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Smiley's grandboys are precocious

Well, a typical week. Went to a euchre party and learned that I was even more stupid at euchre than I am—as my wife tells me—at bridge. And this is abysmally stupid.

Fact is, I don't like games in which one must use one's mind and at the same time depend on Lady Luck. And my wife loves them. I had to, almost literally, drag her away from the euchre party.

And I hate navigating, which I also contend, despite the protests of all the old World War II navigators who thought they bombed Essen when they were bombing an orphan asylum, is a trade for idiots who depend on such weird things as mathematics and physics, and not the trade for an intelligent person who believes in witchcraft. The Lord, and a good pilot to get them home.

So almost endeth the lesson. My wife navigated home, in rain. I merely steered the brute. And she learned that the shortest distance between two points is whatever way the car goes, with me at the wheel.

After I gave up on her math, I turned to my intuition. We got home, finally, but the guy behind me wondered if I was leading him on a wild goose chase. Perish the thought.

And speaking of wild geese, I had a visit from my grandboys. There seems little connection, but there is. I took them down to the park to see the wild geese, to me an on-going source of awe. They're not really wild. They're smart. They are Canada geese who have discovered that it's easier, and saves a lot of wear and tear on the wings, to dump themselves in the local park, and feed heavily on bread crumbs and fish-n-chips, rather than fly south. Cost of flights south is even affecting the geese, let alone Canadian turkeys, who pay enormous sums to get in the sun for a week in winter.

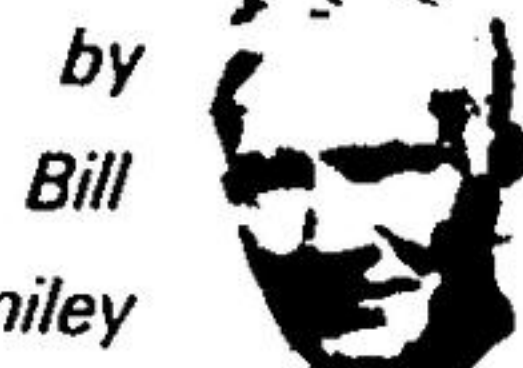
Anyway, the boys thought the geese were for the birds, yuk, and that the sea-gulls were much superior. Until I threw a bread-crust and they watched a great gander and an insignificant sea-gull go for it. No conflict. The kids apparently learned some deep lesson about Darwin, because they started throwing stones (potential Toronto Argo fans?) at the sea-gulls.

I also learned some other things, while the boys were here. I always do. My own kids were brought up in middle-class, properly repressive circumstances. They weren't to swear, break things, get their clothes dirty. They were to be respectful, not ask embarrassing questions of adults, and vote against the government.

These grandboys are completely irrepressible. They might be a little quiet, patiently, contemptuously, during a five-minute harangue after they've just knocked a lamp off a table, but it's just a cover. They roll their eyes at each other.

They don't swear, but they know all the word, as a little listening will confirm. They break things with abandon, always coming up with the wide-eyed explanation that "it just broke." They jump, deliberately, into puddles that will soak them to the navel. They call me "Bill." How's that for respect?

They ask embarrassing questions. "How come your hair is black, Gran, and Bill's is white? Why do you put your teeth in a glass at night, Bill, are you afraid the fairies will get them, and not leave you a



dime? How come Gran gets mad when you fall asleep with your mouth open, Bill? Hey Gran, why are you getting so fat in the tummy? Are you going to have a baby?"

We had some people in on Sunday, and a little girl, three, fell in love with the worst of the two, Bahnd, and followed him around all afternoon. Her father reported that she didn't get to sleep until ten that night. The devil's influence.

And I also learned something about our society when I took them, and dumped them, at a matinee at the local cinema.

First of all, it cost \$1.50 to get in. Each. It was a dime in my day. Second of all, acting the big wheel, the affluent, benevolent grandfather, I gave them a buck each for treats. They looked rather askance.

I checked the prices of goodies. No wonder they were askance. One dollar would not even buy them one (small) box

of popcorn and one small pop. Sixty cents for a narrow box of stale popcorn and fifty cents for the smallest pop. And Bahnd dropped his dime, when I made it up to \$1.10. What a rip-off. The show opened at 1.30. The movie, a cheap cartoon, began at 2.00 and ran for an hour.

And there, at the popcorn counter, in a town that is one of the worst in Canada, as far as the recession and unemployment goes, were all these little kids, waving two and five-dollar bills at the popcorn girl. Some recession. Some hard times.

Their mother had a convenient migraine, and their gran had guests to prepare for, so the boys and I spent most of our waking time together. It was like spending a weekend with two charming con artists. You know perfectly well you're being taken, right down to the horribly expensive games they want for Christmas, but it's so much fun that you scarcely feel the shaft going in.

Ballinafad

Joy, sadness, mingle at holiday season

by Winifred Smith
The December meeting of the United Church Women was a special one, as husbands and guests joined members for the annual pot luck dinner. The committee in charge of planning the meal had the tables beautifully decorated for the occasion. Just before supper the many candles, which added to

the festivities were lit. Rev. Bandy said grace, then each helped themselves to the buffet supper. When the meal was over, Joyce Clarke, president of UCW, said a few words of welcome. A short program followed, then all joined in singing the familiar Christmas carols. A variety of

games were then played which added to a most enjoyable evening.

The Christmas Eve service at the church was well attended. It was mostly all musical with the timely passages of scripture read at different intervals during the service.

The Christmas holidays were saddened somewhat for members of families in the community when they suffered the loss of a loved one. Miss Jennie McEachren passed away at the Guelph General Hospital on Christmas Day. She had been ill for sometime. We extend sympathy to Mrs. Mary McLean and Mrs. Ada Kirkwood and family.

Members of Ruth Burt's family, including Linda O'Connor and daughters, Lorraine and Bruno Knoepfli, and John and Debbie Burt, Doreen Burt and Mrs. Richard Knoepfli spent Christmas at the Smith farm.

Mrs. and Mrs. Leo Jamieson spent Christmas at their daughter and son-in-law's home in Hillsburgh.

Mrs. Lola Marshall accompanied her daughter Ruth and members of her family to Toronto on Christmas day where they spend the holiday with the Miller family.

New Years Eve party was as usual a big success at the community centre when the couples danced the old year out and the New Year in to the music of DJ George.

A Happy Healthy 1983 is wished for all.

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