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Smiley remains on the fence

I am a very divided character. That used to be called mixed-up. This week, I had planned to come out flatly and make a lot of new enemies and new friends by taking a stand on the Cruise missile and, maybe a little shot at abortion.

But my Cruise thing got all mixed up with the Fourth St. Fusiliers fighting town hall, and I made one remark at a dinner party which began such an abortion fight between two old friends, that I got scared and retreated into my carapace to write about something we all agree on: the weather.

The weather is lousy. You can write that at almost any time of the year in Canada and make friends. It's too hot or too cold. There's too much rain or not enough. There was no fall and now there's no spring.

O.K. That dispenses with the weather.

Now, I was going to say that we should test the Cruise missiles in Canada, which the U.S. is going to ask us to do, despite all the mealy-mouthed evasions of our P.M. and our Foreign Affairs man, MacEachen, perhaps the only man in the government who can out-mealy the P.M.

My argument was to go something like this. After all, we are a member of NATO to which we provide planes that crash, tanks that you couldn't sell to Afghanistan, rusty, obsolete ships, and as little of our national budget as possible.

But if you belong to a military alliance, you belong or get out. You can't be a little bit pregnant. So let's give the Yanks something we have lots of — wide, open spaces — and let them test their little monsters.

by
**Bill
Smiley**



Then the local town engineer came up with a plan to rebuild my street, and I swung right around. His plan included cutting down a dozen magnificent maples (the press report said "removing several old trees"; would you say a dozen was several?), and removing a sidewalk where many children play.)

The hell with it, I said. Let the Yanks use their own wide open spaces to test missiles; and let the town engineer cut down all the trees around his own lot.

I was equally prepared to leap fearlessly into the abortion fray: abortion is necessary, but not necessarily abortion. We had some people in for a roast beef dinner the other night, and I casually retold a snippet from a novel I'd read, in which a hunter shoots a pregnant antelope, tears out the fetus, and eats it raw, claiming, "It's the best part of the meat."

Next thing I knew I was sitting between two ladies making like a tennis spectator as the abortion ball flew back and forth between them until the only thing I could offer was some rare roast beef.

So, I'll have to push those topics off for a bit until I am not emotionally involved.

Anyway, it's nicer to deal with people than ideas. The people may be a little

crazy, but when you mix people and ideas, you have insanity.

Many people have answered my request to "drop a line." David and Ivy Enns of Dalemead, Alta. are fed up to the ears with what they call Bureaucratic B.S. They've been fighting Revenue Canada for three years over tax refunds. "Yes, we have found it is very hard to find any honest men. We have been trying to find our nine honest people; unfortunately we have not succeeded."

Jean Groom reads me in the Dutton Advance. She and her sisters apparently had a crush on former editor Herb Campbell when they were kids. "Back to your last column—"A Dispirited Corpse"—which really hit the mail on the head...jack (her husband) goes up the wall when the forces are mentioned on T.V. or in the papers. The sight of Trudeau is enough to raise this blood pressure to the limits... We can understand why your brother has left Canada in disgust over the mess the forces are in." Mrs. Groom's letter is warm and friendly and so nice that I would blush to repeat some of what she says.

Incidentally, that column brought more mail and phone calls, all angry, but not at me, than any for a long time.

And another pleasant letter from Myrtle Holmen of Wayne, Alta., concerning my column "To Bee or Not to Bee" in which I suggested, somewhat tongue in cheek, that humans could learn a lot from the bees and the ants. "Your daily pattern of the human race sounds so gloom and uninteresting. A person's life and attitude make a difference in whatever they are doing." I agree. I was just trying to wake people up a bit who insist on living in selfmade cells.

Dome "Rubbish"

A regional councillor cast doubts on the Halton domed stadium proposal Wednesday afternoon asking his colleagues on council if they were actually serious about the proposal.

"For a regional municipality that can't find a site for its garbage, how do you think you'll convince people to build a domed stadium here?" asked Steve Toth, from Burlington.

"I think regional work must be falling off if people can take time to be on a committee," he added.

Mayor Pomeroy started the discussion by asking what the sub-committee—made up of four mayors or their designates—would actually be doing.

"Are we supposed to make submissions or start construction at the 401 and 10 or what?" he asked.

The mayor asked that regional chairman Jack Raftis be on the sub-committee and Raftis was added to the list.

But Burlington councillor Walter Mulkevic, who already offered a name for the stadium, took exception to Toth's remarks, claiming Halton's credibility was being questioned.

He reiterated his statement that Halton was an ideal site for the stadium.

"There is lot of merit to this," argued Oakville mayor Harry Barrett. "As funny as it may sound, not everything should go to Hogtown. This would tie in with the new LRT (light rail transit), the 401, the 403, the QEW—all of those go through here."

Council passed the recommendation to form a sub-committee about the stadium. Mayor Pomeroy said last week he thought the stadium was a good idea, but there should be more direct action on the provincial level.

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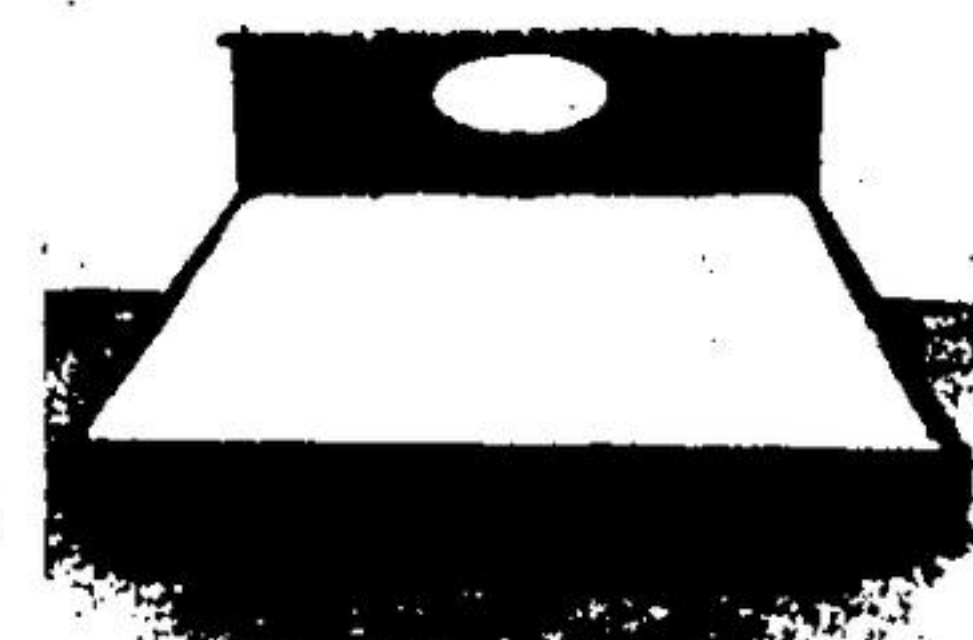
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