

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

An Easter story

Interviewed last year on his anniversary in broadcasting Larry King, the red braces host of Larry King Live, was asked if there was anyone else he would like to interview on his show. King, who is Jewish, replied, yes, he wished he could interview God so he could ask if He had a son.

An astute broadcaster, King knew that history would have been entirely different if Jesus Christ had not been born.

This week Christians here observe Holy Week which began on Palm Sunday when the people of Jerusalem welcomed Christ into their city, waving palm branches and shouting, "Hosanna to the son of David," a welcome fit for a king. In a few days the same people who had welcomed him were among those who turned on the same Man. And watched as the Romans crucified Him.

Christians in the hundreds of millions around the globe commemorate those events with the sorrow of Good Friday. Then they celebrate the triumphal feast of Easter when they believe Jesus rose from the dead. They believe Jesus is the Son of God.

Since Easter falls at the same time as Passover among the Jews, early Christians knew Easter as "Paschal" time, the Greek word "Pascha" meaning "Passover."



Easter is called a moveable feast because the date can change from year to year. Easter Sunday always falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the 21st of March among western Christians. For Orthodox Christians, however, who still follow the old Julian calendar, it comes two weeks later.

A controversy about the right time to celebrate Easter has been recorded by Eusebius, an early Christian writer in the year 190 A.D. A diversity already existed as early as 70 years before between those in Asia Minor, who kept Easter on the 14th of Nisan, the Jewish Passover, and the Pope and the bishops of the church, who wanted it on Sunday, the day Christ rose from the dead.

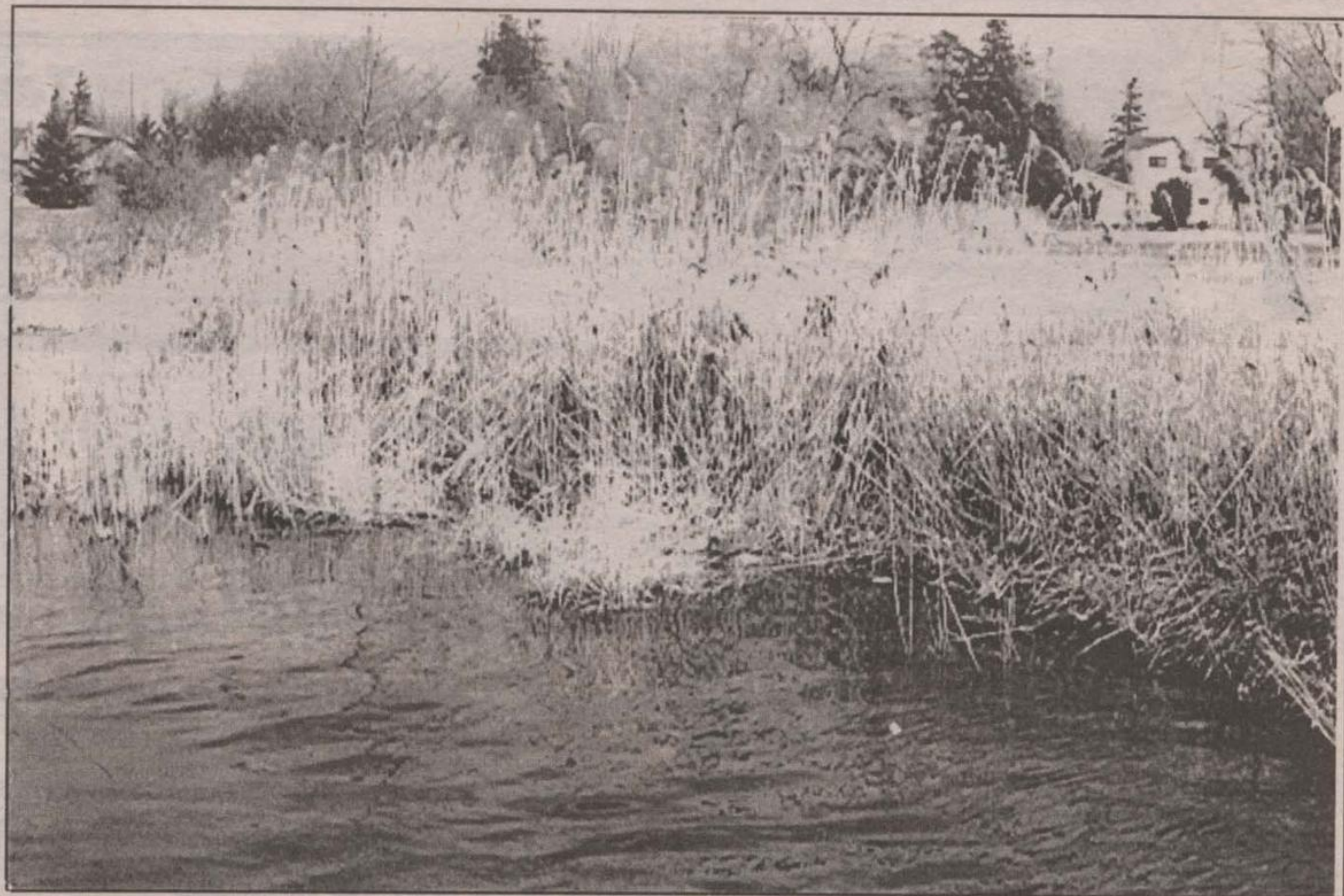
Today those controversies, which were once fervently argued, are not so important in the public domain. Easter, in the secular view, is a time for feasting and honouring the Easter bunny. Good Friday is often just another holiday, a term which oddly enough derives from "holy day."

