



**JOYCE
BEATON**

"The Unexplained"

Recently Ann Landers had a letter from the wife of a mortician who was mortified at the clothes people bring to the funeral parlour in which to bury their dead.

This once again brings to light the macabre approach we take to dying and the strange, deeply rooted customs some of us cling to concerning funeral home etiquette.

I've known a woman who for twenty years kept a clean white shirt in readiness for her husband's 'laying-out ceremony.' There was nothing wrong with her husband's health... she just wanted to be ready if the inevitable should happen to catch her short. By the time he accommodated her the shirt had yellowed and was two sizes too small so all her planning was in vein!

Another woman (why do these things always seem to happen to women?) arrived at the funeral parlour with her husband's clothes as she was asked to do. Along with the shirt, tie and best suit was a set of long winter underwear! She said he always wore long underwear at that time of the year and he would be uncomfortable without them!

And yet another strange occurrence happened when my own four-year-old son's body was on view. A relative leaned over and touched his knee, uncovered between the short pants and the knee socks. "His wee knee is cold," she informed me, adding that I should bring him a pair of long pants to wear!

But the strangest of them all in my experience concerns an ESP occurrence. It was in Montreal when I was teaching Sunday School. Our choir leader would arrive each Sunday at about the same time as I and we would chat over the affairs of the week and the hymns to be sung that day.

On the Sunday in question I saw him standing in his usual place at the head of the stairs but didn't have a chance to talk to him. However, I did notice he was wearing a new suit. It was brown and blue pin-striped and looked very natty. I meant to say something but was sidetracked.

Noticing during the service that the hymns were sung unaccompanied I inquired as to why. My friend the organist and choir master had taken ill and the priest had driven him home before the service began. I mentioned to my husband that I had seen him and that he was wearing a new suit.

The following Tuesday I read his obituary in the newspaper. Upset at not having spoken to him when I had a final chance I phoned the priest.

"But you couldn't have seen him," he informed me. "I drove him home at 10:30 and he died at 10:45."

"But I did see him there at 10:45," I insisted. "He was wearing his new suit and I didn't even have a chance to tell him how nice it looked." I then proceeded to describe the suit.

There was dead silence on the phone, followed by "I can't explain it but you must have seen his ghost. He wore that suit for the first time Sunday morning and his widow tells me that is what he will be buried in."

Sounds like the Twilight Zone doesn't it? It's certainly one of the strangest things I've had happen in my lifetime.

I suppose it would be more appropriate to list it as "The Unexplained"!

Joyce Beaton is editor and publisher of EARLY CANADIAN LIFE, a monthly publication on Canada's heritage, its craftspeople and artists. It's available for \$5. yearly from 181 Main St. Milton Ontario. L3T 1N7.



FUN DAY

Children enjoyed a wagon ride at the North Halton Golf Club's first "Fun Day" while parents played golf or participated in a tennis tournament. Over 100 families enjoyed the day and later ate chicken and chips while waiting for the night's entertainment.

Garden, flower course starts

The only courses in landscape gardening and flower arranging being offered between Brampton and Acton this fall will be conducted by Tom and Prue Crookston in their home in Norval.

The Crookstons wanted to bring the courses closer to Georgetown and they have been very successful. "We even had people coming from Mississauga which is a long way to come for such a course," says Mrs. Crookston of the course they taught in the spring.

Mr. Crookston will teach landscape gardening for homeowners on Monday evening starting Sept. 26. The course will include how to plan your garden and will stress low maintenance and dealing with gardening problems.

Mrs. Crookston's course, flower arranging - basic and intermediate, will be held Wednesday evenings starting Sept. 29. Students will work with both fresh and dried materials during the course.

Mrs. Crookston already has three students for her course and Mr. Crookston has two for his. Since the Crookstons are offering the course in their own home this time, rather than in Norval school as has been the case in the past, they must limit enrollment to 10 in each course.

Employment group opens evenings

The Brampton Labor Council full employment committee is kept busy handling calls from unemployed persons and will be open Tuesday and Thursday evenings to answer all calls.

A meeting with Cliff Pilkey, of the Ontario Federation of Labor and Halton-Peel members of parliament is being co-ordinated for Oct. 5 Bill Cumpsty, chairman of the committee said Wednesday.

Letters are being sent to the elected members and the public will have a chance to ask questions.

Most persons who call the office, Mr. Cumpsty said, are interested in workmen's compensation, unemployment insurance, Canada Pension and welfare services.

The committee is applying the finishing touches to an in-depth research report prepared on the role of Canada Manpower. "We are not satisfied with Manpower at all," Mr. Cumpsty said.

Manpower is very "close-mouthed" on its actual operation yet "millions of dollars" are being sent within Halton and Peel regions by the Federal agency. Once the report is finished the labor council will ask Manpower executives what exactly is being done

with the money and what are the positive results, he said.

The committee is now two-months-old. All meetings are held at the United Auto Workers Union offices on Elizabeth Street in Brampton.

The objective of the committee is to cut red tape and speed up procedures for unemployed persons who have been disqualified by the Unemployment Insurance Commission (UIC) and act as a liaison between the unemployed, Manpower and UIC.

Since the committee first appeared it has been swamped with phonecalls from Halton Hills and Brampton.

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