

Halton Hills Outlook

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Their Outlook

Where is home?



One woman's view

By CHRIS CARLISLE
Things aren't always what they seem. Sometimes they aren't even close.

Take the television preacher who claims to have talked with God. If the preacher doesn't raise so many million by March, God'll call him home.

Where is home? A condo in Miami Beach? Hawaii?

Home is where the heart is. It's where you hang your hat.

So just where is this guy going in March?

Suppose the preacher falls short. He has led his viewers to believe he'll die. I doubt very much that he will. But what great television it could make.

There he is attached to the heart monitors. He has gone into a coma. The monitor beeps out his slow, meandering heartbeat. We see the little green or blue blips on the screen beside his bedside in the studio. Fighting till the end, he is. They play his old impassioned speeches begging for dollars to save his life while the blips and beeps slow down.

But the dollars just don't come in and the beeping stops. Silence on the screen while a million heartbeats across the continent speed up. He's dead. But wait, thirty seconds later, the blips start up again. They get faster and faster. Yes, it's a miracle!

He's not only been home, he's left it. He has been spared for another month. One more month to try to reach the magic figure.

Maybe as he lies there in his coma, the calls will pour in and instead of weakening, the heart will speed up faster and faster, until, in a frenzy, he awakens to thank the world for saving his life.

A friend watched a religious show, the minister pleading for funds to save the earthquake victims in some far off place like Peru. The viewer searched his mind for recollection

that particular earthquake in which thousands were to have perished. He asked around, checked files. Found no record of an earthquake.

While leads me to a very deceptive money-making scheme - or is that scam? - we folks in this land of lakes could easily begin. Our motto: Bleed the World.

As the cameras roll over the scores of tiny fish-bait villages on the bay, the sad voice begins.

"These people had homes. Jobs. Cottages. Retirement homes. But the levels of the lake rose, flooding those homes. Then winter came. Froze the waters.

"These poor homeless people are forced to live on the ice in tiny four by six-foot shacks. Some are without heat. All are without food and water systems. They are forced to fish for food through a hole chopped in the ice. They can't even afford proper fishing rods, but must fish with these crude little rigs, reeling in their catch hand over hand.

"There is no tap water. They get their drinking water from the holes or these little brown bottles from the mainland. Contaminated, the bubbly amber liquid makes many ill and incoherent.

"There are no sewers. Raw sewage enters their water supply through another hole in the ice out back. They brave blizzards and Arctic temperatures to take care of their personal needs.

