



by Shirley Whittington

A funny thing happened to me on the way to the breakfast table this morning. I opened the refrigerator and beheld a full jug of milk. My kids drink a lot of milk. They will swirl it down at meals, before meals, after meals and before they go to bed. This is why it surprised me to find a full, untouched bottle of milk at 7:30 on a Wednesday morning. The solution to the mystery is simple. The kids have caught on to my latest cost-cutting ploy, the use of reconstituted dry milk powder. I've been doing it for years, but nobody around here deemed it drinkable. By funneling the reconstituted stuff into a plastic dairy jug, I'd hoped to fool them. I didn't, so I'll have to cut costs in some other area. Milk is as wholesome and socially acceptable as motherhood and Sunday morning

Milk: acceptable as motherhood, but the price is too high

worship. It is also very expensive, and as the price has climbed, so has its glamour. Milk is not just kid stuff, according to the PR boys. Beautiful successful career women are shown on television, declaring that when their nerves get frazzled and hunger strikes, a glass of milk makes them feel all beautiful again, and ready to cope with the next exotic assignment. Ontario's Dairy Princess passed through our community some time ago. She was a knock-out, with gleaming teeth and a peaches and cream complexion. Her job was to swing around the country in a milk white convertible, promoting the milk diet. The implication was that you, too, could be a knockout, if you got on the milk wagon. Now something more startling is happening to milk. A bill has gone before the Ontario Legislature which would require all taverns, bars and licensed clubs to offer their patrons a choice of milk, coffee and soft drinks, as well as booze. That's a sensible innovation, but I can't

help wondering where this will all end. Pretty soon, cows, the primary milk producers, will start wearing violet tinted shades, and giving press conferences. A mystique of milk drinking will develop. Milk snobs will start carrying on about what temperature milk should be served. Headwaiters will suggest a nicely chilled skim with your fish fillets; a full bodied Holstien homogenized with the roast beef; Devonshire cream for the strawberries. Gourmets will make a fuss about decanting milk before serving. They will argue about size and shape of glasses. They will suggest that thoughtful hostesses provide a variety of milk in order to please all her guests. Those who serve a powdered mixture of corn syrup solids, vegetable fat and chemicals, with after dinner coffee, instead of real cream, will be outside the pale. Now that milk has been glamorized by inclusion on the cocktail menu, other changes in our life style are inevitable. Business deals will be consummated over a

2 per cent lunch, instead of a two martini one. When friends drop over to the house for a drink, we will have to burp them before they go home. Socialites will arrange milk and cookie, instead of wine and cheese, parties. What will happen to that tough guy on the telly who says that nobody laughs at him when he drinks sherry? Will his friends giggle when he hoists a glass of buttermilk? I'm glad to see that milk drinking is getting classy, just like beer drinking. It will be nice to see people coming out of bars at midnight, all rosy and healthy, instead of pale and reeling. And it will certainly be a Godsend for my son. He turns 18 in June. The next time he finds the refrigerator full of reconstituted dry skim milk powder, he'll be able to nip round to the pub and have a glass of the real stuff. Shirley Whittington is a staff writer with Markle Community Newspapers.



Sunlight through the pines



by Fern Judd

Webster's dictionary defines a cemetery as a public burial ground. Most of us will end up in one of these man-made preserves after we have "shed our mortal coil." A few people, many perhaps, pick out a plot ahead of time and know exactly where they are going to be buried. Do they dwell on it?

Cemeteries are for people

Do they savour the thought of eventually lying in some well kept grassy nook? Not likely. To some persons, cemeteries are morbid. For the bereaved relatives, and even friends, cemeteries are sacred sanctuaries for the departed. They return there, week after week, month after month, or on special occasions. They seek to be "close to the deceased", to commune with them, to pray, and to freshen memories. They enjoy the peace and the beauty. They encourage it. They embrace it. They help to create it with fresh bouquets of flowers and favourite plants. They help to keep alive these tranquil and hallowed spots. To me, cemeteries are beautiful. Sad, serene and comforting. In my home town, they are situated on cliffs that surround a broad and busy bay. They were established years ago on the outskirts of town, where you can still find softness, quietness and acres of trees and shrubs. Some of the liveliest and tallest trees

are found there, casting shadows that keep the grass cool and green. Narrow roads wind in among the trees and headstones and discourage hot-rodding and other noise. Single visitors or small groups quietly come to place a few flowers, meditate, and just as silently slip away. They leave no clutter, create no fuss. As they come to make their own private pilgrimage, the visitors show respect for these monuments to the past. These are secluded retreats for the soul. More of us should share these beauty spots. Admission is free. There are no snack bars, no washrooms and probably no drinking water, but there is peace. There is loveliness. Many tombstones are works of art with stories carved in granite. Notice the biblical names on the older ones such as Ezekiel, Josiah, Sarah, Ebenezer and Ruth. Ponder on the sad old man who died within months of his wife, probably of a broken heart. Wonder about the widow who survived her spouse by some twenty-odd years. Dwell on

