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Happy days are gone again

More's the pity. Happy days are gone again for another year, with only soggy memories remaining.

I returned this past week to the realm of ink-stained wretches after two weeks of holidays in beautiful Ontario-ario.

I did not journey south of the border to the United Ingrates of America because I feel what few ducats I am able to squirrel away for use during vacation time is best spent in Canada. Besides, I can't speak American and I'm not too sure of their water.

I enjoyed the brief time off (although some of the unfriendlies consider me more than a bit off most of the time) and brought back some stories to relate to the interested. For those not interested - well, there's always the bottom of the bird cage.

I trekked north for my first week of vacation to my usual haunt. A cottage on the West Arm of Lake Nipissing on Samoset Lodge property near Monetville, close to the French River area. It is a beautiful spot and well worth the five hour drive - even on Hwy. 69, the well-noted death road.

My son Jason and a friend of his, Steve (affectionally known as 'Lurp' to his buddies) accompanied me and my female companion to the near north outpost.

A word of advice to parents and other sorts who head out to the supposed boonies. Leave the computer games at home. These two characters must have spent half the week in the cottage playing Seaga games. There was a pool table at the lodge and time was spent there, as well. So much for enjoying the great outdoors.

I rented a canoe for the pair one day and like a forlorn whale, it spent most of the time on the beach.

The water lapped about 50 feet from the cottage, but for the most part, this hardy pair swam in the lodge's indoor pool and enjoyed a sauna. (It was 90°F outside and these two were in a sauna. Go figure.)

We got out on the water a bit, but unlike in previous years, I didn't encounter any major catastrophes - except for one close call.

The motor I rented this year was an Evinrude 20 H.P. and to put it bluntly, it was a lemon.

The thing stalled continuously and refused to start a few times.

I had heard rowing is good for your health - I think I returned fairly healthy.

Jason caught a few small bass and a fair-sized yellow perch. Lurp caught one bass, didn't like the feel of it and after performing various forms of torture on the creature (while attempting to get the fish off the hook) relinquished it to the watery wallows. At last sight, the fish was seen limping away on one fin.

I caught a bit of a cold, two hooks with my toes and a bit of a sunburn.

In order to get away from the

"As I
See It"

by
Colin Gibson



excitement of the cottage, my companion and I ventured to the Monetville Hotel one day. In three years, I have yet to find Monetville, but I know where the hotel is located.

We were greeted by Chuck the barman (why are all bartenders named Chuck?) who informed us he was from Linden (near Hamilton) and was an ardent Hamilton Tiger-Cat fan. This might explain how he ended up in Monetville. It should also be noted there were a few Toronto Blue Joke fans in attendance as well.

The Blue Jokes, as we all know, have been making like Pee Wee Herman of late - exposing their weaknesses.

The highlight of our time at the hotel was getting to meet a local couple, Ed and Ethel.

Ed, bent and gnarled, looked to be about 150-years-old but was still full of vim and vinegar. Ethel, maybe a couple of years younger, was just recovering from a near tragic accident.

As she reached over to bum a cigarette, she explained that she had been in the hotel a few weeks before with her portable oxygen tank. She suffered from asthma.

After a couple of beers she forgot about the tank and lit up a cigarette. The tank exploded and she was rushed by ambulance to a Sudbury hospital. She explained, however, that she had learned her lesson. Never bring the oxygen tank to the hotel.

It appears our steamed Prime Minister, 'Good Old B.M.' is no more popular up north than in southern Ontario.

According to Ed, he is referred to in their area as "Burnt Macaroni" - not good for anything except the garbage.

With this pearl of wisdom, Ed and Ethel explained they had to leave.

Ed had work to do on his chicken coop. Seemed he had been losing a few chickens.

"Can't understand why though," he pondered while scratching his head. "I've only been working on the damn thing for two years. Smart birds, I guess."

With that, the pair fishtailed out of the hotel parking lot in their pickup truck.

I got a glimpse of a bumper sticker on the rear of Ed's pickup.

"Preserve wildlife, have a party!" it read.

See you next year, Ed.
As I see it, anyway.



