



PIXIE THE PUSSY is getting set for the Christmas season by pawing balls that resemble the bulbs which will soon be on the family Christmas tree at Jim Jennings' home on Mill St. Pixie is one half of a cat act at the home which also features another tabbie name of Dixie. —(Jim Jennings Photo)

Bill Smiley



November glooms are barren beside the dusk of June. Thus quoth the poet Henley. And I say too ruddy true. As a general rule.

But this year has been an exception. I don't think I've ever written a decent word about November, with its "surly blasts", its sudden, depressing dumping of snow, its bleak and sterile look.

I know we're going to pay for it with a terrible winter, but this November, for the first time in many years, we've been ushered into winter with a gentle melancholy that seems unbelievable.

By the time this appears in print, we may be up to our noggins in snow. But credit where it is due. The first few weeks of November this year, in these parts, have made me decide to give this country and its crazy climate one more chance.

It's almost as though God had held up his hand as the four winds were on their mark, cheeks puffed, ready to give us the usual, and boomed, "Hold. The poor devils are having enough troubles of their own making. Let's give them one November to remember."

Normally, November is the most dismal month in the year, with the possible exception of March. But in the latter, at least the days are getting longer and there's a wild hope that spring may come again.

Normally, November means many things, none of them pleasant. Darkness comes early. There is a wild scramble, for many of us, over snow tires and storm windows. There is bitter wind ashore and terrifying storms on the water.

It's been a grand November for the hunter and trout fishermen. Perhaps not so good for the deer hunters, with little snow. But for the duck and partridge boys, and the rainbow anglers, it has been near perfection.

Day after day of mild, almost balmy weather has done away with the agonized squat in the duck blind, with nothing between you and certain death from exposure except the flask of rum. The same weather has made trout fishing, usually undertaken in a biting wind with half-frozen fingers, practically a Sunday school picnic.

Even the golfers have been able to stretch the season by at least a month. The only danger they face is exhaustion from golfing in the day and curling at night.

Normally, the squirrels would be getting set up for the winter. I look into the backyard and they're gambolling as though it were mid-June.

Surest sign that it's been a November without peer is the behaviour of our cat. As a rule, when November arrives, with its wind

and rain and snow, she has to be hurled bodily outside. This year, she has actually been going to the door and asking out.

I haven't seen any bees, but there are still a lot of crazy birds around who have been baffled by the weather, and are going to be caught with their pants down one of these days.

And they're not the only ones. Many a man like myself has been lulled into a false sense of security, hasn't his storms on, hasn't changed to snow tires, hasn't even turned off the outside water, and hasn't a clue where his winter boots are.

Oh, there'll be a day of reckoning, all right. My bones warn me. But to heck with it. I'm going to live dangerously and enjoy every day of it.

And to prove it, I'm going to write my first, and probably my last, ode to November.

Much-maligned November, This year you've been my friend, Don't quite know how to prove it, But you've shown you can groove it. No way are you September, But you're one I'll long remember. Isn't that beautiful?

From the editor's desk . . .

As an advocate of keeping Sunday as a day set apart, I was interested in the information that came from the Lord's Day Alliance regarding the history of Sunday observance over the centuries.

It starts back in the days of the Roman Emperor Constantine. In 321 A.D. he issued a ban on Sunday work, except agriculture, so the populace could honor the sun, patch up quarrels or free slaves. It was not until the fifth century that the meaning of Sunday was changed from "Sun" day to the Lord's Day. Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman Empire by then.

Roman law in turn became the foundation for Saxon law in England and we find King Ine (688-725) had both religious and social objections when he banned Sunday work.

A freeman caught working could lose his freedom or be fined 60 shillings. A priest's fine would be double. Other English acts were aimed at travelling, on meeting outside one's own parish, and sports, particularly the cruel bull-baiting and bear-baiting current then. The Sunday Fair Act banned selling goods at fairs and markets on Sunday. The 1577 Sunday Observance Act banned all works but that of necessity.

In 1791 Upper Canada, now Ontario, was created, and the very next year English Sunday statutes were introduced into the province.

It was not uncommon for settlers to work seven days of the week when Canada was young. So it is understandable that rail-way workers asked the Presbyterian Church to help them get rid of the burden of a seven day week in 1886.

The Presbyterians got an ecumenical conference going and the result was the Lord's Day Alliance in 1888. But it wasn't until 1906 that the Lord's Day Act was passed by the Canadian Government assuring Canadians of one day of rest in each week of the year.

For more than a few years the Lord's Day Act was interpreted very strictly by the "blue nose" element of society who were mainly interested in the letter rather than the spirit of the law. But in the last few years there has been a loosening up of the strict laws governing Sundays and people haven't been afraid to enjoy themselves. This is partly due to the more liberal attitude of the churches and a lessening of their influence on the public morals.

