

# EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

## Are you a fisher?

One of the more goofy controversies emerged in the news-dry summer months is what we should call someone who fishes.

It is commonly accepted that someone who fishes for sport or commercially is a fisherman. In the case of women perhaps it is fisherwoman. If the word is too long for a headline, the gender neutral word, angler, conveys the proper meaning.

However, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) language experts in Toronto have decreed that "fishers" is the term used by Canada's public broadcasters. The corporation adopted the word fisher a couple of years ago maintaining it was gender neutral and has both the Department of Fisheries and Oceans as well as the English language translation of the Bible behind it.

The first time I heard CBC news people using the word *fisher* I thought they were referring to a long crack in a rock - a fissure. Pronunciation of the two words, fisher and fissure, are almost identical in this neck of the woods and it only adds to the difficulty in learning the language if they are in common use.

But in the political correct corridors of the CBC it has been decreed that fishers is the word for fisherman, despite people in the east coast of Canada who think fisherman is a gender-neutral way of referring to all people who work in the fishing industry.

I suspect the people who have decreed fisher is the correct way to identify a fisherman are the same who maintain manhole covers are people covers, who think a chairman is a chair and are anxious to get this "man" preoccupation out of sight. In any event we also suspected their sources for the new word might be suspect so consulted two of our own well known authorities - the Oxford Dictionary of Current English and the New Testament.

According to the dictionary a fisher is a fishing animal, a fisherman is a man who earn a living by fishing or who goes fishing for sport. The New Testament edition I consulted in Matthew 5, verses 18 and 19 says this: As He (Jesus) was walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishermen). And he said to them, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

So the Bible which the CBC cites as behind their language use has both words in this English translation. The dictionary doesn't identify the word fisher at all except to name an animal. It suggests, as the St. John's Evening Telegram says, that fisher is an awkward anachronism that need not be resurrected for the sake of a few "language experts" in Toronto.

After all, as the Evening Telegram notes, they "wouldn't know a dory from a punt."

## Those gas prices

Suspicious about the real reason for high gasoline prices? Is it the price of oil as the oil companies maintain?

A recent trip to the United States stretches that reason pretty thin. In upper New York the price of regular gasoline ranged as high as \$1.49 a gallon U.S. As we progressed south the prices kept getting lower and lower until they reached a low of \$1.12 a gallon for the same brand in South Carolina - a 37 cents a gallon difference.

Ordinarily there is a gap between north and south - perhaps 10 cents - but 37 cents is a significant difference.

In our terms even \$1.39 for four litres (ball park equivalent) of a U.S. gallon comes to about 52 cents a litre while \$1.12 is about 40 cents a litre, prices still well below prices here.



GETTING READY: Area homes are getting ready for Halloween. Lou Andrews and his niece Katie Patchett, were busy decorating with pumpkins and monsters. - Angela Tyler photo

## Hallowe'ens aren't the same

Sunday is October 31, naturally Hallowe'en, the trick and treat day. The kids dress up in costumes and go house to house, hammering on doors, yelling "Trick or Treat".

Few will do a trick so it's treats all the way into bags that range in size from small suitcases to pillowcases. Costumes the children wear these days are so scary some people with weak bladders are afraid to open the door. Some costumes are so elaborate you know some mother has been busy sewing and cutting in the days before Hallowe'en. Some are so cute, especially the toddlers, you want to pick them up and hug them.

Those of us a little long in the tooth can't help but compare the scene now at Hallowe'en to the days when we were young, Magee, as the late Ted Reeve used to say. Costumes then were usually made up of all the flotsam and jetsam floating around the house, hand-me-downs that no one else wanted to wear. Few people could afford a "store bought" costume and that makes them hardly in the same class as the elaborate disguises available now.

### Coles' Slaw

with  
Hartley Coles



Boys often dressed up as "tramps" which most hoboos were called. Girls wore their mothers' dresses complete with high heels and lipstick. Gypsy fortune tellers and witches complete with brooms were another wrinkle. And who could forget the "ghosts" who cut eyes and noses out of old bed sheets and floated through the air on gum boots.

During the depths of the Great Depression the usual "treat" revelers received was a handful of kisses, those sticky sweet confections wrapped in wax paper, that often could only be partly removed. So kiss and paper often went into mouths together to be separated by tongue movement. If you could get them out of your teeth that is. Apples, snows and spys, were popular hand-out, suckers and gum another. When word went out they were giving away whole chocolate bars at the Station Hotel one night Hallowe'en beer parlour patrons were outnumbered by trick and treaters.

Hallowe'en was different then. It was also the time for plenty of mischief, the chief one being the hunt for old outhouses that could be pushed over before the occupants of the house could rush out and defend their turf. It was a mean trick, really, because if persons fumbling in the

dark for relief unsuspectingly dropped into the hole under the privy.

