

# The Acton Free Press

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Business and Editorial Office

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## Hats off to firefighters

It's starting to sound like a broken record, a tragoc broken broken record.

We never expected to be doffing our caps three times in a little over seven months to the volunteer firefighters of Halton Hills for herculean efforts, let alone twice in about a month.

Regardless of how investigations of Sunday morning's killer fire turn out it's clear the firefighters deserve a lot of praise for another big job well done.

They put in over six hours of stressful and strenuous work. It wasn't very satisfying work, two lives were lost and firefighters had the distasteful job of discovering and removing the victims from the gutted building.

The ding, ding, ding, of Scott Air Packs warning firefighters they didn't have much air left as they scampered down ladders or out the front door rang out throughout the long ordeal.

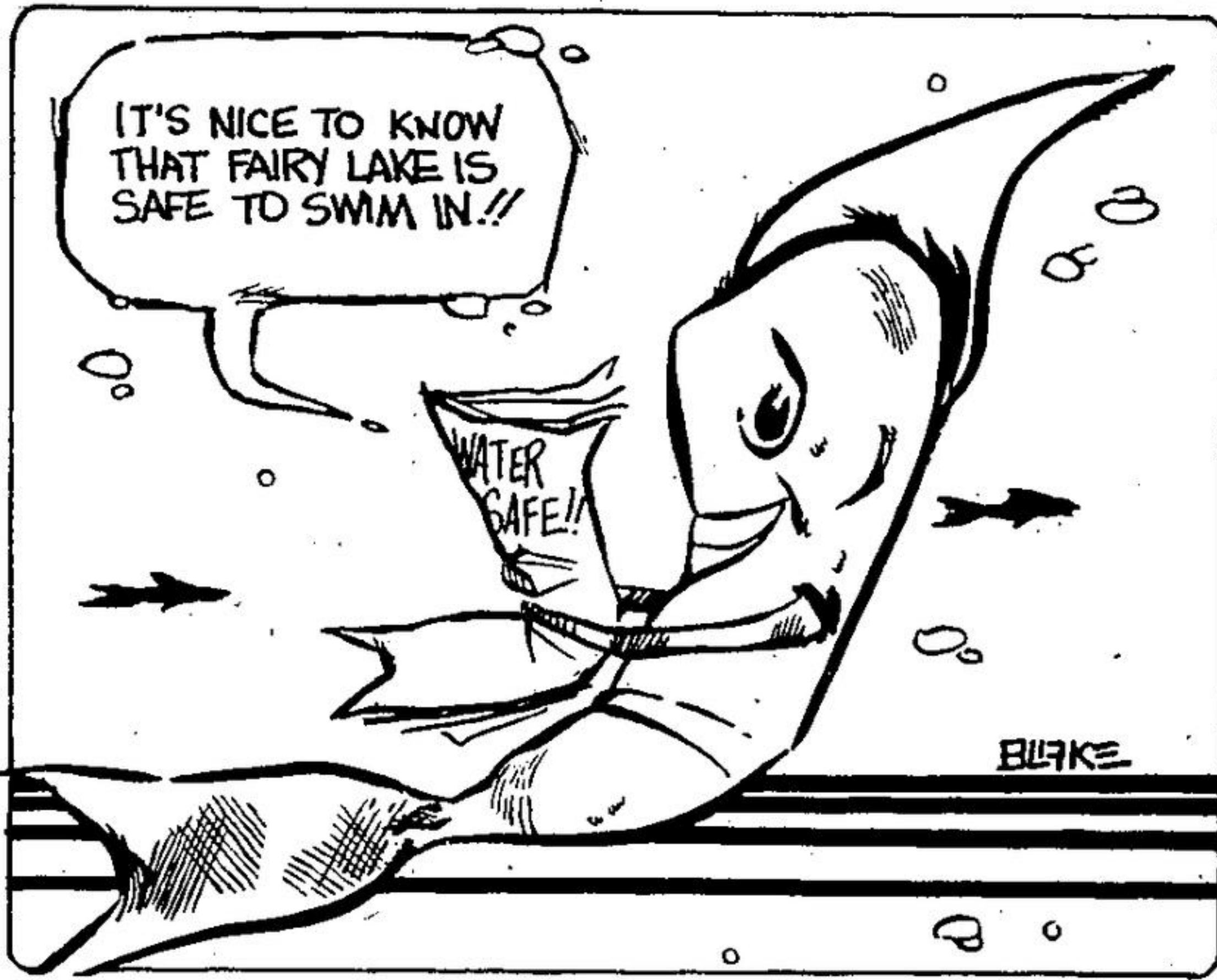
The saved was testimony to their big task.

The fire could have been worse, big trees over hang the roof, there were other structures nearby. Without the highly professional job of the firefighters the carnage could have been much worse.

