

Citizen comment

Singing offbeat notes

No one can claim to be an expert on regional government. Not even Premier Bill Davis' administrative wizards, who would restructure, reorganize, re-think, and re-circulate re: memos on regional government structures. These provincial care packages are designed to do away with the waste and inefficiencies of local municipal government.

When a regional government was created in the Niagara area, optimists talked of visions of long term financial savings through more efficient government. Sugar plums dancing in their heads.

In reality the Niagara Regional Government has proven to be the most expensive monster since the birth of inflation.

Mayor Vincent Moreau predicts that a Simcoe County Regional Government will be imposed on this area by the province in the next five years unless local municipalities learn to co-operate and come up with some sort of alternative—an alternative requiring co-operation which according to Moreau has been missing among County municipalities. It's refreshing to hear a representative of a

municipal government admit to a lack of co-operation among neighbours.

Anyone attending or reading of any of the inaugural meetings of neighbouring municipalities, even the one in our town on Monday night, would be amazed to hear all the talk of brotherly love voiced by visiting municipal dignitaries.

On Monday night a number of neighbouring municipal leaders brought greetings to the Penetanguishene council and spoke of the excellent co-operation between area municipalities in the past.

If that co-operation between the municipalities has been so outstanding in recent municipal history, why do people like Mayor Moreau warn us of provincial plans to impose regional government?

If regional government comes it will be because of a lack of co-operation among area municipalities according to Moreau.

Something doesn't jive, and we have the feeling all this glowing talk about neighbourly co-operation between municipalities is off beat.

Exerpts from inaugural address

The Mayor's message

An ambitious program

For instance, in 1971, because only 50 per cent of the municipality had sanitary sewer services, we undertook an ambitious program to install in excess of four miles of sanitary sewers in the Town by the year 1978. We are now very happy to report that close to 90 percent of this objective has been met, or will be met when the two contractors have completed their work in a few months, with three more years left to complete the remaining 10 percent. As well, the extension to our sewage treatment plant is now in progress.

Our financial position

Our financial position has been affected by these expenditures, which were considered vital to the progress and well-being of this Municipality. Our debenture debt which was \$331,877, at the end of 1971 has now been increased to \$957,986 at the end of 1974. Of this amount, we are pleased to note that our debt repayable by the general mill rate, (which is the only portion chargeable to all ratepayers) has only increased from a 1971 total of \$205,996, to the sum of \$361,584. The balance of the debt is recoverable from other revenues, or from the ratepayers receiving the benefits. While we are reciting figures, I was most impressed by a report from our Treasury Department last month which revealed that since 1971 the Municipality has spent \$1,370,293, in Capital Projects under our Five Year Program. Of this amount, \$496,424, was paid by the Federal and Provincial Governments as a subsidy, while \$196,043 was paid cash, leaving the balance to be debentured.

Let's slow down

Because of our fast pace, I want to recommend to Council that we adopt a 'go-slow attitude' this year for our Capital Projects. A breathing spell will permit us time to re-assess our priorities for the next five year program in its entirety. While sanitary sewers and sewage treatment occupied a large part of our previous program because they were so badly needed, it is my opinion that emphasis should now be given to improving our existing services to the ratepayers. For instance, Robert Street West, which has been mutilated by the sewer construction is slated to be entirely reconstructed at a cost that will certainly exceed a million dollars. Such a sizable expense will require to be done in stages. Negotiations are now under way with the County of Simcoe for a better grant formula than exists presently which is geared to rural roads for townships.

Our industrial court

The serviced industrial land in our Industrial Park is now completely sold. We have another 28 acres left of unserviced subdivided land that is required immediately.

Our Engineering Department has estimated that it would cost approximately \$407,448, to complete the services at our Industrial Park. This entire amount cannot be met at this time, but Council will be asked to provide the sum of \$125,000, to service lots abutting Fuller Avenue from Don Street to Laurier Avenue, in order to make more serviced industrial land available. Understandably, the Municipality cannot provide for such sum in their budget; Council will be asked to use the proceeds from our 28 serviced residential lots on Yeo Street now available for sale.

Concerned about a shortage of land There are still 30 acres left in our subdivided Industrial Park, I am concerned

however, that considering our steady industrial expansion, and the long period of time required to bring about a plan of subdivision, we may run out of serviced industrial land in a few years. A program will therefore be submitted to Council in 1975 to provide for a plan of subdivision for the 253 acres lying north of Yeo Street which is municipally-owned.

Residential development

Because of the beautiful view of the Bay, a segment of this development will be made available for residential purposes, providing multiple density dwelling and single family dwellings. It is also our intent to provide in such a scheme, an area for both low cost housing and senior citizen housing.

