

# Thank goodness for the Cherry Brandy flask

A couple of weeks ago I told you about bottling home-brew with my Dad in the family kitchen.

This week I thought I'd let you know I'm back on the booze kick; Cherry Brandy.

If you have some in the liquor cabinet, put it in your wife's purse just in case. You never know when you may be stopped by the law for a spot breathalyzer test. It may save your driving licence from being suspended.

That little flask of Cherry Brandy saved a friend of mine from taking taxis, walking and relying on friends to get him back and forth.

One day I was short of court constables to fill every courtroom and I decided I would look after the "appeals."

This meant those who had launched an appeal on a conviction of impaired driving at the Provincial Court level could be heard in County Court.

I don't know what they call the system now, but in my day the Provincial and District Court were separate.

Anyway, I could pretty well handle the opening of the court alone and asked the judge if he was prepared to let me fill in while he heard the appeals.

He agreed.

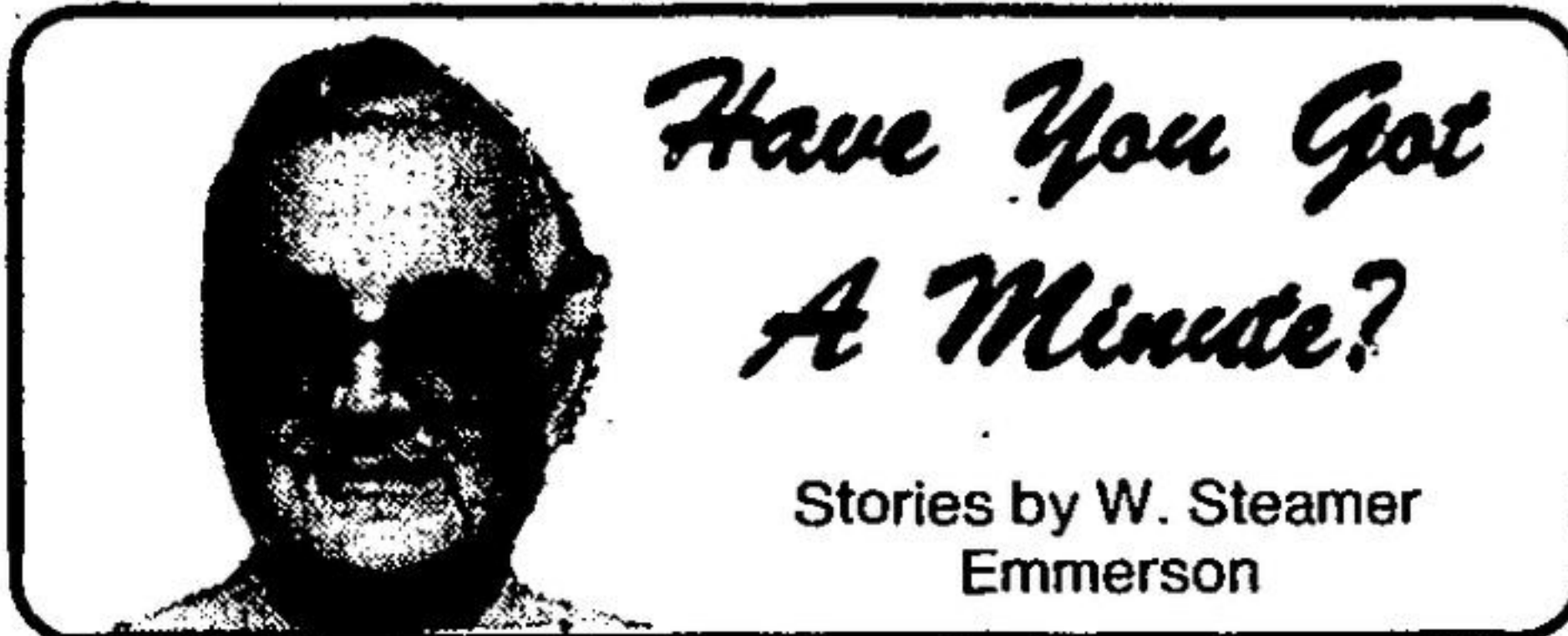
Oh, I didn't have to dress in my tricorne hat or carry my sword for this quiet session. All I had to do was make sure everyone was in place, go into the judge's chamber, gown him, open the door into the courtroom and shout order, loud enough to awaken anyone who had dozed off including the judge.

