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This year's budget tough nut to crack

Councillors must be relieved these days that they generally campaigned on restraint platforms in the election last November.

It will make it easier for them to bring down this year's budget at both the Halton Hills and regional levels.

Undoubtedly many taxpayers won't be happy with the budgets just as many won't remember they were warned repeatedly last fall that this would be a tough year.

But at least the councillors will have the comfort of pointing to their campaign planks and saying they told us well in advance that they wouldn't be able to improve levels of service, tackle much in the way of major projects or launch new programs.

We don't envy Halton Hills budget committee chairman Ross Knechtel and colleagues the job they are now facing. Bringing down a responsible budget, something Halton Hills has a fine track record of doing, is never an easy task.

This year it is twice as tough.

Case in point is the "preliminary" capital budget the budget committee is now struggling to trim.

It runs about \$3 million, about \$1.5 million would come from property taxes. Treasurer Ray King has urged councillors chop it down so only about \$1.1 million must be raised through property taxes.

It won't be a very easy job chopping enough projects so that \$400,000 is saved. Most of the projects contained in the budget staff framed, with restraint very much on their minds too, are simply continuations of projects started in previous years like Lakeview reconstruction or Glenlea reconstruction engineering. The remaining projects are items which really can't be delayed any longer.

And because grants are scarce this year from Queen's Park, council will be tempted to keep those projects—the province helps pay for even if in their own minds they aren't as important as some works which the Town must pay for totally.

Word from the treasurer that with revenues shrinking, when the operating budget is combined with the capital budget total Town spending should be kept at the same level this year as in 1982, about \$7.5 million will also be a bitter pill to swallow.

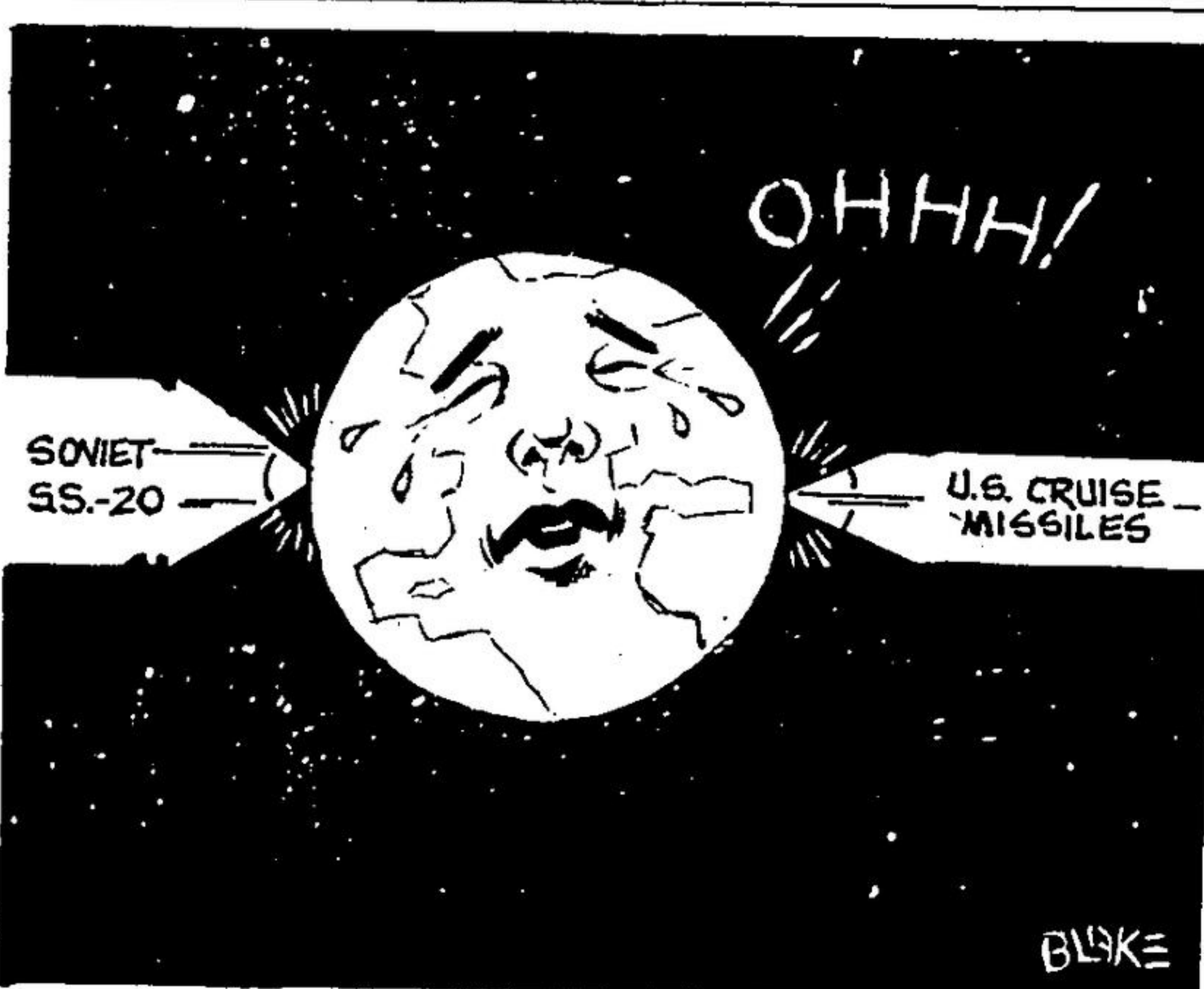
With inflation last year driving up costs over 10 per cent, just marking time will be a chore.

