

Looking for a swift kick

It's bound to happen. Someone is going to come storming into this town's municipal office in a fit of rage over some real or imaginary injustice which town officials have inflicted upon him.

And he's going to rant and rave, claiming that he pays taxes, he's the boss, municipal officials are his employees, and if he was in office he would straighten this town out in two seconds flat.

Oh the injustice of it all! The big bad town picking on a solitary citizen.

But who could blame the town clerk, our mayor, or any of the other municipal officials if he or she told that raging individual to go burn in Hades.

They won't but they probably have every right to.

First of all it's doubtful that our imaginary redneck voted in the recent municipal election. Although the voter turnout was good,

less than half of Penetanguishene's eligible voters exercised their democratic right.

Then there's the matter of access to municipal government. Currently openings exist for 15 seats on various non-elected town boards and committees which make recommendations to the town council. Council acts on these recommendations, rejecting, modifying, or accepting them.

When approved in whole or in part committee recommendations become law.

To date only two persons have volunteered to serve on the various town committees and boards.

If you get the urge to storm into the town office to complain about any real or imagined beef in the next two years ask yourself two questions. Did you vote? Did you offer to serve on non-elected municipal boards?

If the answer is no, perhaps you should count slowly to ten and then kick yourself. And you know where.

This is being written in that pre-New Year expected voice on the other end, pleading, "The house is an absolute mess, isn't it?"

As a matter of fact, the house looks as though a ship-load of Vikings had spent the weekend, before going on to loot and rape somewhere else, but I am equal to these occasions and reply firmly, "I've just finished the dishes dear."

Brunhilda, at the other end of the phone line, doesn't know that this means I've just dropped and smashed a huge trayful of Belek, Spode, Worcestershire and fine old Woolworth's Japanese.

But she senses something. Some people have a great sense of smell, or taste. My wife has a great sense of sensing. "You sound funny," she'll say. "What are you up to?"

"Well," I chuckle, "it depends on what you mean, dear. At the moment, I'm up to the phone. In the fairly recent past, I've been up to the bathroom, and up to the dairy to get some milk."

This goes over like a ton of feathers. "Just as I thought," she'll say. "The house is an absolute mess." She seems to get some strange, vicarious satisfaction out of this idea. If the house is a mess, our marriage is

good and solid and I am to be trusted.

"You are quite right," I retort, knowing the formula. "Your daughter and your son-in-law and your grandchild have just left and your son has just arrived, and he is going to Paraguay to pioneer the faith and Paraguay is full of snakes and tortillas and enchiladas and Mennonites and the Green Hell and he wants money."

"Don't give him a cent, until I get home," she commands.

This is what is known as intercourse, between married people. Both parties know what the next move is, and there is no confusion, clumsiness, or frustration. I shudder to think what it must be between single people.

Well, that was an imaginary, if verisimilitudinous, conversation with my wife. The rest of this column is cold fact.

My daughter was home with Pokey and that other fellow she hangs around with. I changed his diapers six times (Pokey's), while his father slept and his mother played contemporary music (slabs and cords) on the piano.

The kid and I had our usual super time. I must be getting old and sick and stupid and queer because he's the only person I have any fun with any more. We wink solemnly, smile gravely, crawl under the dining room table and bump our heads, and hold out our arms to each other when everything else fails. He likes whisker-rubs and I like satin cheeks.

According to his grandmother, he and I have the two sets of most beautiful eyes in the world. His are like two huge, dark grapes with a devilish light in them. Mine are blue, blood-shot, fallen-angel type. We also share an affinity for doing things other people think we should not do. He rubs the cat the wrong way. I ruffle my wife's feathers.

I'd like to have had him for Christmas but his other grandfather was apparently pacing the floor, hitting his head against things, and threatening to call out the Mounties if he didn't see his grandson, so I had to let him go.

However, I was not to be left alone and lonely loitering, as I had so much looked forward to, during the holidays. My son Hugh arrived. My son is a bird of paradise or a bedraggled sparrow, depending on how you feel.

I was a bit in the sparrow mood, following the receipt, a few days before, of my bag and baggage, to the tune of \$46.60, express, collect.

Yes, he is going to Paraguay to spread the faith. Yes, last year he went to the Holy Land. The Arabs didn't get him. Neither did the Jews. Yes, he is broke.

Yes, there are enchiladas and Mennonites in Paraguay. The enchilada is a corpulent scorpion. If you step on one while he is resting in your shoe, and squash him, you must eat him, and this results in a disease called enchiladitis, which calls for the roof of your mouth to cave in.

And of course, if you step on a Mennonite in the course of spreading the faith, you Mennonitis. This does not cause the roof of your mouth to fall in, but the front, including teeth.

There are shots for the former, but not for the latter.

At any rate, Hugh and I dined in lonely state on Christmas Day, from a capon. We weren't lonely, but he was. He was the only castrated rooster in the joint.

