



I JUST GOT WIND of a story. someone is putting it around Flower, pet skunk of Julie Heatley, R.R. 3, Acton.—(Photo by that we smell! Looking for sympathy from her owner is Bill Stuckey)

Bill Smiley



It is quite an ordeal reading the headlines these days. President Nixon's surcharge has thrown the financial world into a panic of sorts. Telephone rates are up and rail fares are going up. Everybody and his brother is either on strike or threatening to strike. More than one out of every 10 members of the work force 24 and under is jobless.

The government has proved totally incapable of both halting inflation and increasing employment. Welfare costs are soaring. Plants are a shutting down. In boom or bust economic cycle, we certainly don't seem to be headed for a boom.

A friend of mine who came to Canada from Germany told me frankly, "In the 18 years I have been in Canada, for the first time I am scared."

John Bassett, financier, wheeler-dealer, and imperious owner of the Toronto Telegram, gave that city a rude shock when he announced brusquely that the 95-year-old paper would cease publication because it was losing large sums of money. And there went 1200 jobs.

That leaves Toronto with a population creeping up on the two-million mark, with only two papers. Ottawa, an infant comparatively, has two dailies. Is there something rotten in Denmark?

Now don't feel sorry for Mr. Bassett. You won't find him on the welfare rolls for a bit yet, even though the Tely was losing over half a million a year. He owns Toronto Argonauts and has extensive holdings in an audio-visual empire, plus only he and God

know what else.

But I feel a little guilty when I think of the Telegram going on the rocks. Until just over a year ago, the Telegram Syndicate distributed my column. Then I switched to another syndicate. Is it possible that merely one rat leaving can sink a ship? I lie awake and worry about this at nights. For about 28 seconds.

I find that the only way to escape from this pall of gloom and doom is to concentrate on something just as silly as the bickering, whining, recalcitrant, salty, exuberant human race.

One of the silliest things in the world is the English language. But it's also fascinating. Especially the slang, which changes almost from day to day. I'm not much interested in the thousands of new words added to the language every year by science, but I have a morbid interest in the abortions that creep into daily usage.

Younger readers may stop here. Their elders, those who have a stomach for it, may continue. For example, you take a verb such as "to put", generally meaning to place. Then you toss in a preposition and you have a whole new vocabulary.

"You're putting me on." That really means "You're pulling my leg." Try to explain that to somebody learning English. Why would anybody, except perhaps a chiropractor, want to pull anyone's leg?

"You're putting me down" means you

jeopardizing their integrity when they accept payment from public bodies for covering public business. It is hard to believe such an archaic arrangement still survives in Ontario, but harder still to believe there are those who will defend it.

With all the construction going on around town it is difficult to escape from the roar of a shovel or the sound of a hammer. The town streets are being ripped up to install storm sewers, houses are being erected on Churchill Road S., and also in the Cemetery Hill, sidewalks will soon be constructed along the route to the senior citizen and geared-to-income housing, and there's impending action on two new subdivisions.

Such a plethora of construction hardly seemed possible only a few months ago when it looked like the only action spot would be the industrial park but the only action there now is the town works building and garage. To add to the dust and confusion created by construction work on 25 Highway north to Osprings has arrived at this end of the road and the huge earth movers are filling in the gulleys and valleys that used to make the road one of the best roller coaster rides in the province.

Most of the dust should be down before winter shows its head in these parts, but we hope the activity here this fall is an indication of a booming economy in the Spring.

It is so nice to have "Amen" around the house.

are squelching the speaker. "You put me off" means that the person addressed is displeasing to you. "Will you put me up?" means you want a free place to sleep.

"You're always cutting me up" means that you are criticising the speaker, and is a favourite among teen-agers. "Cut me off" refers to anything from a conversation to an allowance. "I really cut him down" means that you reduced somebody, either verbally or physically, to your own pigmy proportions, and is usually a prevarication. Or even a lie.

The Yanks got in there first with "wise". You take a noun, add "wise" to it, and you have a hermaphrodite. Can you see the tortured visage of a foreigner, who has learned to speak impeccable English, having to cope with something like, "Sales-wise" he's on the ball, but experience-wise, he's just not with it?"

And I wonder how the Department of Transport words its advertisements when it is seeking the services of keepers of lighthouses. Who responds if the ad simply says, "WANTED — LIGHTHOUSEKEEPERS?"

Is the Department swamped with applications from lazy women who want to do only light housekeeping, no scrubbing? Or does it get buckets of mail from little, skinny guys who don't mind a bit of house-keeping on the side?

Fair boggles the mind. Next time you're troubled by the headlines, find something silly, and save your sanity.

We were over to last week's Esquering council meeting when Tom Hill, announced he was all in favor of building a township arena, so they wouldn't have to haggle with the various neighboring towns about prices.

Don't discount the promise, Tom has a penchant for getting what he wants in Esquering and this could very well be another project which will engender mass popular support.

