

The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

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Daredevil bicyclists problem

Drivers can soon breathe a sigh of relief.

Bicycle season is quickly drawing to a close.

Driving the streets of this town, spring, summer and fall, especially when schools are operating, can be a real nail-biting, nerve wracking experience.

One reader, who called recently about the problem of irresponsible bike riding by local youngsters said it well when she declared "it makes you fear for the kids sometimes."

The children obviously either don't know the rules of road or else simply have decided not to bother following them.

They seem to think they own the road.

Kids ride their bikes down the wrong side, they ride out from between parked cars, they ignore stop signs, ride double and cross from side to side without looking for cars.

One of their most distressing habits is riding in pairs down the middle of the road and then splitting just in front of an oncoming car. If a youngster ever fell, where would the driver go.

The problem doesn't seem to be localized to any one part of Acton. It happens on virtually every residential street.

Possibly the police and teachers aren't doing a good enough job of teaching the children the rules of legal and safe bicycle riding.

More than likely the youngsters have been taught and know the rules, they just find it's more fun

to play chicken with cars.

Thus the problem is one of attitude.

And the responsibility for changing a child's attitude about bike riding must rest with the parents.

Parents before the bikes are put away for winter sit down and have a long talk about bicycle safety with your child.

Reinforce the lesson again in the spring and then review it at least every month until the bikes are put away for winter again.

But don't just talk about bike safety to your child.

Go out and spot check your child's bike riding habits now and again.

And when you see your child riding dangerously take tough action.

A few weeks without the bike should produce wonders with most children.

The young daredevils aren't hoodlums.

They aren't other people's kids either.

They're your children.

So far Acton has been lucky. We haven't had many accidents yet involving careless bicycle riders and motorists. The few accidents there have been resulted in only minor injuries for the bicyclist and scares for drivers.

Why push our luck longer?

It's long past the time for parents to start laying the law down with their careless bike riding children.



BIKES ACTON FREE PRESS

Back issues

10 years ago

November 11, 1970

The Michigan Bulb Co. will completely close its Acton operation Friday and move to Quebec.

Will the airport be close to Acton? Mayor Les Duby asked Minister of Transport Don Jamieson, but received no new information.

Possibly the best-organized walkathon yet raised money for UNICEF Saturday as 149 walkers strode along a 20-mile course. Tramping teachers were Gerry Brouillard and David Boycott. First in were Mike Luty, John Hansen, Bernie Taylor, Michael Masters, Jim Gentles, Steve McKnight, Terry Bateman, Charlie Griese, George Blunder.

The traditional club green jacket was presented to Acton Meadows champion Mike Prystasz.

20 years ago

November 10, 1960

Girls copped the largest share of the awards at high school commencement. Louise Wasowicz, valedictorian, received two scholarships and was presented with the valedictorian medal by student council president Barry Kirkness. Irene Varey, Gloria Latimer, June Davidson, Mary-Lou Creighton, Jean Moffat, Jean Hart, Mary Beth Elliott, and Alan Hayward received special awards.

The school board turned thumbs down on the suggestion a driver instruction class be held, favouring stressing the three R's instead. Trustee M. M. Cole felt the plan might have some merit, but it was thought the students' academic standings might suffer.

The "Silver screen" in Acton will be blacked out Nov. 26. Romy manager Murray Harrison has been informed the theatre has been losing money for two years and will be closed.

50 years ago

November 13, 1930

Ladies' and men's teams are both in the softball playoffs. The girls defeated Brampton and the men defeated Hewletsons of Brampton.

All unemployed residents are asked to register at the clerk's office.

Mr. D. G. Robertson and Mr. Bert Robertson of Ospringe won prizes at the Eramosa plowing match.

The man who led the gang which burglarized the clothing store of W. M. Cooper was sentenced to two years.

A portrait of the late J. C. Hill was unveiled in the Band Room. He was for over 50 years a member of the Band and for many years the Bandmaster. A. Mason was elected Bandmaster. C. Mason assistant bandmaster and Archie Kerr president.

The first six who organized the band in 1872 were Messrs. Jas. Nicklin, Jake Dempsey, Dave Lighthouse, Chas. Hill, John Hill and John Cameron, who each pledged \$6.00, a large sum in those days.

75 years ago

November 18, 1905

H. P. Moore presented to council the petition signed by 150 ratepayers, requesting Local Option. This is the largest petition ever presented to Council during the 30 years since incorporation. It asks council to submit a bylaw granting the ratepayers the privilege of voting whether the legal sale of liquor would continue in Acton.