For instance, the Lord's Day Alliance endorsed the four proposals of the Ontario Law Reform Commission Report, which was issued this year, and states:

1. Ontario should provide legislative support for a uniform weekly pause day for as many persons as possible.

2. The uniform weekly pause day should

be Sunday.

3. The Ontario legislation providing support for a pause day should be secular, and not religious, in both purpose and effect.

4. The legislation should have the dual purposes (a) preserving a quality environment for the pursuit of leisure activities and (b) ensuring that as many persons as possible will be protected from being required to work on Sundays against their will.

Earlier members of the Alliance would have turned their wrath on these proposals but the liberalization process has been at work. The Alliance is trying to keep Sunday as a day set apart. I believe they are one hundred per cent right.

Apparently most Canadians think this way, too. In early 1971 a Gallup Poll asked Canadians if they wished changes in the laws concerning Sunday retail selling. Sixty-one per cent said "No." Sixteen per cent thought small stores should be open, 21 per cent thought all stores should be open and two per cent would not venture an opinion.

Canadians want to retain Sunday as a day set apart for family, recreation, church and other pursuits, completely divorced from the activity of the other humdrum six days of the week. There are enough pressures for six days of the week without ex-

Regional government in a year?

Imminence of regional government statements which cooled off prior to and during the election campaign can be resurrected.

Liberal leader Bob Nixon has predicted regional government will be imposed on four new areas of the province within a year and he names Halton-Peel, Hamilton-Wentworth, Haldimand-Norfolk and Oshawa-Ontario as the areas slated for regionalization.

More evidence to support Nixon's statement came by mail to this town's planning board from the Department of Municipal Affairs. Replying to a letter from Acton asking about possible annexation of Esquevas area, the long delayed return mail said annexations in Peel and Halton had been discouraged and deferred and there was little likelihood of the province changing its mind now.

If regional government comes, the moot question for Halton politicians, of course, is will it be Halton alone or will

the government preside for a shotgun Halton-Peel union?

There is no doubt the majority of Halton's elected representatives would prefer to see Halton proceed down the paths of history alone, with only friendly Peel links. Peel apparently would also like to sing solo in the regional choir. But the director of regional government music for the province has indicated he prefers a duet to a solo anytime because this would put a united front against the City of Toronto's expansionary designs.

But how will regional government affect the ordinary citizen?

According to Bob Nixon, speaking from the experience of the new Niagara Region, local government costs can be expected to rise as high as 40 per cent.

Expectations of economies by elimination of duplicate programs have so far not materialized in areas where regionalization have been put into effect. You can expect the power

than once belonged to local councils will be seriously eroded. Many of the decision-making processes will be centralized at the top level where they are awfully slow in coming through now.

Town and village councils will be able to increasingly blame the slow march of progress on those above. The large communities with the bigger vote will grab all the goodies they can for themselves, while the smaller municipalities will be offered some crumbs.

As one who was an early convert to the regional government we have become increasingly disenchanted by reports from municipalities where it has been implemented. Have there been any results worth the time and the bother, or is regional government just another genuflection to the current philosophy that "bigger is better?"

We'd be interested in knowing some of the positive effects of regionalization before we become completely cynical on the entire concept.

Free Press Editorial Page

Why not encourage homework

We were a little surprised at the scope of the opposition to Councillor Peter Marks' attempt to allow councillors to take non-confidential material from the town office for study, which was defeated at the last meeting of Acton council.

Although there was a strong body of opinion maintaining that all councillors had plenty of opportunity to receive all the information needed at committee and regular meetings of council, we don't think that is necessarily the guide lines for a decision. If Councillor Marks, or any other member of council, wants to take copies of town business home for further study, why not encourage rather than make it as difficult as possible to secure the documents?

Apparently all this material is available to the taxpayer merely by going to the office and requesting it, and then paying a small fee. Some councillors reasoned that what is sauce for the goose should also be sauce for the gander, and Marks should have to follow the same routine.

We are well aware that Mr. Marks sometimes follows an independent course in council's deliberations and his opinions often run counter to the majority's, but no one can accuse him of not fully wishing to explore each issue.

Some people are going to harbor the suspicion now that certain documents council has in the town office could be embarrassing to council. This is simply not true. All members of council have

the opportunity to see them at committee meetings.

That is why we cannot understand council's reluctance to part with copies of by-laws and resolutions for their own use.

No doubt some councillors have a suspicion that Councillor Marks could use these documents against them in debate but by the same token they can do some homework, too, and trip up Mr. Marks.

We would like to suppress the notion that there might be some personal animosity present in decisions at council, but the suspicion lingers that personalities rather than logic sometimes play too large a part.

