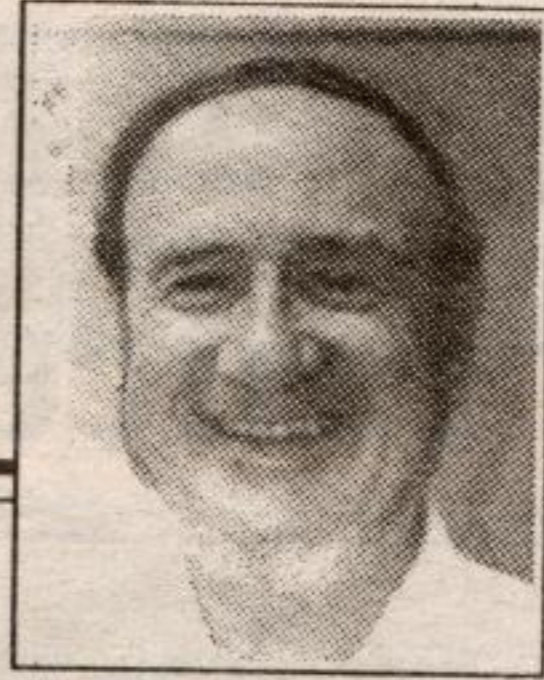


EDITORIAL

With Hartley Coles



The 'good old days'

Complaining about uncleared sidewalks and the plow blocking your driveway with snow just after you laboriously cleaned it? They're symptoms of one of the worst winters experienced in this neck of the woods for decades.

Remember when good old dad told tales of the horrific winters of his youth ... walking three miles to school, up to his neck in snow, uphill both ways. Now jaded offspring who scoffed at those imaginative tales can have stories of their own to impart about the bone-chilling winter of '93-94.

The snow's been as high as a small elephant's eye, the mercury has plummeted below zero for six weeks at a stretch, water pipes have burst, cars wouldn't start, buses and meetings have been cancelled and red noses and ears have been frost-bitten. Maybe those stories dad told about winter weren't embroidered after all.

What were those old-fashioned winters like? Old enough to remember when horses pulled bobsleighs over the unplowed streets of Acton strewing future hockey pucks in their wake, this scribbler bids you turn back the hands of time to the '30s when Acton was a village of 1800 souls and winter wrapped the streets in a snowy mantle.

- When the winter Olympics consisted of a 50 yard dash to the outside unheated privy for that blessed relief.
- When kids were dared to stick their tongues on the steel railing at the public school bridge – and did, their tongues sore for days.
- When coal had to be lugged from the cellar to feed the ravenous appetites of the cook stove and the Quebec heater in the parlor.
- When Saturday was bath night in a galvanized tub around the kitchen stove.
- When milk bottles left at the door blew their caps and glorious white cream was licked by the kids.
- When your bedroom was only heated by a stove pipe through those cold winter nights – and the fire was turned down.
- When boys wore gum boots and breeches and girls long beige stockings as they trekked to school for 9 am classes, let out at 12 noon for "dinner" and back again from 1:30 to 4 pm.
- When you prayed for cold weather so there would ice in the arena.
- When Acton Citizens' Band played for Saturday night skating and between periods of intermediate hockey games from their perch in the front of the arena.
- When farmers drove spanking teams of horses into town on Saturdays pulling huge bobsleighs piled high with oats for chopping at the two feed mills. And boys hitched rides.
- When hotel beverage rooms were crowded as farmers waited for their chopped oats.
- When horses occupied all the church horse sheds, munching on feed as they waited for their drivers.
- When rural families did their shopping Saturday nights in stores that stayed open till midnight, driving home in cutters with sleigh bells jingling.
- When drying your socks and gum boots in the oven and beside the kitchen stove was a nightly ritual.
- When clothes turned so stiff on the clothes line they wouldn't fit into a basket.
- When kids always had strings on their mittens so they wouldn't lose them.
- When the first crow that cawed was a sign of spring
- When Henderson's pond, Fairy Lake and the filter beds were sites for pick-up hockey games and kids trying out their bob skates.
- When two foot thick blocks of ice were cut from Fairy Lake to be stored for ice boxes used in the summer.
- When hockey sticks were 10 cents and pucks a nickel.
- When the principle recreation on long winter nights was listening to the Lux Theatre on the radio.

If I'm tugging at your nostalgia a little, it's just an exercise. Few of us would want to live those times over, but they involve happy memories.



WHAT'S HAPPENING!

A Weekly Round-Up of Coming Events in Acton & Area

Mar. 4, Friday — 9:30 am: World Day of Prayer hosted by Ebenezer United Church, Guelph Line between 20th and 25th Sideroads. Coffee will be served followed by ecumenical service at 10 am. All are welcome.

Mar. 4, Friday — 7:30 pm: Churchill Community Church presents a World Day of Prayer service, sponsored by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. The speaker will be Helen Pasanen. Child care and transportation are available. Call Olga Thompson at 853-1978 for more information.

March 5, Saturday — 6:00 pm: Irish Ceilidh at Trinity United Church. Come join us for an Irish dinner followed by entertainment. Tickets available at Church office 853-2090 or by phoning 853-1884 or 853-1258.

Mar. 5, Saturday — 6:30 pm: Any past or present Junior Farmer members or friends, please keep this date open for the Halton Junior Farmers' 60th Anniversary Banquet and Dance being held at the Lions' Hall, Thompson Arena, Milton. For more information call Sandi Brander at 877-1505, Julie Wilkinson at 876-3513 or Pat Wagner (905-257-0528).

March 6, Sunday — 2 to 4 pm. Open house for Mildred Heffernan's 80th birthday at St. Joseph's Church Hall, Church Street, Acton.

March 14 to March 18, Monday to Friday — 1 to 2:20 pm: Local service clubs have once again sponsored free skating during March Break. Show off your Olympic skill at the Acton Community Centre.

March 14 to March 18, Monday to Friday — 2 to 4 pm: Enjoy a fun-filled week of special swims each day at the Acton Indoor Pool. For more information call 873-2600, ext. 276.

March 14 to March 18, Monday to Friday — Guelph Civic Museum and McCrae House present March Break Fun Week for Kids. For more info call 836-1482. Reserve your spot now!

March 16, Wednesday — 2 pm: Children can come to the Acton Public Library and join in Egyptian head gear and bead making. Registration for this free program begins March 4. Kids can take part in the "Egyptian I-Spy Contest" all week too.

March 17, Thursday — 2 pm: Enjoy hieroglyphic painting at the Acton Public Library. There is no charge for this program but spaces are limited. Registration begins March 4. For more information call 853-0301.

March 21, 23, 28, 30, Monday and Wednesday evenings — 6:30 to 9:30 pm: First Aid Course. For more information please call Yvon Essiembre at 853-4889.

March 26, 27, Saturday and Sunday — 9 am to 4pm (Saturday), 1 pm to 4 pm (Sunday): C.P.R. course. For more information please call Yvon Essiembre at 853-4889.

March 26, Saturday — 10 am to 2 pm: Alumni Bunny Brunch for Rockwood Nursery School alumni. Be sure that your name is included on the 25th Anniversary Roll Call. If you were involved in any way — as a parent, student or board member — we want to hear from you. Any little stories, memories and especially pictures would be greatly appreciated for our Anniversary Year Book. Call now: Shirley Facey 856-9588, Mary Zaborowski 856-4972 or Katrina Baklarz 856-2173.

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