

Editorial

First rate reading

For quite some time now, I have wanted to lay my ink-stained hands on a copy of The Old Farmer's Almanac. The problem, you see, has been what might best be termed - two-fold.

In the first place, I don't really know any old farmers. Secondly, I don't really think I would want to lift his book and be chased all over hill and dale - even between Roy and Dale - by a deranged bull simply because I wanted some reading material.

The other day, however, courtesy of Canada Post, a copy of the 1991 Old Farmer's Almanac arrived on my desk. (Knowing Post's reputation for efficiency, I double-checked to make sure it wasn't the 1881 edition and also checked for hoof prints to make sure it hadn't been delivered by some galoot of a Pony Express rider. Canada Post passed the test on both counts.)

For those unaware of the Old Farmer's Almanac, it is indeed a treasure-trove of information, tidbits and trivia.

First published in 1792, the Old Farmer's Almanac used to (and still does for that matter) provide some fine reading when you are spending time in the outhouse or even the indoor version of same. It is the oldest continuously published periodical in North America. Environmentalists will also be pleased to note that the current version is recyclable.

There are planting tables, recipes, zodiac secrets and advertisements galore, including one for hernia appliances. I wonder if that dipstick who advertises on the radio for The Brick knows about that line of appliances.

I found out about meteor showers and earthquakes and got a kick out of an article gleaned from folk tales on things to know about having a baby and taking care of a baby. A couple of ex-

Editor's Notebook by Colin Gibson



amples:

- Labor pains can be eased by putting an axe under the bed. (My suggestion - avoid arguments in the bedroom.)

- Call a child 'Piggy' to make him/her grow. (My suggestion - stop calling the kid 'Piggy' as soon as he/she starts growing chest hair.)

- To make a child grow tall, put manure in the baby's shoes. (My suggestion - remember to put the kid outside when guests arrive.)

I also discovered that wall climbing is one of the hottest new exercise fads in athletic clubs. According to the information, some people are even building their own climbing walls in their homes.

As a former sports writer, I approve of exercise and fitness. With my circles of friends, however, their climbing walls would likely be made of cellophane and erected perilously close to the balcony with a drop of about 100 feet beckoning would-be climbers.

Yes indeed, The Old Farmer's Almanac is must reading even if it is only used as a way to pass time or other things.

Speaking of which, I'd like to tell you more about the treats inside the covers, but I must heed the call of nature and I'm taking the thing with me.

