

Out at the Ranch

with Bill Ellis



THE TEMPTATION

Here comes Easter and it causes much concern for me. Maybe there is concern in my family too - but they are hiding it well.

As usual, my consumption level will go all out of whack and it will take weeks to get it corrected. No, it's not the coloured eggs, nor the baked ham -- or even the Bach beer. It is the dreaded, DEMON CHOCOLATE!

Damn that Easter Bunny and his Chocolate! Please pardon my profanity, but you have no idea of what a chocolate addict goes through!

Valentine's Day is not so bad. It is only one day long. And no one, who knows me, would dare offer me chocolates on Valentine's Day. They know it could set me off on a chocolate binge right through till June!

Christmas is the second most dangerous period in the year, for a chocolate addict. I sneak away to my favorite chocolate den to load up. I must not mention the name of this candy company in Guelph -- you might become addicted too! They recognize me as an addict. I have all the signs -- upon entering the store, I stop dead in my tracks and let the chocolate aroma envelop me. I admire all the goodies as I make my circuit of the store -- then it is selection time! Will that be dark, light or white chocolate! Hard centres, soft centres, caramel centres, chocolate covered peanut clusters, raisin clusters -- or perhaps chocolate bark -- and of course, the world's best peppermint patties in dark chocolate! I'm

always afraid I don't have enough money with me!

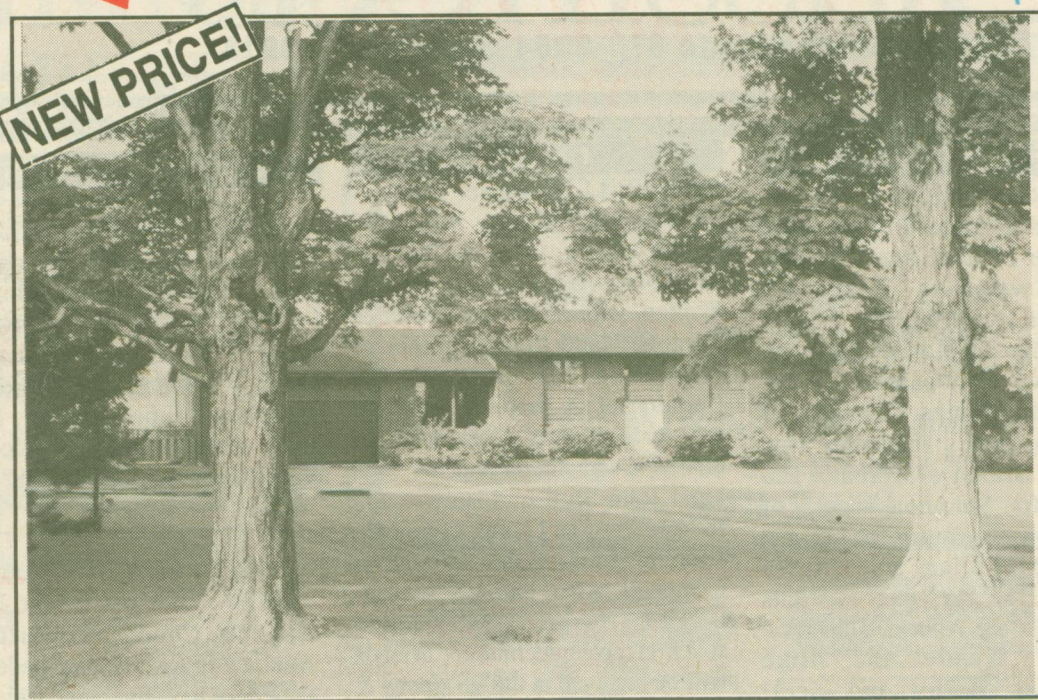
Any day now, I will be drawn, as if by a magnet, to Schneiders' Reliable Sweets in Guelph, for my Easter chocolate. There -- I have told you the name -- you are on your own!

I will walk in with great reverence for this mecca and take the aroma -- as we addicts say. Then I look around at the customers. We mostly nod or speak to each other -- we all know why we are there. A well dressed matron says she wants some chocolate eggs for her grand-daughter. Some story! I used to tell that to the clerk too. She would always smile. I don't bother making any pretense anymore. You know those big marshmallow eggs enrobed in dark chocolate? I confess it here! I have to eat one before I even drive out of the parking lot. Isn't that awful!

Pat says that maybe I should seek professional help. What if this chocolate thing could effect my family and my work? What if I started to blow my whole weekly allowance on chocolate? What if I became a solitary chocolate eater? What if I had to have a chocolate first thing in the morning? What if I hid chocolate in the chandelier? I can hear people talking now. That poor family -- Bill has become a Chocoholic! The shame of it all!

I must summon up all my courage! I must try harder to fight this Demon Chocolate -- and Good Luck to all of you chocolate addicts. See you in the store!

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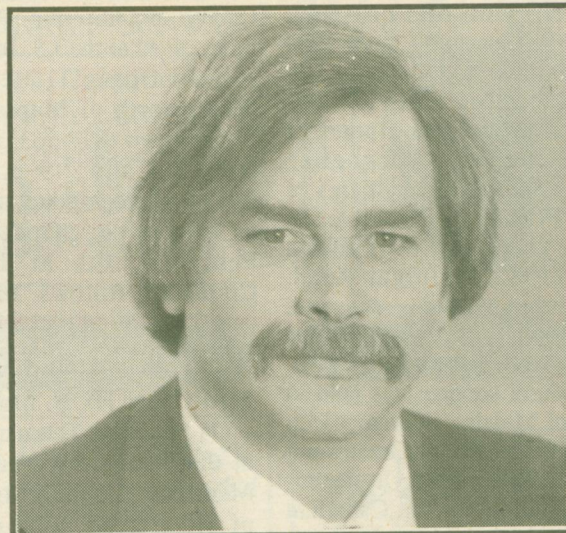


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