

Mini-Comment

Remember the good old brown eggs you used to buy, the product of Plymouth Rocks and Rhode Island Reds? They're making a comeback, according to British researchers who have found that birds laying brown eggs are consuming less feed than the white egg egg birds. This news should spur on those white birds that lay white eggs: 'eat less, lay more, or Zip!'

A wag annoyed at the recent mail stoppage suggests the eight-cent stamp for first class mail is comprised of two parts — three cents for delivery and five cents for storage.

Those who complain to the Ministry of the Environment about farmers spreading manure on their fields will encounter a deaf ear, according to a Ministry spokesman. "Farmers who are only carrying out normal farm procedures have nothing to fear," says Environment Minister Bill Newmont. Normal manure spreading and subsequent cultivation is both necessary and beneficial for farm operation. However, farmers who do not follow normal farm procedure could lead to a valid complaint and an investigation by a board made up of farmers called the "Farm Pollution Advisory Committee." What next?

Liberal leader Bob Nixon dangled an appealing carrot in front of Actonians' noses when he said Acton could one day have its own council again, but we'd like to see the mechanics of the operation before commenting further.

Travel to sunny climates hasn't eased up this year as much as might have been expected. Statistics Canada reports that Canadian residents returning from visits to the U.S. increased 13 percent in January over the same period last year.



What do you think of Him?

Rumors spread quickly around the province—the man executed on the previous Friday outside the city had been seen alive with friends on Sunday.

Skeptics laughed, especially at the provincial premier who ordered an investigation into strange happenings reported at the fellow's grave. Reporters sent to the scene by the media could find nobody although the platoon of guards stationed there with Sten guns had made sure no one disturbed the mausoleum.

There had been a lot of strong feelings about this fellow and authorities did not want to stir up any more trouble. There had been enough commotion on Friday when he was executed for a crime of which the premier felt he was innocent.

But the mobs demanded his blood and the premier had given in reluctantly after washing his hands in the city hall fountain as a symbol of his own innocence in this man's execution. The premier wasn't a weak man but elections were soon to be held and he wanted to curry favor everywhere. He couldn't afford to offend any segments of the public although he knew agitators were firing the people up.

Now there were strange rumors about the fellow circulating around the province, about the grave not being able to hold him. Some of his followers, rustic bumpkins many of them, said he would follow in the footsteps of Jonah who had stayed in a big fish for three days and emerged alive. Jonah, they said, was a symbol of this man's victory over the grave.

This upstart however, didn't seem to be a prophet. He was born in a small town in the northern part of Halton County, son of a respected carpenter. His mother was a young lady with a very good background who left the farm to marry young, the custom of the district.

Stories about the youth were widely circulated that showed he worked in the carpenter shop with his father until he was 30 years old, building cupboards, handling saws with painstaking skills taught by his father, a plain and simple man descended from pioneers of the district.

The family lived in a frame home on a quiet North Halton street. Maples shaded the house from the sun and a cedar hedge helped shield them from winter blasts. They were a happy family, living modestly, and genuinely interested in their neighbors.

As a youth it was apparent this fellow had a philosophical turn of mind. He often talked and argued with the teachers from the schools and had deep discussions with the priests and ministers, who were often puzzled over the extent of his knowledge, knowing as they did that he had quit school in Grade X to assist his father with carpentry.

He attended church regularly and seemed religious but he wasn't averse to lifting a pint or two of lager or ale at local hotels with friends. Some people classed him a drunkard but it didn't seem to bother him, even when they criticized him for being entertained by known sinners. But his friends were often puzzled by his references to the meaning of life.

He told interesting stories that attracted a strange multitude and many of them had a message. Even the fellows who frequented the local pool halls were fascinated by his stories, although they often found them difficult to understand.

By the time he reached age 30 he had such a large following the Liberals, Progressive Conservatives and New Democrats had all asked him to run for office in their colors. He politely refused, telling party officials that his electoral district was not of this world. They puzzled over his answer figuring he was some kind of revolutionary who was going to raise a social revolution of his own.

It was about this time he also started to visit other nearby places, talking to the people in small and large numbers and his reputation grew even wider. He visited Limehouse, Georgetown, Erin, Acton, Brampton, Milton, Ballinafad, Stewarttown, Norval and any other small hamlets where people congregated at feed stores or supermarkets.

One day in a field near Silvercreek while cars from a nearby driveway thronged in the background, a local paper reported he had an audience of 5,000. Although there had been conflicting reports it was also said he fed the entire

crowd with seven loaves of bread and a few brook trout taken in Silver Creek.