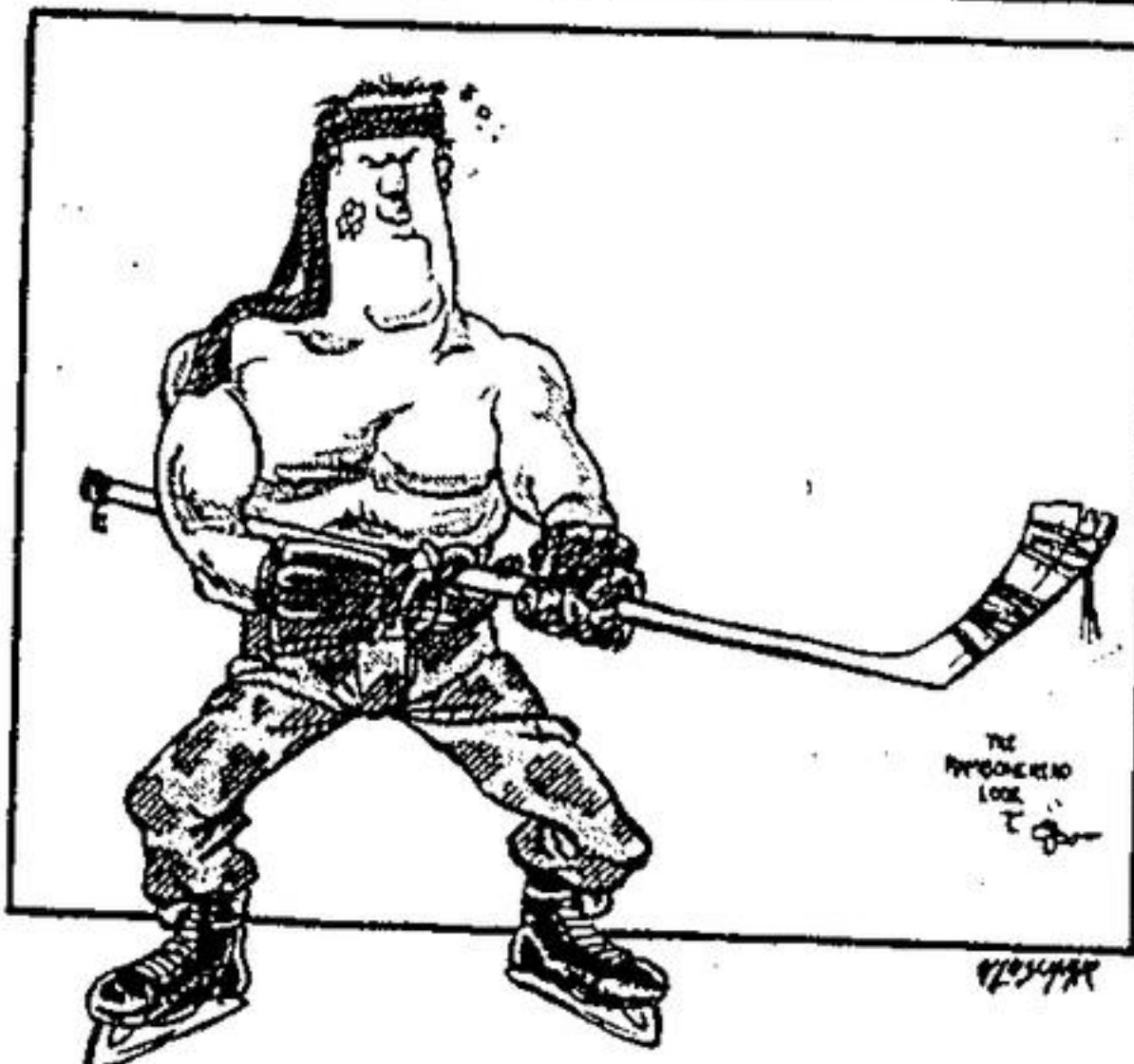
"These brave, struggling Canadians have no electricity and after dark they rely on the lights from flashlights donated by us. They are without books, schools or churches.

"We want to send them Bibles for hope on those long, dark Canadian nights. We want to build them a church. Using the most modern farming methods, we want to teach them to grow their own fruits and vegetables in the snow.

"Help us to help these valiant Canadians in their struggle. Send your money to: Bleed the World..."

Don't get me wrong. There are many legitimate charities and religious organizations out there. Thank Heaven and whoever for that.

But they aren't all what they seem. The miracle of television can confuse at times. When in doubt, think of the great Canadian sport, ice fishing. And ask questions.



CANADIAN HOCKEY UNIFORM - 1937

Shoe's uncomfortably on the other party



Ottawa Report

By Stewart MacLeod

I can't recall many of the exact words that Conservative MPs used to throw at the Trudeau government when there appeared to be an unnecessary delay in calling byelections.

But it was usually rather strong stuff. "Afraid to face the people" was one of the more common accusations. "Cowards" was another. So was "anti-democratic".

The over-riding argument was that, after a seat had been vacated, the government had an obligation to act swiftly to ensure the riding was not deprived of representation longer than necessary.

And there were occasions when the Tory outrage seemed singularly appropriate. Once was in 1978 when then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau waited as long as possible before calling no less than 15 byelections on one day.

The results indicated why he waited. The Liberals won only two of those 15 byelections, with the Tories taking 10.

OTHER FOOT
But now the shoe is, probably uncomfortably, on the other foot. It was last Aug. 31 that New Democrat MP Ian Deans resigned his Hamilton Mountain seat to accept a federal appointment. And four days later, Newfoundland Tory James McGrath resigned his long-held seat to become lieutenant-governor of Newfoundland.

