

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

It's still Christmas

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas as colourful displays of lights blossom all over the town, villages and area creating a delightful scene despite weather which belongs to February instead of the first part of December. There's snow in abundance but due to the roller coaster weather those dreaming of a White Christmas can't be sure their dream will become a reality no matter how many times Bing Crosby croons the tune.

Like other Christmas seasons there's lots of the secular and the sacred on the air waves and on the tube. Carols have been playing in department and other stores by merchants who hurry the season along when they make most of the year's profits. By the time the Big Day arrives some are fed up with the carols as we are with pre-Christmas delicacies served at parties and get-togethers. They can't wait to tear down that Christmas tree and resume their normal lives.

Of course, the tree comes in for its annual name calling. Some, with political correctness in mind, would like to refer to the tree as a "holiday tree". It ignites passions better reserved for hockey games. Most people we upset feel those paragons of political correctness have gone too far. Their recent attempt to rename the Christmas tree in Kitchener was rebuffed so strongly it's doubtful they'll try it again.

Locally, the Acton Ministerial Association is carrying on its campaign to Keep Christ in Christmas with the big sign at the corner of Mill St and Wallace St. Hundreds of people in the area have put out similar signs indicating their support.

Christmas may be under fire, as we know it, but there's lots of evidence to indicate it is not holding its own but on the offensive.

Climate change

We're as concerned about the climate change as anyone but really some of its advocates go far beyond the scope of reason with their constant reference to it in every aspect of life. It has almost become a religion for them.

Indeed, we know that the earth has been warming up for the last 12,000 years when the last ice age ended and the Great Lakes were formed. And the climate has been changing from warm to cold ever since. This is not a new phenomenon. But people should be aware of changes in the past before they pronounce whether the present climate change is human induced or by the natural process which has governed the earth's climate through the ages.

For instance, during the Miocene period (17 million years ago) the earth's climate was very warm. Forests went right up to the arctic until about 2 million years ago. There have been 33 glacial advances (ice ages) from 1.5 million years ago to the present.

People should know that the arctic was warmer during the Holocene period (5,000 years ago) by up to 5°C than it is now. The arctic was also warm during the 1920s (up until 1940) and the Canadian prairie climate was decimated by a Dust Bowl with recurring droughts and strong wind in the 1930.

From 1940 through 1975 the earth's mean temperature declined by about .25°C before starting to climb by approximately 0.35°C from 1977 to the present time. We could go on and on with examples such as people's departure from Greenland when warm temperatures allowed farming until a cold cycle moved in to make agriculture impossible.

People should be aware of the cyclical changes of the earth's temperature before the present period. We're not saying that those who advocate draconian measures to curb climate change are not concerned but they should balance their perspective by referring to scientists and weather people who disagree, at least partly, with them before tilting lances.



NO STOPPING: Acton branch of Halton Hills Library is always a picturesque spot in all seasons but it gains a postcard look when snow falls. The Bailey bridge which spans the School Creek, heavy with frost, nevertheless presents a unique entrance to the yellow brick building, good for a photo from a car window.

Gas bills can cause distress

'Tis the season they say. Well, the season for the Dude and me is the season to bicker about what temperature the thermostat in the house should be set at.

I always seem to be cold as soon as Thanksgiving arrives. Even in the summer I sleep with a comforter and usually several afghans. Around Thanksgiving I rotate from having a few windows "cracked" open to turning on the heat. One day the heat is on, one day the windows are open. By Hallowe'en, it is just the heat.

I have to admit we do have a warm house. At work, it is not unusual for the temperature to be hovering on the thermostat around 70 degrees F. At home though, 66F feels some days like a sauna.

The Dude will come home and grumble about how hot it is while I snuggle under yet another afghan watching t.v. Somehow, he seems to detect if I have turned the temperature up even a touch as soon as he walks in the door. I think for me the afghan is more of a security blanket than a needed item.

However, for many 66F degrees



By **Angela Tyler**

is hardly a heat wave. With our heat being at a balmy 66 (noted, I have just cranked it to 68) and no gas appliances, I was surprised last year at how affordable our gas and electric bill were.

We had come from a home that had electric heat and crazy electric bills while the gas bill was maybe 30 bucks a month. Last week, for some unknown reason, I took the mail out of the mail box. We're lucky here. We have home delivery. There are no more community mail boxes for us. I usually let the Dude get the mail. He likes getting it for some reason. Yet, that night, I picked it up.

Inside the box was the Union Gas bill and I opened it, a task I usually leave for him. As I pulled the bill out, I almost had a coronary event, a.k.a. a massive heart attack.

Last month our bill was about \$130. This month it was \$1,368.57. thir-

teen hundred....sorry, *almost fourteen hundred @&!@#%\$%^*()\$%\$!* dollars. Thank gawd nobody was around because there were a lot of cuss words flowing out of my mouth.

I was in shock. How could it be 14 hundred bucks for one month with no gas appliances and at that time our heat was at 66F degrees? I called my mom in shock. I called the gardener in shock. I called everyone I knew in shock. Then I called the Dude warning him not to be alarmed when he saw the bill. At the same time I was preparing to decide which kidney I would sell to pay for the bill.

"It's probably right....they've been doing estimated reading for a few months because the dogs were in the back yard when they were reading meters," the Dude told me, not easing my enormous pain. I kept thinking 14 hundred bucks and its Christmas. Merry Christmas Union Gas. After a sleepless night, I called the demon, Union Gas.

After pushing 1 for English and 3 for accounts and 5 for screw-ups and 6 for English and 7 to speak to

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