

'We fool the rain,' cries the auctioneer

By ANDRE Herald correspondent
The scene is Limehouse on a soggy-shed Saturday with a nipping wind blowing straight from the North Pole.
It is the last outside auction of the season. The garden is set about with forlorn chests and cabinets, bare-mattressed beds and chairs backed against the wind.
On the long trestles best china stands aloof from the humbler kitchenware.
The secretive boxes and tarnished hope chests of a lifetime are piled open, picked over and slammed shut. Everything is tidily in order. Anything with a smooth surface has been polished. It is a sight to warm an auctioneer's

heart. . . "the cleanest lot of the season." . . a fleeting hour of tribute to the housewife's excellence of an elderly lady, and a feast for auctioneers (to coin a new phrase).
Ward Brownridge directs operations like the good general he is. One of his merry men makes a half frozen joke about the inclemency of the weather and how it would affect attendance.
"Not it!" says Ward with a farmer's eye on the scudding clouds still going thataway.
"One of the best sales we ever had was on the day of the Georgetown Fair when the rain drowned the town and shut everything down except us. That's the reason I had my wagon built. When people bring their estates to me they expect the sale to take place on the date set for it and I don't like to disappoint anybody."
The famous wagon is Ward's own idea and a good one.
A local man built it to specifications so that its sides lift heavenwards when heaven makes it necessary and the overhead tarpaulins save bidders from getting soaked.
On the other side the legend "WE FOOL THE RAIN" stretches the truth only a little for the heads do remain dry, even if creeping damp that starts in the toes ends up in bed on Tuesday.

"We got good prices for our client that day," Ward continues, "and if that kind of weather doesn't keep them away, nothing will." A strange and hardy breed, the auctioneers.
Now the crowd begins to get noisier.
Each estate auction starts like a wake with silent little groups of people moving up and down between the tables then gradually friendly greetings and club-like conviviality mellow the proceedings with the auctioneer acting as a kind of master of ceremonies.
This is a good crowd, more intent on buying than bargaining. That's the way it is with most bidders, competitive but not crude.
And it's off and away. . .
Fast bidding gets rid of the suntrifles first.
The linens go next; hand sewn, crocheted with love or boxed in Japan. . . makes no difference they'll all go sky high. A little bit of someone else's life is what the crowd wants today, instant home hearth and heirloom.
Mr. Brownridge is king up there on his footsure box, high and dry. My friend creeps into the back porch like an abandoned orphan child. The wind blows blue.
She is waiting for someone to hold up the rosey quilt, but she knows her auctions well and is already muttering, "I'll never be able to afford it." The quilt comes and goes at Christmas price. My friend stays on, woebegone but hypnotised.
Several bodies have interjected themselves between me and the auctioneer. I can still hear his voice, loud but not unintelligible. He is discussing the mechanical merits of three small clocks.
"One definitely goes," he promises "and the other two are guaranteed to tell the right time twice a week."
We are laugh and feel a little warmer for it. I begin to think more kindly of Ward even if his feet do have the advantage of my own, now slowly taking root.

The walls are bright with country scenes painted by his particularly exciting climb in bidding the crowd are loudly appreciative in their comments and laughter. Everyone feels a kind of relief.
"See that man over there," Ward says. "There's a man who knows what he wants. He said all he came for was the clock and by George, he's got it."



WARD BROWNBRIDGE AND HIS 'WE FOOL THE RAIN' WAGON

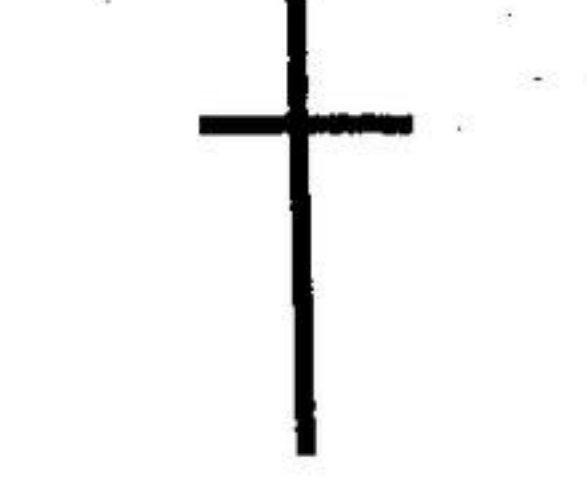
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When the auctioneer begins his attack once more. This time the victim is a schoolhouse clock a d Ward's big guns are out for he knows exactly what the item is worth.
"Who'll give me two hundred to start?" he demands.
There is a nervous titter from the crowd when someone has the temerity to offer only fifty.
But it's a start and the bidding is brisk to one hundred dollars, then there is the faintest of hesitations and the crowd holds its breath.
The auctioneer coaxes out another bid and the price escalates onwards and upwards until as if by tacit agreement it reaches the two hundred mark and the deal is closed.
He's a cool man who in his own words doesn't like hassles. His customers get a fair shake both buyers and sellers. He avoids some of the more questionable practices that tend to slip into auctions unobserved by the uninitiated and he tries to verify the condition of an article so that no one is the loser. Most of his work is with farm and estate sales.
He is honest when he says his preference is for outside work. After all he IS a farmer.
But inside his own house, he is a man sensitive to fine old things. Bits of collected Canadiana a pine lyre-backed washstand and a well finished chest he brought back one day so dirty that after hours of cleaning he was surprised to find the handles were solid brass.
In the corner stands a flatback display cabinet; treasured because it once belonged to Mrs. Brownridge's great-uncle, killed by a snowfall in the Caribous Gold Rush in 1868. The initials scratched on one of the glass panes bear witness to his name: Robert J. Ruddell.

