

Letters to the editor

Courier readers irked

Dear Sir:
We are writing in regards to your article about the tragic death of Mr. Robert McTavish. We are residents of Clyde Street and have been neighbours of the McTavish's for many years. We were devastated by what happened Saturday evening. We could not sleep and still that is all we think of.

When we read your story about this tragic night we became very upset. There is a part that reads, when this young man from Toronto that was visiting Perth arrived on the scene he was surprised that "none of the neighbours had left their homes" and also that, "nobody came out of their doors" till the cops came. I'm sure everyone was watching. Why did this young man not do something?

It sounds like we stayed in our homes on purpose. The facts are we did not hear anything! If we did, we would have been the first to go and assist in any way we could have.

To fill you in a little, Clyde Street is a very quiet one. It consists mostly of retired, elderly, and widowed people. Also a few younger families with small children.

On Saturday evening some

of these residents were not at home. Some had already gone to bed. In our particular case we were watching television in the back end of our house. We only knew something was wrong when we saw the ambulance lights, which drew us outside. Of course it was too late!

This article really made us feel very bad, and we know other neighbours agree also. (This is hoping some people understand a little better.)

Dear Sir:

As a very close neighbour of the McTavish family who suffered the terrible tragedy last Sat. night, I am very upset with the report in the Perth paper.

It seems to me it is a very sad thing when people's comments are published when the true facts are not known.

I would like to have the opportunity to give the young couple who gave information to the reporter the true facts about why the neighbours did not intervene.

It would be a help to other families when a tragedy occurs if people would first learn the truth before they give any story to the press.

Sincerely,

A very concerned neighbour

Sir:

I found your coverage of the death of our fellow citizen last week, to be tasteless, pointless and uncalled for.

I find it hard to understand how our own paper in our small community, could have chosen to disregard the feelings of all those who were touched by this tragedy.

June K. Moodie
RR 5 Perth

Editor's Note:

In last week's Perth Courier, we quoted a Glascoet Street resident as being surprised when he and his girlfriend arrived at the scene to

discover none of the neighbours had left their homes — and we continued the story. It has been brought to our attention by a number of people, including the writers of the above letters, that many of the people in the immediate area were away and there are a further number of the immediate area residents who are elderly.

We did not intend for the story to insinuate what was obviously misunderstood by many people. We were only quoting a person on the scene. We extend our sympathies to the McTavish Family.

An open letter to the Citizen

Dear Editor:

Sensationalism sells newspapers! This is true. But what about the damage sensationalism causes to innocent bystanders? What about the thousands of people who use the Great War Memorial Hospital of Perth and District regularly, let alone the doctors and nurses who work there? Hugh Adami's account of the recent Coroner's Inquest in Perth which appeared in the Ottawa Citizen is a prime example of irresponsible journalism. Front page headlines, accusations, and implications, were all based on testimony given by people close to the deceased, and were later clarified with subsequent information. As the testimony became more factual and less sensational, the location of the articles became less prominent.

Methanol poisoning is a rare and very difficult diagnosis to make, let alone treat. Without a clear history it is even more difficult. There were only four deaths from methanol poisoning in Ontario last year. The symptoms may not occur for up to 24-36 hours after ingestion, even longer if ethanol was concurrently ingested. Mr. Adami was aware of these facts as reported by the toxicologist on the first day. Where was this information in his coverage of the first day's testimony?

We can hardly wait for Mr. Adami's next article. We love fiction based on half truths!! Yours truly, Barbara Perrin, Reg. N. Nancy MacLean Reg. N. Christine Hetherington R.N.

Dear Editor:

I am appalled by the coverage your paper gave the coroner's inquest into the methanol-ingestion death of Grant McGonegal. Before I go further, let me state my bias; I

am president of the Medical Staff at the Great War Memorial Hospital in Perth, and was involved in the case in point. In fact, I was the other physician, with Dr. Turner, in the ambulance taking Grant McGonegal to the Ottawa Civic. I also attended several hours of the hearings.

Having stated my bias, I question whether your report also had some bias. His first day, front page article certainly had little resemblance to the facts as I knew them. Surely any reporter worth his salary would consider that Mrs. McGonegal's testimony was tempered by her extreme grief at losing her son. When the second day's testimony came out much more balanced, it was relegated to the front page of the third section; and the jury's recommendations, virtually exonerating the hospital and staff, was buried somewhere in the middle of the first section.