Halton Hills, because of wild spending other years by the board of education and the region, has been struck with a lock-step budget for some time now. To keep tax increases from throwing us for a real loop in past years, Halton Hills has bit the bullet and kept their part of the tax increase at a very modest level.

Taxpayers haven't given local councillors the credit they've deserved. They look at the bottom line and see a staggering tax increase each year and point the finger of blame in the wrong direction, at Halton Hills. Really it's been the region and school board which should have been blamed. Fortunately since their deficit problems of the late 70s the region has pulled up its socks, brought in as responsible budget as conceivable considering they had to cover the deficit. Since last year's unbelievable education tax hike, trustees now too have heard the message and are tightening up their spending.

Poor Halton Hills, just when the other two levels start practising a little restraint, which in other years would have given the Town a little manoeuvring room, the Town is now faced with the need for even more belt tightening.

Grants are down drastically, the province is passing its problems on to the municipalities and school boards. Interest the Town earns on money it collects will be down. And because Halton Hills hasn't been growing, mostly because of reams of provincial red tape, property tax revenues will not be much higher than last year. If for no other reason than to broaden our tax base, councillors must continue to push full steam ahead with growth. —GM



From the editor's desk

Brush up on flicks for trivia

by Gord Murray
Free Press editor

A Trivial Pursuits update. A week or two after Christmas I filled this space with a report on a new game two couples we know had introduced Helen and I to over the holidays. Trivial Pursuits. If the reaction in our composing room and what I heard from a few readers is any indication, people found it pretty interesting. I spotted a number of our plant people checking out the questions and answers published last time.

Well, we've tried a new set of questions and answers for the games and heard a number of newsy tid-bits about Trivial Pursuits since the first time. I wrote about it, so I concluded it was time for an update.

I won't explain the rules again, there isn't the space. It doesn't seem to be necessary anyway since from what I hear a lot of readers already know how to play. Suffice to say the objective of the master or original game is to consistently correctly answer trivia questions dealing with Sports and Leisure; History; Geography; Arts and Literature; Entertainment; and Science and Nature.

Anyway, the game's popularity is growing phenomenally. One player recently told me he'd heard Trivial Pursuits outsold every game by incredible margins at Christmas, even the all-time favorite Monopoly (both the international and special Canadian editions) by unbelievable 200 to one.

There's been rumors of Trivial Pursuits tournaments right here in Acton.

And a real testimonial to the popularity of the game, every morning a Toronto radio station, CFTR, plays the game on the air with prizes for listeners who answer questions correctly.

Since I first wrote about the game, we've been present when the game was introduced to other friends. Twice we've played it with rookies at parties, once in three teams of four and once in six teams of pairs. Even the players who

didn't shine at the game seemed to have fun.

Recently one of the first people who exposed us to Trivial Pursuits acquired a new set of question-answer cards, all based on the Silver Screen.

It was about time. One gal we played with often had taken a lot of kidding about reading the cards and memorizing the answers, she'd become that good. It was nothing for her to answer as many as a dozen questions in a row correctly. Personally I think she knew a lot of trivia all along, she certainly won often enough, and questions she didn't originally know the answers to she learned by playing the game repeatedly.

I was looking forward to playing the Silver Screen edition, even though entertainment is my worst category. We all gathered for the unwrapping of the new packages of question-answer cards, they didn't dare invite us to play with the packages opened lest they be accused of doing their trivia homework.