Stories such as this kept the people wondering if this was the simple village man they thought they knew. Several men were his constant companions, quarrelsome fellows some of them, sprinkled with a few reticent types, selected it was reported from the fields and factories of North Halton. The group including businessmen, tax assessors, town clerks, farmers, laborers and some of the storekeepers of the district. They helped spread his fame until it reached the ears of the people in the big city of Toronto.

It was said he told stories about loving your neighbor, doing good to those who hate you, taking the last seat in church and letting your talent shine. It was also said he cured the lame, gave sight to the blind and one day healed 10 men with a loathsome disease and only one of whom bothered to return and thank him.

It was inevitable that one day he would klick the dust of North Halton from his oxford and leave for Toronto in a shiny white compact car lent him by a friend. His fame preceded him and a spontaneous ticker tape parade developed on Bay St.

The mayor greeted him at the city hall steps, remarking to a nearby controller that it seemed to be, the key to the city. Why, he said in an aside, the man wasn't very well educated, and had a distinct North Halton twang.

But the people of the metropolis took the man to their hearts. He had so many invitations to speak and advise the troubled and perplexed that some of the city leaders began to get jealous. Some of the hints through one of Toronto's daily papers that the fellow better shut up or some means might be found to shut him up.

Why this brash lot threatened the country's economy one money lender told a luncheon meeting of a service club. He could upset the country's morals, a religious leader charged.

Spurred by the opposition, some city leaders spent time investigating his background, hoping to fabricate some charge against him. They paid special attention to one of his followers who looked after the communal purse. One day the fellow relented. He said he would betray his leader when they offered 30 of the market's prime stocks. He agreed to betray him with a kiss in imitation of a well-known secret society said to be infiltrating the province.

One night in High Park where the fellow was holed up

with his followers the police arrested him and charged him with treason and being a revolutionary, although he had never raised a gun or carried a knife.

The worst that could be said of him was that he drove some money changers out of the downtown cathedral one day, charging they were defiling his father's house.

The magistrate heard the case in a late night city court, obviously bored with the proceedings, and sent him over to the chief magistrate, who promptly sent him back with a letter acknowledging the fellow was probably guilty but he could find nothing wrong with him.

Meanwhile, public opinion, helped by an unsympathetic press, radio and T.V., began to turn against the fellow. Some of those who threw ticker tape a few days earlier were now hollering for a conviction claiming the man was a fraud. They wanted the death penalty, something which hadn't been handed out with impunity for some time.

There was a trial and throughout it was obvious the jury was loaded with his enemies, hate, avarice, jealousy and a few of their boon companions.

They found him guilty and handed him over to the city officials to be executed.

Because he was a carpenter they hung him on two beams which took the form of a cross. They did this on a hill which overlooks the city. On either side, to give the execution justification, they hung a criminal.

After much suffering the fellow died, calling to his father to save him, which became a jest among the crowd that gathered to watch the gory spectacle. When he was dead a friend buried him in his own mausoleum while the rest of his followers and friends fled back over the Niagara Escarpment in horror, dismay and utter confusion.

A funny thing. A few days later the same friends and followers were smiling again. Dismay was replaced with secret enmity and they had the effrontery to tell others that the fellow executed on the cross Friday had now risen from the dead.

Preposterous, you say? Maybe.

But what has caused the big change in his followers? Why do they no longer mourn for the man and nurse secret smiles?

It makes one think especially when one of them asked me the other day: What do you think of Him?

Canine capers

There's dog daze in Rockwood over charges and counter-charges about dogs running loose and resulting messes. It's a dogfight in which everyone is taking sides, apparently.

Despite Eramosa Reeve Bill Adsett's admonition to "let sleeping dogs lie," the township council decided it wasn't the sleeping pooches that were causing canine confusion but the four-legged critters on the loose. So one resident is going to receive a letter advising him to keep his pooches cooped.

In the exchange of pleasantries over man's best friend, a kennel owner confided that his dogs only

go out when they go to the bathroom.

Ah ha — trained dogs. Wish the whole world had them, because it's a world-wide problem.

England, for instance, where dogs are allowed on a leash, suffers terribly from the mess pets create along the boulevards. When things get dull during summer months, English newspapers don't quiver about starting a controversy about dog droppings. It invariably starts a ruckus to enliven an otherwise dull summer of strikes, demonstrations and other trivia.