Honest, factual reporting? Not in my opinion. And it has hurt the hospital and some very competent people associated with it. You might be interested to know that, after the inquest, Mrs. McGonegal approached Dr. Turner and asked him if he would still be her personal physician. He agreed. No hard feelings there, just basic human emotions coming to the surface. You and your reporter have no such excuse. Your journalistic standards in the reporting of this case would do justice to the National Enquirer. I do not read the National Enquirer, and if you continue with this sort of rubbish, I will not read your paper either.

Sincerely,
Rick Moxon, M.D.
President, Perth Medical Society
President, Lanark County Medical Association

Perth, Canada: does it exist?

Dear Sir:

It may seem strange to you but I feel that I am writing to a ghost publisher of a ghost weekly newspaper in a ghost town that does not exist.

By way of explanation, my daughter and her husband are spending the summer with us and some weeks ago they celebrated their wedding anniversary. Jane's mother, who now lives in South Africa, sent a cable of congratulations with the correct address care of myself, RR 4, Perth, Ontario, Canada. After some delay, the cable was returned to South Africa from Canada with the message that no such place or address existed in Canada. Jane's mother complained and the cable was again sent with the same address. This time it was sent from Canada to Perth, Australia. They, feeling that some error had been made, returned it to South Africa. After further complaints, the cable was again sent, only to be returned from Canada with the same message, no such town or address.

I presume this would have been handled by Telecommunications in Montreal and one wonders how such stupidity could take place in such an important field as communications.

Letters arrive regularly each week from South Africa using exactly the same address so there can be no error there.

I thought this might be of interest to you.

With every good wish, if we do exist.

Sincerely,
John F. Morrow,
RR 4 Perth, Ont.

Time to ask again

Sir:
I read with some amusement Mr. Nastich's remarks concerning the proposed hydro corridor. Surely he must think the people of Ontario are not capable of logical thought to suggest it is cheaper to construct a new corridor than purchase power from Quebec Hydro. To state Quebec Hydro "prefers to sell to the U.S. where the province can get more money for its power" is equally as silly. How much electricity can be purchased for the price of a transmission corridor?

And finally, Mr. Nastich has admitted Ont. Hydro's desire to send electricity to the U.S. via this new corridor. I wonder how many people remember the denials from Hydro officials to this question in the recent township meetings (with Ont. Hydro).

Perhaps it is time to ask again for the real use of this power corridor.

Yours truly,
Terry Steeves
Maberly

A book comes home

"The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees, / The Moon was a ghastly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas, / The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor, / And the highwayman came riding — Riding — riding — / The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn door".

This opening verse of Alfred Noyes' poem, "The Highwayman", appeared on page 184 in my "Life and Literature," a volume used in reading class and better known as "the senior fourth book".

Blue in colour, it contained 480 pages of stories, poems, bits of Dickens and Shakespeare and tales of the sea and the North. It cost 30 cents, this fact in large letters under the Ontario coat of arms and below the statement: "Authorized by the Minister of Education for Ontario".

At first it was thought that it would be foolish and impractical to buy two books as my younger brother Paul and I had been in the same "book", or grade, since starting school, but finally it was arranged somehow that we both got our own volume. I never did figure out if Paul was smarter than I and therefore up in my class, or whether I was stupid and was always back in his class.

On the page opposite the one that showed the coat of arms and the price was a picture, a pen-and-ink sketch, of a man in great old-fashioned boots and a three-cornered hat, tossing seeds around a small clearing in the woods while lugging a large sack

slung in front of him. The caption below read: The Pioneer. In the background was a small shack and a young lad, presumably the pioneer's son, driving a team of oxen.

On page 132 was Thomas Moore's "Oft, In The Silly Night", and page 218 started a piece on the Caribou, Gold Rush by Agnes C. Laut. "The Deacon's Masterpiece", the story of the wonderful one-hoss shay, was found on page 78; a chapter from The Scarlet Pimpernel got started on page 415.

And now, dear reader, how do you think it happens that I remember so many details about the fourth book? Easy, really — you see, not two weeks ago a friend dug it out of a trunk in their cottage and presented it to me. And it really is the self-same one I used in school all those years ago, right down to my name scrawled inside and all the little cartoons sketched into the margins.

If I had turned out famous the book would have become a collector's item, as they say, because the drawings and notes would tell more about the user than stacks of biographies. But I gained no heights of fame nor stations of importance, so you would probably be wasting your money if you were to offer me thirty or forty thousand dollars for it.