Talk about tough. I had trouble with the original cards but Silver Screen was something else. I think I got three or four questions right all night. You really have to know everything about films, from the start of the art all the way up to today's TV movies, to excel. Categories are Sets; Titles; Off Screen; On Screen; Productions; Portrayals. I found I couldn't answer questions even for movies I'd seen. The only comfort was the other four players (Helen was away) weren't all that much better either. It was a long game.

When we opened the Silver Screen cards we learned there's two more sets of cards on the market, though I haven't seen them for sale. One set is on sports, I can hardly wait to play with them. I'll finally have a chance of tasting victory. There's also a new set of general questions covering six new general interest categories.

Saturday night we played the original game, introducing it to a

couple which has never played before. Playing rookies didn't help much. The female half of this partnership, who was delighted to finally get a crack at the game she's heard so much about, could challenge our resident ace. I don't think she missed a geography question all night, and she was strong in the other areas too. Her husband struggled as we did the first couple of times, but still gave Helen a good run for third spot in both games we played, while I chased his wife for top honors.

If cards and other games have become a bit mundane, next time a crowd gets together try Trivial Pursuits, it's a great night's entertainment.

One last thing, I'll give you some questions and answers (upside down to discourage peeking of course) from the Silver Screen edition.

1. Where did Deborah Walley's Gidget go?
2. What 1979 film asked the question "What about Billy?"
3. Who was the last of the Marx Brothers to exit from the world stage?
4. Who won the case of Kramer vs. Kramer?
5. What Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright wrote the 1956 movie Baby Doll?
6. Who played the title role in the 1956 Ella Kazan film Baby Doll?
7. What 1963 movie turned Sweet Apple, Ohio, inside-out for a rock star's departure?
8. What film had Peter Lorre saying to Bogie: "You will please clasp your hands together at the back of your neck?"
9. Who was known as the girl who "couldn't help it?"
10. What words were painted on Sam Spade's office window at the start of the Maltese Falcon?
11. What queen's head was lopped off in 1895 in the first use of trick photography?
12. Who played the treacherous Brigid O'Shaughnessy in the Maltese Falcon?
13. Mary, Queen of Scots, 12 Martyr.
14. Spade and Archer.
15. Carroll Baker.
16. Bye Bye Birdie.
17. Kramer vs. Kramer.
18. Kramer vs. Kramer.
19. Kramer vs. Kramer.
20. Kramer vs. Kramer.

Back issues

10 years ago

February 21, 1973
A Saturday morning house fire left a family of seven homeless. Sid Spears, resident of the century-old Ballinad home, was away when the fire was discovered by his 16-year-old daughter Rosemary.

Kathy Fuchs, a Grade 9 student at Acton High, was chosen Queen of the Snow during the school's Winter Carnival last week. Finalists included Ann Luty, Diane Timbers, Judy Thibodeau and Roma Kuchmak.

A framed portrait of Queen Elizabeth was presented to Acton Council by Lakeside Chapter, IOOE. The portrait is to hang in the newly-renovated council chambers. Mayor Les Duby received the portrait on behalf of council at its regular meeting.

20 years ago

February 21, 1963
Jack McMullen, local contractor, said this week he hopes to bring dining and dancing to Acton by early summer. McMullen just purchased the building which formerly housed the old Roxy Theatre, on Mill St. The theatre has been closed for two years.

Cost of constructing the new water reservoir on Churchill Rd. North is estimated at \$178,000. Acton Council learned Monday. Acton artist Elizabeth Wilkes Hoey has won two first prizes worth \$100, top awards in the Ontario Souvenir and Handcraft competition held in Toronto.

50 years ago

February 23, 1933
An appeal for funds to carry on the work of the Acton Welfare Board has been made. The canvassers had hoped to have the work of calling on every home in Acton done this week. Let every citizen render whatever assistance he is able. Not only the needy of Acton have been assisted but transients as well have been supplied with two substantial meals.

One hundred criminally insane, including several of the most dangerous maniacs in the Dominion, were removed from the Reformatory at Guelph to a new building at Penetanguishene. The transfer was kept secret to avoid the gathering of curious crowds. Mrs. Matheson, who is visiting with Mr. and Mrs. N.F. Moore, received a radiogram from her daughter in Philippine Islands. An ordinary letter sent by post requires about a month to complete delivery. This message came to Toronto in five days. The present day methods of quick communication have truly brought together the farthest points.