We may one day see a junior or intermediate hockey team from the township flaunting the words "Esquering Flyers" or the "Township Tigers".

One man, bothered by an abundance of neighborhood dogs with little bite but lots of bark, noted with interest an article in last week's paper about a Speyside district couple's plans to raise barkless dogs.

They wouldn't look like barkless trees, would they? he asked incredulously, tongue in cheek.

Jennie Barr, our columnist and expert on horses, called to complain about misprints in her column last week, which changed the entire meaning of one sentence and left another in doubt.

She wrote, in answer to a question about a strong colt and how to train it — "Don't use brawn, use brain. A horse isn't too smart despite the romanticism of the old "Flicka" movies." The second sentence came out "A horse isn't too small despite the..."

It's that computer again. Can't tell small from smart, despite all the coaching it's been given.

Free Press Editorial Page

Lot to be thankful for . . .

Thanksgiving 1971—and we have a lot to be thankful for, pessimists to the contrary. Looking back a century to 1871 and comparing the lot of people in Upper Canada, then to Ontario 1971 shows we have come a long way.

Walter Stewart, writing in a recent issue of Maclean's makes these points: "This year's census will show that we have come a long way in a century. The population will nudge 21.3 million, more than five times the Canadian total of 1871; the province of Ontario alone contains more than twice as many people as the nation held 100 years ago.

"We have become a modern industrial state, on the way to post-industrialism, with only 457,000 out of work force of 8,336,000 still employed in agriculture. The Canadian Gross National Product has soared to an annual rate of \$84 billion, more than double the \$37 billion of a decade ago, and personal incomes are about \$3,000 per capita, up from \$1,563 in 1961.

"Prices are much higher than in earlier times but so are wages. A century ago, a suit of clothes cost less

than \$10, Eaton's was advertising "Light colored Grenadines at \$2.99 the full dress of 14 yards", butter was 20 cents a pound, eggs 18 cents a dozen, and pork 15 cents a pound. You could rent a modest house in Toronto for \$12 a month, or buy a 10-room dwelling with well, outbuildings and "an excellent garden on the premises" in Orillia, Ont. for \$3,500.

"Francis Abbott, foreman of the staff for general repairs on the Carleton and Grenville Canal, pulled down a princely two dollars a day. In terms of the work it takes to supply food, clothing and shelter, ordinary people in Canada are far better off than they were when the first census was taken.

"James Cassidy, laborer, with 19 years and six months seniority, drew six cents an hour for his 10-hour day a century ago; at that rate it took him 150 minutes to earn the price of a pound of pork. Today's laborer, at \$4.05 an hour, can have 70-cent pork chops in 11 minutes and 42 seconds.

"Cassidy could have purchased a nine-dollar suit for 150 hours of work; a

laborer today can buy an \$80 suit for just under 22 hours.

"Foreman Abbott could cover \$12-a-month rent with six day's work; a Regina plumber at \$5.17 an hour, can cover \$248.76 rental in the same period. A sampling of wages and prices across the century shows the same constant improvement.

"In 1801, a stonemason labored 36 minutes for the price of a dozen eggs; today's bricklayer can have them for six minutes' work.

"When sirloin steak cost 28 cents a pound in 1931, it took a 65-cent-an-hour tradesman 27 minutes to earn it; today's six-dollars-an-hour tradesman can have it in 12 minutes.

"We have acquired a whole new set of problems, from pollution to drugs, and carried over many of the old ones, from friction between our two founding races to worries about the Americans. But as a family we have grown, matured, filled out; we are stronger, healthier, more prosperous and better educated than we were a century ago and, compared to most nations, have many blessings to count."

Couldn't you squeeze it in? . . .

Being editor of a weekly newspaper is a rewarding experience and one which we would not wish to abandon, even if on most occasions, it involves longer hours and a variety of problems not common to many other occupations.

Perhaps what makes it so, the Greenfield (Ind.) Reporter reminds us, is the fact we never lack for interesting observations and questions, typical of which, the Reporter suggests, are the following:

"Please put it on the front page." "Use the story just as I have written it. The club wants it that way for the scrap book."

"You're invited to our annual dinner tonight (this was the third invitation that week and we wanted a night home). There will be plenty free to eat and drink. Oh, yes, please bring your camera."

"How come it wasn't in the paper? It was—Well, I didn't see it. Will you please go through the back copies and tear it out for me."

"I just stopped by to talk a few minutes, but if you're busy."

"We voted to make you our club publicity chairman."

"I know you have a deadline, but couldn't you just squeeze this little item in?"

"My husband has never been in trouble before so I don't think his name should appear in the paper."

"I know it's on a Sunday, but it's our annual reunion and someone ought to

cover it."

"My uncle's brother is one of your biggest advertisers and I was wondering if

"I'll try to get my ad in to you before the deadline next time."

