

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Insight into station's responsibilities

To the editor of The Herald:
Regarding CN's plans to close the Georgetown Station and your article of June 14th. Early June 7th, a customer held up a copy of your paper showing that CN plans to close their Georgetown Station, and asked me if it was true. That was the first I had heard of it, so I was as surprised as anyone. Later, I had a call from a young lady in your office. She identified herself, and asked me to give her any

information I could. Naturally I could not. She asked if I was the Station Manager, and I explained that there was no one there with that title, and suggested she call our Public Relations Office in Toronto, as is the custom in such cases. She said she had already been talking to Public Relations and was waiting for a return call. I congratulate you for the way you dug into the story, and must, for now, assume that the reporting was correct.

Next I read your June 14th issue, and was flabbergasted. Some items attributed to the spokesman showed lack of class, and indicated that my job was a nothing one. I then decided to clear those items up, as the public are very confused. Then I decided to wait a week to see if there would be a retraction or a change. Nothing.

(1) The article says there was for many years a function

(I hate the word) called the Station Agent. They were put there in early days because of lack of communication between stations. We had better communication with Morse Code and Switchboard Operators than we have today. We could ask the employee first hand in another town, when we could expect a carload to arrive; and he or she in turn, could use their common sense and reply immediately. Morse was like a

lovely language and was comparable in efficiency with today's Telex. Sure we made mistakes, but nothing too elaborate as people armed with computers losing a carload of Royal Mail for a year.

I am not in the category of Station Operator. I am classified as Agent-Operator. The public call me the Station Agent, and others who they have called Station Agent, have lived here and some have died here, in recent years. (Only one person is on duty at a time. I work the day shift. The other two shifts are covered by Operators. In addition to an Operator's work, I do period reports, balances, banking, requisitions and so on.

An Operator's most important task is handling written train orders for the trains. This requires complete attention, as many of the orders are those setting up the meeting of trains at various points on the single track route between here and London. That's likely why the Spokesman said we should not be selling tickets.

Though I have worked many places in Ontario, it happens that one of the first Operators I watched using his craft, was in part of what is now Halton Hills. He too had war service. He had been a wireless operator in the Navy. He broke out in a rash handling train orders, and I asked him to explain that. He said the ships receiving a message, were usually beyond the horizon, but here he knew the crew, and when he handed them orders, and the big steam engines started down the hill he sure hoped there were no errors.

I can't verify the following, but it's understood that a survey was taken of the life expectancy of Train Dispatchers (a group), and the Air Traffic Controllers at Chicago's busy O'Hare airport. It seems both groups were below that of most other workers. Well, we work with four Train Dispatchers, on their phones, have two bell phones, a payphone in the

waiting room, two phones that ring behind a locked door and the train radio. One person to answer.

Very many of our phone calls concern GO Transit, and we can only refer them to the (2) Transit number. Oh yes things do quieten down, and then ten things happen at once.

(3) Your article says there are toll-free numbers which the passengers can call for information schedules and fees. Where? There are none listed, unless it's since this situation started. I've tried to find one for years. There is a long distance number listed in the Toronto directory. We waste about a half hour a day trying to get through to it. Try it in prime time. You may be lucky and get a recording in two languages to fill in the time.

We perform another service in connection with Telecommunications, but we do not send normal telegrams.

I won't comment on shelters, Express, Freight, or who should sell tickets. Now, in case someone gets the wrong idea, I work for a good company which has great ability and potential. CN is capable of many huge tasks, not just the CN Tower. It is only their most noticeable one. Our Union seems quite law abiding. All in all, I have no complaints other than the three mentioned above. Sure, I am concerned about what's going to happen to the beautiful station, though there is probably a reason for the decision to remove it. Also, since railways are considered the backbone of a nation, I'm concerned what's happening to our beautiful country.

The other fine Georgetown paper, thinks a joint effort by everyone would save the situation. An honourable thought, but don't hold your breath. As the saying goes - any effort to save it would get the same results as rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

Thanks for the space,
Jim Burns

Comment not fact: Reader

To the editor of The Herald:
For the past two weeks in The Herald, Miss Sue Lehn has expressed her opinion of both the Physical Education Department at Acton High School and the staff who work in that department. I was upset with the inference and the inaccuracy in the first article, but decided to remain silent allowing it to pass as just an opinion. However, when a second article appeared which was even more inaccurate and approached libel in its attack on the character of a school and the people in it, I could not allow it to pass without comment.

