

WORD'S WORTH

With Eric Balkind



Learning to eat a bit of "humble pie"

For the umpteenth time, we'd been raided by the masked marauder. Despite three bricks piled on top he'd managed to dislodge the lid of the composter and then he'd helped himself to the tasty morsels inside.

This must be some raccoon, I thought to myself, but I guess it's time to teach him a lesson. Whereupon, I went out and found myself a large trap. I set the thing carefully, baited it as per instructions and waited. Stealthily, I checked each morning at daylight but it remained empty — even the neighbourhood cats gave the thing a wide berth. I began to think that I lacked the necessary guile.

After several days, I realized that I wasn't going to make a name for myself in this particular endeavour so I decided to return the trap; when I walked around the corner of the shed to retrieve it I discovered that I'd caught a skunk! That was when the fun started.

I called the Animal Control Officer and the conversation went something like this:

Me: "Good morning, I set a trap in my yard to catch a raccoon but I ended up with a skunk. What should I do?"

A.C.O. (With measured tone): "You'll just have to release it."

Me (After a period of silence): "How do I do that?"

A.C.O. "You'll have to open the trap and let it out."

Me: — protracted silence.

At about this point, the A.C.O. must have known that he was dealing with what the English call "a right Charlie" but he rose to the occasion and, to his lasting credit, he took pity on me and offered to help.

When he arrived and saw the almost inaccessible location where I had set the trap he muttered something about "people who didn't know what they were doing getting themselves into all kinds of trouble." I kind of hung my head and admitted to him that he was right. After all, I said to myself, Heaven knows how many times I've said similar things about others; why, I may even have said them at times in this column. (I think this is the point where I realized that, once in a while, a dose of humility is good for the soul.)

In the course of being rescued, the skunk certainly let us know that he/she was there but, in the end experience prevailed and the little menace trotted off home — wherever. For my part, I was grateful to the A.C.O. and I promise publicly that my days as a wild animal catcher are over.

Good to see students from McKenzie-Smith being encouraged to move out into the world outside of school with the job-shadowing program. In days gone by, adolescents gained a measure of identity by working alongside older family members and their contributions to society really counted. In a world in which such opportunities have, to a large extent, disappeared, initiatives such as job-shadowing are bound to help. Well done.

Wit & Wisdom

I hear that, here and there, it's the hunting season again. That probably means the usual quota of interesting stories about the ones that got away but — how about those who didn't? Here's a report (on a country which shall, for the moment, be nameless) but if you are thinking of going travelling and hunting give me a call and I'll tell you of one place you'd be wise to avoid.

The hunting season began yesterday — with the hunters falling almost as fast as the pheasants.

The "bag" totalled at least nine people wounded and thousands more hurt in fighting over who had shot what.