"If there wasn't room for the picture, why couldn't they run it on another page?"

Editorial notes

A high powered executive purchased his first Rolls-Royce. About a week later, he called the dealer to complain that wheezing noises were emanating from the front end of the car. "There's only one possible explanation", the dealer remarked coldly—"Your chauffeur has asthma."

Two little boys were merrily eating ice cream cones, when one dropped a scoop on the back of a woman's mink coat.

"Be careful!" said his friend. "You're getting fur all over your ice cream."

A 4-year girl noticed a tag on a dog collar and asked his owner what it was.

"It's his license," replied the man. "Oh," she exclaimed. "Does he drive?"

School days can be the happiest days of your life—if your child is old enough to attend!

Why is that a dollar bill looks like nothing in the supermarket but looks great on the collection plate in church?

Free Press back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, October 18, 1951.

Two armed and masked gunmen held up the Royal Bank of Canada in Rockwood 15 minutes after it opened Friday, herded the staff into the vault and robbed the teller's cage of about \$2,300. T. C. Winlow, Manager, was able to persuade the thugs there was no more money in the safe. They held long barrelled automatic pistols against him and three other members of the staff as they motioned them into the vault. The two girl employees were on the verge of fainting from fright and the thugs said "Don't be afraid. You won't be hurt if you don't make a fuss." Provincial police in all districts were short staffed because of the royal parade from Milton to Toronto but as many cars as could be spared were sent to form road blocks.

Keen interest was shown in the Acton Home and School Association when 120 attended the opening meeting. Trustee Wes Wolfe reported on the progress of the new school addition. Principal McKenzie and members of the staff described the new teaching methods. These included Mr. Smith, Miss Folster, Mrs. Gamble and Mrs. Alger. Mrs. Alger's room won the attendance painting which had been donated by Dr. Garrett.

With a spasmodic whirring of the siren, Jack Lambert and fire chief F. Dawkins drove the town's new fire truck to Acton about 10 p.m. last Thursday. Total cost of the pumper and chassis was \$9,977. Firemen held a demonstration and trial in the park Sunday morning.

Stanley L. Hall, Halton's representative in the Ontario Legislature for the last eight years, was again chosen candidate for Halton P.C.s at the convention in Milton Monday.

Miss Clara Grindley showed slides of her trip to Mexico to members of the Lakeside I.O.D.E.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, October 13, 1921.

The incessant rain last Friday morning and afternoon was very unfortunate for Rockwood Fair. A splendid exhibit had been

placed in the hall and judged on Thursday, but owing to the storm there was very little livestock brought in and no visitors on Friday. The fair was consequently postponed until today.

The subject of church union is evidently a live topic, judging from the discussion in the various churches affected. Mr. H. P. Moore, who has been a member of the Union Committee from the outset, has received a call to a meeting in Toronto of the joint committee of the Congregational, Presbyterian and Methodist churches on the 20th.

The first of a series of euvres and social evenings will be held tonight in the parish hall of St. Joseph's church.

The new drinking fountain presented to the town by the Women's Institute is being installed in the front area of the Government building, between the stone steps leading to the customs office and the post office. The area heretofore been a grass plot, will now be surfaced with concrete.

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The first snow storm of the season came on Sunday morning. Last year the first snow fell on October 1, about four inches.

The Methodist church at Norval had a narrow escape from destruction when a gasoline lamp used for lighting for the Harvest Home festival was turned too high. Men threw coats and rugs on the flames.

New Brunswick voted bone dry last Monday. The people declared with immense majorities that liquor is ostracized.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, October 15, 1896.

For some weeks past a number of youths have been in the habit of parading the streets in a body shouting "whoa" in concert at passing horses, to the great annoyance of drivers. This conduct was particularly disgraceful last Saturday and Sunday evenings. The local constables have received instructions to promptly arrest and incarcerate in the cells all disturbers of the peace of this character in the future. The congregation of crowds on the street corner is also prohibited.

Rockwood show was undoubtedly one of the best ever held. The display of fruit, especially apples, was the finest seen in Rockwood in many years. Rockwood has more than a local reputation for fine arts. The competition is particularly keen here on account of the number of experts from a distance always showing. The roots, vegetables, etc. were quite up to the standard. The butter and bread were choice but the cheese was not as good as has been shown before. There was a large showing of stock in most classes, but perhaps the finest lot, from a horse fancier's standpoint, was the great showing of heavy draught and general purpose horses. The most interesting and exciting event of the afternoon was the hurdle jumping when William Maud's horse ridden by T. Craig cleared the bar at 5 feet 4 inches as the winner, amidst great applause.

One short puff of breath through Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder diffuses over the nasal passages. It relieves instantly and permanently cures Catarrh, Hay Fever, Colds, Headache, Sore Throat, Tonsillitis and Deafness. Sold by J. V. Kannawin. Potato digging is the main attraction at Crewsons Corners these days.