Catch your surgery on film

Let me ask you something. Are there times when you begin to think our society is getting a wee bit narcissistic?

I don't think this, of course. Generally speaking, I try not to form negative opinions of anyone or anything.

It's much safer to go through life in a sort of genial grey fog, nodding vague agreement with whatever people say.

Still, I was just wondering if maybe you had formed a negative opinion when you read in the newspaper about the latest fad that's sweeping society. I refer, of course, to surgical videos.

Unfortunately, I'm not making this up. Apparently, hospital patients in the U.S. have actually begun arranging to have their surgery videotaped.

Just think of it. The next time you're wheeled into the operating room, you won't be merely a patient.

You'll be the star of Bill and Ted's Excellent Appendectomy.

Or perhaps Ghost II.

At the risk of voicing a negative opinion, I should confess that I have a few nagging doubts about the current mania for home videos in general.

You know what I mean - the apparent belief that a birthday party, kindergarten recital or pee-wee hockey game hasn't really happened unless you've videotaped it.

Oh, I suppose I see the theory, here. The theory is that little Billy will be eternally grateful that you taped his first T-ball game, so that he can watch his athletic triumphs with pride and delight in future years.

Like most theories, however, this one has a flaw - the problem being that it overlooks two fundamental laws of life.

One: most of us are wretchedly incapable of athletic triumphs. Two: but memory is kind.

Personally, I was a middling-to-rotten Little Leaguer. Every year, however, I get better. And there exist no lying videotapes to contradict me.

But I digress. We were addressing the fundamental question: who on earth would want a videotape of his surgery?

I certainly embrace the principle that self-awareness is impor-

Weir's
World
by
Ian Weir
Thomson News
Service



tant, and that we should all take time occasionally to look deep within ourselves. But surely there are limits.

Like most people, I've undergone surgery. And I took the traditional approach to the experience - that this was a private matter, involving my surgeon and my internal organs.

If the two of them were to be involved in some sort of dispute, then I didn't want to hear about it.

Besides, there are other people's feelings to be considered, here.

For starters, we know that home videos never remain private. The whole point of doing a video is to show it to your

friends - which really doesn't bear thinking on at all.

"Okay, gang. First we'll watch the doc strip my varicose veins - and then we'll fire up the barbecue."

And what about the surgeon? I can't quite imagine the surgeon being thrilled about arriving at the hospital and discovering that he's expected to give a feature performance, complete with pre-interview.

"Well, Dave, that gall bladder's big, and it's tough. But we're just going to go in there and give 110 per cent."

Besides, videotaping the doctor denies him the chance to use many of the normal surgical terms during the operation - like for instance, "whoops."

I dunno. I guess we'll just have to get used to living in a society in which having your hemorrhoids removed becomes an exercise in self-expression.

And in which doctors give a whole new answer to the question of why they continue to dedicate themselves to the healing arts, despite the stress, and long hours and the general lack of public appreciation:

"What, and leave show business?"

Peoples Forum

Lessons from Garth

Dear Editor:

The headline on page 11 reads "Ottawa to soon outlaw government spending." My first reaction was either your paper had gone bonkers or I was smoking something that put my vision in question.

Upon reading the Ottawa Report one finds the headline completely false. What it says is that the feds are going to cap their spending by 3 per cent, a far different cry from the headline.

Libertarians have been saying for years - take away the credit card. There is no accountability by governments any more.

A letter to the Editor thanks Garth for taking them off of unemployment or welfare and hiring them for the GST office. We taxpayers are lucky to have Garth, take off one government spending scheme, put on another.

Either way taxpayers lose, the only winner is Garth, who no doubt enjoys the travel and perks, at taxpayers expense.

By the way Garth, you sound more like a Libertarian every day. It seems you are learning.

Sincerely,
John Shadbolt,
Libertarian.

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.

Poets' Corner

THE WORLD

An empty desert
like a black home in the sky,
I want to get out.
A fleeting spring day,
with cruelty and coldness,

no understanding.
The animals died,
I'm alone and afraid,
all caught up in grief.

Kari Andrews, Acton.