



by Shirley Whittington

You win a little: you lose a little. That's the way life goes. Some day's you're sinking by the stern, and then Dame Fortune hands you a cork to plug the leak with.

Last week, the family fortunes were at a low ebb, as we atoned for our festive over-spending. There are no jolly Christmas cards popping through the mail slot these days, only sternly worded invoices in windowed envelopes. So far, we've gotten two fiery red Final Notices, pointing out our errors of omission. We pray that both the offended creditors do not take their threatened immediate action on the same day.

The kids have spent all the money their grandparents gave them for Christmas, and their hands are outstretched once more demanding money for ski passes, for class

# Thanks for the cork, Marc, it helps plug post-Christmas leaks

trips, for badminton rackets and birthday presents and year books and skate sharpening and goodness knows what else.

I am married to a teacher. They are so noted for their sound sense of money management that they are paid once a month. That means that the canary regurgitated just before the Christmas vacation - about December 20, I think - and it is not due to cough up again until the very last day of January.

That's a long six weeks, even for good managers. (We aren't.)

So it was with heavy hearts, and light wallets, that we struck out for the supermarket last weekend.

Stephen Leacock used to get rattled when he went into a bank. Lately, I get more than rattled when I go into a supermarket - I go into a deep depression.

Toilet paper, for instance, depresses me. Remember when a new roll of toilet paper was so fat that you could hardly lift it down from the shelf with one hand? Now the brand new rolls are the same size as the ones I thought needed replacing in the good old days.

Margarine depresses me. I remember when it was the lower priced spread. Now it's only the slightly less expensive one, and I wonder if the kids would mind the taste of lard, if it was coloured pale yellow.

The dairy counter depresses me. The cow has jumped over the moon, and she's taken the milk with her. It's as dear as beer.

The baked goods depress me. Angel cakes have climbed to celestial heights, and cookies are so expensive they aren't a snack any more. They are a major event.

Bread, at two cents a slice, is no longer the staff of life. It's the chief executive.

The other shoppers depress me. They glump around, peeling back the double tickets, only to find that the original prices have been obliterated by a black marking pencil. Everybody sings the same sad song. What they are buying this week was ten cents cheaper last week.

As we lined up at the cash register, I did a little mental arithmetic. We weren't going to make it unless one of us stayed behind as collateral. I returned about eight dollars worth of fripperies to the shelves - cat litter, chocolate cookies, a new measuring cup, and

a pair of bright red mittens. I sulked about those mitts all the way home.

Then today, a small miracle happened. I got an eight dollar raise in the family allowance cheque.