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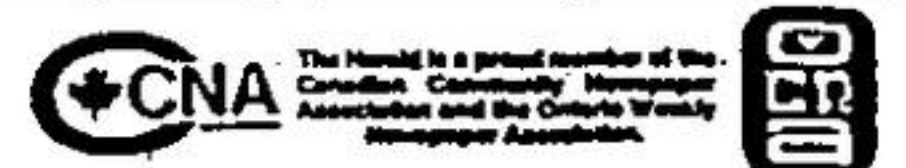
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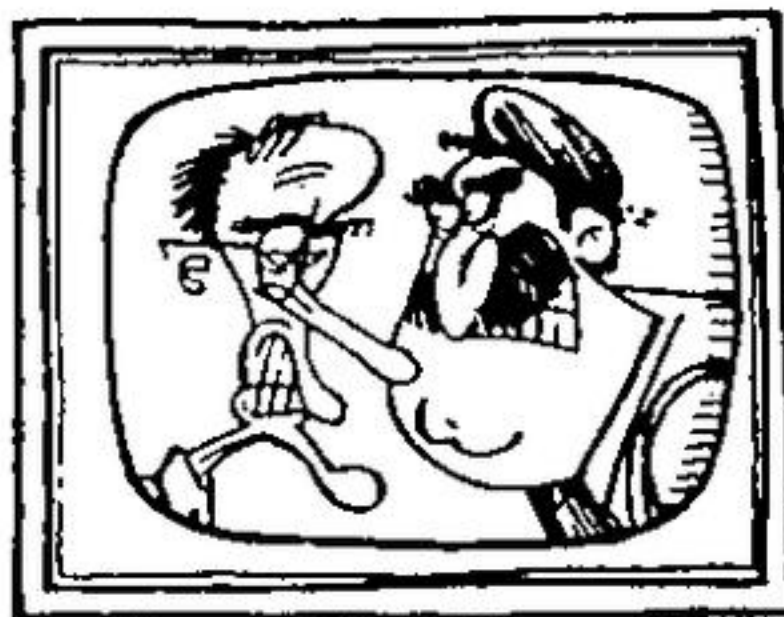
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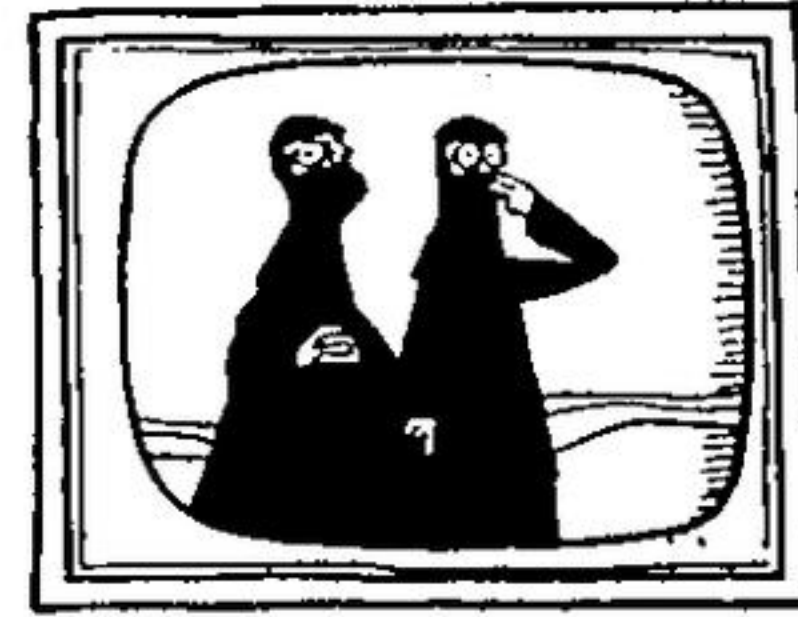
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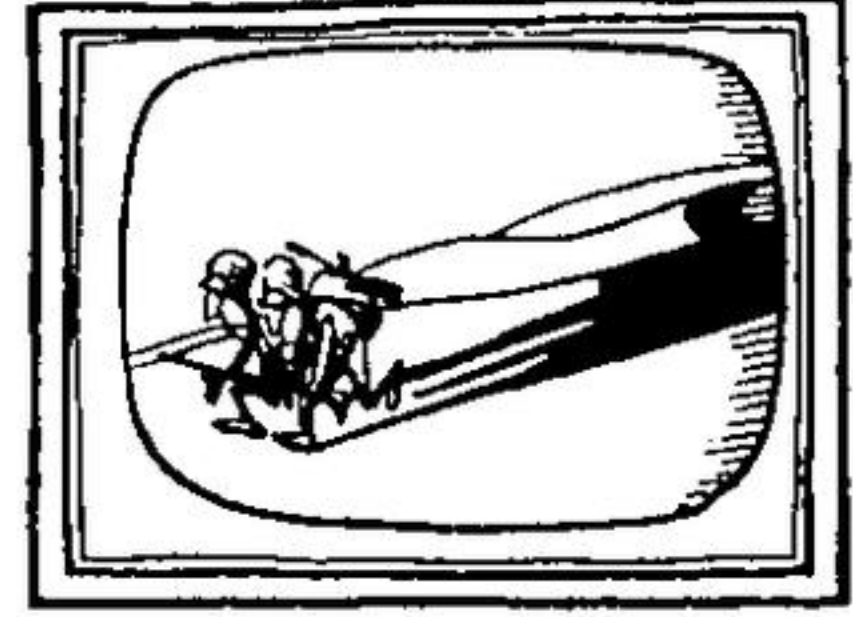
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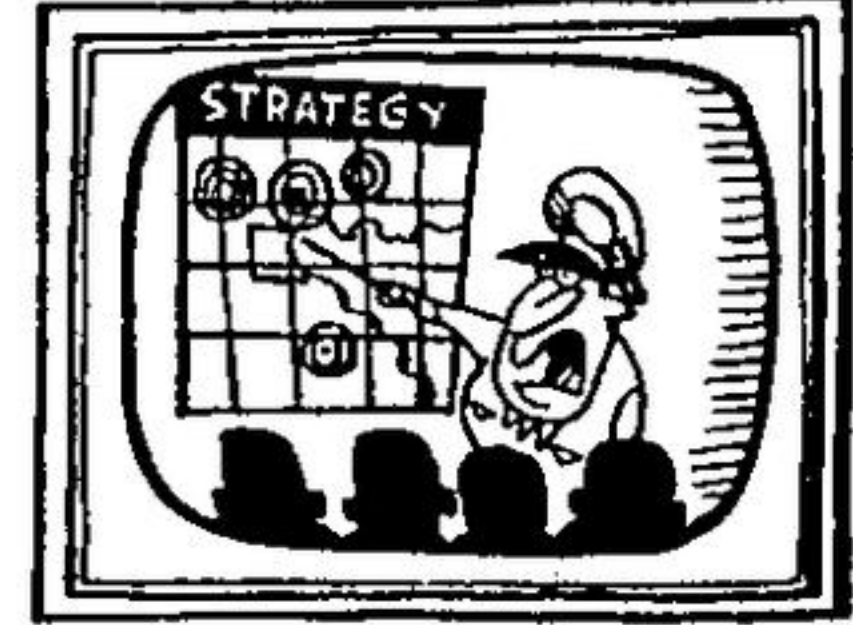
DARK SHADOWS



DEAR JOHN



TWIN PEAKS



DIFFERENT WORLD

Poets' Corner

YOUNG LADY - A WORD IN YOUR EAR

You're giving him rights to
your body
Don't give him the rights to
your soul.
You're giving him life long
commitment
Self-fulfillment should still
be your goal.

