



(Photo by Denis Gibbons)

Stumped angler



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

June is one of the happiest months of the year in Canada. Or it should be.

In other countries they have spring. In this country, we have a bleak month before the last snow goes, and June bursts forth in all her lush, soft splendour.

Grass is startling green and the cattle fill their bellies with the juicy sweetness after a long winter of confinement and dull fodder.

Young ones of all species actually gambol, snort, kick up their heels and butt their mothers on one side, then on the other.

Our trees have forgotten their groaning and cracking in the teeth of winter; they bow and whisper like ladies at a garden party while the squirrels scamper saucily about their legs and the birds twitter among their ample bosoms and verdant hair.

June is full of anticipation. The boat owners are painting and repairing and launching. The golfers are having their finest hour before the silly summer duffers swarm onto the courses.

And school is nearly over. And the most beautiful marriages ever conceived are in the offing.

It is a month when surely every Canadian should be shouting "Praise the Lord", or

"Let joy be unconfined", or at least, "Wow! This is the greatest!"

But a benevolent Providence, in its wisdom, must remind man that every rose has a thorn, that every light contains its darkness, that every good has a balancing evil.

It's probably just as well. If there were no bad smells, we wouldn't appreciate the good ones. If we never felt pain or illness, we wouldn't appreciate health.

So, in June, as in life, there's another turn of the wheel, another side of the coin.

There's all that glorious nature, just waiting to be revelled in. And there are all those mosquitoes and blackflies just waiting to revel in turning you into a swollen porpoise or a stripped skeleton.

There's all that luxuriant grass. But the dam' stuff is up to your knees before you get your lawnmower overhauled.

And there's all that young life. June was a happy month for my mother, more years ago than it is decent to talk about. She proudly bore her third son, me. But what she got was a sickly whelp who cried for two years without stopping and barely survived every infant's ailment there was in those days.



and Pepper

by hartley coles

I told you a little last week about our one day junkie to Michigan when trusty old "318" took us there and brought us back safely despite the fact she was nursing a very high temperature. I'm glad to report the patient is recovering but there is still trouble in her radiator that will require more medication than a new fan belt.

Over there, the Americans we met all wanted to know what was going on—Canucks streaming over the border as if it was a holiday. And of course it was, thanks to good old Queen Victoria celebrating a birthday on the 24th.

Just to make us feel at home my sister and her husband had hung a large Union Jack outside their front door to let us know there were still some U.E.L.'s in the country the revolution of '76 failed to expel. It was a welcome sight after seven trouble-filled hours on the King's Highways, although I'm partial to our own Canadian flag myself.

This family of ex-Canucks has been living over in Michigan for a decade now. Although they like the U.S. way of life it has some drawbacks that we have no corresponding problems to compare with here.

As a for instance, one of the first Americans to greet us at the door was a furry ball of curls they referred to as a "Cocker-Poo".

I thought it was some strange Michigan animal that bore a resemblance to a

sheepdog. It turned out to be a dog—half cocker spaniel and half poodle. He (I think it is) had trouble distinguishing us from the Michiganites despite an inquisitive nose, and adopted us on sight.

Of course, discussion about dogs brought up the inevitable questions about race relations which are considerably strained in the small city of Mount Clemens, Michigan. It seems the Whites cannot get on with the Blacks and the Blacks cannot get on with the Whites.

What's that got to do with dogs?

Well, my brother-in-law, an easy going sort from way back when he rode a tail gun for the R.C.A.F., visited a service station one day to settle an account. Noting there was no one around in the reception area he started for the office.

"Whoah there", yelled a voice from the back of the garage. "Stay where you are". There was the sound of hurried footsteps as the proprietor arrived on the scene.

"Oh it's alright," he said glimpsing my brother-in-law's red hair. "I thought you were black. See that dog in there, (he indicated a large German Shepherd in the office) he's trained to bite blacks."

The incident was forgotten until an article appeared in a newspaper a few weeks later. It was headlined—proprietor bitten by dog—or words to that effect. It seems the dog one

There's all that anticipation. But the boat owner discovers that the rats have been at his sails, or the termites at his hull, or his motor has developed a perforated ulcer. And the golfer swings too hard on his first day out, slips a disc and is out for the summer.

To be sure, school is nearly out. But June is pure hell for both teacher and student. For the teacher it is a scramble of final reviews, an avalanche of evaluation, a surfeit of statistics. Fair enough. He's paid for it. But he might as well be teaching a couple of cords of wood. The bodies are there, but the minds and spirits have fled through the open windows into the musky June air.

It's even worse for the student. There is that awful talking about poetry when the greatest poetry in the world is taking place outside that stifling rectangular prison. The blood stirs, the limbs go languorous, the eyes go glassy and that retarded adult up front might as well be talking to himself in Swahili.

As for those beautiful marriages, conceived in heaven, and time-tabled for June. If I had any statistics, I'd say that statistics show that fifty per cent of them will end in a life of quiet desperation, thirty per cent of them will be unbearable, ten per cent will be impossible, five per cent unspeakable. The rest will wind up having their sixtieth anniversary pictures in the local paper.