The fatigue was visible on the volunteers' faces. The pain of not being able to save two lives also showed through.

The police, ambulance staff, other officials and neighbors all did their bits to make the trying situation more bearable for all concerned, but once again it was the efforts of the volunteers which really shone through.

It's said that these kinds of tragedies come in threes hopefully for Acton it ends at three awful fires for 1983. We've had more then our share of terrible fires for this year. -G.M.



## From the editor's desk

Hartley and I've had a little surprise vacation from filling space on the editorial page the past couple of weeks because readers have been doing our job for us writing interesting letters about the motocross track controversy. You're still commenting on this contentous issue, but slowing down a bit so there's a little room left over for me to fill.

This is a potpourri of little items in the dawg days of summer.

The local gendarmes must be relieved that Metro cops dropped charges against Yankee outfielder Dave Winfield for the cold blooded murder of a seagull.

As we all know laws and law enforcement are based greatly on precedence.

The Winfield case could have led to all sorts of fun at Prospect Park. The police, who often meet behind the rink at Prospect Park, would have been handy on the scene to press charges in the event an errant hit or throw happened to strike one of our fowl.

Actually we were joking about this the other day and Hartley said he seemed to recall the paper carrying a story about one or two ducks or geese being dinged by a ball at the park, naturally he couldn't remember when this momentous story took place.

Anyway, it would appear local and visiting ball players can continue to concentrate on the game instead of worrying about the off chance of injuring or even killing a feathered spectator.

Considering the mounds of fowl droppings covering the parkland around the lake, there may be some who are so fed up with our birds they wouldn't mind if a few fowl were fouled. They are a lovely sight at the lake and park, but nearly as big a pain at times as seagulls and pigeons.

Speaking of the Winfield foolishness, this has certainly been the year of weirdness in connection with the Jays.

I might be more aware of oddities involving the Jays because of the pennant fever exposure, but it does seem that about any night you tune in the TV or radio you can learn about something screwy happening.

Two of the funniest incidents I remember featured opposition players pulling boners.

First, talented young Twin first sacker Kent Hrbek tossed the ball to the umpire after the second out late in a losing Jays effort under the dome. Hrbek thought there were three away, not two, and only a shouted warning from a colleague prevented the startled umpire from catching the ball.

Hrbek doesn't have that lengthy a career behind him, but it had to be the most embarrassing moment on a diamond so far. Give him time though, he'll probably do something sillier still.

Then there's Mike Armstrong.



by Gord Murray  
Free Press editor

You remember he's the Royals fireman who picked up a fair ball in the bullpen he thought was foul off the bat on "Pine Tar" Brett.

When error was brought to his attention, looking pretty sheepish, the tall hurler on North American TV tried to nonchalantly drop the ball behind him so nobody would see. Everybody saw.

These two players couldn't have felt stupider though than the cop who charged Winfield should have, and probably does, feel.

I had more to write about this week, but I'd better cut it off now. Another long letter about motocross just came in and the space on this page is fading fast.

By the way, don't get me wrong. We welcome the letters. I think many readers would much rather read what their fellow citizens have to say than a couple of editors. Besides, Hartley and I can use the rest, gives us a chance to dream up new material.

### Letters

## Reader questions the value of motocross

Dear Sir:  
It seemed curious to me that Mrs. Cornwell, in her highly personal response to my letter about the environmental hazards of motocross racing, chose to become exercised about physical fitness. She dispatched several important concepts with one snide remark for each. Since her comments had, at best, questionable relevance to the issues, I need only respond to her theme.

I had said that bike racing per se does little for fitness and is not a fitness-oriented sport. It is obvious that someone who is physically fit should have a competitive advantage. Enlightened athletes, whatever their sport, acknowledge the importance of fitness and stay fit by following an appropriate program of daily exercise. Enlightened people, who need not consider themselves athletes, do likewise for health reasons.

Mrs. Cornwell clearly does not understand the meaning of fitness. I strongly recommend that she consult her family doctor on this topic.

I might have commented, also, about downhill skiers. If they were to consider the criteria of personal safety and physical conditioning in perspective, they would ski up the hills and ride down on the ski lift.

This deserves an aside to any skier who might be offended and want to write a scathing response. This is not an insult. Under the heading of risky sports I used to do some mountain climbing and therefore am not in a position to criticize.)

In response to Mrs. Cornwell's challenge to me to race a teenager on a motorcycle as a sure-fire indicator of the latter's superiority, I will offer comment.

First, I wonder about people who satisfy their own competitive urge through their children, while they cheer from the sidelines. Speculating is clearly not at all fitness-oriented.

But if I were to accept Mrs. Cornwell's challenge, surely I should have the prerogative to choose the weapon. I would want to begin with a 10 kilometer road race, followed by a 5 kilometer swim, finishing with the bike race. Then our respective performances would be a more reliable indicator of fitness.

