



by Shirley Whittington

# After last year, we're having a heartless Valentine's dinner

And what about this great heart that once beat in the breast of a cow? Had it ever stood in its owner's mouth? Had it ever skipped a beat, or belonged to Daddy, or beaten in three-quarter time?

Had it ever been stolen, broken, sunk, sick, or for that matter, felt?

Recipes for cows' hearts are not hard to find. (When you get right down to it, I suppose the hardest part is to find a cow who will give her heart to you.)

In my 1867 cookbook, directions for beef heart are sandwiched between those for tongue toast and stewed kidneys. Discouraging.

I turned to Fanny Farmer where stuffed heart is bracketed by calf's head à la Therrapin, and braised ox joints. That's class.

Eaton's, of course, thinks big, and in their ancient Dominion Cookbook, I could find nothing for a mere cow's heart. They suggest the more robust roast bullock's heart, a serving of which would grow hair on the chest of a pygmy, I am sure.

Adrift in cookbooks, I finally got my heart stuffed and browned, and it began to look quite nice. It roasted fragrantly, while I dithered about the rest of the menu.

If I devised a fishy hors d'oeuvre, would we then dine on heart and sole?

If I impaled the meat on tiny wooden skewers, could I call it peg o' my heart?

The thing was stuffed with bread crumbs. Did that make it heart and flours?

Should I fashion little pleated knickers for it, the way one does for legs of lamb? "My heart pants for you," I could cry, as I whisked it out of the oven.

Later, as the family sat around the table, salivating, I eased a serving knife through my edible Valentine. My heart, as they say, stood still. Texture-wise, the thing seems awfully close to liver.

I married a man who has made a career out of avoiding liver. I have tried to sneak it into him - in pies, meat loaves, patés, and naked with onions. I have never succeeded. The Squire is not a picky eater, but he will not, can not, eat liver.

Naturally all this bad press has rubbed off on the kids. Although they normally eat anything that is not nailed down, the word "liver" is inseparably linked in their vocabularies with the word "Yecchhh".

Fearing the worst, I plopped the platter on the table. "Happy Valentine's Day," said I. "That looks like liver," said the Squire

suspiciously.

"It feels like liver," said our daughter.

"It sure smells like liver," said the Fanny Bros, in unison.

The Little Kid paused in mid-munch. "That is liver," he roared.

I looked at them all reproachfully. Would I, I asked, resort to trickery to feed them the one thing in the world that they didn't like? Who did they think I was - one of the Borgias? Indeed, what they had before them was not liver. It was something much more exotic.

"That," I said, with an ingratiating smile, "is a cow's heart."

The silence was deafening. Open mutiny at the dinner table is forbidden around here, so the plates were cleaned up, but with bad grace.

And nobody thanked me afterward, for the lovely dinner.

This year, I'm planning another Valentine dinner and it will be heartless. I'm serving something tuned to their personalities rather than to the season itself.

Scrambled brains. Isn't that offal?

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On the slopes

Photo by Harvey Markle



by Vianney Carriere

# Cigarettes, beer, friends should be tax deductible

is accentuated at the end with the warning "It is a serious offence to make a false return." Oh dear: Math, don't fail me now!!

In between the pleasantness and the warning, itemized, broken down and calculated according to some unknown and unknowable formula created decades ago by a civil servant who had it in for humanity in general and me in specific, will be my contribution to all sorts of goodies for which I would gladly donate at the office even if it weren't a serious offence not to.

You know. Things like LIP projects to construct roof directional beacons to assist migrating geese. OFY projects that pinpoint the exact effects of Cuban cigar smoke on tadpoles. Science Council of Canada research into the state and quality of the teeth of the northern caribou, and Canada Council grants to provide a livelihood for the struggling young artist endeavouring to determine the most esthetically pleasing way in which four commas and three dots can be arranged on a piece of legal sized foolscap.

A serious offence for me to refuse to pay my share? Nonsense. It would be a crime

against humanity not to pay my share.

Fortunately, the actual contribution doesn't hurt as much as it does to see it there on paper. After all, the money I contribute I never had. Its absence is duly noted there to the tune of about a third of my living wage each week, when I get the statement from my company telling me how much or how little they have contributed to my forever starving bank account.

If I had to actually mail out a cheque each spring, I long since would have gone the way of Al Capone, or followed Richard Burton to some more civilised land where the dreaded income tax has not yet been invented.

But ever-so-slyly, Her Majesty's Government actually makes me feel good about baring my economic soul once a year. I never have to write a cheque. I merely fill out the forms and wait for a cheque to be mailed to me. Much less painful that way, and only occasionally, in early morning lucidity, does it occur to me that the only reason it works that way is because so much is deducted in the first place.

It's psychological. What does it matter if I have contributed \$5,000 and get \$100 back. By

the time the rebate comes in, sometime in the summer, I actually thank the government for the slight windfall. It might well be falling from heaven, and it becomes mad, splurge, fling, extravaganza money, replete with interest for whatever use it has been put to since it was pared from my salary.