Negotiations for the servicing of the residential portion of this development have commenced with Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, whom we expect to finance 90 percent of the cost of the services in the form of a loan which well could exceed one million dollars when it is completed. Even after allowing for an 80 percent single family zoning, this residential project has a potential of a population of over 1,700 people.

Improving existing homes

Last fall, Council authorized our application to the Federal Government for an Urban Renewal Program. If the Federal Government accepts our application, this Council will be called upon to enact legislation to provide for a Minimum Standard By-law for Penetanguishene. Such a by-law would permit the Municipality to proceed under a Neighbourhood Improvement Program enabling us to revamp the basic services in the West end and Peel-Sheridan Area. Furthermore a Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program would provide low interest loans to the individuals to improve their homes with a generous portion of the loan forgiven, depending on the financial status of the applicant.

Completion of the Waterfront Park

The basic work in our Waterfront Park is nearing completion. We have authorized the preparation of a secondary plan which will show the specific land use of every acre in the Park. A consultant's report will be submitted to Council for their study in the month of February, so that at least one phase of the park can be completed in 1975, with the possible assistance of service clubs.

As council is aware, we are also developing a new 11 acre park on Fox Street, and I have been told by some ratepayers that we have too many parks. We may! But what about five years from now, or ten years from now when our population has increased to 7,000 or 8,000. Will we have the means to rebuy them? These new parks are mainly developed with Federal and/or Provincial funds on municipally-owned land. The day may come when we may regret that we did not acquire more parkland. Besides, is it not better to be known as the Town with too much greenbelt, instead of the contrary?

Preparing a Zoning By-law

Our revised Official Plan was approved by the Government in 1974. We are now progressing rapidly in the final preparation of our revised Zoning By-law to conform with this new Official Plan, so that the Municipality for the first time will have a completely enforceable Zoning By-law that will give us the tools to control and permit the desired development within the Municipality.

Mayor Vince Moreau.

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Sugar & Spice

This is the time of the year for "out with the old, in with the new." I honestly did try to do this. But it was hopeless. I got bogged down, right up to the navel, in my first attempt to get rid of the old.

I decided, as my year-end project, to clean up my writing desk. This may sound simple, a mere 15 minutes of sorting and tidying. But you are not acquainted with my writing desk.

Perhaps you remember the myth about Hercules cleaning out the Augean stables. They were filled with cattle, hadn't been cleaned in decades and there was a veritable mountain of you-know-what. A formidable task. He did it without even using a pitchfork. He diverted the flow of two rivers through the stables, and lo! they were cleaned.

Clean-up results not startling

That was child's play compared to cleaning off my desk, and also I am no Hercules.

On each side of my typewriter sits a teetering stack of papers that reaches approximately to my head, when I am sitting at my machine. Huddled between them, like a sparrow between two huge tomcats, squats the typewriter.

Occasionally, one of the piles, like a glacier, slides majestically to the floor. My wife picks up the mess, and muttering under her breath, jams it back on the desk. She's forbidden to disturb anything there, or even to dust it. That's the main reason the piles are two feet high. I do allow her to dust the front of the desk, where the drawers are.

Trouble is, she's so annoyed she piles the stuff back in any order. This causes a

problem when I decide to clear the desk at year's end.

I pick up the first letter. It is from a farmer's complimenting me on my stand for the beef farmer. It is dated 1962. That suggests that the last time I cleaned my desk was in 1961.

It also poses questions. What was my stand on the beef farmer in 1962? I'll bet it was a little sweeter than my attitude toward sirlin steak prices today. Was the letter ever answered? Who knows? So I put it in the stack labelled Who Knows. This turns out to be the biggest of the many piles I lay out on the floor.

The other piles bear such esoteric labels as: To Be Dealt With — Sometime; Needs Further Study; Look Into This; Silly Old

by Bill Smiley

Cranks; To Be Answered Definitely In the New Year; Complimentary; Over The Hill; and so on. The second largest stack is called Miscellaneous because I don't know where else to put these items.

Under the last item go such things as: a passport application form; a bill from the Strand Palace, London, England; a Christmas card from my insurance agent; a test for Grade 11; an offer to do the Smiley family tree for only \$3.00 (must have been a small family); and a reminder that I am due at veteran's hospital for a chest X-ray (which I forgot all about).

Have a very definite way of handling these piles. Miscellaneous I put back on the desk. Over The Hill, which contains anything more than six years old, goes into the wastebasket, as does Silly Old Cranks, a very slim stack of letters from ridiculous people who don't agree with me.