Parents group seeks members
The Georgetown chapter of Parents Without Partners is looking for members so it can receive its charter.
At a general meeting Tuesday, Florence Boys, Canadian zone administrator, reminded the executive that 25 members are needed before a charter is granted.
Without a charter, the organization will not supply the chapter with any funds. Mrs. Boys and Kirk Maxey, associate zone administrator, have been working to get the Georgetown chapter set up.
Tudor Beattie, a Halton Hills solicitor, showed a film dramatising the breakdown of a marriage, and answering a number of questions about legal procedure as regards divorce. After the film was over, Mr. Beattie answered questions from the audience.
The next general meeting will be held on Dec. 13, and will feature discussions of maintenance and child custody. Anyone interested in joining Parents Without Partners in Georgetown should contact Janic Allan at 877-7215 for information.

4-H Club report
By MARCIA LOWIN
Meeting Five of the Georgetown no. seven club was held on Monday October 24th at the residence of Mrs. Lowin. Meeting Five was held with meeting Four.
The meeting Five subject matter was read and various definitions pertaining to foods of Holyland and eastern Europe were given by Mrs. Thomas.
Discussion, demonstration and group work were included in the meeting Four report.
Meeting Six of the Georgetown Two club was held at the home of Mrs. Thomas on Monday November 7.
The 4-H pledge was said and dues were paid. Meeting Fours minutes were read by Janet Hicks and meeting Fives by Wendy Chaplin.
The meeting Six subject matter was read and Scandinavian dishes were discussed.
Recipes made this week were derived from Northern Europe. This week we made rhubarb soup and apple cake. Before cooking we played various games dealing with our 4-H knowledge.

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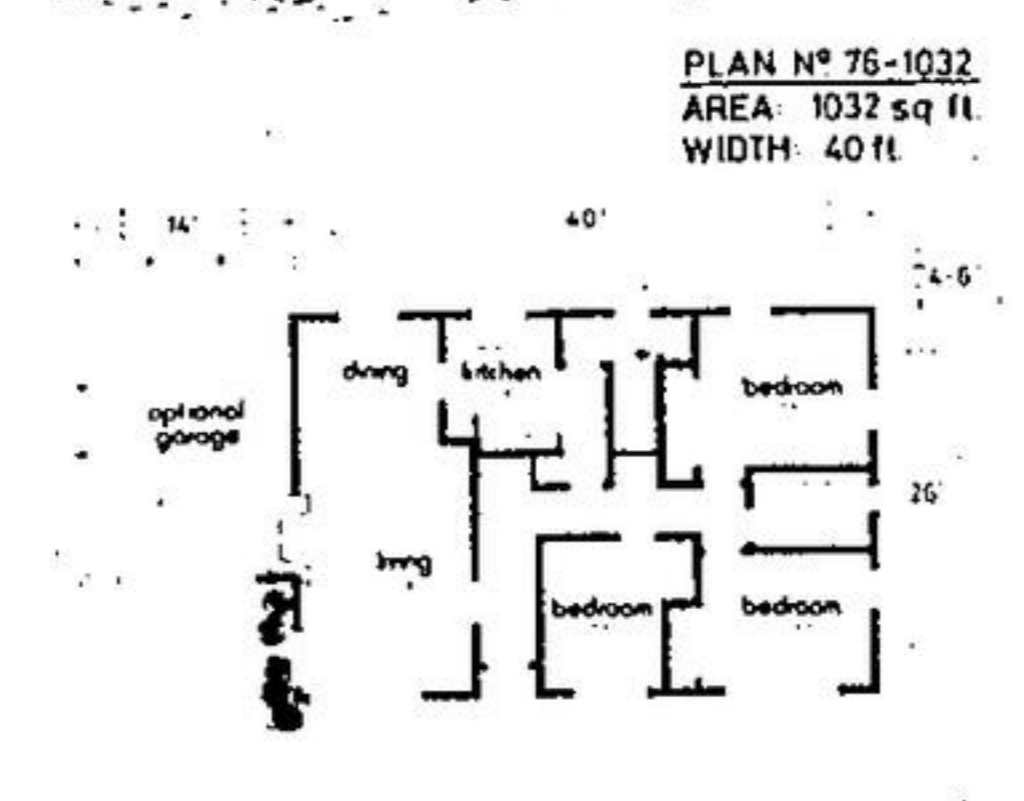
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Plan Number: 76-1032
This charming three bedroom, full basement, compact design has the romance of an escape cottage in some tropical paradise combined with the solidity of North American practicality. The brick veneer, vertical siding and cedar shake roof of the exterior establish a low profile appeal, while the upward sweep of the accent board and built-in rain gutters carry the imagination off to "the islands".
The weather-sheltered front entrance leads into a long foyer-ahead to the hall closet, left to the large, rectangular living-dining room combination. The living room has a centrally-positioned fireplace and corner windows facing a charming brick planter.
The galley-style kitchen is well planned and provides easy access to both the dining room and a rear entrance foyer with closet.
All three bedrooms are centrally-positioned around the bathroom and linen storage closet, and all have good natural light and generous closets. For the young family which entertains, the front bedroom could be furnished as a den or lounge, and a door led into the wall facing the front entrance hall for easy guest access.
The plans for this design provide for an optional garage, which would harmonize with the overall design and allow the home handyman a workbench to the rear of the garage.
A full basement provides abundant space for the future development of a recreation room, family room, hobby and storage area for the growing family.
Plans for design No. 76-1032 may be obtained at a cost of \$50. for the first set and \$9. for each additional set, plus \$4.00 for postage and handling. Ontario residents please include 7 percent sales tax.
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