekends. Be sure you participate.

Back issues

10 years ago

Wednesday, June 24, 1970

Acton's size would double, and the population more than double, if annexation of 1,000 acres of Esqueving is approved. The present population is 4,800 and the Toronto-centred region plan limits population at 25,000 for Acton. Property owners concerned all asked that their property be annexed. Owners would also like to have the Sprowl and McCullough farms annexed.

Residents are objecting to apartments being built on property off Bower Ave. owned by Hazel Orr.

The five new stores and offices at the corner of Main and Church are taking shape. One tenant will be a new dentist for the town, Dr. Robert Steen. A laundromat is also expected.

An Acton man, Corp. Charles Watson, is assisting with rescue operations in Peru following earthquakes there.

A 90th birthday cake for Miss M.Z. Bennett was a highlight of the Duke of Devonshire tea. Her birthday is August 4.

Eden Mills school will be closed this month and children bussed to school in Rockwood. Most of the parents favored the move.

20 years ago

June 16, 1960

Anglo Canadian Leather Company will discontinue production at Huntsville, moving their operations to Acton, Beardmore president W.G. Beatty announced. Employment should be on a steadier basis in the sole leather department here. The increased use of substitutes and growing shoe imports weighed the scales against the Huntsville tannery.

A child playing with matches has been blamed for the fire which caused over \$500 damage to special lumber being used in the erection of the new United Church sanctuary.

Over 100 attended the grade 6 graduation banquet in the Robert Little school. Don Long was master of ceremonies. Taking parts in the program were Marie Hulsman, Robert Myers, Dian Swackhamer, Tony Leighton and Neil Franklin. Top awardees went to Jill Hurst, Nancy Miller, Bill Reid and Janice Roszell.

Mrs. Robert Allan grabbed the family Bible and ran outside when their R.R. 3 home caught fire.

Lifeguards at Fairy Lake are an innovation. Alfred Chopka is assisted by Chris Denny and Anthony Hopper of the Water Y's Swim Club. There will also be a lifesaving boat. Ruth Landsborough has opened the wading pool for the season. Herb Fryer is park attendant, Bill Roszell gate keeper.

50 years ago

June 19, 1930

An impressive service was held by the Presbytery of Guelph when they met to conduct the dedication service for Miss Mary E. Anderson, who is to take up work among the Koreans in Japan.

Sunday was the annual Decoration Day of the Acton Lodge I.O.O.F., and their church service. The parade halted at the home of Mr. P.A. Smith, who has been ill, and the band played a few numbers.

A barn dance will be held at the home of Mr. A.G. Clarridge, under the auspices of Acton Farmers Club.

A highly respected citizen was called home when Mrs. William Wiles passed away. The children of the home are Harold and Miss Laura.

The three Farmers Clubs of the Acton district held a picnic at Stanley Park. Race and game winners included Mr. and Mrs. J.J. Stewart, Wilmer Davidson, Margaret Somerville, Kathleen Robertson, Max Storey, Dorothy Clarridge, Eileen Clarridge, Mildred Foster, Genevieve Clarridge, Margaret Walde, Mr. and Mrs. R.L. Davidson, George Wallace, Nellie Young, Mrs. Geo. Somerville, Mrs. Henry Sayers.

The examinations of the High School have been in progress this week.

100 years ago

June 17, 1880

On Friday night last a second, but not very serious, burglary occurred in our usually quiet little town. The burglars visited four or five places and their principal idea seems to have been to obtain provisions.

They entered Mr. Samuel Moore's cellar from an outside door and helped themselves to a ham, several loaves of bread and a crock containing 20 pounds of butter.

A bylaw was passed at a council meeting prohibiting cows from running at large at any hour of the night or day. Dr. McGarvin says he has had his garden destroyed by cows for 26 years. Charles T. Hill and 63 others signed a petition asking that the bylaw remain the same, allowing cows to run at large from April to November. They said "p sture to any extent cannot be obtained sufficient for the villages at all convenient, and to compel owners to dispose of that which goes so far toward our support, is certainly diminutive to our village wealth."

During the discussion of the cow question, some member mistook Reeve W.H. Storey's hat for their own. The return will be considered a favor, as the one left is rather large.

Our readers write

Reject Church St. stop

June 11 / 80

Dear Sir: In reference to your article on page 8 of the June 11 issue of the Free Press concerning the plans to install stop signs on Church Street, I have the following comments to offer.

As a resident of the east side of town, I am one of the many who use Church Street as an alternate to Mill Street in order to avoid the congestion that is frequently present during the evening rush. The route is a most pleasant one by comparison.

I would like to take the Halton Hills committee's acceptance of Mr. Austin's report to task on two points. Firstly, the intention of reducing traffic volume on Church St., if successful will mean that there will be more traffic in the downtown core, on Mill Street, where it is already frequently crowded. Thus there is potential for more accidents as a direct result.

Secondly, the installation of stop signs will result in a needless waste of gasoline for every vehicle using Church Street.

Surely, in this day where energy conservation is of vital concern, or should be, to everyone, including local government, the proliferation of stop signs should be viewed with the utmost concern and stopped except where absolutely necessary.

Another negative side effect to the installation of additional stop signs is the increased traffic noise to local residents. Living on a corner myself, I am acutely aware of the noise generated by vehicles accelerating through the intersection, particularly those who chose to make drag strip-like starts.

The argument apparently submitted by Mr. Austin that the number of speeders will be reduced by virtue of the reduced traffic volume seems to approach the problem from the wrong end. I would submit that frequent and judicious enforcement of the speed limit would be a more effective and beneficial approach to solving the basic problem.

M. F. Chell



On the Leavell

With Helen

Word has it that the judges involved were disappointed in the turnout of entries for the Back to Acton Days essay contest. All told, there were eight entries, with none from grade 6. The contest was open to grades 6, 7 and 8s. Helliers donated prizes to the winners.

Robert Little school students visited the African Lion Safari near Rockton on Friday. I hear they had a pretty good time. Saturday was Media Day '80 at the famous park. That's when the Safari public relations department invite representatives from newspapers, television and radio stations, and cable TV to enjoy a free day at their facilities, and enjoy a big barbecue.

Hubby Gord and I took advantage of the invite Saturday, and "went wild." The wild animals roaming around, the terrific barbecue, the meeting of old friends, was