Needs Further Study goes back on the desk, right on top of Miscellaneous. Look Into This goes back on the desk on top of Needs Further Study. Next on the growing pile on the desk goes To Be Dealt With — Sometime.

Then I lift the whole pile and slide underneath it, right at the bottom, if you'll pardon the expression, To Be Answered Definitely In The New Year.

And then carefully and delicately, I place on top of the pile the stack labelled Complimentary. This contains the letters I have received from those splendid, intelligent people who admire my wife or kids or column.

Yes, I know they should be thrown out. But surely you wouldn't deny a chap a little ointment for his ego, any more than you would begrudge an old lady a seat in the chimney corner, where the fire can warm her.

The piles beside the typewriter are now only a foot and a half high, and it has taken a day and a half to sort them. This may not seem like progress to you, but Rome wasn't built in a day, as some idiot once remarked.

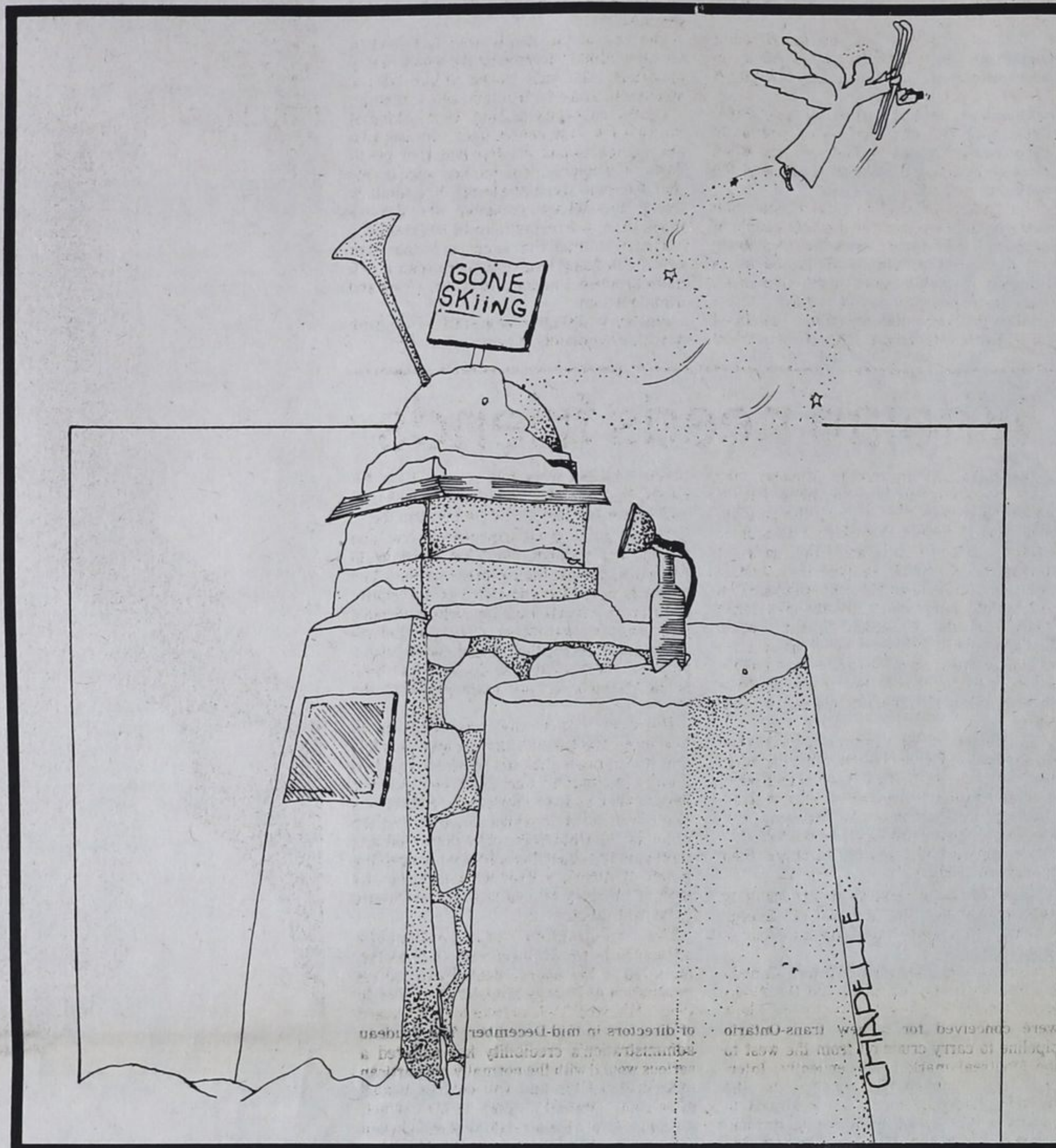
One good thing came out of this year's sorting. I remembered that I had received a letter from Barry Broadfoot, author of Ten Lost Years, a compelling book about the depression. I'd written a column about it.

