

# the HERALD

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## Meaning and purpose comes in surprises

It's amazing, how it's always the small and unlooked-for moments that surprise you with the realization that your life may have Meaning and Purpose after all.

I had one of these moments yesterday morning, when my eyes were suddenly opened to the possibility that I may have been placed on this earth to make existence just slightly less unbearable for parking meter attendants.

Better put on your mask and snorkel, now. This column is going to be very Deep.

It was odd - in fact, quite Cosmic really - that I should have encountered a parking meter attendant yesterday. Because I'd just finished reading a newspaper trivia-item about the invention of parking meters.

As you might have imagined, parking meters are an invention of the Twentieth Century, along with the hydrogen bomb, mustard gas and male menopause.

Parking meters were invented 35 years ago somewhere down in the States, and apparently they actually caused riots when they were first installed.

This in itself says something quite fascinating about the changes in society over the past 35 years. Back in 1955, it seems, people had a much sterner notion of what constituted a violation of their rights.

If they were prepared to lay violent hands on a parking meter, imagine what they'd have done to a bank machine that swallowed their card and then flashed a little message urging them to have a nice day.

Anyway, we were discussing my parking meter attendant.

I'd parked outside a convenience store, you see. I'd gone inside, and spent, oh, say 35 seconds making a purchase. When I came back out the door, a small and reprehensible person was putting a ticket on my car.

I shudder to think what might have happened next had this been 1965. I presume the mob would have had him before I had a chance to intervene.

As it happened, I found myself sauntering over, grinning foolishly, and saying "Whoops."

I'm not sure how to explain this cringing response. Perhaps it was because I'd gone into the

Weir's World

by Ian Weir  
Thomson News Service



store to buy a pack of cigarettes, and was thus feeling crushed and unworthy under the weight of mortal sin.

In any case, he just stared at me, jaw slackening and eyes widening.

"You know," he said in wonderment, "you know, I just gave a ticket to a fellow just like you. Well, not quite. He was a little younger. And a little better dressed, and his car was more expensive...."

It occurred to me, briefly, that this fellow was doing a splendid job if his aim was to make me sympathize with him. He had phrased this just about flawlessly - except for the bit that came after "you know."

"That other fellow swore at me for five minutes," my new friend continued plaintively. "Why do people DO that?"

I was tempted to say that it might have something to do with his own sure touch with compliments, but he just continued:

"I'm only doing my job. Sometimes, I just have to ask the Lord for strength."

I confess, this took me aback. It had never occurred to me that giving out tickets - like ministering to the homeless in Calcutta - was a job for persons of deep spiritual conviction.

I had a sudden piercing insight into the misery of this man's life, and felt a surge of relief that I had spoken kindly to him.

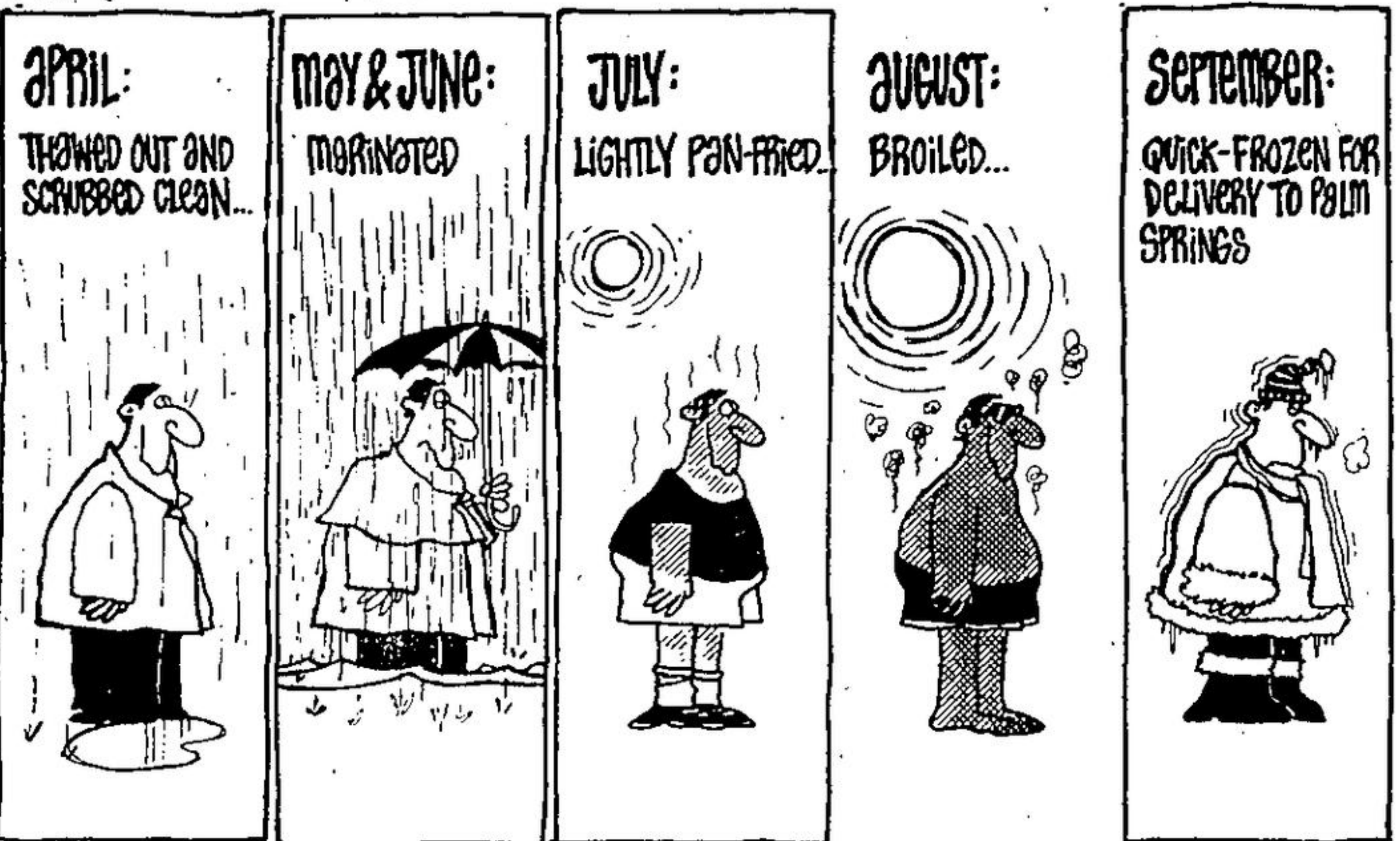
"Some people are pretty incredible," I said sadly, shaking my head. "Swearing at a guy over a \$5 parking ticket...."