Last Jan. 16, Erik Nielsen, former deputy prime minister in the Mulroney government, vacated his Yukon seat to become chairman of the Canadian Transport Commission.

Since the date of a byelection must be announced no more than six months after a seat is officially declared vacant, the prime minister had only

one day left in which to declare the date for Hamilton Mountain.

So, he lumped all three byelections together and announced they would take place on July 20, nearly five months down the road. As campaigns require only 50 days, voting day could have been called for mid-May.

Since summer elections are traditionally avoided in Canada - because so many people are away on vacation - and since Tory condemnation of byelection delays are so fresh in mind, it's obvious the prime minister and his advisers are deeply concerned about the outcomes.

With opinion polls showing Conservative popularity is at an embarrassing 22 per cent, it's probably little wonder Mr. Mulroney is willing to risk opposition ridicule with the delay. He must be reasoning that if the law of averages has any validity whatsoever, Tory fortunes surely can't continue to tumble over the next five months.

REACTION STRONG
Marion Dewar, the former mayor of Ottawa, who is representing the NDP in Hamilton Mountain, says the prime minister is clearly afraid. By holding the elections in mid-summer, she says, any government embarrassment would get less attention.

"It's cowardly," says Newfoundland Liberal MP Brian Tobin. NDP Leader Ed Broadbent called it "extraordinarily anti-democratic" - a phrase he might have had left over from the Liberal era.

Since Mr. McGrath swept St. John's East by 25,000 votes in 1984, the Conservatives have high hopes of retaining this seat. But considering Mr. McGrath's high personal popularity, the anti-Trudeau sentiment of 1984, and the recent Canada-France fishing fiasco, a Tory victory is not a foregone conclusion.

Neither is it in the Yukon, where Mr. Nielsen won by over 4,000 votes. In recent territorial elections, the NDP outpolled the Tories.

In Hamilton Mountain, Mr. Deans won by 8,000 votes, which augers well for Mrs. Dewar.

Letters

Cold water on paper's 'playful whimsy'

Dear Sir,
Your paragraph in the Editor's Notebook column of Feb. 11, 1987, concerning Gary Dunford's tale about the library staff member who would not disclose the title of a requested item to anyone other than the client, requires a little clarification.

In fact, it is not necessary to know the title of the item requested in order to claim it at the library. We hold all requested materials under the name of the requestor and only that need be given to locate the item.

I include in this letter to you the substance of my response to Mr. Dunford because I believe that the core of the matter, so lightly regarded by both of you, should be clearly understood.

"Dear Mr. Dunford,
The item entitled Top Secret in the Feb. 6 edition of your column was brought to my attention this week and as the Chief Librarian of the public library cited I am constrained to throw a little cold water on your playful whimsy.

Item: Section 28 of the Public Libraries Act, 1984, S.O. 1984, c. 57, specifies that a library board shall not release information which "identifies an individual user of library services by name or makes him or her readily identifiable by other means". This is construed as a general obligation to maintain the confidentiality of any library user's transactions.

Item: Under the heading "damned if we do and damned if we don't" - not releasing information to anyone other than the client can and does result in awkwardness and delay, but if we do release information into the wrong hands we can create unforgivable embarrassment or worse for our client.

Item: If, as your tale implies, the Georgetown husband, out of a sense of pique, mischief or idle curiosity, is withholding the message from his wife, he is not only doing her a disservice (her problem!) but wasting library staff time, obstructing public access to information, and therefore wasting public money.

It pains me to have to respond to your light-hearted little story in such a heavy-handed style but there is an important issue at stake, one which journalists, especially, ought to appreciate.

Thank you for giving me the chance to set the story straight for The Herald's readers.

Yours truly,
(Mrs.) B.R. Cornwell,
Chief Librarian

Little old lady: Conductor, at which end of the train car do I get off?

Conductor: Either one, madam. Both ends stop at the same time.

