

# Major gaffes at Mayor's luncheon

Last Wednesday at noon was the Mayor's Luncheon sponsored by the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce.

Before a morsel of food was consumed I was off on the wrong foot and stayed that way during the whole affair.

There wasn't much doubt, the audience could see it, I was out of step.

Today they say out of "sinc."

Ted Gorth was kind enough to give the blessing and I forgot him. Terrible mistake at a do like that. David Page had to remind me. I hadn't been so confused since I couldn't find the men's washroom at a Women's Lib do.

But Ted, old pro that he is, took it all in stride and delivered a beautiful and appropriate blessing. Gaffe number one was over, thanks to Ted's eloquence.

In vaudeville days I would have got the hook right then and there. Had they known I was going to continue committing them there is little doubt I would have been gone.

This isn't the first time I forgot to ask someone to say the blessing. One night a few years back I



*Have You Got A Minute?*

Stories by W. Steamer Emmerson

can remember a man of the cloth muttering in my ear "damn it to h-- Steamer, you forgot to ask me to say grace.

He wasn't too pleased.

The President of the chamber was next to be introduced and once again I gaffed. Trying to be as articulate as possible after being shook up by my first gaffe I rambled on in my introduction of David Page, President of the Chamber of Commerce, by saying "in the community we think of him as a criminal lawyer only we couldn't prove it."

Well there was the second gaffe and I still had poor old Russell trembling in his seat to work over.

The audience was sympathetic towards me. Audiences know when you are having an off day and they knew it was two down and one to go - Russell.

Russell has been on the receiving end of some of my humor several times and he has always been most gracious about my remarks at his expense.

Wednesday I could tell he was apprehensive because I had just insulted two very important guests and naturally he was hoping he wouldn't be the third.

Sure enough his worst fears were confirmed.

"Ladies and gentlemen, my job today is to introduce His Worship Mayor Russell Miller." Deep

down in my heart I wanted, I really wanted to give him a fine introduction, but gaffe number three was rolling off my tongue before I could put it in neutral and out popped "I haven't much to go on." Then I was going to say "Russell is at the awkward stage, he's fifty-two," but I forgot.

However, I did introduce him by using a shortened version of a quote by Theodore Roosevelt: It is not the critic that counts, or he who points out where the strong man stumbles, or how the doer of deeds could have done things better. The credit belongs to the man in the arena whose brow is marred by dust, sweat and blood, who, if fails, at least fails greatly daring so that his lot shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory or defeat.

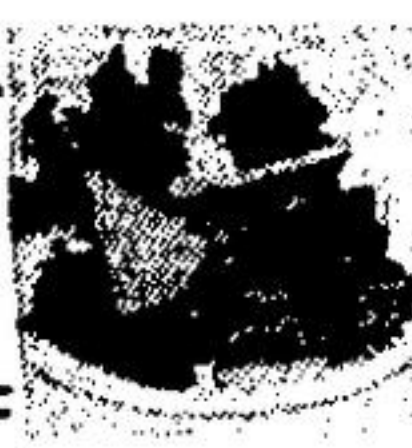
Everyone from Ted, David and Russell did a super job at a very special luncheon enjoyed by many.

It was just too bad I couldn't pick up the step.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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# Tough Christmas decision for newlyweds

It's that time again. It's time to make the big decision on where to spend Christmas. Each year for the past three years, my now-husband and I have had to make this same decision.

Up until then, life was pretty easy at holiday time. You see, then this here town WAS big enough for both my mom and his parents. Those days were great. I could spend Christmas Eve with his family, skate back across the park to my house for the night, be with my family Christmas morning, slide back over to his place for the afternoon, and bring him back home with me for Christmas dinner and the rest of the evening.

If this very liberal schedule still caused any domestic disputes, we could always eat twice. After all, anything to keep the peace, even another piece of pie. Those days, the turkey certainly wasn't the only thing stuffed.

Then Mom moved away. The annual skate through the holidays now sometimes glides over some very thin ice. No more quick walks across the park for us. A real decision has to be made. There's always post-Christmas get-togethers for the loser family, but one or the other must be the chosen location to be blessed with our presence.

As newlyweds, we're not into a pattern yet - this year is my family, next year is his. This year we set the pattern. The decision is difficult. It can even get personal. The differences between his family and mine are very evident and can be used as weapons on either side of the battle.

Take my family for example - please! Sorry about that folks, but you'll understand soon enough. I am the youngest of six very prolific children. Each is married. Each, except for me, has children. Except for my sister, that is multiple children. Altogether, we total one mother, six brothers and sisters, six spouses, and 13 children under the age of 10. Throw in a couple of grandmothers and we got us a football game - both teams!

I thrive in this mayhem, provided its for a limited time. O.P.K. (other people's kids) are great. I love them. For those of you who haven't caught on to the concept, here's why. Dirty or wet



Life In My Lane  
By DIANA GERBER

diaper, "Here you go Mom." Crying baby, "Oh, here. The poor boy needs his Daddy!" This time of year is especially great. I get to see the magic of Christmas come to life - and not pay to put it there!!! This is why I make a terrific aunt.

Hubby, on the other hand, always seems to get lost in the shuffle. He can never find anyone to have a good conversation with because there is always some kid asking him to play a game or calling him names and teasing him. Also he always seems to get a headache, which I can't understand. I also don't get why he seems to float around the house aimlessly for the next few days, saying blankly, "It's so - quiet. It's so peaceful."

Things are changing, though. My family won't be all together this year. Sis and her family have moved out west, and everyone is going to the "in-laws" for Christmas day. I guess hubby's family wins out this year.

Here is his family Christmas. Him, me, his mother and father, his sister and her husband sitting around the tree, talking. Notice how I could name everyone present. If Santa were around, he would say Ho, Ho, Hum. I say, "What is Christmas without a crowd?" Hubby would translate, "What is Christmas with some sanity?"

I'm just kidding. This more subdued style has grown on me a bit. I can actually dress-up without fear at his place. (Damn, just when Hubby has developed enough muscle in his legs to carry six kids at once!) Actually, this year at hubby's, things will even be more crowded. The new niece should live up the joint.

Things are changing, in other ways, too. This year, for the first time, we have a third place,

where we can celebrate Christmas. This will be our first Christmas in our own home together. Maybe its time we began to develop our own Christmas style, started our own Christmas traditions.

Don't get me wrong. I don't think either one of us is ready for a complete family withdrawal,

but I think we're both seeing a relevance in other family traditions. I think they could blend quite nicely.

Maybe in a few years, when we are actually paying for the magic of Christmas ourselves, we'll have our own pattern set.

Check back with us in a few years.

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