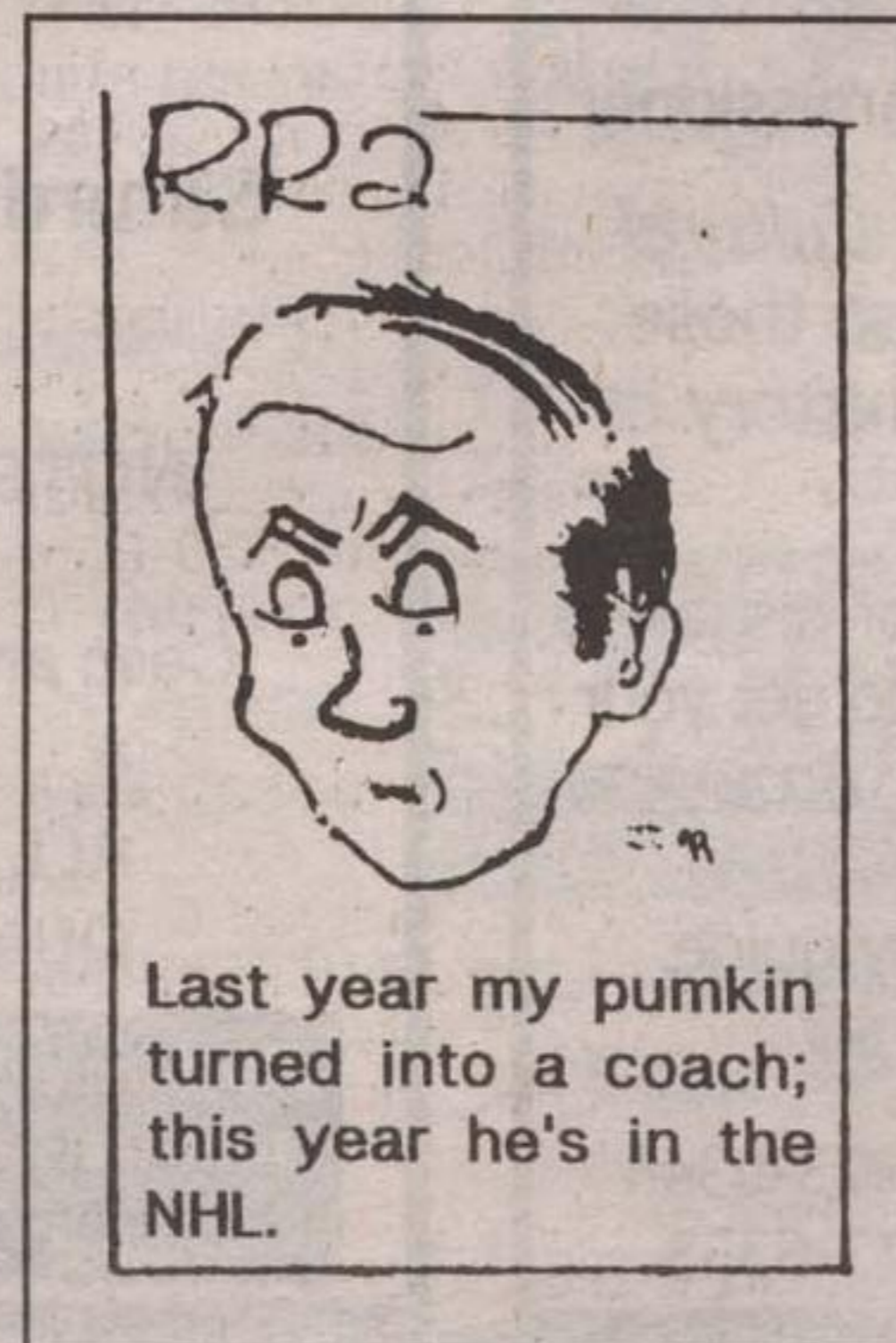
It bore out the old vulgar expression - "You're in deep sh—."

But there were other tricks that could not only mystify the residents but drew oohs and ahs from those who admired their derring-odo. One fog-shrouded Hallowe'en night several mischievous youths carried a privy to the four corners at Mill and Main streets where they set it on fire right in front of the "Silent Policeman."

The Silent Policeman? That was a pole that sat in the centre of the street so motorists had a marker. It was on a spring and jumped right back into place after someone hurdled it. Or a vehicle hit it. Novices who hurdled it without knowing its surprising resiliency often had a case of sore family jewels.

After another dark Hallowe'en night residents awoke to find a four wheel wagon on top of the old Acton Public School. For days people wondered how these miscreants ever hauled that heavy rig on top of the old bell tower, which the devils compounded by ringing the bell to let all and sundry know what they had done. No one ever admitted they took part in the escapade but there were a lot of suspicions.

Most of the pranks were harmless, and helped relieve the monotony of a time when everyone had to make their own fun. There just wasn't enough money around to do otherwise, except for the few fortunate souls who had bank accounts. Most people were scrambling just to make ends meet. And "ends" then were much simpler than they are now.



### WHAT'S YOUR BEEF?

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