the tragedy of parents who buried an infant struck down by diphtheria. You may notice how many children succumbed during a flu epidemic about 60 years ago. Enjoy some of the sentimental verses and chuckle at the deliberate humour carved generations ago by stone masons long since departed too. On some restless day when you wish to avoid the crowded beaches and the busy parks, seek out a burial ground. Perhaps it is tucked away beside a church with its own interesting past. Cemeteries are tributes to the departed and they are veritable history books. Stroll down the rows on headstones, markers and wooden crosses, but stroll quietly, reverently. Those with a sense of history will find food for thought nourishment for the soul, fresh air, and a happy harmony of man and nature. Fern Judd works at the Penetanguishene Mental Health Centre. He lives in Midland.



by Vianney Carriere

In matters of morality, I consider myself more of an observer and a wonderer than a judge, because it's always been so much easier to ask the ponderous questions than to try and answer them. Morality in my mind, like good and evil or sin and virtue, has always been reducible to the denominators of pain and pleasure. If a person is harmed physically, or emotionally

The sadness of Vietnam brought home by babes

by an act or an omission, that is immoral, sinful and evil. There are no easy answers to any of the questions regarding the great baby airlift from Vietnam. The questions abound, and beyond any assessment of right or wrong in this case, there is the complicated and painful area of motive and logic. It's hard for me to refute the statement by a friend of mine who has just returned from Saigon and who declares me incompetent to make a judgement one way or another. It's impossible to quarrel with the look in his eyes when he argues that you just have to see the babies and their condition before making a judgement. But then, I have another friend, who is a brilliant lawyer and has spent the last nine years of his life dealing with questions of oppression and civil liberties, and the way he puts it is probably the best simplification possible without becoming banal: "There are an awful lot of evil people in this world, some communists, I suppose, included, but nobody goes around killing orphans. They are hardly

one of your oppressed groups." It's like dealing with the philosophical implications of a split glass of milk. The babies that are coming, for good or for ill, are here, so it's the motivation which will cloak their trip into adulthood that is the prime concern now. Without seeing the babies in Asia and while remaining objective, there are certainly some facts that can be stated without cynicism. For almost 15 years, armed force dispatched from this continent have been making orphans in Viet Nam. For every year that the war was prolonged and the defeat of the South, which may well have been inevitable from the start, was delayed, there were thousands more orphans created. It's a documented fact that for these 15 years, American soldiers in Vietnam have been having relations with Vietnamese women, leaving them eventually with fatherless children. It's difficult to refrain from cynicism when one thinks that it took that long for the North American families involved to assume some

collective responsibility and some concern towards the solution of a problem which to a large extent was created on this continent. It may well be that beyond the obvious motive of massive guilt, there is a nobler purpose. But the massive guilt motive is more logical than cynical. The most tantalising thing about the whole question is that it is one that will never be answered. It is very seldom in history that a problem or a series of events cannot be entrusted to history acting as final judge. But the future in this case appears exceptionally clear in view of the complexity of the moralities involved. There will be culture shock. There will be massive disorientation. There will be medical problems and deaths. There will be failures. But babies are resilient, and I find that the overwhelming probability is that the majority of these children, one way or another, will grow to lead normal, productive useful lives. It seems reasonable to assume that the proportion of failures will be no greater than it would be among a similar

number of North American children born and raised in middle and upper middle class Canadian homes. But that doesn't solve the problems. In a different context, the Russian poet Yev-tushenko wrote: "When a nation has gone dangerously insane, it cannot be cured by history. You can't even wash blood away. There are no such washing machines." The thief who is never caught is no less guilty of thievery than the one who serves his sentences, and war crimes that go unatoned for are no less criminal than the ones probed at Nuremberg. Regardless of good or ill, it's impossible to leave this matter with any feeling whatever other than a sense of hope and prayer that all will be well. The uncomfortable thing about motives is that they are subjective, and once the decision is made, the motive becomes part of the environment. I would be a lot more concerned about the future if children were not so loveable. So I prefer to believe that if there exists a family somewhere who adopted a Vietnamese child

because the people up the street had one, that child has the child-like talent of creating love and bettering the motive, and, hence, growing up in an atmosphere of love and tenderness. The sadness lies in the fact it took so long. The sadness lies in the 15-year-old lack of concern. And it lies most deeply with the orphans now dead, with the parents they lost. It lies no less deep with the orphans created on this continent and with the men and women who made the monumental decisions that have brought this end to the world. The sadness lies in war and in warring men, for through the end of a war is a beginning for these little children, there will be other orphans in the Far East, the Middle East, Ireland and other places this day at peace. If the motive, in this case, be guilt, then so be it. But if guilt has any use, it is not to anesthetize the past. It is to guide and lead the way to tomorrow. Vianney Carriere is a reporter for Toronto's Globe and Mail, and free-lance writer for Markle Community Newspapers.