"Well, no," he said. "Not exactly. It's \$25."

Then he jumped into his Jeep and drove off - so quickly that I didn't even have a chance to start swearing at him.

If only the Lord will give me strength.

## THE SEASONS ....



## Peoples' Forum

### Military needs advanced equipment

To the Editor:

The Iraq war proved without a doubt that sending troops to battle with anything less than the most advanced equipment is really suicidal.

With the apparent collapse of Russia (even though Russia still has the world's most powerful nuclear submarine fleet), Canada decided to save money and not build three nuclear-powered submarines.

During the Iraqi war, our few surface ships were deployed well out of harm's way and very little air time was spent in real danger zones.

Don't blame our men! The problem is our equipment.

Last summer I spent several hours on the Athabaska and was shocked when I was told of one problem that occurred in the

building of the first new frigate by the M.I.L. Group Inc.

These thips are normally blocked four feet above the deck of the drydock. This one was, but while building the superstructure, they forgot to install the engines or turbines. The ship had to be raised to a height of 12 feet and large holes cut in the superstructure to install whatever was left out, then rewelded. Later in the year, I was talking with a gentleman associated with the Great Lakes shipping authority, and he confirmed this event to me.

Furthermore, I understand the refitting of our destroyers in Quebec shipyards is well behind schedule.

The M.I.L. Group Inc. is owned about two thirds per cent by the government of Quebec. According to a recent article in the

Globe and Mail, 75 per cent of the contract price for three frigates has been paid to M.I.L. already, yet one is only half built, another about a third and the third ship just started.

M.I.L.'s contract overruns are already approaching \$400 million, and with Parliament on summer holidays, it's a good time for the Federal Government to announce they will give M.I.L. all the money it wants. After all, Mulroney has the G.S.T. funds to play with.

Why should the rest of Canada put up with such incompetence?

This is not petty stealing - this is a major robbery made legal by Mr. Mulroney and other Quebec politicians.

This is Canada's major problem today.

R.D. Pinkney,  
Georgetown, Ont.

### Incineration should be explored

Dear Editor:

Your bold editorial asking for a reappraisal on the Energy From Waste (EFW) alternative, July 17, 1991, is timely and worth the exploration you recommend.

Unfortunately, the garbage disposal issue ends with the 3 R's for both the Ministry of the Environment and many lobby groups. The real issue is what's next after 50 per cent reduction in the waste stream? The contenders remain EFW and Landfill.

The Carbon Dioxide (CO2) emissions from a well designed boiler are of the order of 12 per cent by weight for fossil fuels. It is unlikely this figure will be exceeded in burning garbage. CO2 is heavier than air and of course, plants breathe it. It migrates into the ozone layer slowly and then only heats the layer; being rich in oxygen, it does not react with the ozone (O3).

Landfills emit significant quantities of methane (CH4). This gas is lighter than air and migrates into the atmosphere quickly. It reacts, absorbs, 29 times its weight of the ozone layer. That barrier is both depleted and warmed.

The so-called trace elements,

furans, halogens, many varieties of carcinogens, remain locked in landfills to quietly form toxic compounds which eventually migrate into drinking water: No one, expert witness or knave, can predict when they will make their presence felt. The same dread chemicals in EFW can be identified and scrubbed and often neutralized because they can be isolated.

The Editor and Milton's Councillor Bill Johnson are correct.

EFW is the lesser of two evils. The debate should be opened and soon before the technical reality is totally eclipsed by wrong political posturing.

Yours truly,  
Bill Hyde.

Editor's note: The Herald thanks Mr. Hyde for his letter in response to the newspapers July 17 editorial, however the focus was on the banning of EFW, not on EFW being the lesser of two evils compared to landfilling.

## Write us a letter!

The Herald wants to hear from you. If you have an opinion you want to express or a comment to make, send us a letter or drop by the office. Our address is 45 Guelph Street, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 3Z6.

All letters must be signed. Please include your address and telephone number for verification.

The Herald reserves the right to edit letters due to space limitations.

## Poets' Corner

Being Me

Being me,  
isn't that bad.  
At times though,  
I am quite sad.

When I am sad,  
I think of my good qualities,  
and it makes me feel,  
pretty glad.

I realize that I am human,  
and I,  
like everyone else,  
have good points and bad.

I remember that,  
as an individual,  
my accomplishments are  
great.

Being me isn't bad after all,  
I just have to think of

everything good about me,  
and not spend so much time  
worrying about my mistakes.

Janet Banks  
Georgetown

FROM ABOVE

As I gaze down from  
way above,  
It is your sparkle that I love.  
The deep blue sky, does  
surround you.

The earth, the waters,  
so abound you.  
The glare of moonbeams  
shine on you.

By morning comes the  
glittering dew.

They are your beauty,  
width and length,  
For your bounty, your  
very strength.

Lois Richardson,  
Georgetown.