More than luck is needed

Birthday parties are a time for celebration, for hearty handshakes and wishing good luck in future endeavours.

Yesterday the Centre d'Activites Francais marked its first anniversary. Congratulations are in order but that's not enough.

The centre desperately needs financial assistance from the provincial government to expand French language nursery school programs and to date that assistance has not been forthcoming.

On Thursday, two provincial officials will visit the Centre to assess its role in this area, its future plans, and to determine what if any

assistance should be scooped out of the coffers at Queen's Park in Toronto.

We hope they will recognize the French Centre's vital role as the cultural heart of Francais activity in this area.

Federal funds are lavishly spent on promoting bilingualism within and around the immediate area of our nation's capital.

But if the dream of a dual culture is to become a reality our provincial bureaucrats and indeed their federal brothers will have to look well beyond Ottawa.

Let's hope they offer more than a happy birthday during Thursday's visit.

A case of perfect timing

You have to hand it to the bureaucrats who sit and ponder over the management of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario. Less than six months after raising the price of liquor and beer they've dared to do it again and they're getting away with it.

Our initial reaction like any faithful anti-tea-totaler was "Ye gods, they're raising the price of booze again." To be honest we expected some sort of swelling of public opinion against the move. Something like the public outcry which greeted the federal Liberal government's recent proposed 50 per cent salary increase for members of parliament seemed in order.

But it didn't come. Drinkers across the nation quietly stocked up with their favourite brew and liquor and that was all.

The price increase was accepted. A 25-ounce bottle of liquor, any brand of liquor, was raised 50 cents. A 24-bottle case of Canadian beer jumped 40 cents, and a 26 bottle of wine now costs 20 cents more than a week ago.

The LCBO's excuse for higher prices? A combination of the increased excise tax

coming from the federal government's November 18 budget and higher production costs.

Standard but good reasons for the increase, which possibly was justified. But why was it accepted with so little protest?

After all if drinkers don't raise a fuss even over legitimate price hikes of their favourite beverages how will we temper future demands for price increases. The LCBO bureaucrats may think we've become soft.

That was our initial reaction to the price hike until after careful consideration the LCBO's ingenious strategy became clear.

It's all in the timing. This was the perfect moment for a price hike and the responsible officials realized it. Coming a week after New Year's party celebrations, and the aftermath of millions of hangers, the increase is a blessing in disguise, for as every slightly tipsy to horizontal New Year's drinker who was beginning to weaken on his or her resolution to cut down on booze in 1975.

The price hike strengthened weakening resolution.

You have to hand it to the bureaucrats at the LCBO. Their timing was perfect.



"Home from the holidays"

Letter: Snowmobilers' image blackened

Dear editor:

On the Monday between Christmas and New Year's there was a snowmobile gathering on the sixteenth Concession of Tiny Township at the top of a nearby side road.

The weather was great and snow conditions good and I assume they had a good day.

I am a sportsman myself and do a lot of horseback riding so I can appreciate their

desire to spend a day in the great outdoors. However, we local residents would also appreciate it if the next time they would take their garbage home with them.

The side of the road where they were parked was littered with trash: paper, cans, beer bottles, cookie boxes, etc.

A few careless individuals can give snowmobilers in general a very bad image!

Babs Ellis,
R.R. 2 Penetanguishene

Looking Back

In the January 8, 1969 issue of the Citizen: The first baby of the year was a boy born to Mr. and Mrs. Lorne Caston of Wyevalle.

The Mental Health Centre started a new concept in staff training called "Live-Ins"

In the January 7, 1970 issue of the Citizen: The New Year's baby was a girl born to Mr. and Mrs. Eric Pauze of Perkinsfield.

The Mental Health Centre became affiliated with two universities in Waterloo. Because of this, recreational and social work students from the universities were able to spend four-month periods training and working at the Centre.

The Bell Telephone Company of Canada sought damages from a contractor when the shovel he was using to dig a trench for a storm sewer at the corner of Main and Water

Streets, cut the cable and left much of the town without phone service for approximately a week.

In the January 6, 1971 issue of the Citizen: Martin Johnson was co-ordinator for the 24th consecutive Winterama held in Penetanguishene.

Deputy-Reeve A. H. Cage stepped out of the political scene after 21 years of service to the municipality.

Dog catching services in the municipality went to the Ontario Humane Society.

In the January 5, 1972 issue of the Citizen: The Huronia Social Planning Council started its new threefold project consisting of a research project, a 24-hour telephone information centre and a walk-in centre.

Humour

The weather forecasts are getting longer, not only in range, but in the announcing thereof. We all realize that come hell or high water we will have weather. But...The weather forecasts are so long now that station breaks are inserted between 'highs' in Broken Lance Alberta, and 'lows' in Broken Rod Prince Edward Isle.