Mr. C. A. Goodie spoke of the large aggregate of money now being spent in the bars in town. Rev. G. W. Barker spoke in the interests of the young manhood of the town. When the drunkenness prevailing had been referred to by outsiders, he had been ashamed that the fair name of Acton was besmirched. Councillor Warren said the hotels have not been providing accommodation since too much attention was given to the bar. Councillor Lackey said he has seen the failure of such laws in other centres.

The School Board has requested council to arrange that the room in the town hall presently used as a lawyer's office be handed over to the Public School Board for their use.

100 years ago

November 11, 1880

Our village rulers estimate expenses at \$894.08 for the coming year. This includes \$40 for the new constable, who will enforce order. The sum of two dollars will be collected as statute labor tax from each male inhabitant of the village. Street lamps will be erected, not exceeding the number of 20. The offer of J. McGarvin of fifty cents a lamp for the privilege of advertising on the lamps was accepted. Arrangements will be made with persons opposite whose homes they are to be erected, with a view to making them as inexpensive to the corporation as possible.

The rate of 1 1/4 mills is a very low rate when compared to other villages, and our streets and sidewalks are in very fair condition.

A gold watch and chain was presented to Mr. Robert Little, P.S.I., at the Teachers Convention in appreciation of his nine years' work.

Our readers write

Recalls Acton's early days

Dear Sir: By way of introduction I would like to say I am a native son of Acton having been born there in 1904.

During the summer my wife and I made a visit to Toronto and also Acton and Guelph. My cousin in Guelph gave me a copy of "Acton's Early Days" which I have just finished reading with great interest. It was first purchased by Miss Alice Cook, who lived near the cemetery. Later her sister, Mrs. Eva McClaughlin obtained it and then my cousin.

As I look back on those early days I realize not many will remember what I would like to say but to some it may prove interesting.

To begin with I passed Sr. IV when Miss M. Z. Bennett was teacher in June 1918. I went on to Continuation School till early in 1919 and left there to become "the printer's devil" at Acton Free Press. My salary was \$1.50 per week. In the closing page of your book you mention the date of March 1919 (before the Addenda) as the first column being published of "The Old Man of the Big Clock Tower." At that time, Mr. H. P. Moore asked me if I would take a picture of the clock tower. I had a Kodak box camera and on my lunch hour took the photograph that was used in the paper.

You will notice the time as five minutes to one. There was a hydro pole in the picture, of course, but when the "cut" was

made for the Free Press it was taken out. Everyone was curious of who the writer was. I remember one day looking especially at the copy and recognizing H.P. Moore's writing, although I believe, there was someone else who also wrote for it. Of course, at that time, I kept this to myself. Such is my claim to fame. At that time there was a linotype machine but I remember when there was a staff of five or so and the type was set by hand. I work d when Arlof Dills was foreman and also Earl Vincent.

My father died in 1912 and mother married again in 1919 to a farmer in Glen Williams. Wise or otherwise I left the Free Press later in 1919 to live on the farm. My parents, my grandparents and my baby brother are all buried in Fairview.

I could go on but I will close with one recollection of Armistice Day, November 11, 1918. The towny whistles blew, there was a parade through the town led by the school children and great rejoicing. In the evening, there was a pile of stumps which had been pulled out of Fairy Lake and were quite dry. It made quite a pile and one of the storekeepers donated five gallons of coal oil. Someone made an effigy of the Kaiser and there was quite a celebration that evening watching watching it all burn.

George Taylor
Burnaby, B.C.

Prevent animals breeding

Dear Sir: As an animal lover I was happy to read in your paper that the town's budget committee are examining a request from the Humane Society to help fund research development of a chemical to prevent

animals from breeding. However, Councillor Walter Blehn's comments on the matter show his callous disregard for helpless creatures. It could be the concern of every municipality. Jean Hawthorne



Following the sun

photo by ERIC ELSTONE

Polar Bear Express trip for wife gives Smiley the freeze

by Bill Smiley



It's like being a shipyard's worker at the launching of the Titanic. Or an usher at a Hollywood premiere. Or a nurse at the birth of a baby. You are part of it all, but an insignificant one, compared with the central drama.

My wife is going all the way to Moosonee to visit her daughter and grandboys for two weeks, and I feel about as important in the entire tour de force as the people mentioned above.

I'm quite sure that Scott's preparations for getting to the South Pole didn't cause nearly as much fuss in Britain as have my wife's for getting to Moosonee, in our house.

