

## Keith's Corner/McGill News

February 18,2022

### Winter Fun, McGill Style—1940s/50s

Winters can be fun, boring, exciting or miserable, depending on your outlook. We wretched, McGill heathens, tried to make winter a fun time. There was a lot more snow back in those days, so most of the winter we could go sledding or ice skating.

At the detention center, the teachers would send us out into the cold for recess twice a day. If there was fresh snow we would make a large fox and geese setup and chase each other around it. Another great sport was making an ice slide on the sloping sidewalk between the two school buildings. This was done by stomping the snow down until it was like ice. Then, you would run and slide on the soles of your boots. Rubber overshoes were not allowed. It took some skill to keep your balance while zooming down the icy slope.

When the snow was just right for packing, snowballs were in vogue. Sides were chosen and the snowball fights got started. All in all recess in the winter was quite a physical workout. The only and biggest problem was recess was too short. School days should be just the opposite, recess most of the day and two short sessions in the classroom.

When the day long torture was finally over and we were free once again, we had the usual snowball fights on the trek home. Then change clothes, get the Flexible Flyer out of the garage and head for the sleigh riding hill. We had a nice bonfire at the top of the hill to thaw out a bit.

Weekends were a different thing, as we got our temporary 2 day parole from school. It gave us time to hoof it down to the dairy ponds to do some ice skating and play some hockey with homemade sticks and a rubber boot heel for a puck. Nobody knew the rules so we made them up. Mainly it was more like a ping pong or tennis game of batting something back and forth and hollering at each other.

One winter, instead of playing silly games, some of us decided to get serious about what to do. The previous summer, several of us had made small carts out of a board and some wheels off our wagons, to coast down the avenues, or force your little brother or a dog to pull you around town.. A brilliant idea soon formed in our fertile ever growing scientific minds. Why not take off the wheels and put on some old style ice skates? These were skates that fit on the soles of your boots. We wired them on with baling wire. Then we found out that it was hard for someone to pull the cart as their feet kept slipping. So, the next brilliant move was to rig up a sail and let the daily McGill wind move us around. Getting the necessary materials was easy for us, because we were all highly trained and qualified dump scroungers.

The next question was where to put the sail. That was easy, put it behind us so we could see where we were going, duh. We used old sheets for a sail.

Next problem was, where to run our new sail ice cart. The ponds at the dairy were too small, so we decided to try Bassett Lake. One very windy day, we loaded our carts into a friend's old Chevy truck and headed for the lake. Our first task was to cross over the dike road and look for any open spots in the ice. It was all solidly frozen. We put our carts on the ice at the south end of the dam and the wind got us going at once.

Now, being very astute in the fields of physics and engineering, we knew that we needed a method of braking and steering our carts, so we nailed a stick on each side that we could pull back on it and it would drag on the ice. Pulling on one side or the other would allow us to steer or slow the cart. Pulling both, would of course stop us on a dime.

We shot across the ice and attained some great speed easily. As we got closer to the shore on the north side of the lake, we could see the large sagebrush growing right down to the edge of the ice. Unlike a sail boat that can turn the sail, we couldn't and so we tried our sticks to turn. That didn't work, so we put both of them down on the ice as a brake and that didn't work. As a last resort, we put our boots on the ice, but that didn't do anything and so we crashed into the sagebrush. Oh, well, back to the drawing board. Of course, it wasn't our design that was wrong, it was the fault of someone allowing sagebrush to grow that close to the lake. However, that was the last of the ice carts. A definite loss to humanity.

## McGill News

Still no word on the clothing store. The Drug Store got some new lights in one of the side rooms. We can see a lot better. The room needs to be cleared and cleaned up and then we will have even more things to see at the old McGill landmark. Larry Manning and Gary Stokes exhibited their skill putting on some new window trimming on the south side and giving them a new coat of paint. Thanks guys. We really need some volunteer help on the inside doing some cleaning and moving stuff.

## Oldies

1910—July 3—American Trading Co. Manager , G. Holt, was honored at a dinner at the Steptoe Café.

1911—March 19---Morris Glick was the manager of the Steptoe Café.

## Old Photo



April 1979 –Tomato crop in my greenhouse at Cross Timbers. The only way to grow tomatoes in this area.