The word "Easter" itself is an Anglo-Saxon word from the Teutonic "Easter," an ancient German goddess of light, which certainly has no connection with the Christian Easter, outside of being only the time of year signifying the arrival of the Spring equinox. Other customs which originated in the dim past include the use of eggs which symbolized germinating new life. Buns which represented the fruits of the earth were also used during the Equinox. The early Church viewed these as harmless symbols, adding a cross to the buns from which we get our hot cross buns. Christian symbols were painted on eggs and it became an art form known to Ukrainians as "pysanky."

When Christians around the world crowd into churches during Holy Week and Easter they are not celebrating the arrival of the Easter Bunny, nor the rites of Spring. They are celebrating the central belief of Christianity, that Jesus rose from the dead. Even C and E (Christmas and Easter) Christians attach importance to it, beyond the cultural.

This has been a stumbling block for many, not just in this skeptical age, but through the centuries. Usually at Easter the secular press gives much publicity to those who deny the physical resurrection of Jesus and scant heed to those who defend it. Yet belief in the actual physical resurrection was certainly essential to the early Christians. It was certainly essential to St. Paul, who wrote: "If there is not resurrection from the dead then even Christ did not rise: and if Christ did not rise, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith also is in vain."

The debate continues almost two thousand years after the events in Palestine, showing that Easter still has profound meaning for those who follow the way of the cross. As Larry King observed, it is still one of the central questions of our time.



PUSSY WILLOWS have put on their spring coats, the bullrushes stand erect while nearby grasses don green as their color. It's all a sign of spring where the school creek joins Fairy Lake. Migrating water fowl are already nesting in plant hideaways.- Frances Niblock photo

Township hall held memories

By **MAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY**
The New Tanner

The severity of the consequences from the fire in Georgetown Little Theatre's building in Stewarttown is unquestionable. I'm no actress but I do understand how this hobby gets under your skin and what a loss the group's records will involve.

What hasn't been talked about so much is how the loss of that building affects those of us who lived in old Esquesing Township, especially if we're more than 40. That old structure was important to us because it was all we had left of our rural heritage.

Yeah, yeah, we're part of Halton Hills and all that. Indeed, regional government hasn't done anything more to us than it did to Acton and Georgetown. The thing is, they kept their post offices and stores and assorted other institutions with the town name on them. Esquesing is gone. Stewarttown was the centre for us and it has virtually fallen off the map too-unless you're a resident there-because of its proximity to Georgetown. That old hall was our landmark even though it had been replaced by a new council chamber and works yard up the road in the 1950s or 1960s. There's something about that square box architecture that has no soul. You need those old structures with the soft, red bricks to catch your sentimental side.

My first memories of the Esquesing Hall were in the late 1940s when it was the setting for the township music festivals. All the one-room schoolhouses participated in that each spring. It was our one inter-school competition in a time before such competitions became fashionable, sort of pre-Kiwanis festivals.

Our itinerant music teacher helped us practice the songs every

week starting in February at least and perhaps even earlier. There were separate solo classes for boys and girls at each age as well as several choir categories depending on the enrolment in your school. They also had classes for duet, trios and quartets, or was that double trio? It's been so long I don't remember them all. I just remember the queasy stomach when your turn came to get up on that stage.

The accompanist would start up at the piano and you climbed the two (or was it three?) hardwood steps to this HUGE light-coloured stage. And then you looked out at the audience and thought all those people were miles away. Of course it would be your mother, and maybe your grandmother, a couple of aunts probably and your neighbour's wives so

it was a friendly crowd. It just didn't seem friendly because you had all these butterflies jumping around in your middle.

And there, smack in the middle between the rows of folding chairs, was the adjudicator at a card table. Seems to me it was always a man but I could be wrong.