Since I do not own a bike, perhaps I could train for that part of the competition by clamping myself into a paint shaker for a few minutes each day, inhaling a quantity of noxious fumes and eating some dirt.

Since I am probably three times the age of any competitor with whom Mrs. Cornwell threatened me, would she consider it fair if I were expected to complete the race in one-third the time?

I hope that by the time my would-be competitors are the age I am

now, that if they do not enjoy fitness, they at least know the meaning of the word.

Frankly, it does not interest me to know if I can outpace a teenager. I do not respond to silly challenges to go: rodeo-riding or sky-diving either. My interest in fitness lies in maintaining my own health.

However, if it is as important to Mrs. Cornwell as her letter seems to imply, she might satisfy her curiosity about my fitness level and that of her teenage champions, if she chooses to have them enter the next road race I run,

With Mrs. Cornwell acting as their spokesperson I guess the snakes (which she observed that I omitted from my previous letter) are going to have to take their chances. Since it seems clear that she has no regard for the people who are adversely affected by motocross racing, and easily dismisses the interests of other mammalian animals, birds, and the environment, I think the snakes are in for a lot of trouble.

Yours sincerely,  
J.R. Bray

### Letters

## Mother sings praises of moto-cross sport

Dear Sir:  
I have been following with much interest the "letters to the editor" concerning the Moto-Cross track in Acton. Perhaps another point of view might be of interest to your readers.

My family (as this is indeed a family sport) has been involved in Moto-Cross for eight years. My son entered his first race at the age of 7. Prior to his first race both my son and husband joined a Moto-Cross school for two years, which involved not only learning to ride a motorbike but the skills of safe, yet competitive, racing, sound physical conditioning, mechanical maintenance as well as gentlemanly conduct on and off the track.

It is interesting to note the increase in number of such schools during these eight years. Schools are now available on a weekly basis throughout the year, some on a five-six day intensive training program. All the schools include running four miles a day, have strong emphasis on nutrition and diet, as well as specialized training in the skills of racing and bike maintenance. There are very few sports available today that provide such a well rounded opportunity for the development of young people.

As I write this letter my son Jeff and nephew Brad Boyle, who is the captain of the Leathertown Moto-Cross team, are travelling to Moonton, New Brunswick to race at the Canadian National Schoolboy and Junior Championships.

They will be competing with young adults from across the nation. I would like to give you an overview of the preparation. Both have spent each weekend at the normal Sunday races, together

with extra practice riding at least two-three times a week. Each bike (a total of three) has been mechanically prepared for New Brunswick taking approximately six-seven hours per bike. All their equipment, helmet, goggles, boots, pads, gloves, kidney belt, pants, shirts have been carefully checked and packed. Each of them have continued their physical training programs. Jeff and Brad are only two of many who have been doing exactly the same thing across this country. Many of these boys have financed their transportation, bikes and equipment. The bottom line of the bill is in the area of \$3,500 per year. How can anyone with knowledge of the sport say that these racers are unfit, untrained, individuals and that the sport itself is detrimental to the individual.

Over the past several months I have come to know Mansell Nellis, Lorne Doberthien and Len Murdock. These gentlemen have had the vision to provide near Acton a moto-cross track which is growing in reputation as one of the finest in the area. Mr. Nellis has provided the land and has personally worked diligently to preserve the natural environment and he has succeeded. Messrs. Doberthien and Murdock have provided sound administration in its operation.

Their collective efforts involve local employment opportunities, the use of local service clubs, tourism business opportunities, and they have developed a team of riders who are presently representing Acton nationally, something perhaps this town should be proud of. I know the riders are proud to be a part of the "Leathertown Moto-Cross Club."

In closing I would like to say to the environmentalists and those

who would complain of noise and the like, that while I understand their point of view, perhaps their priorities need to be re-evaluated. I would work with them to solve some of these daily problems. Can we work on having the side roads paved to control dust; can we bring the rabies epidemic under control which will kill wildlife far quicker than Moto-Cross; can we get our beaches cleaned-up from poor sewage systems; can we stop acid rain pollution; can we stop the danger from heavy water/radiation leaks at the Pickering Nuclear Power Plant; can we stop the squealing wheels and roaring engines of cars racing on our side roads at night; can we stop the

## Acton smell worse than a bike track

Dear Sir  
I felt compelled to answer the concerned citizen letter of July 27th. Subject: Motor cross. It never fails if some sport locates in this area that appeals to the young people in the town, a concerned citizen can be relied upon to raise enough flack to get it stopped. eg. Dragstrip.

This sport would surely bring some increased business to the area and get a few of the young people off the streets. It is a sport that requires skill and for the rider to be in very good physical condition.

