



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

Weddings are for women. During the entire ritual, as practised in our society, men are inarticulate, inept, and in the way.

This was my conclusion after attending the recent wedding of a niece. Not that it wasn't a lovely wedding. It was. She's a grand and beautiful girl, Lynn Buell of Brockville, and with the aid of her young sister Pam, her remarkably calm mother, and her fairly distraught father, she came through the ceremony with flying colors.

She even "did fairly well for herself," as we used to say. She hooked a doctor. Well, at any rate, a medical student. All she has to do is support him for three or four years, and they'll be rolling in medicare.

He seems like a decent, inoffensive chap, like all the other males at the wedding. At least he had on a shirt and tie, and didn't want to get married in jeans and beads and a caftan, like so many young punks these days. He doesn't even have a beard, so he may be OK.

But he was practically unnoticed, there was such a craning of necks among the women, to see what and why each other was wearing.

Please don't get the idea that I'm down on weddings. I think they are fine, and I'll go down to the church on a nice summer day with the best of them, and get a prickling at the nape of my neck, and reach over and hold the old lady's hand when the parson intones, "for better and for worse, in sickness and in health, for richer and for poorer," and all that stuff that makes your hair stand on end with hindsight.

And I don't mind the two or three hundred dollars it cost me to attend. Not at all. The last wedding I was at — my daughter's — cost five times that, and all I've got out of it is two grandbabies and the establishment of the Bill Smiley Benevolent Fund which caters to indigent daughters, their husbands, and any offspring they may have.

Nor did it bother me in the slightest that I had to drive 600 miles, round trip, to see my niece given away. There was a torrential rain all the way there, and heat and a hangover from a magnificent reception all the way home, but that goes with the territory.

What I did mind, just slightly, now, was the frenzy of preparation during the three weeks before the wedding.

Right from the beginning, I was aware that I was going to be stuck for a wedding dress, one of those creations that women can wear once and never again, unless they have some sense, which most women don't have, when it comes to a wedding.

However, I just shrugged this off. You

can't take it with you, no matter what route you choose to go.

But little did I realize that my wife was going to do three things simultaneously: create her own costume for the wedding; lose 10 pounds; and get a tan. Just try it ladies.

She is one of those people who don't know their own limitations, demand perfection, and drive everyone around them straight out of his skull.

Since she started sewing a year or so ago, she thinks she can tackle anything in the haute couture line. I granted that she could whip out a golf skirt or pair of smashing slacks in a day, and knock off T-shirts for the midgets in the family while the dishes were soaking, but I was leery about her tangling with a wedding dress.

First week was sheer hell. I told her to knock out a "little, white dress" for the wedding, and she came up with some old wives' tale that you can't wear white to a wedding—that's reserved for the bride.

In addition, the sun didn't shine for tanning, and the diet seemed a dead loss.

Second week was a repeat. But she did make a panic trip to the city to buy material, the sun shone for one day, and she lost a pound and a half.

Third week. The material she chose was raw Indian silk. Great stuff to work with. Look at it sideways and it resembles a newspaper that's been left out in the rain.

But the sun shone. She stole a half-hour a day from her 10-hour sewing stint for sunbathing. And suddenly the scales began to work, instead of sticking, as they had been for two weeks.

In the midst of it all, so wound up about weddings are women, she found time to dash out and buy me a pair of pants and a fine new white shirt. I was going to wear my old gray flannels that I bought three years ago for \$18 and a clean golf shirt. The pants are a bit lumpy around the pockets from carrying keys, \$6 in change, and golf balls, and the shirt has a cigarette burn in the collar, but otherwise they're fine.

There was no way she was going to get me to buy a pair of black shoes, so she said I could wear my hush-puppies and she'd say I forgot my dress shoes.

Not only did she finish a real zappo of a skirt with a matching vest, but a polka-dot blouse to go under it. New shoes, of course, a tan, and—believe it or not—a brand new figure with almost 15 pounds vanished into thin air. She was a knock-out.

Why don't women put all this creativity and willpower into something besides a wedding?

Between the Willows

By Don Byers



FIFTIES—FEARFUL OR FUN?

I have seldom given much thought to the fact that I lived more than half a century.

Once in a while, I do observe things that remind me that I am not as young as I once was.

For example, have you noticed how much younger police officers look anymore? And for that matter, doctors, dentists and lawyers?

I have also observed that they are building stairs steeper now. And type in the newspapers seems to be getting smaller.

The driveway is longer... and the lawns seem to go on for miles.

And what about our kids?

All of a sudden they have grown into adults—living their own lives, meeting their own challenges. And while we are still emotionally involved, we must remind ourselves, with some sadness, that they are no longer little guys so dependent upon us.

Then again, it's the way we brought them up to be. And there's some solace in that.

But the woods, if anything, is becoming more beautiful, as are the songs of the birds that inhabit it. Printings have not lost their magic nor have good music and literature.

Perhaps it's because I now have more time to look and to listen.