Must have been a dull winter in Rockwood and nothing can enliven the village more than a good dog-fight.



B2 The Acton Free Press, Wed., Mar. 26, 1975

Bicycles bugs are out

Spring's here and the bikes are out again in Acton and on the country roads. The Safety League has got those bikers all typed, and it makes interesting reading.

1. The Swerver bug. There's bound to be one to two. The "Swerver" wheels in and out of traffic as though he is on a timed obstacle course. He gives no thought to the poor, frazzled motorist who is forced to slam on his brakes, risk collision and is left to face, shakily, the rest of the day's hustle-bustle.
2. The Tricky-Turner Bug. We've all seen this one. One minute he's riding harmlessly next to you. Then, without any warning signal or even a backward glance, he cuts a fast turn right in front of your path. It's guaranteed to give the car driver palpitations.
3. The Middle-of-the-Roader Bug. He thinks he's driving a car and hogs the whole lane. He never notices the traffic jam behind him.
4. The Double Headed Bug. This

is an easy one to spot—two bodies weaving along on a bicycle built for one.

5. The Wrong Way Bug. These are usually very young cyclists who haven't yet mastered right from left (bet they can't even button their own coats correctly). They habitually ride on the left-hand side of the road, irritating and confusing both motorists and other cyclists coming towards them.
6. The Biking Bevy Bugs. This herd is most frequently spotted on residential streets, three or four cyclists riding side by side. The more experienced bevy bikers will be wearing ear muffs to lessen the din from honking motorists bringing up the rear.

The habits described are illegal in Ontario and dangerous everywhere.

Biking is great! Obeying the laws and using safe, commonsense practises will only ensure greater enjoyment.



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

This may seem an odd time of year for it, but I'm being torn between two old adages.

That is better than being torn between two old harridans, but not much.

At my age, of course, the chances of being torn between two young harridans is rather slight.

As a matter of fact, there hasn't even been much of a line-up of old harridans lately, so I guess I'll have to settle for those two old adages.

One of them goes thus: "There's no fool like an old fool." An adage go, it fills the bill. It is short, blunt, and if you happen to be an old fool, brutal. I don't like that one much.

The other one says: "There's many a good turn played on an old fiddle." This is also short and to the point. It is usually delivered with a wink and a leer by some old fool of either sex, speaking of which, that is what it usually refers to. I like that one better than the first, though I am not given to leering or winking. Not for years.

Anyway, to get to the heart of the matter, I've taken up cross-country skiing and those ancient adages ride with me, one on each ski. They are heavy, as well as old.

When I state that I have taken up cross-country skiing, I must confess that it is not a reciprocal deal. I have taken it up only once, and it has taken me down more times than I care to contemplate.

But that's beside the point. Cross-country skiing is not for everybody, though you'd never know it on a Sunday afternoon.

No, it's really a sport for us romantics, the few of us left who are loners, who have a fierce, overwhelming urge to pit our muscles and will against a fierce and alien Nature.

Even before I strapped on the skis, I knew I would love it. Pictures rolled through my mind like a film, with me in the major role. Gliding, swift and silent, along a lonely winter trail. Slipping through the stilly woods like a wraith. Stopping on a peak for a belt of brandy and a munch of bread and cheese, before plunging, eager-eyed, into the terrible, hurtling danger below.

It's a tough world for us romantics. For some reason, the picture seldom lives up to the advance notices.

I didn't exactly glide, not at first. I sort of shuffled, rather like an old man with a double case of gout. Nor was the trail really lonely. Not if you count dogs, little children, and old ladies who came up from behind, shouting, "Track!" and went by me as though I were standing still. Which I was, a good deal of the time.

Stopping on a peak for a bracing, solitary brandy is also a little difficult, when the only peak for miles around is about eight feet high, and is already populated by eleven-seventeen of your friends, every last one of whom loves brandy, but doesn't have any with him.

Not to mention those woods. It's hard to keep them stilly, when every time you get anywhere near a tree, everyone in sight shouts, "Timber-r-r-r!"

A couple of young punks sail by, and I overhear, "Jeez, it used to be stilly in these woods, but nowadays there seem to be great, noisy gusts of wind." Little do they know it's only old Smiler trying to get his breath back.

I have taken up other sports, like golf and curling, and have learned that unless he is extremely vigilant, the beginner may develop some bad habits which are hard to shake.

I was determined that this would not happen with skiing. On my very first time out, I thought I was developing a bad habit. My left ski seemed to want to veer to the

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