However I must take exception to the remark about motocross being an environmental disaster. I have to put up with the Acton stench from them that would wipe out the smell of at least 100 motocross bikes. It doesn't happen

blasting in the quarries that literally shakes our houses?

If viewed in true prospective Mr. Bray's reference to the "lunar landscape" of the Acton track is insignificant to the proportion of scars our "scenic" quarries represent.

Ms. Mr. Bray invited environmentalists to visit the track site, I would like to invite anyone who would like more information on Moto-Cross to please contact me.

Sincerely, a devoted  
Moto-Cross Mother,  
Angela Ogden,  
P.O. Box 105,  
Acton, Ontario

P.S. Good riding in New Brunswick numbers 51 and 166.

once every two weeks either, its every time the wind blows. If some of these citizens are really concerned about an environmental disaster, they should take a walk around Acton and smell a real one. I'm sure if a poll was taken as to what bothered people the most the Acton stench versus a moto-cross track, the smell would win hands down. When I have company from out of town, I am embarrassed if the wind blows my way, but I wouldn't be embarrassed by a moto-cross track. I also feel that hockey in Acton promotes bad sportsmanship but I don't try to interfere with other people enjoying it.

I am a concerned tax payer who would like to see something that interests me stay around for a while.

David Stone

## Back issues

10 years ago

August 8, 1973

After 28 years running Watsons Restaurant in Acton, Tom and Rene Watson are retiring. The Watsons sold the restaurant to a Toronto man recently. The restaurant officially changes hands this week.

Acton's Steve Van Fleet, a student at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, has been named outstanding freshman track and field athlete by the university.

Recently appointed Halton Regional Chairman Allan Masson has named Garfield Brown as acting clerk for the new Halton Region.

A severe electrical storm hit Rockwood last week, causing considerable damage to Harris Street residences.

Acton's Band Camp at Rockwood Park has attracted 85 participants.

20 years ago

August 8, 1963

Karl Gathof and Jean Hart topped a class of eight graduates from Grade 13 at Acton High School. Other graduates are Ruth Coles, Fred Dawkins, Kay Dennis, Joanne Force, Katherine Garrett and Randy Lidkea.

John Goy Jr. vaulted 11 feet, 6 inches in St. Catharines Civilian Track and Field competition recently, picking up another trophy. He was competing in the colors of Guelph Legion Track and Field Club.

Esqueuing Township staff have moved into their modern new township building on the Seventh Line north of Stewarttown. The new brick structure cost \$71,450 to build.

Two Acton area businessmen, Jeweller B.D. Rachlin and George Robertson, have purchased the old Acton Post office on Mill St. Rumor has it the purchase price was just over \$16,000. The building is to be renovated for professional and small business offices, new owners say.

50 years ago

August 3, 1933

Excavations have been made for Mr. H.N. Farmer's new office building with apartments on Mill St. A view of the plans was had by the Free Press this week. This fine building will certainly be an asset to the Acton business section.

Acton Citizens' Band gave another splendid concert in the park on Sunday evening, which was well attended. Featuring this program was a cornet solo by Bandsman C. Landborough with band accompaniment.

The regular monthly meeting of Dublin's Women's Institute was held at the home of Mrs. Alex Near with the President Mrs. Storey, in the chair. The meeting opened with The Maple Leaf followed by prayer.

75 years ago

August 6, 1908

The second male child born among the Russian Jews who have been colonizing here the past three or four years had his birth at the home of Mr. L. Starkman, Beardmore Crescent. In accordance with custom, the child was circumcised by Rev. P. Dolgove who came from Toronto for the ceremony. The child was given the name of Morris. At the conclusion of the ceremony a shower of nuts and sweetmeats and ejaculations of "Mazaldvor" (good luck) were made on all sides. A few Christian fellow-citizens were present as invited guests.

Acton Baseball team took another game from Georgetown despite the persistent kicking of the Georgetown management, who questioned every close decision by Umpire Gould, and who took their own umpire out of the game when he refused to call one of the Acton runners out when he was safe by a yard. Hynds and Ryder made good showings, with McDonald, Sinoski, Taylor, Williams, McIntosh, Wilds, Holmes and Plant.

The fine new barn of Mr. Alex Sprowl, second line, is nearing completion.

100 years ago

August 16, 1883

A number of our citizens are in favor of having our civic holiday excursion to some western point. They think excursions to Toronto and Scarborough are getting played out. Acton fast horse flesh is in training these cool mornings and evenings. You can see some good pacers if you pay the trotting course a visit. We expect to see red tickets attached to some of our local steeds at the fall shows this year.

It is said another doctor is coming to Rockwood. That will make three medical men in their midst.

Early settlers say they cannot remember such a cold and wet summer.

Farm hands are very scarce in this vicinity. Wages are good.