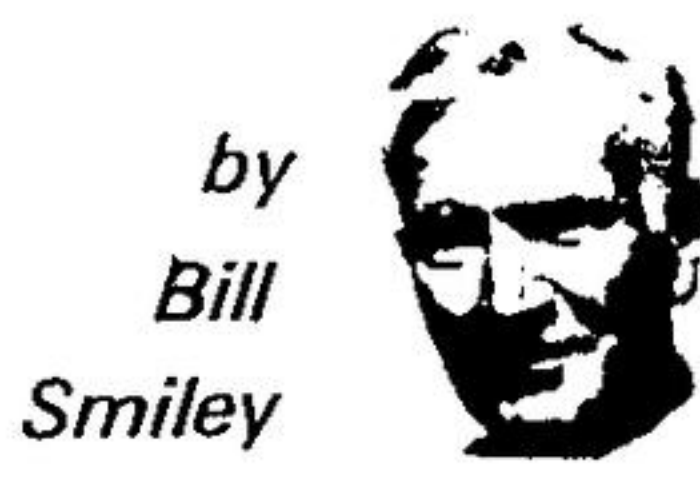


Cleaning up, or how to shake a marriage

One of the best ways I know to knock the mortar out from between the bricks of your marriage — the un-cement things — is to join your spouse in cleaning up the basement / attic. Take your pick. One's as bad as the other.



by
**Bill
Smiley**

My wife's been talking about cleaning up our basement for approximately 15 years. I have avoided it by resorting to a number of subterfuges that I will gladly send you on receipt of a certified cheque for five bucks.

six months of sheer hell.

That may seem a little expensive, but it takes a mighty lot of subterfuge to get through 15 years.

But nemesis is unavoidable. It came last week in the form of an ad in the local paper stating that the town trucks would pick up household junk on the following Thursday.

It caused a lot of deep thinking in our town. What constitutes household junk? Some chaps I know sat there, pretending to watch TV, while their dark and secret minds conjured visions of chloroforming the old woman, putting her in a green garbage bag, and sticking her out by the curb on Thursday.

I'm happy to say that nothing of the sort occurred to me (it says here). But the notice did draw a deep and anguished groan, right from the heels. I knew what was coming.

I thought I might be able to stall her until the Wednesday evening before, when we could lug a few things out of the jungle that lies below, and leave the rest to rot, as it has been doing for 15 years.

But it was not to be. With complete disregard for my feelings about the sacredness, the almost holiness, of weekends, she dragged me down into the underworld, on a perfect day for playing golf, pointed, and coldly said: "Let's go."

Oh, I could have sneered, picked up my golf clubs, walked to the car, and driven off. I wish I had that kind of guts. But I knew I'd come home to a living martyr and

I went. Down. That's when I began to envy those lucky devils who have converted their basements into rec rooms. If you have one of those, you don't unpack a box, remove the contents, and happily hurl the container down the cellar steps. You get rid of it in some seemly fashion.

It's not the grubbing through spiderwebs and other assorted dirt that I mind. First job I ever had was cleaning out latrines, and I have no dignity when it comes to dirt. What gets me is the dialogue.

We were in two different rooms, she in the place where the oil tanks is, and the Christmas tree stands, and the paint pots, a little in them, and the old drum and cymbals set, and son Hugh's pots and pans and dishes, from the time he was batching, and a lot of interesting artifacts like that.

I was out in the main cellar, where we normally shovel a path from the bottom of the steps to the furnace, the washer and dryer. It was full of wet cardboard boxes, pieces of linoleum, ancient lamps without shades, ancient shades without lamps, mildewed purses and gunny sacks and jackets, warped curtain rods, ski poles without handles, skis with the harness missing, various pieces of torn plastic, great heaps of old sheets, kept for dusting rags, and similar fascinating items.

She hollers: "Bill, I think there's enough green here to touch up the woodwork."

I have just lifted an anonymous box full of dirt from when the furnace was cleaned out. The bottom has dropped out, and I am contemplating a one-foot mound of furnace excrement on the floor.

Me: "That's great. Shove it — uh — that's fine, dear."

She, appearing round the door: "You're not going to throw out that perfectly good chunk of linoleum! We might need it to patch the kitchen floor!"

Me: sotto voce: "Why don't you make a bikini out of it, you great seamstress, you?"

Me, alarmed: "Hey, you're not going to throw out the gunny sack? I had that in Normandy in '41!"

She: "It has a hole in it and stinks of mould. And what about these old medals?" Old medals, my foot. They are precious. They are not exactly the V.C. and the D.S.O. As a matter of fact, one is for joining up, another for getting across the ocean without being sunk, a third for staying alive on wartime rations, known as the Spam medal, and the fourth for getting home alive. But the grandboys like to play with them.