I will begin by questioning the wisdom of The Herald's editor for allowing any article

which questions the character and integrity of an individual or institution, without first collecting all of the facts, to be written by a staff member and then published. Miss Lehn at no time approached me, as head of the Physical Education Department, to determine the Department, school or Board of Education philosophy with regard to athletics in the secondary schools. As a result, both The Herald and Miss Lehn have caused the reputation of hard working, well intentioned people to be called into question. It is unfortunate but true, that many people who read articles entitled "Opinion" accept the content as fact and truth. Miss Lehn's articles were not factual and were in large part

based upon her personal feelings. If she is to continue as a reporter, she should learn very quickly the fine line between personal opinion and defamation of character. I do not question the right of anyone to express his or her opinion, but opinion based upon incomplete facts can be harmful and is therefore inexcusable.

If The Herald or Miss Lehn would be interesting in learn-

ing more about the philosophy which guides our approach to athletics at Acton High School, I would be most willing to make a presentation. I know the facts will show us not to be the incompetent, insensitive and chauvinistic personalities of which we have been accused.

Yours truly,
Bruce H. Andrews
Head of Physical Education
Acton High School



40th ANNIVERSARY

About 100 people attended an open house Saturday for Bob and Irene McMaster on the occasion of their 40th wedding anniversary. Mr. and Mrs. McMaster, the former Irene Bennett were married June 25, 1938 at the Glen Williams United Church. Mr. McMaster offered a special thanks to the couple's many friends and to Donna and Lyle Armstrong for organizing the celebration.

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Where does it say Made in Canada?

Sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes a sign says "Produced in P.E.I." or "BC Apples" or "Fabrique au Québec" or "Made in Manitoba" or "New Brunswick Sardines" or "Grown in Alberta" or "Fresh from Newfoundland" or "Manufactured in Ontario" or "Nova Scotia Lobster". The point is, if you take the trouble to find out, you can usually tell. And, if it's made anywhere in the ten Provinces or the territories, it's made in Canada.

This ad was made in Canada. Making this ad employed that a printer, a writer, an art director, an ad consultant, a media buyer, a media planner, a typesetter, an engraver, a platemaker, a train operator, several switchboard operators, various mailmen, shippers, and secretaries, public relations people, and many other people, not to mention all their various suppliers. Every one of these people lives and works in Canada.

Reader turned off by dance display at library meeting

To the editor of The Herald:
At the high school Thursday night, I attended the public meeting of the Halton Hills Library Board - a meeting held to collect input on building a new library or renovating and enlarging the old one. As one of the people for the new library, I naively expected to hear a serious discussion from my fellow taxpayers on the stated both pro and con. Within minutes, this illusion was shattered. Unable or unwilling to stick to the announced agenda, the first presentation to the Board attacked the library services and the personalities associated with it; the Board members, the librarian and the library staff.

Next, the evening's performance threatened to take on a Circus Maximus air when a troupe of dancers from Toronto (Toronto Star, June 23) attempted to make a presentation about library services set to music. After suggesting - to no avail - the dancers wait until the other submissions had been presented, the Board chairman adjourned the meeting to another room. Away from the distraction the dancers provided, it wasn't long before audience irrelevancy again reared its head in the form of a harangue against the Board. Rather curiously, this one even touched on the American Revolution and the Civil War.

At the meeting's conclusion, I was struck by one overwhelming reaction. Surely no one listening to the harassment and character assassination heaped upon the Board and library staff could remain neutral! What a pity the night's events weren't televised like Parliament - there wouldn't be a fence-sitter left in town! Obviously those of us in favor of a new library aren't as vocal or organized as the ones who are for renovation. But make no mistake about it - we DO exist. Not only that but (gasp!) we LIKE the library staff.

Another public meeting like last Thursday's night might just be the ideal way to discover how many of us there are. Yours truly,
Carol Lowe

Kiwanis thanks for charter coverage

The Georgetown Herald 103 Main Street, South Georgetown, Ontario To the editor and the staff of The Herald:
Informative and responsible community reporting is the key to an effective newspaper. We of the Kiwanis Club of Georgetown would like to thank you for your generous coverage of our charter nite held June 12, 1978 at the North Halton Golf and Country Club. This kind of support will surely help build a solid core of community interested members.

We look forward to your continued assistance as we begin providing service oriented programs in Georgetown. Sincerely,
KIWANIS CLUB OF GEORGETOWN
Finn H. Poulstrup
Secretary

Graduate



Patricia Susan Syme, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. Syme, of 167 Raylaw Cres. graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University with an Honors Bachelor of Business Administration at the May 23rd Convocation. A graduate of Holy Cross and Georgetown high school, Pat has joined the marketing division of I.B.M.

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