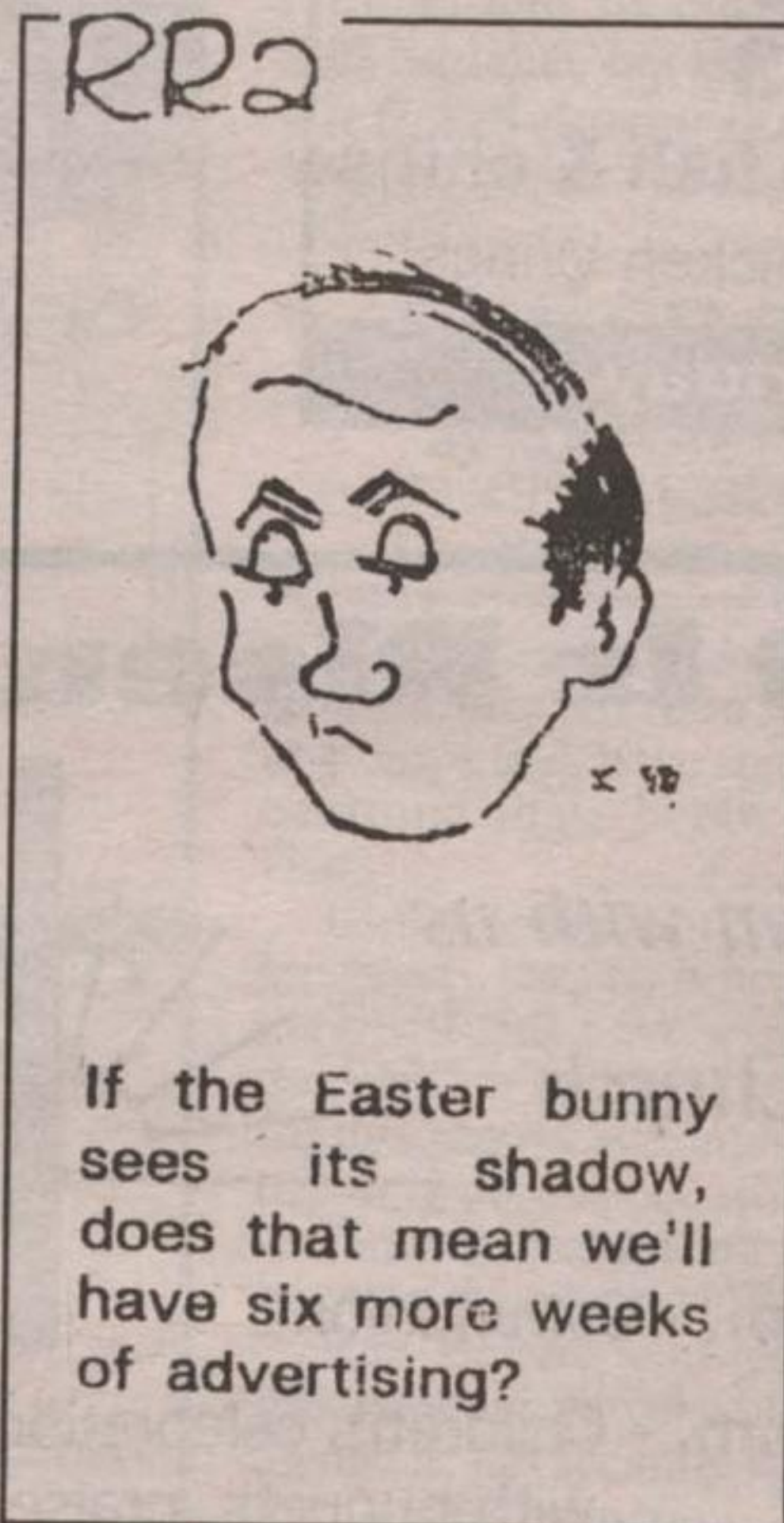
The best part of these outings was getting a day off school. And if you happened by some fluke to be good enough to go to the county music festival in Milton you got two days off. The other good part was all the kids you met from the other schools.

Bannockburn school was so tiny in those days (12 kids) they wanted to close us down and send all the kids to Robert Little school in Acton. We needed that broadening experience.

That was how I met my best friend although she doesn't remember it. She thinks we met our first year in high school. I remember us sitting on those crummy folding chairs picking holes in the performance of the girl who won our solo class when we were both nine. After we had appropriately run her down, we commiserated with each other on neither being winners, and went out to play in the creek behind the municipal hall.

I think that was also the year I wrecked my knee when I fell in a pile of cinders while playing tag behind the hall. I never knew how badly cinders could hurt until I ground them into me skin with a pile of threads from a pair of white stockings. I still hate peroxide!

Yes, that old hall had some memories. I'll bet there are plenty of people out there still who remember it as the place for Junior Farmer functions and municipal elections and all sorts of other things. It really is too bad when history goes up in smoke. You just can't repair that loss.



If the Easter bunny sees its shadow, does that mean we'll have six more weeks of advertising?



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