No, I couldn't find his letter. It must have wandered into the Miscellaneous or somewhere. But the memory of his letter made me remember that I'd had at least ten letters from all over the country, and the States, asking where a copy might be obtained. No, I couldn't find these letters either.

But the memory of them reminded me of what Barry Broadfoot wrote in his letter. He's writing another book called The Pioneer Years, and he wondered if I would ask in my column for the names of oldtimers who were spry and interesting, so that he could interview them.

So there you are, everybody. Send the names of spry, interesting oldtimers, of either sex, to Barry Broadfoot, care of Doubleday Publishers, 105 Bond Street, Toronto, Ont. M5B 1Y3. And the same people will be happy to provide you with a copy of Ten Lost Years.

There. My first good deed of 1975. And that's going to cost you, Brother Broadfoot. Crown Royal will do.



Down by the Marsh

herein will deal with the marsh. This is not so. Some ideas come from the marsh, but not all. In fact, I have a friend on the outside named Newtrivious Q. Skreet who will be writing in now and then.

I had thought of using the old standard, View from the editor's desk as a column heading, with a few changes of course. Somehow, View from the turtles desk just didn't make it. It seemed a little presumptuous to have people believe that a turtle could have a desk. Besides, the view from out here is no real thrill unless you're Jacques Cousteau or something.

Then I thought of something literary like "Marsh Mumbblings", but it wouldn't do either. I thought it might give people the idea that turtles have been afflicted with speech impediments. The fact is that most of us have an alarming lisp, so I didn't want to offend any of my friends.

Just before I wrap it up for this week I should explain two things. The first being the

instant fame I am likely to suffer through. I isn't every day that a turtle allows mankind to discover that he can speak. It also isn't every day that a turtle has his speech recorded in a newspaper column. That is to say it isn't every day that it is recorded because this is a weekly newspaper. Anyway, I'm sure you can appreciate that a lot of people have tried to get in touch with me since they discovered my gift of the gab. In this regard, I have had to disguise myself rather intricately.

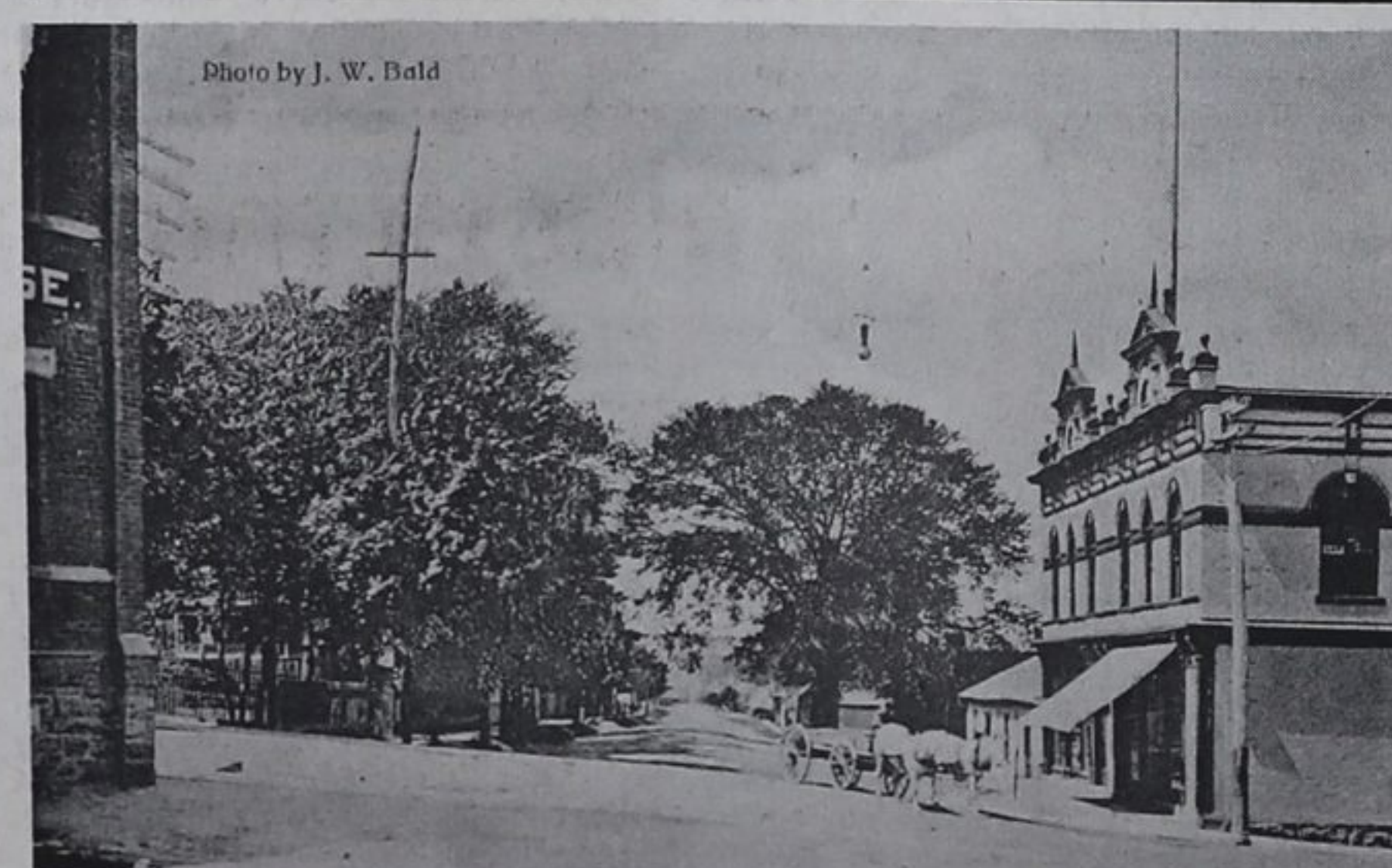
If you should want to get in touch with me, you will have to keep a sharp eye open when trundling through the marsh. First, if it is a warm day, you will notice an old discarded GM hubcap lying rightside up near the water. Don't kick it because that's my summer disguise. I had a friend paint the GM on my back, and the disguise has worked quite well. The only trouble I had was when some delinquent tried to sell me to a used car dealer in Oshawa.

