

Trailing livestock is job for immature youth

When one achieves the wisdom of maturity one tends to shudder at the follies of youth. Sound pompous enough for a dignified column?

Well, I don't know how mature and wise I am (or how dignified this column), but I certainly shudder at the follies of youth and inexperience.

Horse in a back pack

The other day Mack and I were chuntering along a windy highway in the pickup reminiscing of the days when we'd transport our huge Belgian stud in a similar pickup—and his stamping produced the same swaying effect on the truck.

The things we used to do trailing horses would make your hair curl!

When I think of the stock trucks and makeshift arrangements that carted our horses around, I'm appalled—and very, very glad the horses survived without damage.

We didn't have our own trailer for years—people didn't consider their own trailer a necessary part of horse gear in those days. There was always some stable owner who would transport your beast for a minimal price.

When I married and moved to the farm, Mack had the practical attitude of farmers toward moving animals. You got them there as quickly and as cheaply as possible with minimum bruises. Of course, cattle, sheep and pigs are much harder to truck than horses. But the same old stock truck or pickup was good enough for my horses it seemed.

When we started breeding Belgians, Mack made one concession to this business of transportation—he bought a half ton pickup with extra heavy springs. He then built plywood racks for the sides and bolted a three-ply oak plank ramp to the tailgate (so heavy it took four men—or me and

Mack—to lift it). The day we bought the yearling Belgian who was destined to become a Canadian champion, Mack planned to bring him home in the truck but he hadn't completed the ramp. The unhandled 1500 pound colt would have to be persuaded to jump the two feet into the truck.



He did, too. Without much trouble the colt was pushed into the truck where he stood in startled surprise wondering how he'd got there. His surprise didn't last long. As the men were lashing his head down, the colt decided he wanted out and he up-ended himself, landing in an upside-down heap crossways in the truck, his legs crocheted together through the tie ropes.

You think that wasn't fun trying to get him out of there without breaking three of his knees? I kept crying about the poor horse as the men yanked and pulled—Mack kept moaning about his brand new truck.

Eventually the colt was upright once more, a little chastened but not unduly frightened.

He travelled in that truck for two years even when his body weight went past the ton. We'd go merrily bouncing into a show ground, swaying precariously

as the excited stud swung his bulk from side to side. We'd have to watch for hydro wires because the horse was 18 hands tall and stood above the truck racks like a giraffe.

But his guardian angel was with him—that horse never suffered a scratch.

It's easier to walk!

His brother was just as lucky when we transported him in the same truck to his new home. The tailgate was broken at the time so Mack popped the other big stallion in the truck, crammed a light plywood rack on the back and took off with an 18-inch gap between the back rack and the truck base.

You guessed it. The horse managed to step one of his hind legs out the gap going over a railway track and we had to stop and push him in again—no damage (I certainly don't know how he didn't break something!).

We'd had fillies stand on their heads in a trailer while their heads were double tied. We've had them somersaulting in narrow trucks.

One mare, a bad trailer risk, reared up and threaded her foreleg over the front trailer bar, round the centre post and down behind the front bar of the neighboring stall. This was in our own conventional trailer and wasn't supposed to happen. I don't know to this day how we finally got her leg out but she was unhurt.

The only trailer accident we ever had was on one of the few times we hired a professional horseman with a Rice trailer to move my excitable Thoroughbred. She reared on loading and tore her shoulder to bits on a trailer hinge. That certainly made Mack mutter.

I'm glad those days are over but they sure provide some funny stories.