Nice government. Sweet government. Of course, for the rebates to continue, I can't afford to be making much more.

But patriotism and my desire to pay my way aside, I don't mind admitting that as a 27-year-old childless bachelor, well paid because he is bilingual and has a university education, I feel somewhat discriminated against when I fill out those forms. I am being punished for various things for which I shouldn't be.

My main beef is irrational when you consider the expenses involved in the alternative, but when I see it there on the form, I always object to the fact that I am being taxed because I have so far in my life chosen not to procreate. Sure, kids are expensive things to have, but when I see all those lines there on the form that I have to

leave blank because I don't have a wife to bring me coffee in bed or little ones to bring me my morning paper, I see red.

I'd feel so much better if parents got the same exemptions for kids as they do now, plus, say, \$25 per child, and then, on a different part of the form, they had to add \$25 per child to their taxable income for contributing to overpopulation, or as a luxury tax, or whatever. It would work out to the same and be totally redundant, but I do see a lot of other redundancies on the forms.

I would like to be able to deduct one cent from my taxable income for every package of cigarettes smoked and every bottle of beer drunk because I have already been taxed on those. Empty packages and bottle caps would of course be submitted as proof.

If religious contributions are exempt, and I make none, I would like to deduct ten cents for every Hare Krishna pamphlet that I spurn, and if savings are to be had through charitable contributions, I would like to deduct from my federal taxes the amount I pay in my provincial taxes. I am taxed because I am healthy, hence if I have no medical bills to deduct, I should be allowed

savings on those things that keep me healthy: beer, books, crossword puzzle magazines, my favorite pink blanket, trips I occasionally make to the land of these newspapers.

Friends should be tax-deductible, at least my friends should be. What a tremendous incentive it would be towards good will among men, and it might save the government money in other areas.

All of these things could be tested by a clever accountant, I'm sure. A clever man could simply call the Hare Krishna pamphlets I've turned down "spiritual depreciation" and my friends "medico-moral assets." My pink blanket could easily become "early middle age securities" and my beer empties "liquidated liquid assets." But really, hiring an accountant to do an income tax form is cheating. Like using a dictionary on crossword puzzles.

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by June Judd

# Looking back on Granma's advice - she was right

the gripe, as they called it in those far-away days, she would wrap one of my dad's old socks around my throat, said sock being filled with raw onions. I had to gargle with soda and salt water, have my chest rubbed with goose grease, and swallow a teaspoonful of sugar with a couple of drops of Sloans' Liniment in it! Holy dynamite, you had to be healthy to be sick in those days.

Well anyway, everybody said my granma made the best apple pie in Trawna. I believed it. I mean I really believed it. When I came home from Sunday School, it was roast beef, mashed potatoes and turnip, and apple pie and cheese for dessert. I didn't know there was other stuff you could have for Sunday dinner until I grew up and joined the Air Force and found out that you could have neat goodies like corned beef and prunes on Sunday!

Food was very important in my life when I was young. There wasn't too much of it, and nothing was wasted. Like, you take Monday night's supper. It was bound to be cold roast beef, and bread and gravy, and maybe a few fried, mashed potatoes. To me, it was a

heavenly feast. The only time we had a tangerine and an orange, together at the same time, was at Christmas. Sometimes, we even had a Macintosh apple too.

One time I remember an aunt, who was very rich, brought my grandmother a tin of shrimps. She was rich in my eyes because she had store-bought cookies, the kind we used to call sandwich cookies. Bought them out of a big bin in the corner store. Anyway, I thought it was very grand indeed that my grandmother ate shrimps, and sliced tomatoes, in the winter!

Sometimes at night, usually on a Sunday night, after I came home from the Salvation Army evening service (I used to go to all the events around our house that went on in the churches. They always had hot chocolate), my granma would reminisce as she played gin rummy, or did one of her big, wooden jigsaw puzzles.

She would tell me how she came to Canada as a young girl from Yorkshire with her parents. Her father was a school master in the old country. She met my grandfather, who was a "river rat", black-haired, hand-

some devil, who swept her off her feet. Pretty soon she was married and had a pack of kids. I never knew my grandfather. He died very young of galloping consumption contracted from sleeping in a snowbank while plastered.

So my little grandmother took in dress beading to raise her seven children, "lost one, a little girl she was, at birthin'". My father was the third youngest, also a black-haired, handsome devil, and the spittin' image of his daddy. Well, this beading was on what they called shirtwaists and black crepe dresses, black, jade beads. She would work away, night after night, putting these tiny little square beads in beautiful patterns on party dresses. At the age of 85, she said that beading was what ruined her eyes, even though she still didn't wear glasses and could spot a speck of dust behind my ears at 50 paces.