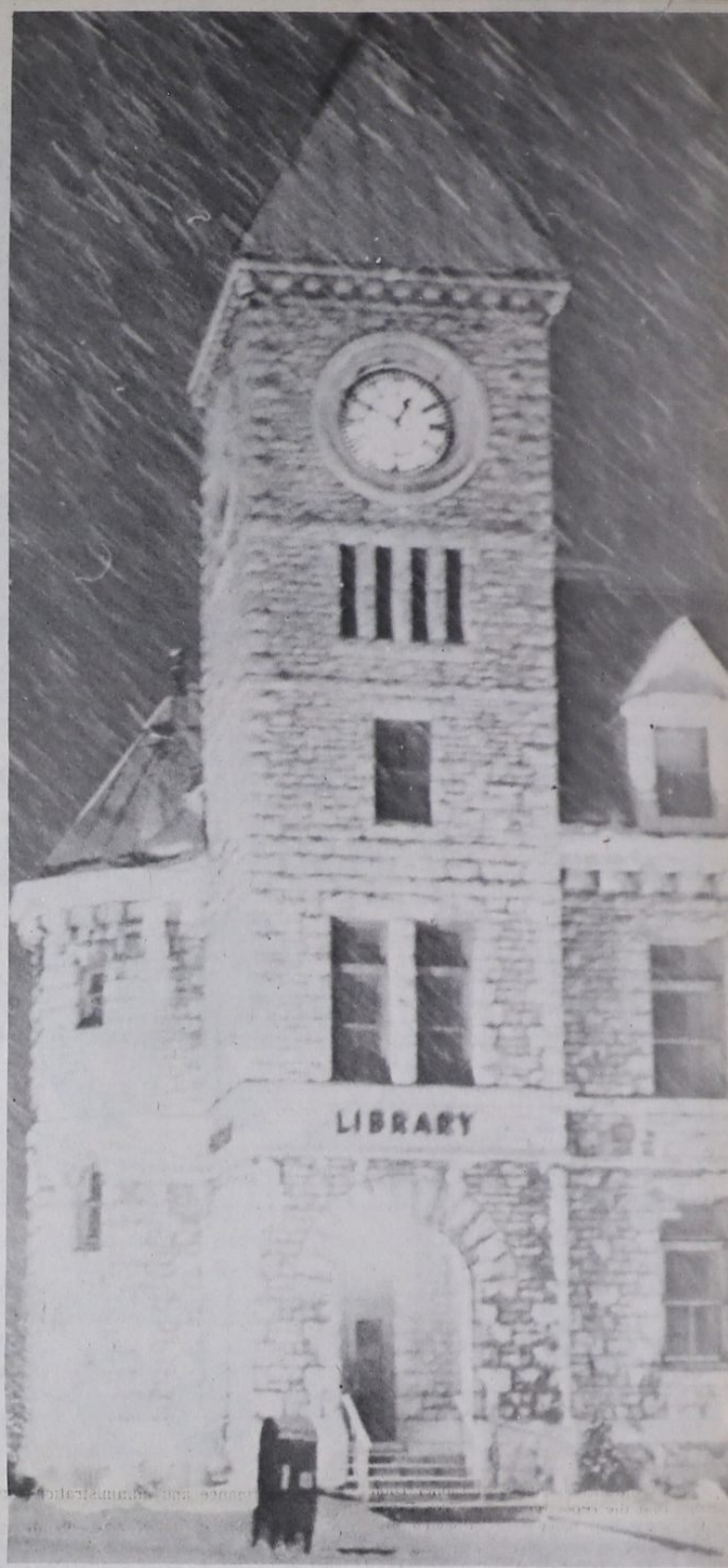
Inside the family allowance cheque was a warm and friendly communication from Marc Lalonde. "Family allowances are increased each year," said Marc, "as the cost of living goes up."

Merci bien M. Lalonde. I only wish the extra eight bucks had arrived last Friday so I could have bought the kitty litter and the chocolate cookies and those gorgeous red mitts.

Your lovely warm letter touched me so deeply, that I almost missed the other little note that was included in the familiar brown envelope - a stiffly worded reminder that family allowances are income, and they are taxable.

Thanks for the raise, Marc. I can see another leak coming in the good ship Whittington, but I'll just sit on it until next January, when you throw me another cork.

Shirley Whittington is a staff writer with Markle Community Newspapers.



Facing the snow



by Ron Jones

Ontario Federation of Labour president David Archer released a New Year's message, in which he threatened a year of labour management confrontation - in other words, a rerun of 1974.

Archer and other spokesmen of organized labour are still hanging to the worn tale of the oppressed, exploited and, of course, underpaid worker. The fact is that in the history of this country, if not the world, the working man has never had it so good. We are told of young factory workers in their twenties and

## Labour on 'suicidal' mission

thirties who are living in new homes with new furniture and driving late model cars etc. - a set of goals that self-employed individuals aspire to in a life-time of effort.

Present high unemployment levels are blamed on everybody else by labour leaders and their political mouth-piece the NDP, but much of the responsibility must rest with the union leaders themselves, who on personal power trips have tried to take the worker too far too fast. Where businesses have closed down, labour had in some cases added that extra straw that broke the camel's back.

The Ontario Federation of Labour has now turned its attention to what it refers to as the inhumane employment conditions of the migrant Ontario farm workers, who of course are "exploited and victimized" by the farmer, the chemical companies, labour contractors, etc.

The stage for this campaign is conveniently set by the church sponsored CBC production "Pastures of Plenty" which attacks the social plight of a Maritime family to Ontario vegetable fields. And, certainly, Archer's group is not unaware of the \$6.75-million collected each year by the Teamsters and rival United Farm Workers from California's 70,000 unionized grape pickers. Having been unable to convince farm

owners that utopia would be found in an alliance of farm organizations with industrial labour unions, they are now attempting to organize the farmers' employees.

On examining the record of unionized labour in food processing, will the public be prepared to support the boycotts that will undoubtedly be sponsored by Archer's group in the months ahead to force membership in his union? Time after time, vegetables and fruit have been left to rot in fields as unionized processing plant workers were pulled off the job to extort higher wages from canning companies.