Warren Wagner

Wagner promoted

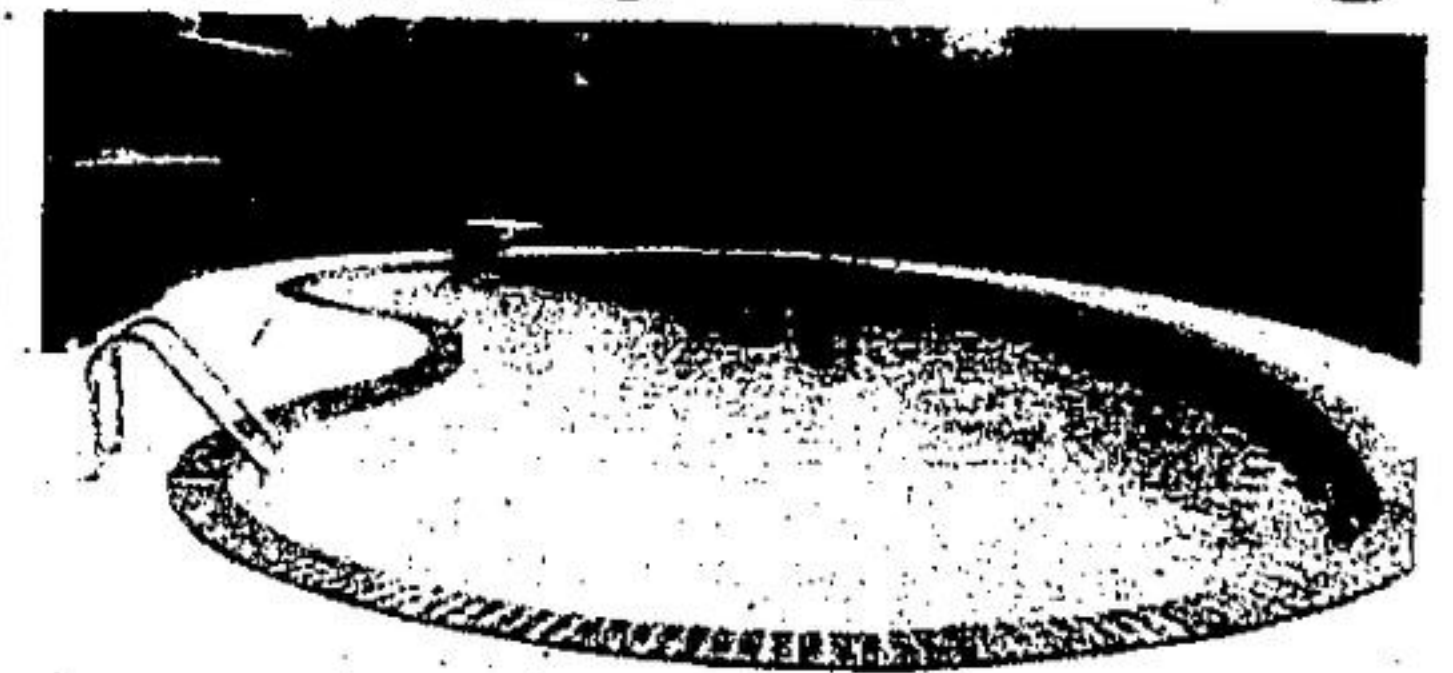
A former Acton man, Warren J. Wagner, has been promoted vice president of sales for Mastercraft, Kingston.

Mr. Wagner, son of Gordon and Lillian Wagner, Willow St., assumes the management of Mastercraft's marketing division and its complete range of products and services.

He has developed a complete set of qualifications in his 20 years in the printing industry and was previously general manager of Maxwell Printers, Kingston. Mr. Wagner attended Acton schools.

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Travel less paradise

I've been helping a student, the lively and lovely Julie Noack, to prepare her speech for the Lions Club public speaking contest. She wrote it: I just listen and make critical comments.

We've had a few laughs. Her speech is in praise of travel in Canada, instead of taking our lame dollars off and spending them on the often spurious attractions of other countries.

It's a sort of travelogue of Canada, and sounds pretty good. But at one point she broke me up. We have just crossed the Ottawa River from Quebec and are cruising around the capital, "where dwell," according to the speech, our Prime Minister, ambassadors from all over the world, and ... She slurred the "ambassadors" a bit, and it came out, "Our Prime Minister, bastards from all over the world ..." I couldn't agree more.

Another one that shook me up was when she said that, "Canada is more than 'A few acres of snow', as the French writer, Voltaire dismissed it." Voltaire came out as Volare. The powers of television!

However, one point in her speech got me thinking along a different track. She pointed out that, despite the vast variety of vistas this country offers the tourist, it is expensive to travel in this Canada of ours. Too true.

Hotels and motels are ridiculously costly. Many of the big new hotels in the cities want an arm and a leg for a place to lay your head for a few hours. Motels want from \$20 to \$36 for a plastic room, no room service, often not even a place to get a cup of coffee, and get out by one p.m., no matter what time you checked in.

Restaurants in this country are equally usurious, with a very few exceptions. I don't mind going out and spending a day's pay at a good restaurant, with suave service, food carefully chosen and cooked with care, and nobody hustling you out the minute you've sipped your last crop of fifty-cent coffee.

But it burns my butt to be served a leathery omelet with the inevitable piece of limp lettuce, the inexorable one slice of green house tomato, and the ubiquitous helping of french fries, none of which you want, and charged enough to feed a fair-sized family a good meal, at home.

Then there's the mark-up on drinks, anywhere from one to two hundred per cent. Don't believe me? Check it out. A bottle of beer at home costs about 35 cents. In a restaurant it'll cost you about one dollar. A drink at home will cost you approximately 45 cents for an ounce and a half, with free tap water thrown in. In a bar or restaurant the same drink will cost you from \$1.25 to \$1.60, depending on the decor, for an ounce and a quarter. And if you prefer wine, they just triple the price.

