

Oasis no air conditioned watering hole

Almost every day in the summer I drop in at The Oasis, as I think of it.

I know, I know. Nasty-minded readers are already thinking it's some kind of watering-hole for dry old Bill Smiley. One of those air-conditioned bars that are so dark you can't see a thing for five minutes and have to count your change by the Braille system.

Not so. I strongly dislike those joints. Most of them are dark and dirty and stink. They have a few poor, lonely souls who have nowhere else to go, and very often a construction gang or a road gang, noisy and beer-swilling and profane, sousing it up on the company's time.

Nope. I avoid those places like the plague. The Oasis is nothing like that. It doesn't have a braying television set, foul-mouthed roisterers and cold-eyed waitresses. It's just the opposite.

True, it is air-conditioned. But not the kind that makes you wish you were wearing a fur coat after five minutes.

And true, it is not brightly lit. But there is enough light to see what you are imbibing, count your change without using your fingertips, and read a book or a newspaper.

And that's exactly what I do there, and why I think of it as The Oasis. It's a charming little place to stop and refresh oneself, to cool out and meditate a bit, and gossip and just plain sip, before plunging back out into the desert of life.

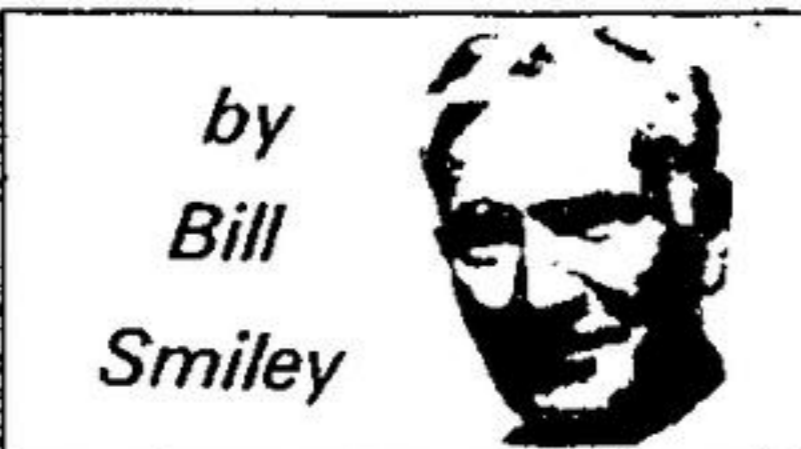
What The Oasis provides for the wandering bedouins who stop there is a little peace and quiet.

It has none of the plastic jazz of the chain hamburger and submarine joints. But it has a number of the things those places

can never offer: charm, friendliness, good manners, courtesy.

The customers are not made to feel that the management is doing them a favor by serving them. They are greeted warmly, they are served quickly and efficiently, and they are thanked graciously when they leave, even though they've spent only 30 cents and taken up a seat for half an hour.

How many public places to eat and drink are there like that in this country? You could count them without taking your socks off.



by Bill Smiley

Sure, we have fancy restaurants in this country where you can pay \$50 for a so-so dinner for two, and be patronized by the wine waiter. And we have eleven-seventy thousand snack bars and lunch bars and grills where everything tastes the same.

But we have scarcely any places like The Oasis. It's not much, physically. Just a half dozen or so tables in the back of a store. Very much like the sort of tearoom you can still find in England, if you get off the beaten track.

The menu varies little, but there's a good soup du jour, good coffee and hot tea, fresh-made sandwiches, and a lot of goodies that are biddies for the many little old ladies and all the vulnerable young

ladies who frequent it: home-made pies, butter tarts, muffins loaded with calories.

Part of the fun, for me, is sitting there getting a jolt from my coffee and listening in.

"Just a pot of tea, thanks. Well, what are you going to have, Ida? You are? Well, what kind do you have? Well, maybe just a square of pineapple cake. And just one butter tart to get started on." And half an hour later, those two gentle ladies are walking out with about 600 calories they didn't need. Each.

Even when The Oasis is busy, there is no sweat. No barking of orders. No getting cross. There's time to laugh and joke with old customers, be pleasant to new ones, and make sure nobody is being neglected.

I've watched tourists come in, a little uneasy because they're not used to such informality. They tentatively order soup and a sandwich, find them excellent, wind up with a whacking great piece of pie, pay a modest bill, and go out looking as though they couldn't believe what had happened to them.