Who loses? The farmer certainly, his product was perishable. It can't wait for labour grievances; the processor, the plant worker and also the consumers who have less product available to them and thus higher prices, not to mention the "oppressed" field workers who suddenly find themselves out of work until the cannery reopens.

This past summer, when meat packing plants were closed in Western Canada, the normal flow of meat to consumers was disrupted until labour was satisfied to return to work - and the farmers sure as hell weren't getting strike pay.

Labour, seemingly completely oblivious to the nations' economic problems, continues on

its suicidal mission of attempting to extract more while contributing less. And Quebec labour brazenly threatens to embarrass the entire country by jeopardizing the 1976 Olympics.

David Archer wants all farm labour under the various legislation set up for workers in non-agricultural pursuits. He doesn't understand and obviously isn't concerned about the perishable, weather susceptible nature of farm produce, and like Caesar Chevez of the California grape boycott, also seems little bothered about what the workers may prefer.

Consumers concerned with what they feel are high prices for food, hopefully will take a long look at Archer's plan, which in simple terms is to use food supplies as a bargaining tool. Farmers who have experienced exorbitant costs and unreliable service from unionized industry will say "No Thanks, Mr. Archer" to unionizing their labour pool.

And government must at all costs beat off labour's grasp for the nations' jugular and the chilling prospect of labour's manipulation of the food supply - thereby bringing final chaos to the Canadian economy.

Ron Jones is a Tay Township farmer and a free-lance writer for Markle Community Newspapers.



by June Judd

Well, I wish you could have seen him when he arrived. He was just a little fella. Funny looking. Cropped, scarred head, too big for his childish body, a look that earmarked him right away - different. Short legs, stubby feet and hands. But below the wide expanse of

forehead, a cherubim smiled. He clung like a chimpanzee when you picked him up, arms and legs wrapped tightly.

He had come to us for a few weeks, and had stayed three years. Nobody knew his full name or where and when he was born, or just exactly who his parents were. We called him Robby. He was quite skittery at first, in mortal fear of anything new to him, which appeared to be just about everything. If you reached out your hand, maybe just to touch his, he would shrink back. He looked very old at times.

For the first few weeks, we added flesh to his bones with good food, lots of milk and fruit, and doubled up on his vitamins. He started to bloom. The scabs began to fall from his scalp, hair started to grow and cover the bare patches. The cuts and bruises on his body began to disappear, and the scaly skin smoothed out.

With love and care, he slowly relaxed and was able to play alone for short periods.

Often at night he would wake up trembling, head wet with perspiration and tears, begging not to be strapped and please not to leave him alone.

The first six months were mostly made up of holding this little quivering bird, gently rocking and soothing the terror away. He gradually began to speak about himself. He bragged of his mother whom he vaguely remembered. There was a dog-eared faded snapshot in a shopping bag which accompanied him. He would tell stories of his mother having to go to work so she didn't have time to look after him; she was buying a house so he could go to live with her; she was sick in the hospital, but just as soon as she was better... He never mentioned having a father until one day while he was watching a war story on television. Then his make-believe father was alternately a soldier, a sailor, a pilot, a commando and a parachutist. He also said he had two big brothers, but "they" took them away,

because his mum was sick, or working or too busy.

He began to emerge as a little charmer by the second year. He was much behind in his school work - he was always so busy trying to get attention. But we didn't really care about that. He was slowly learning something much more important that would be useful to him later in life. He was learning how to be a person, how to accept love and how to give; how to love himself and other people.

He seemed unable to really believe that anyone could care about him, an experience that was totally new to him. He didn't think it was possible to care about someone without wanting something back from them. It was a very hard lesson for him.

He continually tested us by stealing, lying, disobeying, destroying people's property. We just refused to be drawn into his provocations, so he reluctantly let them go. He learned all about playing football, as

best he could; how to swim, which he did like a duck, and how to paddle a canoe, mostly upside down! His energies were used up in constructive ways and he really enjoyed his small successes. He grew more confident, and became a pet of everyone - like I said, a real charmer. But he never lost faith that someday his golden-haired mother would come like a fairy princess, and take him away to some grand house.