No wonder so many restaurants and bars go broke. The business is so profitable that too many people want into it, and the law of supply and demand looks after the rest.

Travel in this country is equally unappealing. Internal airfares are

ridiculously high. It costs almost as much to fly from Toronto to Vancouver as from Toronto to London, England, a thousand miles or more. Trains are a dying species. They have lost their old grace of service, good food and excitement, cut off all their branch lines, and become a rather wistful anachronism for people who like rough road-bed, frequent breakdowns and abandoned stations.

Buses are better. Some have even crept into the twentieth century, with airconditioning, heat in the winter, and fairly punctual time-keeping. But all this is ruined by the bus depots, which are pure 1970s Sleaze, dirty, impersonal, and with the inevitable drunk sounding off. Or throwing up.

Another aspect of travelling in Canada that puts people off is the service, or lack of it. There's very little service with a smile. Too often it ranges from grudging to surly, from indifferent to sullen. Waitresses slop coffee into your saucer or wipe off your plastic table with a dirty damp rag. Waiters stand with their backs to you when you are in a rush to catch a plane. Hotel doormen are all smiles when you are checking in, and non-existent when you are struggling out with three heavy bags.

Hotel clerks are almost invariably insolent, exuding the atmosphere that they are doing you a favour by letting you sign in. Car jockeys come squealing up to the front door of the hotel, jump out, hand you your keys with one hand while holding the other out, and disappear to let you, with your back, load the bags into the trunk.

You can spend ten minutes looking for a clerk in a supermarket. You could spend the rest of your life looking for a porter at an airport. You can turn purple in the face waiting for service in a department store, while two clerks chat about their night out at the singles club, and a third burbles away on the phone to her boyfriend.

Occasionally you get a genuine smile or a real thank you, but more often they are perfunctory or non-existent.

Why? Is it that native-born Canadians feel themselves above the service trades, so that they take out their resentment on their customer?

Is that why most jobs in these fairly lucrative trades are held by immigrants? Is that why our minority of good restaurants are operated by immigrants?

Julie is right. The country is magnificent. But high prices, bad food and bad manners make it less than a paradise for travellers.

St. Patrick's Day

The Aran Sweater

Catherine Graham of R.R. 1, Limehouse, has been contributing articles each year for St. Patrick's Day and she has followed the tradition again in 1979 with information on "The Aran Sweater."

"That this universally acclaimed garment, should have originated from a tiny group of islands, and that the stitches used in them should have been inspired by the sea, and its surroundings, is in itself remarkable. Many of the Aran fishermen have been lost at sea down through the centuries, for this reason few of them learn to swim, as they accept the inevitable with little quail. On the other hand not all is left to fate. Some 500 years ago these nimble fingered fishermen turned their net making skills to knitting weather-proof garments. The great need was to keep warm in rain and spray. "The

wool was taken from the native sheep, oiled, combed and spun and knitted with goose quills into this weather-proof garment. As a means of identification, in case they were lost, each family had their own symbols knitted into the garment they made. "Here are a few names of stitches used: The Trinity, Blackberry, Irish Moss, the Cable, Honeycomb, to name only a few.

"The popularity of the Aran sweater has provided an added source of income to these people. However, worldly riches have not changed the character of these islanders. These tall and humble people reflect in their bearing the grandeur and dignity of their surroundings. "Garments described as "Aran Knit" have the advantage of the oil retaining wool making them fully weather proof. They are also made in other countries but not with weather-proof yarn."

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Union spoiling relaxed plant atmosphere

Dear Sir: For several weeks now the union has been trying to unionize the Superior Glove factory in Acton. Why after 18 years would we want one now?

So far, the union has spoiled a friendly, relaxed atmosphere in our plant, threatening employees putting scandalous letters in employees mailboxes and making silent phone calls. If this is what they want to pay union dues for? Charity would pay the money to better use.

The propaganda and lies printed in last week's Herald are unfounded and ridiculous. How can anyone be locked in an office when the lock opens from the inside?

They've complained about everything from boiling glue pots that don't exist to washroom facilities. What do

they want, fur covered seats and footrests?

The ridiculous allegations go on and on.

The union wants more money. This seems silly only to give it back in union dues.

Hurray for Frank Geng and Julian Zajac. You've done a great job. Now look what the union is doing. We are behind Frank and Julian 100 per cent. The union can go fly a kite.

This union is flour, cereal, soft drink and distillery workers. What do they know about leather?

What kind of union gains membership by their means?

This seems more like a syndicate than a union. We, the opposition, are for the company.

An employee

Easter Seals help crippled children
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CANADA

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