There is no final, or "last entry" at the back of the book, which seems sort of a shame. But I well remember the last day of school in the country; the saying of good-byes and telling of the great

Stories that missed the headlines

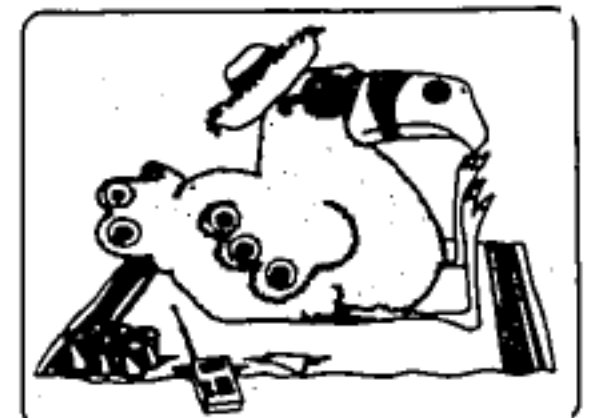


things we would accomplish when we moved on into the bigger world, the world beyond the four sturdy old walls where we had spent many hours of many days, year after year, until the last chapter in our elementary education was closed.

The old school is now gone, torn down and moved away, and only the odd tree, grown taller now, remains to mark

the school yard. And only the "fourth book" (which came back to me in such a roundabout way after all these years) is a material piece of those times; that, and lots of memories.

So now, I think I'll find a comfortable chair, open my book and read "The Walrus And The Carpenter". It's on page 374, you know.



The summer blood donor is a rare bird. Be one.

Bits and pieces

Private 'I'

An Honest Kid: Sometime while fighting a mattress fire in the East Ward early Thursday evening, volunteer firefighter Bob Thomas lost his watch. He assumed someone would pick it up and keep it. That was not so. An East Ward youngster found the watch and promptly returned it, much to the delight of Bob. The other firefighters were also impressed with the honesty of the young man. The honest lad is Billy Campbell of Robinson Street.

Spies In Our Midst: I'm reading a book titled, For Services Rendered, which details spy activity in Canada and was surprised when I came across a brief passage about a Russian KGB agent who met a supposed spy right here in Perth: There was no information regarding where the two met, but it was sometime in Perth back in the late 1950's. I suppose it shouldn't come as a real shock since we are located so close to Ottawa.

Well-Known Visitor: Robert Burgess, former Pentecostal Church minister in Perth for about 30 years was back visiting in the region this week. Now living in New York City, Mr. Burgess is 75 years-old and still preaching. He also plays hockey every Monday night in New York and his team was invited to play in a tournament in Los Angeles sponsored by Schultz, the Peanuts cartoonist. His team won the bronze medal and Mr. Burgess was chosen rookie of the tournament.

Noted Pianist: An article in the July/August issue of Equinox magazine on Canadians in Paris has a section devoted to Ottawa pianist Angela Hewitt. Says Angela, "I'm still glad to be Canadian, but I couldn't live there." Angela is the grand-daughter of Mrs. Walter Hogg, of Perth.

OPP Weed Copter: Was that the OPP marijuana hunting helicopter that was seen flying low to the ground over the Perth region last week? Apparently it was and at least one area grower of the herb was pinched.

Free Ex Tickets: I've got a few admission tickets to the Central Canadian Exhibition in Ottawa and I'd like to give them away to the first people who write and ask for a ticket. If you're planning on attending the Ottawa Ex, I'll be glad to cover your entrance fee. I only have a few tickets, so the first persons to write get a ticket.

Accident Excuses: We've all heard lots of accident excuses, but here's one that comes from Northern Ontario and it's a dilly. Seems a guy drove off the road and when he reported the accident he said he came upon a moose in the road and swerved to avoid hitting the animal. Then, he said, there was a deer, which he also avoided. But, he told police, he just couldn't keep the car under control when he spotted a black bear. "Are you sure you're telling the truth?" queried a police officer. "Prove me wrong," said the driver.

Glen Tay Block Race: For the first time I toured the Glen Tay Block Race route ahead of the runners and I was surprised at the number of volunteers along the way handing out water and sponges. These people deserve congratulations for their efforts. It was also nice to see Doug Scorrar back again. Doug came in second.

Insomniac Motorcyclist: Motorcyclists have a good reputation in Perth and the overwhelming majority are decent, law-abiding citizens. But there was one lunatic roaring around town early Monday morning (about 4 a.m. to be exact) who must have awakened half the town. It's guys like him that give the rest a bad name.