One day, well into the third year he had been with us, a woman appeared at the door asking about Robby. She obviously had seen better days. She reeked of stale alcohol and perfume. The heavy makeup covered the weary lines and bruises on her face. The dark roots belied the blonde scrapple of hair. She kept glancing nervously at a car parked at the curb. She said she was Robby's mother. She wanted to see him.

This was really a dilemma. Would it be good for him or not? We decided he needed to see his mother.

He ran to her, arms outstretched, but she quickly put out her hand and resisted his attempts to hug her. He backed off with an air of bravado as if it had been his idea. They visited together for about fifteen minutes. She had brought him a little plastic car. She then left him and hurriedly walked down the front walk without looking back.

He was proud and spoke of how beautiful his mother was, how she was so busy and so rich and just as soon as "she got on her feet" she would take him home, and they would have a puppy, and he could have his very own room, and even have Cheerios for breakfast. His face glowed. Then quickly turning, he raced to the front door and almost in a frenzy shouted out, "Hey mummy, what did you say your name was again? I'm Robby, remember?"

June Judd works at the Penetanguishene Mental Health Centre. She lives in Midland and is a freelance writer for Markle Community Newspapers.

## The dilemma of Little Mister Who



by Ray Baker

He certainly doesn't look old, but he's a Grandpa and has enjoyed the good life with all its ups and downs. He doesn't really live on a hill either, but from where I live it's up on the top of the hill.

His name is Maurille Marchand, and he's a retired dairy owner. Like thousands of other merchants over the years he sits at home with his wife, takes life easy, looks at photographs of the kids, talks about the old days.

But there is a difference. Maurille has a most unusual and painstaking hobby.

**He Works In Wood**  
Yes sir, he works in wood - bowls, pitchers, urns, card tables, big knives, forks, and spoons. But not the usual solid lump of wood in a lathe type of deal. No, that's too easy. Maurille is a wood expert. His basement has cherry, pine, birch, cedar and even specially imported ebony wood - very expensive - for the touch of black that distinguishes his works of art.

Now for the punch line ..... all the things he makes are produced the hard way. Hundreds, yes thousands, of tiny pieces of wood are selected, hand cut, matched for contrast, glued together and shaped on a lathe.

**Beauty Is In The Eye Of The Beholder**  
So goes the old saying. If you could see, in colour, the intricate patterns of the bowls, and the coloured woods with the grains running every which way (by design, not accident) the whole thing topped off with a black rim, the ebony again, well, wow...

The edge (where nobody sees) of the card table is comprised of thousands of tiny squares of light and dark wood, each one less than one-quarter inch square, then rubbed

down and varnished.

As a youth at his dad's farm, he would sit and whittle. He never pushed his talent. Simply accepted it. Just as artists, sculptors, composers accept it, or people who potter about in pottery.

**The Main Ingredient - Love**  
That's the secret ingredient of Maurille Marchand - the love of doing a good job.

Working at his dairy from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. he would return tired out and start his hobby. An impulse thing. Talent win out even if you don't have time.

"I got it from my Grandparents I think. My middle son has it as well, but he's too busy right now".

I pointed out he had also been 'too busy' in the past, so maybe it will pass on like some talents do, jumping some generations and skipping from male to female.

**The Four Yea. Itch**  
Working without plans from an old photograph he made a model of 'The Irishman's Church', St. Patrick's in Chicago. Four years it took. Then followed an array of articles too numerous to describe.

He still burns the midnight oil now and again, "as the spirit moves", which shows you don't work to order on this kind of thing! He

often has as many as six different projects at once running 'round in his head.

"What's your next project?" I asked innocently, thinking of the intricate detail work in, say, one spoon.

"Well," he said, "them fellows in Ottawa took a few photos of the House of Commons from all four sides and aerial views too. Reckon I might make a model from it seeing

as how they sent me the photos." Then as an afterthought, "might start it this winter if I feel like it."

Maurille Marchand

One of the last Canadian craftsmen, self taught, no drawings or blueprints, who produces works of art out of thin air with bits of wood, glue, guts and patience. Here's to him and his understanding wife.

Note: The "Odd Copy" book store on Main Street in Penetanguishene which is rapidly becoming an outlet for local artists and talents, may be displaying some of his works. Call in and handle them. Feel the effort that has gone into his 'hobby'.

Thank you Maurille...  
Ray Baker is a manager at RCA's Midland plant. He and his family live in Penetanguishene.

## TERRY PENN

by John Beaulieu