by Ray Baker

This week's enthralling column is a mess. No beginning, no middle, no end. Using my talent for ESP: I 'precoq' that the editor is desperate for copy, so I'll quietly slip this one in unnoticed like a trout going upstream. Having read a couple of books by Kurt Vonegut Jr. last year, I churned out an atrocious column, about Nader, Quixote, and Corvair cars, none of which were remotely connected with Vonegut. The book 'Slaughterhouse Five' and 'Breakfast of Champions' came highly recommended (by Shirley Whittington). I thoroughly enjoyed them, and wrote the column under the influence of Vonegut, which is like the influence of alcohol, only more so.

Blood, sweat and tears (1) — how not to write a column

Not only can he send you on a trip without drink or drugs, he is the only modern writer to have his books burned in public (last year in a Midwestern town). So he can't be all bad. Incidentally, I thought the lousy column was good in spite of my literary peers' and better's condemnation. (Editors note: It was so bad I held it at arm's length with a pair of tongs). This week's column is even worse. Hopefully, this one is bad enough to justify public burning, putting me right up there with Kurt. First of all, there is no blood, as the title suggest. In fact, it's anemic. The page is sprayed with Rightguard, so there is no sweat, and as for tears, well if you've read this far, you should be crying by now. For Part II, please send me \$1 to cover postage and handling. It will be mailed to you under plain envelope. B.S.&T, Part I is written under the influence of Ken Dixon. Ken is director of the 'mind institute' in Toronto, which is open to any kind of suggestion on any aspect of the mind. One of his comments worth quoting is "we (the institute) have no fixed notions or opinions on anything. Any conclusions or facts that we think we might have, are subject to instant change at any time without notice". How's that for a start? He mentioned the first annual gathering, or

rally, or assembly, or whatever, of specialists from every walk of psychics that Toronto the good has ever seen. Allan Spragget should have enough of the unexplained to last him through this life - and the next. It's all in the mind Can you imagine the entire Four Seasons Sheraton Hotel being taken over (dare I say possessed) for a four-day, mind-boggling, non-stop, psychic trip, with a cast of thousands. Table after table of tea cup readers. Hot and cold running clairvoians, wall to wall palmists. A \$75,000 truck fitted with every electronic gadget known to mankind - for chasing and tracking U.F.O.'s. You don't present a business card. Simply reach in your pocket for your 78 piece mystical tarot deck and pull out a hierophant, or king of coins. Anything goes Yes sir, anything goes. An executive sand box 'relieves inner conflicts and tensions'. Instant spoon bending by mind power. Witchcraft supplies, black or white (state second choice). Amazing memory secrets, don't forget your cheque book. Treasure finding by ESP. You want to unravel the secrets of mankind. There you go with Astara 'anyone can win sweepstakes'. Well I guess so. You believe in Lycanthropy. Jump right in. How about in-depth discussion on astrology or 20,000 dreams interpreted. Stop smoking in

one minute by will power alone. Here's what I'm gonna do. Go down there on the Friday night with plenty of wine. The way I see it, if you can get enough psychics to drink enough wine, there are bound to be some sadists in the gathering, that's it. They just go around striking happy mediums. Everybody wins. Hey listen, I'm not knocking it. If I can't make it down there, I'll eat my heart out. Think - Tank Not 'think big' or 'think now' but think tank. They will be on sale also. A small plastic sphere filled with words on plastic strips. A viewing window in front like a space

helmet and two knobs complete the sealed unit. Here is the concept. Anyone can think logically, but for real mind expanding creative thoughts, random inputs are necessary. So you sit down at home and turn the knobs. Random words appear and you think about them. 'Sam' who lives in Toronto, let me try his. First words 'transition' and 'greening'. Instantly it triggered off a book I had read, The greening of America, which starts something like this "There will be a revolution. It is inevitable and cannot be stopped by violence." A sombre, interesting

experience. So if you buy a think tank and twiddle the knobs and the random words appear, and every word reminds you of sex, don't worry. You're a sex maniac. Seriously though, it should be a hell of a weekend. In fact using my ESP power of precognition I can say it was a good weekend...Out of sight, out of mind. If you're still not crying here is the clincher. Mind how you go.... Ray Baker is a manager at Midland's RCA plant, and a freelance writer. He and his family live in Penetanguishene.

TERRY PENN

by John Beaulieu