I know how much you love him
I don't doubt he loves you too
But love for a man is different
Than for the likes of me
and you.

These words may sound
quite cynical

They may make you angry
and blue.

But much as you care for your
husband to be

Don't ever forget about you.
Relationships aren't easy

As I'm sure you already know.
You won't make him happy by
losing yourself

The trick is helping each other
to grow.

By J.B., Acton.

JUST BETWEEN FRIENDS

He said he'd never love me
"We'll just be friends" he'd say
I thought that I could change
him

So I loved him anyway.
When I told him so, he left me
His last words very curt:

"I warned you not to love me
I didn't want you hurt."

It's not so much he broke my
heart

I'm strong and I'll live through
it.

What makes the pain so hard to
bear -

Is that I helped him to do it.

B. Brooke, Acton.

WAR IN KUWAIT

There once was a war
in Kuwait,
Everyone there was afraid.
They thought it was stupid
and such a bore,
To fight like that
especially war.

by Magan Bradshaw,
age 11, Milton.

SUZY SPRING

Suzy Spring,
Lost her ring,
Down the drain,
In the rain.
She went to her mother,
And her mother said,
You poor little daughter,
Go to bed!

By Jayde Wocker,
age 11, Milton.

LOST LOVE

He never said "goodbye" to
her,
No "so long," or "I'll write."
He simply never called her,
As the days turned into night.
Each time the telephone would
ring,

She'd pray that it was him,
As the days went by, she'd sit
and cry.

And her hopes at last grew dim,
She knew in her heart, they'd
be apart,

For evermore in life,
And tho they'd talked of mar-
riage,

She would never be his wife,
She'd never know what made
him go.

He needed to be free -
And he disappeared as surely
As a teardrop in the sea.

B. Brooke,
Acton.

Strange eating habits

There you are, traipsing blithely along and feeling only mildly guilty about the fact that you eat meat.

And then one morning you read an utterly ghastly item in the newspaper.

Apparently, a scientist from the U.S. and one from Zaire - the paper didn't name them, for reasons which will immediately become clear - are going into the experimental rat-farming business.

The two of them are studying giant wild African rats to see if they can be raised in captivity for food. The paper added that these rates are so popular in Zaire that rat steak costs more than beef.

Coming soon to a fast-food outlet near you: McRodent.

This is the sort of thing that could cause a fellow to reassess his feelings about tofu.

Gruesomely enough, this news item didn't come as a total surprise to me. A friend once worked as a teacher in Nigeria, and reported that taverns in Africa often serve fried bush-rat as snack-food.

Apparently, bush-rat is served as a kind of shishkabob. Rodent-on-a-stick - one of the few culinary concepts in the world that can actually make McRib's sound appealing by comparison.

The problem, of course, lies in how we're supposed to process this sort of information.

The plain fact is that different cultures have different tastes, and people in foreign lands cook all sorts of animals that a Canadian would never dream of eating. Hence the philosophical dilemma: how can a fair-minded Canadian presume to criticize another culture's taste in en-

Weir's World

by
Ian Weir
Thomson News
Service



trees?

We were forcibly reminded of this during the Seoul Olympics, when Western athletes had to cope with restaurants serving that traditional Korean delicacy, dog.

I've never been to Korea, myself. So I've never had to cope with a culture in which "chow time" referred to the breed of the luncheon special.

Somehow, though, I think this is just about where my open-mindedness short-circuits. Call me squeamish, but I'd just rather not think about poached collie, or beagle almondine.

All the same, this lands me in an ethical quagmire. How can I justify gagging at the thought of fried bush-rat or braised basset when I'm quite content to turn around and eat a cow?

In the case of eating dogs, I can hazard at least a partial justification for my opposition. It just doesn't seem fair to eat something which would, under happier circumstances, have been pleased to fetch you your slippers.

But this justification breaks down when you try to apply it to, say, rats. Rats do not love to fetch sticks for you, and it would be just plain silly to name one Rover.

Unfortunately, the same applies to cows.

In desperate moments, I've hazarded the argument that eating beef is okay because the cow, being notoriously stupid, is a lower form of life than a cat or a dog.

Obviously, this argument has problems. What do you do about cows that are more intelligent than most? And what about a dog that's exceptionally dim? Give him six months to learn how to roll over and then prepare the Hollandaise sauce?

On truly desperate occasions, I've tried to justify eating beef on personal grounds, pointing out that I was - as a child - once chased and badly frightened by a steer.

But I had the same formative experience with policemen. So where does this leave us?

Ultimately, I just have to fall back on the argument that I eat beef - as opposed to dogs and rats - because of the way it's raised.

The sirloin steak, as we all know, is carefully tended by farmers who allow it to remain on the tree until it has reached maturity and developed its protective cellophane coating. Then it's lovingly picked and hand-delivered to the supermarket, along with the fruit of the drumstick plant and the pork chop vine.

I honestly believe this. I have to.

'Cause we all know what tofu tastes like.