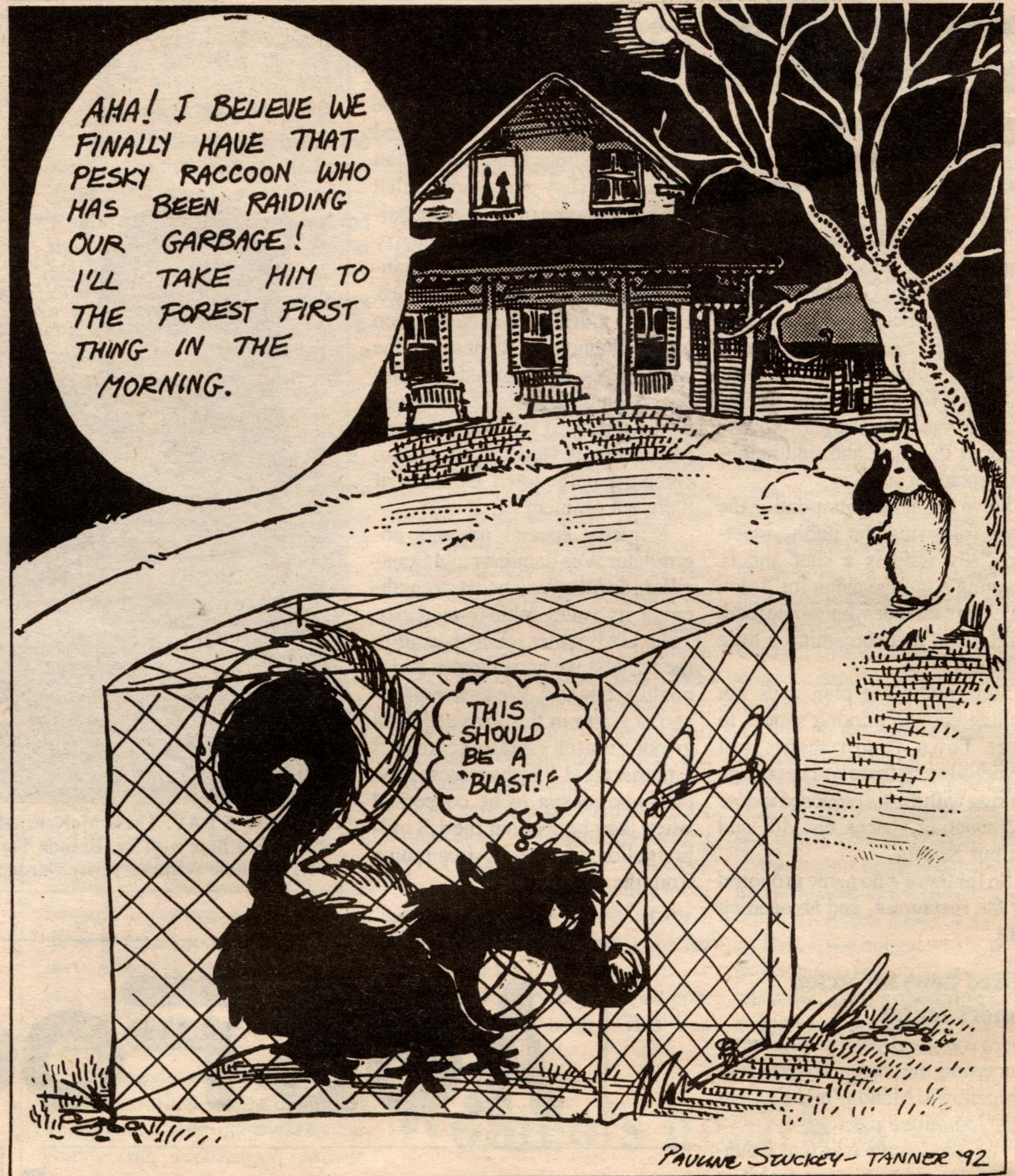
The victims included two men who dropped dead in the excitement of the chase.

A hunter who fled is wanted for manslaughter and "failure to succour" a man he killed by mistake.

Another hunter was accidentally shot dead as he and another man argued over who had brought down a pheasant.

One grief-stricken hunter turned his shotgun on himself after accidentally killing a man walking behind him, but two others overpowered him before he could pull the trigger.

Many of the stalking hunters were shot because they were wearing Alpine hats with plumes in them. The plumes were mistaken for — you've guessed it — pheasants.



PAULINE STUCKEY-TANNER '92

LETTERS

No respect!

Dear Editor

With a deep anger I am writing this letter.

On Sunday, Nov. 9, I along with many people from the town of Acton, stood at the Cenotaph to honour those that died so that we could be free.

As our flag was lowered and with our heads bowed in prayer to give one minute silence to those brave men who died, an employee of the post office felt that the delivery of flyers to local stores was so important that he pushed his way past us so that he could open a door behind us and to close this with a bang and to do the same thing with a second door.

Obviously this person has no respect for those who by giving their lives make his the way it is today.

G. Bagley
Bower Avenue

Community Giving at Christmas

To the Editor,

Acton is a caring community and when families are in need there is always a response from within it.

Over the years, at Acton Social Services and Information Centre (ASSIC), we have been approached by individuals, schools, stores, banks and other groups who wish to give in the Christmas spirit. Any money donated to us, during the Christmas season, is used to buy needed clothing and bedding for families. We have already had some gifts but more items are greatly needed as we expect that this year

in Acton, about 45-50 families will be in need of assistance.

The families we are aware of are in the position where parents cannot afford to provide the extras for their children at Christmas. They are in need of such items as warm blankets, gloves, hats, knitted quilts, sweaters or track suits and other winter clothing items. Any family, individual or business wishing to help this Christmas Co-ordination can call us at 853-3310 or drop in to see us. We are located at 19 Willow St. N., Acton. Our Centre is open Monday to Friday, 8:30 to 4:30.

Thank you,
ASSIC

Does Someone You Know Deserve A Pat On The Back?

Write a letter to the editor!

How About A Slap On The Wrist?

Got it down and send it in ...

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