I had on a navy blue blazer and grey flannels so I was dressed okay. Now in "appeals" we didn't have a large contingent of courtroom personnel, just enough to make sure everybody got a fair shake including the appellant.

We were ready to go, everyone was in place. Justice was about to be done. Then I marched the judge to the bench, as those in the business used to say. I was startled to discover the appellant was a good 'ole Georgetown boy whom I had known for years and knew liked a little pick-me-up from time to time.

Naturally I couldn't smile or wave because that might indicate partiality on my part so I had to sit through his testimony without once cheering him or booing him when he was called to the stand.

Let me tell you I knew him better and longer than anyone in that courtroom and I knew he was going to be convincing. I checked my pockets to make sure I had a handie. It was going to be an afternoon spent rolling in the aisles with laughter, or sobbing with sympathy when my acquaintance took the stand - I knew that much.



*Have You Got A Minute?*

Stories by W. Steamer Emmerson

My friend was finally called to the stand and I offered the Bible for him to place in his hand and swear his oath.

He gave me a look as much as to say "they ain't heard nothin' yet." He was quite right about that.

Man, his testimony was something to behold. He held our attention as he told his story. Believe me I was listening as attentively as the judge.

He was an oratorical spellbinder. Man, he was a storyteller par excellence.

My friend is gone now but he sure told an intriguing, fascinating story that afternoon.

There were times I recoiled in horror when I felt he was on the verge of saying "ask Steamer there, he knows me, he'll tell ya."

I berated myself for not checking the court list before I offered to serve in that particular courtroom. Had I known, I could have switched someone from another court while I took their place.

But on with the story. You all want to know when the Cherry Brandy comes in. Just read on.

My long-time buddy was explaining to the judge he and his wife were going to meet friends at Someplace Else in Huttonville for an anniversary dinner. As they prepared to leave town, his wife asked him to pop into the cash and carry store and get her a bottle of Cherry Brandy, her favorite.

As a loving husband, he obliged, then headed down Guelph St. towards Norval.

Everyone was listening as he was quite articulate and sincere.

He explained to the judge he wore an artificial leg and the harness often irritated his shoulders so it was not unusual for him to wiggle and twist behind the wheel to seek relief and comfort from the bulky harness.

Naturally, he explained this wiggling and twisting would cause his vehicle to swerve a bit and anyone following might think he was an erratic driver.

Between the cash and carry store and Norval, where the cruiser pulled him over, he had wiggled and twisted three or four times at the most. In his testimony he figured the cruiser

behind must have thought he was driving while impaired.

Heavens, nothing could be further from the truth. It was his discomfort that caused the zigs and zags.

The arresting officer didn't buy my friend's wiggling and twisting story. He took him back to the police station back of the old municipal hall on Main St.

My friend told, with a whimper, his difficulty of getting out of the deep back seat of the cruiser and the officers' impatience. His artificial limb prevented him from exiting quickly. As he struggled to get out, the officer pulled him, knocking his glasses to the ground, smashed to bits. He was disabled and now rendered sightless. I was almost weeping at this point.

In those days the police had to call in an officer who was the breathalyzer specialist. It was going to be 20 minutes or so before my friend would be asked to blow into the machine.

While my friend waited for the test his wife showed up and by George, lo and behold, it dawned on him she had that mickey of Cherry Brandy in her purse.

"Your honor, I was so upset, shaking and embarrassed by this turn of event I asked my wife in a whisper to open her purse. I don't mind telling you, Sir, I took a pretty good swig to settle my nerves."

He went on to say in a few minutes the breathalyzer officer had arrived and the results showed a high reading.

"Any darn fool would know it was bound to be high," he said.

The judge asked what happened to the remaining contents of the bottle. My friend, the appellant, with a straight face said his wife threw the empty bottle over MacKenzie Lumber fence as she left the police station and it smashed just like his glasses.

A few days later my friend went sailing by in his car, giving me a big wave and wearing a smile a yard wide.

I thought one good thing is, he's alone in the car and if he gets

stopped again, there'll be no purse with Cherry Brandy to rely on.

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