I'm not being cynical about June. I wouldn't miss it for anything. I am merely, as usual, presenting the facts.

day turned on its master and tasted White for the first time.

I was glad to hear that some sneaky Black guy had retained the dog to bite Whites and the dog started on the first available person.

Outside of the race troubles which moderates on both sides of the color fence are trying their best to settle without more confrontations, the northern part of the United States isn't that much different from our part of Canada.

One radio commentator was giving President Richard Nixon a real going-over the day we arrived for setting out to create unemployment in the United States. Like Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau he was accused of deliberately creating unemployment because he was a callous, hard-fisted administrator with no heart.

Now I know where Bob Stanfield got that line. It should be labelled "Made in the U.S."

And, of course, there was the usual student trouble at the high school my nephew and niece attend. They organized a "skip day" and all the students stayed home, much to the chagrin of the principal but with much secret rejoicing from the teachers.

I tried to tell them about my days at the local academy when we skipped classes and called it "hookey" but they kept thinking I referred to our national game so I gave up in disgust.

Who plays hockey in June, anyway?

Free Press Editorial Page

A confirmation ceremony . . .

It isn't often that the north end of Halton is privileged to have a political nominating meeting. The well run meeting in Acton last week was a first and it went off with hardly a slip-up.

Political fence mending has a long and established tradition in the county and there's no doubt the Tory nomination meeting in Acton was another in the attempt by the south end of the riding to establish a better rapport with Progressive Conservatives from the north. Organizers of the meeting deserve full marks for an imaginative effort that ran off very well indeed.

Unfortunately, as everyone suspected, there just wasn't any attempt to unseat the Hon. George Kerr. And the nomination meeting really became a confirmation ceremony.

A contest where one disaffected member of the Halton West PC's stood up and challenged the right of Mr. Kerr to represent the riding would have made a big difference in the tenor of the meeting, provided just the right

spark to create a dynamic setting for a candidate to accept the challenge for another term.

For instance, if John McLean, who as president of the Halton West Progressive Conservative Association has had some long standing differences with Mr. Kerr over the Burlington stand on regional government, had elected to throw his hat into the ring, it could have really added some fire to the nominations. Mr. McLean resigned as head of the Halton PC's on the eve of the nominations, allegedly over differences.

George Kerr has stood strongly for Burlington remaining in the Halton-Peel regional set-up while Mr. McLean was a member of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce committee, which submitted a report to the Steel Commission urging Burlington be included in a Hamilton-Wentworth region.

There were other differences, too, during the provincial leadership convention where Mr. McLean threw his support behind Allan Lawrence,

who lost out to new premier William Davis. George Kerr lined up with Darcy McKeough. When McKeough lost and joined the Davis camp, he was joined by Kerr. And Mr. McLean was unhappy about it.

He is quoted as saying that the McKeough and Davis camp could lose the next election or end up with a minority government unless they can motivate workers like the Lawrence crew.

Those differences of opinion would have made a volatile combination for a real nomination meeting. There was no doubt that Wednesday's meeting was cut and dried. No one dared tackle George Kerr, the capable knight who has fought the pollution dragon from Manitoba to Quebec.

However, we enjoyed having the Conservatives hold their nominations in Acton. We hope they consider it again. And we also hope the Liberals and NDP can take a few lessons from the political acumen of the Tories when it comes to choosing the site for their meetings.

Come on, ladies . . .

We admire the perspicacity of the women who resent the questions on the census forms which seem to assert male domination of the nation, but we question their logic.

Some women, proud of their ancestry on their own side of the ancestral fence, took exception to questions about racial origins of the family when guidelines stated they must follow the male line. Others thought the census takers were getting just a bit too nosy when they wanted to know how many bathrooms

they had in the house. One woman became so incensed at the questions she threatened to tear the whole thing up and urge others to do the same.

Calm down ladies. Think of the can of worms the government would open if they decided both the male and female ancestry was traced on both sides of the marriage. It would likely turn out that most Canadians were a hopeless blend of a thousand nations with very few

boasting pure blood lines for the social registers.

And just because they didn't ask how many sittings they used to have in the old fashioned privies does not mean that they can't ask how many bathrooms we've got in our houses these days. It is a sign of affluence and we Canadians are trying hard to shore up our national pride these days.

So just sign 'em and send them in—and forget those asides from Women's Lib.

Mixed up values . . .

Sometimes we think population experts, full of Malthusian theories, are barking up the wrong trees with their insistence on limiting people so the earth doesn't become overcrowded. Figures show that a car is produced every five seconds in the United States. A baby is born only every 12 seconds.

It stands to reason that a car is going to take up a heck of a lot more space, guzzle more of the dwindling resources, pollute a heck of a lot more air than people and then end up in a junk yard, disfiguring the scenery.