My winter disguise is a trifle more elaborate, but equally effective. You must appreciate that a turtle that does not hibernate usually has to suffer quite a bit. Since I have never been one to associate with pain, I came up with the idea of wrapping my shell for the winter. I've already been rustproofed, so all that remained was to find an old exterior battery warmer and curl up.

The other thing that I should explain is one of timeliness of these columns. If from time to time you notice that I am referring to summer during winter, or winter during summer, take no heed. You see, this column was written for publications on July first, 1973, but I had to walk to the Citizen office!

To close, most columnists use some witty line to grab the readers attention. I'm not one to do that sort of thing. I'll merely relate the plea of Turtles United local 1555.

"Forget the tranquilizers, slowdown the easy way, take a turtle to lunch!"



Remembering the past...

Jason's Store at the corner of Water and Main Streets in Penetanguishene was called the "Green Block" in the early 1900's not because citizens of that age were particularly ecologically minded but simply because of the building's green colour.

As this picture shows, trees on Water Street were more plentiful, but in those days the abundance of greenery meant that people were more concerned with clearing away the supposed excessive foliage in favour of open

spaces where man would have room to move around and run his affairs. Today the Tiny-Tay Peninsula Planning Board, on which Penetanguishene is represented, is vitally concerned with preserving the area's existing green belts and horticultural societies howl whenever trees are cut down from streets. How times change!

A number of other changes can be seen in this week's picture. The "ginger bread" decorative trim on the top of the "Green

Block" is missing, cars and paved streets have replaced the horse and buggy and the gravel road surface of 1917. Finally, street lights are positioned along the side of streets and not above the intersection. A street light can be seen hanging in the centre of the picture just above one of the trees.

The "Green Block" was built by Alfred A. Thompson in the 1850's shortly after he finished an apprenticeship at Andrew Mitchell's store located at the site of the Penetanguishene Curling rink. At that time Mitchell's store was considered the centre of town business.

The Simcoe County Pioneer Papers, number five printing, records that "Alfred started an adventure on his own account building the pioneer brick store on Main Street...by the "Green Block" part of which is the original store, where for many years he carried on an extensive general mercantile business, ultimately acquiring the extensive fur trade operated by Mr. Mitchell, his former employer, and attracting annual buyers from Montreal, New York, London, Berlin, and even far-off Austria."

The Simcoe County Pioneer Papers acquired information on the "Green Block" from the writings of A.C. Osborne the founder of the Penetanguishene Herald. This photo was taken by W.J. Bald, a professional Midland photographer. It advertises the "Green Block" as an up-to-date tourist supply house and general store. Thanks to Joe Lorette for submitting this picture.

Appropriate photos for use in this space would be appreciated by the Citizen. All will be returned intact after publication.