

# Chocolate soothes irate Czech, Gibber discovers

In a report on his 13-day tour of Czechoslovakia, Denis Gibbons focused on life in Czechoslovakia and what can happen when a journalist meets the secret police.

Today, this newspaper's former sports scribe recalls some of the humorous incidents of the tour he made along with the Burlington Cougars midjet hockey club. Denis is news editor of The Burlington Post.

by Denis Gibbons

A classic example of the screw-ups which can occur if arrangements aren't made properly is the ugly mood our Czech bus driver was in the morning we were scheduled to leave Pribram for a six-hour bus ride to Sumperk. We'd been told the bus would leave at 9 a.m. and when we were still waiting to rendezvous with the players' bus by 9.30, the driver blew his stack and I was designated to listen to his complaint in Russian.

He said he'd spent the past two days hauling Italian soccer fans around Prague, had only four hours sleep after returning to his home in Benesov, south of the Czech capital, and had been in Pribram with his bus since 7 a.m., because that's the time his boss told him to be there. He was to drive us to Sumperk, then make the same six-hour journey back home so he'd be ready to take another group on a trip to East Germany the next day.

To make a long story short, we finally got away and when tour leader Ray McLay came around with his bag of Chocolate bars, he included our disgruntled driver. I then risked the ire of several passengers, who said I should not be talking to the bus driver in case he put us in the ditch, to act as a sounding board.

By the time we reached Potebrady, halfway to Sumperk, the driver was in such a good mood that he not only agreed to stop for beer, but also carried the heavy cases back from the store. The friendship grew so strong that just before the driver left us, after bringing us back to Prague, he made a speech over the PA system wishing us the best. John Russell passed the hat around and our new Czech friend went home with a nice little nestegg of crowns.

Like Santa Claus, Ray always brings along his little plastic bag of goodies (Canadian flags, pennants and souvenirs) to exchange with Czech officials. There are always more officials with more titles than you can shake a stick at and if somebody is missed accidentally, Ray hears about it and out loud! It happened when the Burlington group toured a brewery in Hantsovice, near Sumperk. Reminds me of the 1980-81 Barton Tubes midjets tour when some communist party official didn't get

the Canadian hockey stick his colleagues received. He snapped something back in Czech, which translated would go something like "It's okay, I've got a Russian one, anyway!"

**Powerful Czech ushers**  
Being the editor of the largest soccer-hockey weekly in Czechoslovakia isn't enough to get you into a hockey game without proper credentials, I discovered. Presumyl Hruby, editor of Gol, the closest thing the Czechs have to the Hockey News, invited me to watch a couple of periods of a First Division Czech League match between Sparta Prague and Vitkovice Ostrava. But when we arrived at the Slavia Winter Stadium, well into the second period of the game, my colleague couldn't find his press credentials in his car.

While he practically turned the car upside down to find them, I asked why. He replied that another Czech journalist had recently tried to get into a game without them and had his privileges suspended. Another thing I discovered is that the most powerful people in a Czech hockey arena are the ushers. They wear red armbands, and they're often in their 50s or 60s. But sit only where they tell you or you might find yourself out on your ear.

**Important interruption**  
At the Sumicka Vinarna (wine cellar) in Prague, I had my dinner interrupted by our Czech interpreter who said the maitre d' had something very important to tell me. When we met, the message was that he thought I'd like to know that the Burlington group was winning and dining in the very establishment where Team Canada spent a good deal of its off-ice time during the 1978 world championships!

Every year I visit Europe, I find one of the locals anxious to blow the whistle on one of the notorious Team Canadas we've been sending to the world championships ever since professionals were first permitted to play in 1977. Last year in Finland, the tale of woe was of Alan Egleson leaving a blank cheque at the Hotel Hesperia in Helsinki to pay for damage done by Canadian players who were upset when the 0-0 tie between the Soviets and Czechs cut them out of a silver medal.

**Telephone trials**  
Listeners who tuned in to my nightly radio reports on CHML may have noticed me out of breath for the first few paragraphs. Making a phone call in Eastern Europe can keep you hopping. In Kadan, our first stop in Czechoslovakia, I had to book the call at the desk in the lobby, then run back up to my room on the second floor to wait for the connection. When I got it, the lady suggested it would be better for me



Denis Gibbons

to take it in an office in the lobby, so I ran back down again.

It takes anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour for the connection to be made from the time you book your call and make it clear that you want it to be collect. Quality of the line ranges anywhere from very good, as it was the night I called from Pribram, to almost non-existent, as Al Craig found out when I reported from Opava. Nevertheless, all 12 reports scheduled came through, which was an improvement over last year when we connected on only two of seven calls out of the Soviet Union, and had to pay \$50 American up front for each call because long distance collect calls are not permitted out of the USSR.

**Airport procedures**  
Travellers who have visited the east before found our exit from Czechoslovakia relatively easy this time. But it was an experience for first-time visitors. There are six major stages to go through from the time you arrive at the airport by bus until you board the plane. First is a lineup to show your passport and visa. Next you haul your luggage over to scales to be weighed. Then there's a second passport control at which your visa, now invalid, is taken away from you. Forth step is to pass through electronic doors which check you for any weapons you may be carrying. Fifth is the third and final passport control. Finally, the sixth stage is a personal search of your hand luggage and once over lightly with a hand-held electronic detector.