Mind you, it's not just like jumping on a bus and going to the city for a day or two. Getting to Moosonee is only slightly less difficult than getting to the Galapagos Islands.

You can fly, of course, for an arm and a leg. It's cheaper to fly to England and back than to Moosonee and back. And to catch your plane, you have to be there at some unearthly hour like 6.30 a.m.

That meant, for us, me getting up at 5 a.m., driving 160 miles round trip, and being at work at nine.

Or she could take a cab to the airport, for \$55. Add that to the airfare, going and coming, and you could fly to Hawaii, which would make a lot more sense, this time of year.

Or she could down the night before, spend \$35. for a hotel room and then take a cab to the airport, for \$10. Plus a couple of meals. It still comes out to about \$55.

These are some of the alternatives I put forward. I'm no skinflint. But my wife is, in some respects. When I go to the city alone, I take cabs everywhere. When she goes alone, she takes the subway, or walks.

I said, in some respects. She'll save string, bargain for prices in the super-

market like an Oriental cook, abhors wastage of three cents worth of food.

But then she'll hit me with something that keeps me staggering for a week. One day, when I was a student, and our total income around \$100 a month, she blurted, rather fearfully, I must admit, that she had bought a new sewing machine. There went a month's income. It didn't upset me, really, because I've never been much interested in money.

However, it did plant a little seed of something in my mind, so that, when I came home one day and she announced she'd bought a grand piano, for approximately one year's income, at the time, I was not bowled over, just slightly stunned. I digress.

Anyway, she wasn't going to pay that kind of money to get to Moosonee and back. The return trip, by air, is just as bad. The blasted plane gets in around 7.30 at night, and if you'll just turn all the driving time, and cab-fare and stuff around, it's the same deal.

Getting this out of the way took about two weeks, as she relentlessly tore apart every suggestion I made. She decided to go by train. This is a little cheaper, but just as complicated.

Again, she'd have to go to the city to catch the train, travel overnight, change at Cochrane, spend two or three hours in that salubrious resort, in the fall, doing lord-only-knows-what, before boarding the Polar Bear Express and a journey of anywhere from four to six hours to Moosonee.

The Express is probably the last of its kind in Canada. It stops in the middle of nowhere to avoid hitting a moose, to pick up a trapper, or to drop supplies for a prospector. That's why it doesn't run right to the minute.

Alternative. The train she's to catch stops at some god-forsaken junction, out in the middle of nowhere, 40 miles from here.

works, and almost all the donors had a story to tell about the keys.

The keys are varied, some old, some new, some colored, some very odd shaped. The deaf children use the keys to help them count and increase their visual memory acuity.

Just noticed the other day Speyalde resident Pierre Pilote is a model in the winter Sears catalogue. Pierre, a former NHLer is modelling hockey sweaters.

Yesterday was Remembrance Day, with the formalities being held in most places Sunday. This year the day meant something more to me. For I think the first time, I finally grasped the true meaning of it.

In the past year, my father has started to discuss the war a bit, telling the odd story he has kept to himself all these years. He told me of the day he was waiting to go into battle and received word his brother-in-law, his sister's husband, had been killed on D-Day. To me my uncle John was just a name, but as my father described his sadness and concern for his sister back in Canada, with two young children, I began

to feel remorse for an uncle I never knew. But with the trials and dangers of war, my father could not dwell on the death, and had to face combat himself. He said he was not frightened to face possible death, it was something he had to do no matter what the outcome.

And then the bullet hit him, in one leg and out the other. He was somewhere in France, waiting for someone to come to take him away from the fighting.

Now, when Remembrance Day comes around on the calendar, I think more of faceless names. I think of my uncle, who did not get to see his daughter. I think of my aunt, receiving the news of the death. I think of my father, gunned down in his early 20s, only to suffer the rest of his life from the results of the bullet. I think of my grandmother who received a second telegram within one month. Somehow, when someone brings Remembrance Day to a personal level, the day means so much more. I always observed the day, but I never remembered.

My generation may never understand war, but that doesn't have to stop us from appreciating what the men and women involved did for us.



On the Leavell

With Helen

The students of the E.C. Drury School for the Deaf extend a big thank you to the people of Acton for their contribution of keys.

Lorene Barton, a well known Acton resident and teacher at the Milton school was ecstatic over the response to requests for keys about a month ago in this column. Over 200 keys were received for use in the classroom. Marguerite Taylor was a tremendous help. Lorene says. She went door to door and collected a fair number from neighbors and friends. Others brought in old keys to the Glenlea Drug Mart, where Lorene's husband Gary