75 years ago

February 20, 1908
Morris Saxe, a Yeddish resident, has purchased from Adam Cook the frame house at the corner of Main and Church Sts., and the vacant lot opposite McLean's blacksmith shop. The house contains three dwellings and is a fine property. Mr. Saxe has evidently prospered since arriving in Acton from Russia three or four years ago.

Mr. Robert Sprowl has again been awarded first prize for Sterling Oats, \$5 in gold, from R.J. Gunson and Co., seedsmen, Rochester N.Y.

As the result of the accumulation of snow the roof of the driving shed at the Disciples Church collapsed. This old shed was erected by the fathers of the Methodist Church 60 years ago when they worshipped in the meeting house on Church St. Mr. M. Crewson of Crewsons Corners has sold his gasoline engine and shingle mill to Mr. Dickson who is moving it to his wood yard in Acton. Still the snow banks grow.

100 years ago

March 1, 1883
Last evening the Brass Band played a number of tunes in the open air. We presume the demonstration, right after the provincial election, was a joint one, being on the part of the Grits in honor of Mowat's return to power and of the Tories for Mr. Kern's election in Halton. At any rate, both Grit and Tory participated.

A robbery took place in the village Sunday afternoon by which the G.T. Railway's till was relieved of about \$95. A young man who was sent here from Boston to learn the business is suspected. Notwithstanding the fact telegrams have been despatched in every direction the thief has not yet been secured.

Coles' slaw

Weather's vagaries have no rhyme or reason

Where are all the pundits who predicted last fall we'd have one of the coldest winters on record? I suspect they include those who voted for Pierre Trudeau in the last election or for Joe Clark when he and John Crosbie made their oil tax gaff. They've just disappeared.

Meanwhile we who live in the banana belt, that used to be called southern Ontario, are not taking a backward look as we enjoy one of the warmest Februaries I can remember with sunshine and bare streets to boot.

Last weekend my wife and I left here in the buggy for a wedding in St. Thomas. As we drove the skies got clearer and the snow scarcer, even along the fence rows. It was idyllic. Golfers were out on courses starting to turn green, tops were down on convertibles, people were riding motorcycles and bicycles and walking city streets with families, soaking it all up.

Those who had the resources and the time to spend some time in the Sunshine State of Florida came home with their tails between their legs. The state had rain, cool nights and generally unpleasant weather in January and the early part of February. They even had tornadoes down in the citrus belt, unlike last winter, one of their warmest and sunniest on record.



Of course, Canadians talk about the weather at the drop of a hat. More than a few are blaming the unusual turn around of the climate for some of the things scientist and others are doing with bombs, missiles and other paraphernalia. Then we also have the aftermath of some of the volcanoes which have been belching lava in Washington State and Mexico to create further havoc in weather patterns.

Thinking back, though, we've had warm winters before. When I was a stripling one year during the days of WW 2, it was so warm in March we were walking to school (no school buses, chum) in shirt sleeves. The girls were wearing bobby socks and saddle shoes. Some of the more daring even had their skirts hitched just below the knee.

I joined the Farm Service Force, a wartime measure to aid the farmers when help was all in the services. I started to work at a farm down the Second Line, a gravel road then. Later dignified with the name Highway 25. This move enabled me to get out of school at the end of March and still get my year when I completed 12 weeks.

It was so warm that year I can remember them seeding oats on the 25th of March and my former employer marking the date on his seed drill so he'd have a record for the next year and thereafter. It stayed warm for weeks, on into April. Then it started to rain. It seemed like it rained for 40 days and 40 nights and just when some were thinking of building arks it settled down. We had a beautiful summer.

In those days they blamed the vagaries of the weather on the bombs the Germans were dumping on England and vice versa, the

explosives the Allies were dropping on Germany. Take your pick.

Further back even that I can remember receiving a pair of skis as a Christmas present and never being able to use them because of the lack of snow in January and February. The only occasion they were used that winter was in late March when Ma Nature dumped an inch or two of the white stuff on us. The terraces at the old stone school had enough of it on them to zip down as far as the school creek.

So it could happen again this year, although March, the most unpredictable month, may have some surprises in store for us. That old saw about March coming in like a lion and going out like a lamb or coming in like the lamb and going out like the lion, has a lot going for it.

Snow. We can still have it in May. I also remember (what a memory this guy has) when along with two other carloads of Scouts we left for Algonquin Park one beautiful 24th of May holiday weekend. We camped that night just outside Huntville. We woke the next morning with about two inches of snow covering the ground.

You'd almost think we are being tested, wouldn't you? And maybe we are.