But it was a peach compared to last year when many of our people had their baggage searched both on entry to and exit from Leningrad's Pulkovo Airport. And Cliff Martin was happy he didn't have to fork over \$1,300 American he had to fork over for overweight baggage last year.

Town of  
**HALTON HILLS**  
877 5185

**NOTICE**

**PARKING**  
Parking of a vehicle on streets between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 7:00 a.m. for a period of time longer than three consecutive hours, is prohibited by law. As on street parking hinders snow clearing operations, please comply with the requirements of this by-law.

**SNOW CLEANING**  
Piling of snow or ice on streets in a manner as to obstruct or encumber is prohibited by law. As unpeeled snow and ice cleaning can be a serious hazard, please comply with the requirements of the by-law so as not to create a hazard.

**AUTHORITIES MAY HAVE VEHICLES TICKETED OR TOWED AWAY AT THE OWNER'S EXPENSE.**

**AUTHORITIES MAY HAVE THE SNOW AND ICE REMOVED AT THE PROPERTY OWNER'S EXPENSE.**

**YOUR CO-OPERATION IS NECESSARY TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE WINTER CONTROL MEASURES AND SAFE CONDITIONS.**

R.C. Austin, P. Eng.  
Town Engineer

**COURTESY NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING**

General Committee for the Town of Halton Hills will conduct a Public Meeting to discuss and examine a proposed Amendment to the Georgetown Official Plan and Zoning By-law 57-91. This Amendment involves the redesignation of Part of Lot 71, Registered Plan 617 to permit Commercial uses on the lands noted above. Further Information is available at the Planning Office.

**ALL INTERESTED CITIZENS ARE WELCOME**

Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Date: January 16, 1984  
Place: Municipal Administration Building  
7th Line, Trafalgar Road,  
Town of Halton Hills

I.S. Keith, M.C.I.P.  
Director of Planning

MILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY and HALTON COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION present a two-evening **SEMINAR on RETIREMENT PLANNING**

Thurs. Jan. 18th:  
**LIFESTYLE PLANNING**  
By Mary E. Atkins Carter, R.N., B.Sc.M., C. Comp. Health, geriatric nursing instructor and gerontology lecturer.

Thurs. Jan. 28th:  
**FINANCIAL PLANNING**  
By Johnny Johnson, B.A., M.B.A., Consultant to Management and expert in compensation and financial planning.

Both seminars begin at 7:30 p.m. and are FREE to the public, but pre-registration is necessary due to limited seating.

**Sheridan College: A Step Ahead**

**Sheridan Offers A No-Cost Program To Prepare You To Further Your Education Or Enter the Work Force**

**Academic Upgrading:**

- for people who haven't finished high school, this full-time program will prepare you for entry into College programs.
- for people who need to upgrade their Math and English
- for women who need career counselling and upgrading to enter non-traditional occupations.

This program starts any Monday at the Brampton, Burlington, Mississauga and Queen Elizabeth Campuses.

For more information, call Sheridan at Brampton 826-4360, ext. 299, Burlington, 639-0100, Mississauga 278-6134, Queen Elizabeth Campus (Oakville) 842-0105.

This program is supported by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Board of Industrial and Leadership Development.

**At Diet Center, you have nothing to lose but weight.**

- Natural program based on sound nutrition • Private, daily counseling
- Behavior modification
- No shots, drugs or prepackaged foods • Lifetime maintenance
- Low prices, no contracts

Call today for a free, introductory consultation.

**DIET CENTER**

**LITE YEARS AHEAD™**

**877-2900**

70 Mill St., Georgetown (old post office)

Hours: Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., 3:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m.  
Saturday 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

**TOWN and COUNTRY Cleaners**

**QUALITY DRY CLEANING**

877-0387

SAME DAY DRY CLEANING SERVICE MONDAY TO FRIDAY

HALTON HILLS SHOPPING CENTRE

**POPE & STARRET**  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Anne R. Starret C.A. Ronald D. Starret C.A.

232 Guelph Street  
Halton Hills (Georgetown)  
Ontario L7G 4B1  
873-1601

**INCREDIBLE... 2 DAY SAVINGS**

**1/2 PRICE SALE STOREWIDE**

ON **FRIDAY, JANUARY 13th**  
10 a.m. - 9 p.m.  
& **SATURDAY, JAN. 14th**  
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

**ONLY AT Aladdin LIGHTING**

246 GUELPH ST. GEORGETOWN 877-0880

**WHITE WILD**

**SIDEWALK SALE JANUARY 13th**

VALUES ARE DAZZLING

- FIND OUR ROVING POLAR BEAR FOR THE DAY
- VISIT THE POLAR BEAR HEARTS
- KIDS ENTER OUR POLAR BEAR CONTEST
- PRIZES FOR WINNERS
- A GRAND PRIZE OF A DAY AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

**Meadowvale Town Centre**

83 SHOPS INCLUDING WOOLCO, DOMINION, AGGIES, APPLEBY'S, ARNIE'S & PETTIS

SHOP 9:30 A.M. TO 9:30 P.M. MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY & TILL 8:00 P.M. ON SATURDAY

DERRY RD.  
AGINCOURT AVE.  
BATHURST ST.  
BURNHAMTHORPE RD.