To me, she was a ramrod, conservative, unbending enigma. She had a saying for everything. "May you always be the lady you are today" is what she wrote in my autograph book, when I was the ripe old age of eight. When I was ten years old she wrote,

"What ye sow, so shall ye reap." I think she was a mite worried about the impending threshold of womanhood!

When I was going to my first dance at the age of seventeen (I wasn't too swift) she warned, "Don't dance with anybody who has sores on his hands." Many years later, I realized this was an introduction to the mysteries of venereal disease.

The next instruction was, "and don't be bringing home any Catholics". We had a war going on in our family, orange versus green. My mother was a Catholic French-Irish, and my father came from a Protestant English-German background, with the definite emphasis on the Orange. What a battle!

My father was the original Archie Bunker. His vocabulary was liberally sprinkled with remarks like, "picked these tomatoes up at Tony, the Wop's", or "Teeter, totter, holy water", dagos, limeys, polacks and squareheads. This was the vernacular of Cabbagetown where my father's boyhood education took place. When he got mad at me, he used to call me an immigrant! Oh yes, and then there were the Yanks. It

was always "the Yanks", never just Yanks or Yankees or Americans. Being a very precocious child, who was smoking a pipe at two years of age when I could get hold of it, all this blasphemy made quite an impression on my very impressionable mind. Because, as far as I was concerned in my small world, my grandmother and my father were the authorities for every subject that could possibly arise.

My tiny French mother departed this world at the age of 29, leaving this infant terrible to the care of a young father who quickly called in the troops in the body of my granma. I think I heard my dad say once upon a time, "What hath God wrought?" He stole those words from Mr. Morse of the famed telegraph, but now I think I know what the poor man meant.

I wish it was possible to say, "Hey granma, you didn't do too bad. You might even be proud of me." Whatever I am.

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by Ray Baker

# It's easy to spend a million—when you haven't got it

Mom and the two boys went first, since they have all kinds of practice in spending money faster than I can bring it in. And that's not as easy as it sounds - takes real training. You start off carefully and gradually work up until Dad starts screaming and tearing his hair out - then ease off a shade.

First come Mom "I would definitely want the bathroom modernized," she said. I pointed out we would be able to buy out the whole bathtub industry and Mom revised her estimate.

"In that case, we'll leave the bathroom as it is and sell the house. Then buy another house with a modern bathroom but an old appearance." (The house that is).

Then followed a ten minute discussion on 'The House' with a huge gravel driveway, white pillars, French moss hanging from the trees, old beams. The whole bit. It was really a combination of the film 'Gone with the Wind', the books 'Mandigo' and 'Black Sun' plus nostalgic memories brought back from the Carolinas three years ago.

"And oh yes," Mom added, "a little M.G. sports car and a \$250 Yorkshire Terrier."

The kids had been quiet too long and couldn't wait to spend their share of the legendary million dollars.

No. 1 son jumped in next "A five piece pool cue" said No. 1 son, "and

a big pool table to go with it. A purple coloured one." As an afterthought he added, "we could play monopoly with real money. Not many people can do that you know." And as a further afterthought, he said "and a big house like Casa Loma - no, we buy Casa Loma because there is a pool table there." End of spend.

No. 2 son leaped in "With the grace of a karate death kick he leaped into the spending battle with "a new pair of jeans, and an aquarium, and a small skiff with an 80 horsepower engine on it." He dried up.

I shouldn't have really but I pointed out that what the boys wanted (apart from Casa Loma) could be bought out of a fraction of the interest. This got their interest, so while they were thinking bigger and better spending habits, Dad got to make his pitch.

First stop Zurich "The Royal Bank could handle it and the Bank of Montreal would no doubt take a million dollar bank account in its stride, but - I've always wanted a Swiss numbered bank account."

So the minute I recovered from the cardiac arrest brought on by winning, plus the hangover from celebrating the recovery from the heart attack, brought on by winning

- Zurich... "Do you decide your own numbered account number I wonder, like your old army number or your wife's vital statistics, or do they issue a number? I would be scared to write it down and frightened to forget it."

Then I would buy an island in Lake Huron - using Chargex. I figure with a cool million in the bank your credit rating with Chargex would be good enough to say "I'll take that island with the cottage on it please. Here is

my Chargex card, and oh yes, throw a good motor launch in as well if you would."

Then we would have to furnish the cottage with wall to wall family, hot and cold running booze and sit down and worry.

I've been told there would be plenty of worry. Friends of ours said that they would settle for half the big prize or the odd \$100,000. I will risk the trouble and heart-break, the worries and problems of having a million plus interest, plus interest on the

interest and let the bankers of Switzerland keep it safe and sound while the family and I sit and figure out ways of spending it.

Actually we will tell you a secret. We would settle for a half, a quarter, even an eighth. (Would you believe a hundred dollars)....

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## TERRY PENN

by John Beaulieu