To quote somebody or other "Everybody complains about the weather but nobody does anything about it" But don't worry, it's coming. Cloud cover is getting thicker and more frequent, statistics tell us (a very good source).

The sun is up there. Somewhere

We'll tell our kids, but by then it will be a legend like Davie Crocket, so they might not believe us. If you don't believe me, look up in any big city, but wear safety glasses against the flying cinders, and a gass mask against the irritant carrying inversions.

Seven years feast, seven years famine. They had the same problems way back in the good book.

They found the answer though. Offer up some sheep, a few first born sons or goats entrails. If that didn't work they gave it the ultimate.

This was to offer up a few virgins in exchange for rain, to the old gods. But I'm told on good authority that there is a severe shortage of them nowadays - old gods that is, not virgins.

Rain rain go away, come again another day

The small girls used to sing this when they were skipping, and it did go away. We don't get rain any more, not never, nohow.

Not since someone discovered precipitation. Neither do we have sunny days, we have minimum cloud cover, far too intellectual for me. I don't even know the difference between intermittent precipitation and occasional periods of shower activity.

But weather control is coming. Meteorology has been upgraded to a science in these days of weather satellites.

Gone are the days

They are gone, the old finger up the wind - red sky at night - my left knee is aching - the birds are flying low tonight. Gone, old hat.

Gone the same way as the goats, sheep and virgins.

All we need do is shift around some old trade winds, hold back some clouds until midnight. Vacuum clean the old heavy side layer and ionosphere and bombard with sodium nitrate or sodium pentathol if you want the truth. And there you have it... instant weather.

Long sunny days, instant solar power, balmy breezes, with built in sandalwood or pineapple smell (state second choice) and a gentle rainfall each day from 3 to 5 a.m.

Storms and lightning can be channelled to

The Cumulus Caper

scientific use. After all, look what Dr. Frankenstein did with a few old lightning flashes.

Seriously though

I hope you're treating this with the seriousness it deserves. One prairie town did last summer.

In response to a request from the Indian six nations for the reservation (no pun intended)

of a local park to hold their annual reunion.

The Chamber of Commerce wrote back "yes this could be arranged provided that item seven of their program could be cancelled". This was intriguing. What was item seven? The annual re-enactment of little Big Horn? The mating ceremony of 3000 maidens or the manhood rituals of all the bucks of all the nations? It had to be something big. The

by Ray Baker

chamber had also said "This is likely to seriously affect the attendance of the nearby rodeo and cause possible crashes at the adjacent road race".

The item that would cause all this chaos, that really upset the Chamber of Commerce. The mysterious item seven it was listed as "Traditional Rain Dance".



Remembering the past Main Street

The tunnel view to the Bay is still the dominating characteristic of Penetanguishene's Main Street today, as it was then in 1918.

But some things have changed. The combination telephone and hydro poles with the double cross beams for carrying both lines are gone, a smaller number of trees line the street, and model T Fords no longer climb the downtown hill. The cars on the sides of the street show that parallel parking as in vogue as opposed to today's angle style.

Curiously the cars on both sides of the street are parked facing the same way, indicating an absence of traffic rules. It looks like drivers parked for convenience, wherever and however they liked.

In any event, the parking was free, a tradition which has been carried on to this day, and one which is meant to favour downtown shoppers.

Penetanguishene's original businesses, the dock and the railway station were both at the foot of Main Street by the Bay. Additional businesses would normally have grown out from there, but because of swampy land Penetanguishene's commercial center moved up along the hill. In swampy areas, for example in front of the present Brewer's Retail "wagons sunk to their hubs and horses to their knees" according to local historian, Marcel Bellehumeur.

The drug store sign on the left hand side, partially blocked out by the combination hydro-telephone pole, marks where Mundy's Drug store once stood. Today, Ireton's IGA is situated there.

The tin Grew boat house in the lower central part of the picture can still be seen today, but the third floors of both Bert's Shoe Shop and Wally's Men's Shop have disappeared. In 1918 Bert's Shoe Shop was a three

story building containing the D.A. Lahey general store.

Although this photo, taken during the summer, doesn't show it, Penetanguishene's Main Street was not plowed during the period. Throughout the winter, cars would beat down tracks on the snow packing it good and hard. Then during the spring thaw the town's workmen would attack the frozen monster. For residents of that time the sight of men with picks and hoses was "a sure sign of spring."

Thanks to Penetanguishene's Marcel Bellehumeur, a historian by hobby not by trade, for providing the information behind this week's paper. Joe Lorette submitted the picture.

Readers are invited to submit suitable pictures for publication in this space. All will be returned intact after appearing in the newspaper.

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75 Main Street
TELEPHONE 549-2012

Andrew Markle
Publisher

Victor Wilson
General Manager

Tom Grand
Editor

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