It's a place that brings out the decency in people. Seating is limited. The other day, four people walked in and there wasn't a table for four. A young couple, with a babe in arms, offered to move to a table for two that had just been vacated, transferring their food, utensils and baby. The newcomers were so shocked they could scarcely say thanks.

Very often, The Ticket-Seller is there. He sells tickets on every lottery you've ever heard of. He loves children and jokes and talks to the little guys in The Oasis. He drinks a coffee, displays his tickets, usually selling one or two, and hits the street. The Columnist observes.

Two teenagers grab a table. The Columnist listens. "So, I said to him, not on your life." Giggles. "So, guess what he says?" And so on.

Despite what my wife thinks, I am not enamoured of the lady who runs The Oasis, though she does have a beautiful face, figure and walk. In fact, she doesn't walk. She sashays.

I am in love with a little place of sanity, sense and serenity in this increasingly ugly world.

On the Leavell

With Helen



An Acton woman has recently had her first book published.

Mrs. Hazel Lightle, 35 Mowbray Place has written "Riders on the Plains," the saga of the early days of the North-West Mounted Police, and the hardships of the western trek of 1814. Mrs. Lightle delves into the heroes of the Red rebellion, their trails and trials of a vast, lonely prairie.

George Howard, a former R.C.M.P. sergeant wrote the forward. He is a former editor of the R.C.M.P. Quarterly, a position he held for 11 years.

The book is written in verse, and copies may be obtained from Mrs. Lightle.

Anyone who entered the poster contest for Back to Acton Days may pick up their art work at Halton Hills Furniture. All the posters can be found there.

The Georgetown and

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51 NUMBERS

District Christian School paper drive is back in business, after a few months in limbo. Newspapers can be left in the Halton Hills (Beckers) plaza on Saturdays only, starting the beginning of September. All proceeds go towards the school. For further information, call Sid Adema, 853-2213.

For the second time in two weeks, sympathy is extended to a well-known family in Acton who have

lost a husband and father very suddenly. The family of Bill Campbell, who died Monday evening at his Nelson Court home can be reassured the community is supporting them during this trying time.

McKenzie-Smith Middle School principal Gary Dawkins died a few weeks ago, also very suddenly.

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Seventeen contestants will be putting tractor driving skills to the test August 11 at the University of Guelph, the scene of the Junior Farmers' Association's annual summer games. The contestants are all winners and runners-up from eight regional Tractor Safety Rodeos, held across the Province during June and July. The rodeo event will begin at 11 a.m. on the parking lot in front of the Physical Education Building (P-12). An awards banquet is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m., at the Colonel John McCrae Royal Canadian Legion, 919 York Road, Guelph.

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Town backs farmer in severance bid

Despite a planning staff recommendation, Halton Hills planning board voted unanimously not to appeal a separation given Casey Boss so he can sell land for the hydro transmission corridor.

Councillor Russ Miller summed up planning board's feelings, when he said Boss had farmed 100 acres at 22 Sideroad and the Fourth Line for 20 years, was an excellent farmer who had fought the hydro line with his own money. Then, accepting the line, had fought to have it at the rear of his land. Losing that fight he now wanted to sell the land to Hydro and make a bit of money.

Planning staff opposed the severance permitted by the Land Division Committee since it would create an eight acre lot fronting on 22 Sideroad. Miller said Boss had never had any separations, and was entitled to it anyway. "This way he would have a small farming lot when he wants to retire."

The land is already cut in two by railway tracks, and the piece wanted by

Hydro is mostly swamp land, said Miller. He pointed out Boss has 120 sows on the farm, and also farms 100 acres in Erin. "By refusing this we wouldn't be punishing the Hydro we would be punishing Boss."

Mayor Pete Pomeroy agreed with Miller and contended if for some reason the hydro line does not go through, then Hydro would simply own that piece of land. "Morally Boss should have this separation."

Planning staff felt the hydro should be granted an easement only, so there would be no separation, but where separations for hydro corridor are allowed, claimed there should be a condition tying it to the outcome of the hydro corridor dispute.

The planning report said this had been done in the case of other separations for the same use, so that if the hydro line is stopped the severances are null and void, but if the line goes through the severances are in force.

Dick Howitt, solicitor for Boss, explained the

route does not go along the rear lot lines, because Dr. Solandt, who selected the route, wanted corridor to go through a notch in the escarpment.

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