As a matter of fact, the car raises so many problems that we seldom stop to think about them. We have heard the

car called a sex symbol, and extension of our personality, a luxury, a necessity and a financial drain, among other things, but we find very few people anxious to start up a society to slow down the auto birth rate.

It has been said that the car is a contradiction. We want it yet we hate it. Britain for instance, an overcrowded place if there ever was one, produced over one billion pounds sterling worth of vehicles for export last year. The country depends on the money to keep balance of payments level.

People, with their personalities, variety of talents and differences of opinions, hardly bring anything on the export market these days. You can be

sure the emphasis will continue on producing polluting cars rather than personable people.

When you think of it too, probably a lot more are killed in cars than in the wars people manage to inflict on one another. Russia, although it has only a few cars per capita manages to have 16,000 people killed in auto accidents in 1969 alone. The United States has an annual carnage on the highways that makes the Viet Nam war seem like a cocktail party.

So you can see why we wonder, while we worry, whether some people don't have their values mixed when it comes to making a choice between metal or mentality.

Free Press back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, May 31, 1951.

Mary Sirrs recently graduated from Toronto Western Hospital and will continue her study with a year at Western University. Eleanor Ross graduated from Sick Children's Hospital, Toronto.

Acton delegates from the Acton Y.M.C.A. to the Centennial International convention at Cleveland will be G. W. McKenzie, president of the Y's Men's club, and Melbourne Blow, who will be representing Acton's young adults.

Right Rev. W. E. Bagnall, Bishop of Niagara, administered the rite of confirmation to 21 candidates in the Acton St. Alban's church Sunday morning and dedicated the new parish hall adjacent to Rockwood St. John's church in the afternoon. Parishioners and Rev. Luxton worked industriously on the fine building in Rockwood, climaxing 12 years of work.

A shagging bee was held at the manse, Everton, on Saturday, when about half the work was done.

Mrs. Don Ryder was the lucky winner in the Diamond guessing contest at the Roxy Theatre during the showing of King Solomon's Mines last week. Hassard Radio presented Mrs. Ryder with a beautiful set of pearls. Over 500 entered the contest. The marriage of Dorothy Mae Clayton, daughter of Mr. and W. H. Clayton of Acton to Grayston Furlong, son of Mr. and Mrs. Furlong of Perth, was solemnized at St. Peter's church in Toronto. Miss Eveleen Braidia was bridesmaid and W. J. Furlong was his brother's best man. Carroll's store has installed completely new fixtures.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, June 9, 1921.

Monday was a busy day in Acton Police Court. The court opened at 9 o'clock and the session did not conclude until four in the afternoon. There was a big field day with liquor cases. Three charges were laid

against — of Glen Williams. The first was of being intoxicated and about 20 witnesses were heard. A penalty of \$100 and cost was imposed, this being a second offense.

He was also charged with being intoxicated while in charge of a motor car. In this case, also, a large number of witnesses were examined. The evidence, however, was not sufficient to warrant the registering of a conviction. The third was a charge of having liquor other than in his residence. This was not proven. The case was a tedious one.

The ratepayers of Crewsons Corner and vicinity are petitioning for a union school.

There was a large meeting in the township hall at Brookville last week for final consideration of the erection of a monument to the fallen heroes of the township. The monument will be a costly and beautiful one and it was decided to erect it without delay, on the farm of D. Hutcheon, close to the

road, not in the middle of the crossing roads at that point as was proposed.

It is about hay time for the Council on the neglected back streets.

Strawberries at the old pre-war price of 10 cents a quart may be seen again this year.

The Georgetown golf links, which have been laid out and put into very fine condition by Mr. J. A. Willoughby on his farm are affording much recreation to the community.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, May 21, 1896.

The town bell now rings at 7 p.m. each evening except Wednesday and Saturday so that all stores may close simultaneously. The early closing by-law is in force now and it will be a general advantage. There is no tenable reason why the merchants and their employees should not enjoy a few evenings to themselves each week.

The ball match between the Graveyard Ghosts of Guelph and the Acton Young Canadians resulted in an easy victory of 21 to 8 for the home juniors. The players were E. Ryder pitcher, George Clark, M. McDonald, F. Ryder, F. McIntosh, W. Watkins, L. Williams, S. Smith and F. Swackhamer. Messrs. Beardmore and Co. are building new stables for their teams in the rear of the bark sheds. The old buildings near Mr. McGrail's residence will be removed. Beardmore's new bridge from Agnes St. to the high level at the tanneries is completed.

The Ontario legislature has decided to let ladies practice as barristers as well as solicitors. A lady has just finished her examinations and now the Law Society will have to decide if she may practice as a barrister. Mr. George Cann is now postmaster and storekeeper at Crewsons Corners. You can have pipes like your mother used to make if you buy a Duchess of Oxford range at Symon Bros. The fire can be regulated at a moment's notice and only a very economical supply is needed. Robert Wilson, Eden Mills, has fall wheat out in head. He never knew of wheat being out so early as the 22nd of May before.

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