And on it goes. We fight over every item, for sentimental or practical reasons. I hate to see a perfectly good breadbox go out, even though it has no handle and doesn't match the kitchen. She gets upset when I want to discard the third-last vacuum cleaner we had, because it has the propensity of being a great spray-painting weapon for painting fences, if we had a fence and she could find a bottle exactly the size of the one that is missing.

Like marriage in general, we give a little here, take a little there, and both wind up furious and exhausted.

When it was all over, there wasn't much left but a bagful of moldy, green love letters, 30 years old.

She doesn't know it, but I'm going to get up at five on Thursday morning, sneak them out, and bury them among the junk. I simply couldn't stand hearing what a chump I was in those days.



Acton and Limehouse Cubs received awards at this year's awards night. Tim Height, back row far left, was presented with a knife for collecting the most amount of pledges in the Trees for Canada campaign. Tim is a member of the first Acton Scout troop.

Cub awards given

Hard work was rewarded Monday evening at the North Halton District Scout awards at St. George's Anglican church in Georgetown.

Four Cubs from Acton and four from Limehouse received their five star Cub award. To get this award the boys must meet 21 requirements and complete 14 projects. Receiving this award from the Acton B pack were Steven Dipersio, Bill Ingles, Peter Keuchler and Paul Party. Limehouse boys receiving the same award were Byron Cannon, Lee Foster, Michael Hannah and Stephen Huggie.

Tim Height, a Scout in the first Acton troop, was given a knife for his efforts in the Trees for Canada campaign. Tim collected the most amount in pledges for the project.

A certificate of Warrant of Appointment for three years satisfactory service as a leader and completion of basic training was presented by District Commissioner Murray

Harrison to Terry Colter, Al Fraser, Mike Hastings, Anne Lysy, Brian MacCourt, John Sharples and Steve Wilcher.

Five year service pins were presented by provincial Field Executive Bob Carlow to Jean Belshaw, Vic Longo, Anne Lysy and Andrea Sharples.

A ten year pin and medal was presented to Evelyn Owen.

Appreciation awards were presented by Jean Belshaw to Sandra Book, Frank Hannah, Murray Harrison, Jean Layman, Lorna Thompson and Steve Thompson. These people are all retiring from their present positions.

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Gunmen rob family

Milton — "You lay there nice and still and we will all live," were the parting words of two robbers to the bound and gagged victims, Sherwood Hume and family, one early morning last week. The robbers got one of the family to open the safe. Thieves netted about \$2,000 in cash. The Humes were held at gun point for an hour.

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With Helen



Don't forget Fathers' Day on Sunday. To my own father in Collingwood, who is known to several Acton residents, I wish a happy Fathers' Day. Many folks around town who know me, maybe too well, wonder how he put up with me all these years. Would you believe patience?

Silver wedding anniversary greetings are extended to Wilf (Duvy) and Joanne Duval, who celebrated 25 years of marriage on the weekend. The couple were taken out to dinner Saturday evening by daughter Carolyn and husband George Artem, daughter Beverly and son, Alark. When they returned to their Nelson Court home, they found themselves in the midst of a surprise party.

The Friends-in-Deed, a group of handicapped people who get together for fun and games, have changed their meeting place and date for their next meeting. Last week's paper said they would next get together June 26 at M.Z. Bennett school. Since then, the place has been changed to Ame Dudds' for a pot luck supper on June 19.

Bargain hunters are reminded of the giant shoe sale this Thursday and Friday at the Acton Y. Some 300 pairs of shoes in top notch condition were donated to the Community Services Centre by Sweetman Shoes to help raise funds. The centre is in danger of closing after Halton Hills council cut their annual grant by almost \$2,000. All programs are affected by this cutback, including the vital Meals on Wheels, which provides meals to elderly folks who are not able to make themselves proper meals. See the ad in this week's paper, and see you at the shoe sale.

The Free Press will publish graduation photos from Colleges and Universities free of charge. Please submit your photos with a small write-up, or information for a write-up the Friday before the paper comes out.

WARP, (Women Against Rising Prices), has come out with their list of foods to boycott for the next two weeks. They are: no name beef; frozen vegetables; fruit drinks; instant coffee; oranges; bananas; canned fish; and imported cheese.
Frank Drea, provincial minister of Consumer Affairs has asked WARP organizers if he can meet with them to discuss feedback they have been receiving concerning their now nation wide boycott. He is working on the Ontario Price Review Board and is interested in the public's views. No date has been set for the meeting, but it is hoped it will be in the next few weeks.
Also from WARP, comes the advertisement to buy Canadian strawberries. Organizers have been asked by the Department of Agriculture to encourage consumers to think Canadian the next few weeks while the berries are on grocers' shelves.

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