More time, too, to reflect upon the incredible changes I have witnessed: the mind-boggling growth in technology and of medical science. Most of the killer diseases of my childhood have been brought under control; the flimsy bi-planes that we all rushed out to watch chug over our heads have given way to jumbo jets that cross the Atlantic in 3 1/2 hours; television—how that little box has changed our lives; and the city of 600,000 where I was born now with gleaming towers looking down over a metropolis of more than two million people from almost every county in the world.

Yes, I know there are two schools of thought about this kind of progress. I have some misgivings myself as to whether the true quality of life has improved that much. For many, however, perhaps it has.

But I also know you cannot turn the clock back. And you are only as old as you think and feel.

I spoke to a gentleman of 73 recently. The day before, he had attended a tennis school from 8 a.m. to almost 8 p.m. After this grueling test of endurance he was in better shape than most of the younger people involved in the same activity over the same space of time.

So get on with it, Don, the best is yet to come.

But the next time son Rick breezes home for Sunday dinner, looking as fresh as a daisy after attending two weddings plus receptions, back-to-back Friday and Saturday to all hours, I think I'll turn the hose on him.

Enough's enough.

The Rock Scene

By Nelson Gareau

THE OLD BRITISH LIVES ON

Two of the bands that started a long time ago, are still in existence today.

THE KINKS started when the Beatles first came to North America—1964—and the Hollies began one year later.

The KINKS always exhibited a creative ability, but were overlooked too often by the critics.

Brothers Dave and Ray Davies decided to leave the London Art School in 1964, to form a rock band. Mick Avory was on drums and Peter Quaife played bass.

Even though they produced many hit records, the KINKS never achieved the recognition that was due. Since 1964, they have recorded 19 albums (their latest is "Sleepwalker").

John Dalton and keyboard whiz John Gosling were added to the group, when Peter Quaife left.

Ray Davies is recognized as a great composer and lyricist, but the KINKS have remained a forgotten rock band.

Some of their hits include: "You Really Got Me," "All Day and All Night," "Tired of Waiting," "Well Respected Man," "Dedicated Follower," "Sunny Afternoon," "Victoria," "Lola" and "Sleepwalker."

The HOLLIES began in 1965 and have affected many trends in several rock bands.

They were first known as the Delts, before changing their name to the HOLLIES. They had enormous success all through Europe and at one time, had 15 consecutive hits.

Everything seemed to be going great... until Graham Nash (later to find fame with Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young) decided to leave the group in late 1968.

Instead of disbanding, the HOLLIES carried on like nothing had changed. Much of their recorded music has never been released in North America. Their sound is clean, witty and mellow. The HOLLIES use their harmonies as fine-tuned instruments.

The HOLLIES of today are: Allan Clarke (vocals); Terry Sylvester (guitar); Bern Calvert (Bass); Bobby Elliott (drums) and Pete Wingate (keyboards).

Their well known hits include "I'm Alive," "Just One Look," "Bus Stop," "Stop, Stop, Stop," "On a Carousel," "Carrie Ann," "Sorry Suzanne," "Sandy," "He Ain't Heavy," "Too Young to be Married," "Pay You Back With Interest" and "The Air That I Breathe."

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The Outdoorsman

By Rocco Losole

TRAIL TRIPS

Finding South and North using the sun and your watch. To find south point the hour hand of your watch to the sun. South is half way between the hour hand and 12 on your watch. If it's a cloudy day place a small twig upright on the centre of the watch so that a shadow falls along the hour hand. North is one half the distance between the shadow and 12 on your watch.

Bush Travel Precaution.

Before you travel into the bush, tell someone when you're going and the approximate time you'll return. Make a point of doing this even if you're travelling only a short distance.

How to Survive in the Woods.

A leaflet entitled "How to Survive in the Woods" is available free from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. The leaflet describes the steps to take if you are unfortunate enough to become lost in the wilderness. Some of the points are:-

- If you are lost, DON'T PANIC. Do not wander aimlessly; this will only waste your strength and get you nowhere.
- While you still have daylight, find a clearing and make camp.
- Choose an elevated spot, where rain water will not collect and build a shelter of green boughs. Stay in the open where you can be seen by rescuers.
- Gather dead, dry wood and build three fires in a triangle. (Three fires or three anything is a distress signal).
- Build a fire only on bare rock, sand or mineral soil. (Be careful not to start a forest fire).
- Food, such as frogs, insects, bird's eggs or berries may be found. (Beware of poisonous berries, plants and fungi).

The Ministry also advises anyone travelling in the woods to carry waterproof matches, knife, snare wire, fish hooks and lure, compass, map and food (raisins or sweet chocolate).

First Aid Courses

St. John Ambulance offers courses in Emergency and Standard First Aid. The Emergency First Aid Course teaches the basic skills needed to stop bleeding, start breathing, cope with broken bones and deal with an unconscious patient. It is taught in eight hours or four two hour sessions.

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