Free Press back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, December 6, 1951.

Nearly 1500 voters will be eligible to vote for mayor, six councillors and one Public Utilities Commissioner in the Municipal Election. Approximately 100 citizens attended the nominations. For mayor, one to be elected, T. Salmon, E. Tyler; for council, six to be elected, N. Cunningham, A. Fryer, J. Greer, A. Irwin, C. Rogvaldson, E. Taylor, R. Thompson, L. Weick. For Public Utilities Commissioner, one to be elected, E. Bilton, C. Wood, J. T. Ware.

Elected by acclamation were Reeve J. Hargrave, deputy reeve J. J. Stewart and three public school trustees, J. H. Creighton, J. W. Wolfe and T. Watson.

Those nominated who did not qualify were C. Hansen, B. D. Rachlin, E. E. Footitt, S. C. Collett, G. V. Barbeau, D. Dawkins, J. Leishman, C. Wood, A. Mercer, W. Carnochan, N. Hurst, J. Goy, F. Dawkins.

Reeve Hargrave reported that the deficit was due mainly to the extra work on road paving and downtown sidewalks.

Mrs. Stanley Swackhamer died suddenly at her home, 4th line.

For the first time subscribers' addresses are listed in the new Bell telephone directory. About 885 directories were required for Acton homes, indicative of the growth of the town.

The Free Press is really short handed this week. Three of the staff can only work with one hand. David Dills fell from a truck collecting paper for scouts and has a broken wrist. Jim Greer had a nail removed and George Ware cut the end of his thumb in the

tending them to the seventh.

No doubt there are economic advantages to seven day selling and buying in the marketplace but economists also claim Sunday shopping increases prices.

Work every Sunday? You may have to if some people have their way. It's not so different from the days of Constantine when he set the day aside to honor the sun, patch up quarrels and free the slaves. Only the slaves may wear modern dress today. And the masters.

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Just a word from Jack Carpenter to finish up this week. He says "we are spending too much money getting something for nothing these days."

Amen.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, December 8, 1921.

Dr. Anderson, member of the late government, is surely to be congratulated upon the splendid vote rolled up for him in the election Monday. Neither he nor his most sanguine friends, ever anticipated such a majority especially with such strong opponents, Mr. W. F. W. Fisher the Liberal Candidate and Mr. J. F. Ford, the champion of the Progressive Party of the county. The election returns were given as received to the large crowd at the town hall and at the New Wonderland between reels. Mackenzie King, the Liberal leader, was returned with a large majority.

A German gun has arrived at Rockwood and has been placed on a permanent base near the soldiers' memorial. Also at Rockwood burglars broke into the G.T.R. station on Sunday night, knocked a hinge off the

safe, smashed tills, broke open drawers but got nothing for their pains.

A new garage and ice house have just been added to Acton Creamery, Mill St.

A runaway car which a citizen cranked without releasing the clutch made a mess of the lattice fence at Miss Masales' residence on Elgin St.

Sporting circles are talking hockey again.

New Wonderland — A Cecil B. DeMille production Forbidden Fruit — A vision episode of the story of Cinderella. Agnes Ayers and Kathleen Williams. Prices 16 cents and 27 cents.

All three of the political parties held mass meetings in Acton. The novelty of a lady speaker brought out a large number of ladies when Mrs. Munroe spoke on behalf of Dr. Henderson.

Miss Stella McLam, on the staff of the head office of the Merchants Bank in Toronto, was home for the weekend.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, December 10, 1896.

At the meeting of the Haymakers Concert Co. in Rockwood it was decided to put away the funds raised last winter in the bank. They were found to be not sufficient to put up street lights as had been designed.

New Goods for Christmas! What could be more acceptable for little girl than a Velvet Tam 45c, silk handkerchiefs 15c.

Beautiful china from France — after dinner coffees, individual tea and coffee cups, 5 o'clock sets, bread and butter plates, pin trays, brush and comb trays. All finest china, mostly Limoges.

From Germany cut glass salts, butters, toothpick holders, pitchers and small dishes. English sterling silver, sugar spoons and tongs, berry spoons, salts and an endless number of little things. American and Canadian novelties.

Ladies' silver watches \$5 to 12, gold up to \$25, men's up to \$30. Boys \$2.50.

Periodically there has been more or less opposition to the tanneries owing to the discoloration of the water in the stream on which they are situated. A Pennsylvania doctor upholds tanneries citing how the people benefit from the tanneries.

The knights of the highway who call at Acton for a night's lodging repose in genuine comfort on the downy couches in the cells. Hot air pipes have been put in.

Albert Gibbons, who has been doing successful trapping lately, took a bundle of mink and fox skins to Guelph on Tuesday.

Mother Earth is again clothed in the mantle of winter.

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