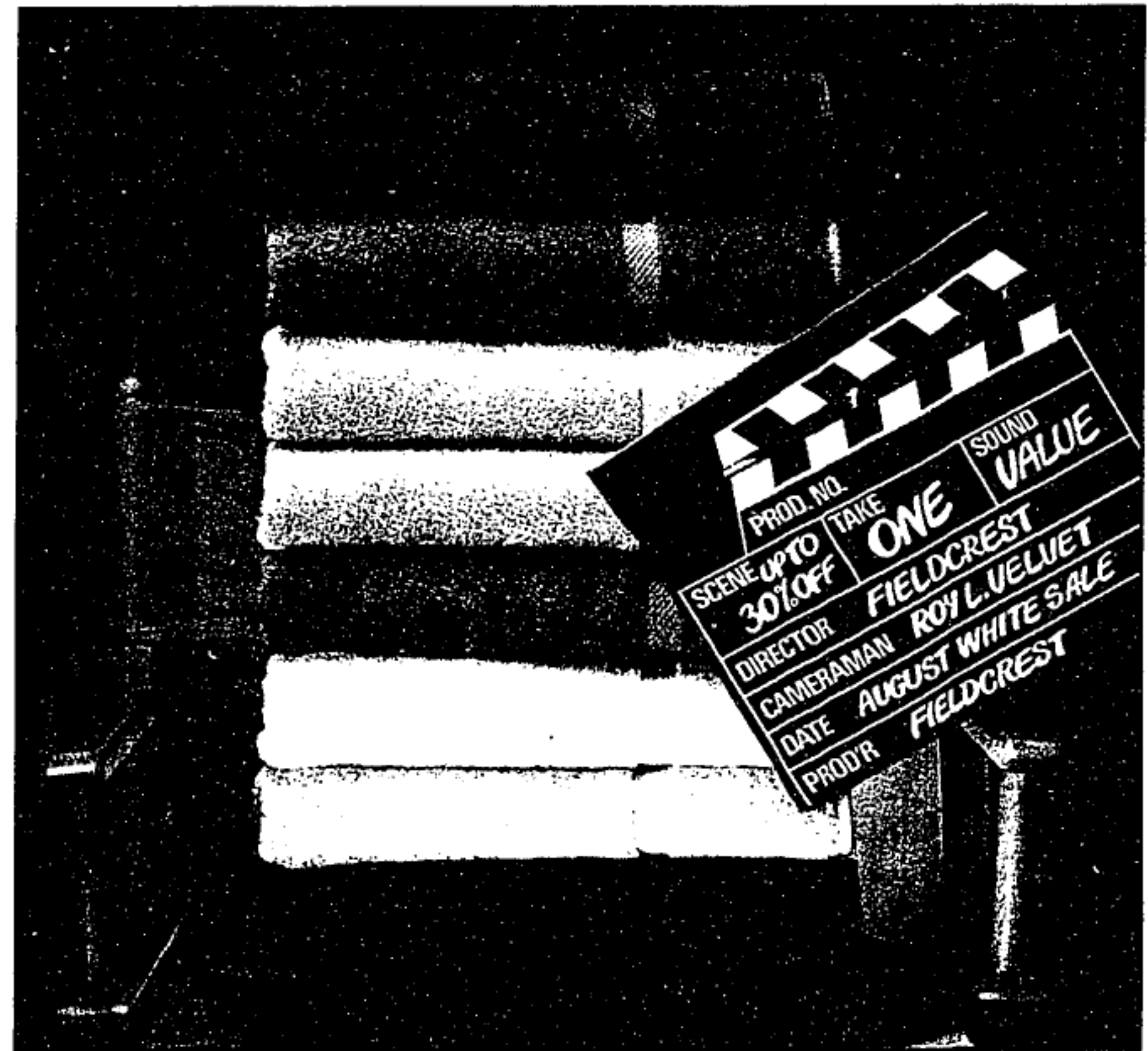
Fire Hazard: Last week when a barn burst into flames and smoke was visible across town people flocked to the scene in droves. Traffic was tied up and people lined nearby streets and fields to get a good view. If it had been a train derailment or serious fire, the mass of people and cars would have caused a real hazard to those involved in emergency services.

Hydro Line News: There's another interesting article in the Globe and Mail written by Orland French and concerning the proposed Ontario Hydro line which could cut through our neck of the woods. Mr. French quotes local residents Hans Pokorny and Coral Nault. The story appeared last Friday.

Upcoming Events: Don't forget the classic boat show at Rideau Ferry this weekend and the Willy Nelson Band performs at the Revere Hotel this week with Bob "The Spider Monkey" Boucher on bass. There's also the Central Canada Fiddling and Step-Dancing competitions at the Community Centre on Saturday.

Quotable Quotes: "When money is seen as a solution to every problem, money itself becomes the problem." "Life is an expressway on which the exits and interchanges are so poorly marked that by the time you see them it's too late."

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