

No place for bigotry

One of the most encouraging items to appear recently in this paper was a story about Radio Canada applying to the Canadian Radio Television Commission for permission to build a transmitting tower here for French radio and television.

People from both the Francophone and Anglophone sectors of the community rallied in support of the application.

Most people, English or French-speaking, saw it as a step toward a bilingual Canada.

At the end of this month when the application comes before the CRTC there will be another application, that one for permission for the CBC to build a relay station in Barrie for French radio and television.

What was the reaction in Barrie? If the editorial which ran in The Barrie Examiner on March 10 (reprinted below) is any indication, it was not good.

The editorial reeks of an anti-French bigotry unseen since the early 60s.

Providing French television may be the only way some people may have of learning

the French language yet the newspaper claims this would be a bad thing because it deprives Barrie TV viewers of one American television channel.

Ridiculous! It may come as a bit of a shock to The Barrie Examiner that French is not a language which is learned in high school then forgotten.

French is one of two official languages in this country, the other being English, and the sooner the unilingual ostriches take their heads out of the sand the better it will be for all.

If Toronto, with its predominantly English-speaking two-million residents, can have a French television station, then surely it is not too much to ask that Barrie follow suit and give up one of its 11 English cable channels for such a cause.

Bigotry is a festering boil in our society and has no place in it, particularly on the editorial page of an established and respected newspaper.

If you have teenage children who may in the next decade get married and have children, it is not too early for you to start getting into condition. The life you save may be your own.

I'd suggest a lot of jogging, for a start. Get your wind together. You'll need it.

Then you should get your back in shape. Practice leaning over a bath-tub until you can do it for 10 minutes without a stitch or a twinge.

Next, you should work on your arms and shoulder muscles. I suggest you buy a baby cot and a high chair. Then get hold of a large plastic bag and fill it with 25 pounds of sand or old iron. Nails might be even better.

Now. Put the bag of sand in the high chair

and practice hoisting it out until you can do it 10 times in a row without puffing. Do the same with the baby's cot, with the sides up.

This is only a facsimile, of course, not the real thing. One hopes that the bag of sand will not be struggling, or screaming that it doesn't want its bib on, or doesn't want to go bye-byes.

Next, put on your winter clothes, tuck the bag of sand under one arm and a 20 lb. bag of groceries under the other, and practice walking out to the car with them, over the slippery sidewalk. If you see a dog or cat or kid, you must stop and look for a suitable interval, saying: "See the nice doggie," about eight times.

If you followed this regime for five years or

so, you might be physically able to cope with a lively two-year-old grandson or daughter. I wish someone had warned me.

We're into our third week with Pokey, and we're getting a bit tattered around the edges.

When I was a young father and had young children of my own, for some reason I didn't get so exhausted.

Of course, then, I didn't get home from work until about 6:30. The kids were fed, bathed by their mother, and I told them their bed-time story. There was nothing to it.

Nowadays, I get home about 4:30, and a little demon hurls himself at me. He's just up, refreshed, after his nap, and I'm a little pooped after coping with the life styles of 150 adolescents. It's no contest.

I'm beginning to have the deepest sym-

pathy for young mothers. With one child, it's about a 16-hour a day shift. With several young ones, it's got to be the modern answer to the Chinese water torture.

How many of you oldtimers have tried recently to get an infant into one of those winter snowsuits? The boots won't go through the legs, the zippers won't zip. Yesterday, I spent eight minutes getting one leg in, and for once the zipper worked. I straightened up to draw breath and ease my back, looked down with some satisfaction, and saw to my horror that the child's leg was in the wrong leg of the snowsuit. Back to scratch.

Sunday, there was a fresh fall of snow, and I thought I'd take Pokey for a toboggan ride. After the usual ordeal of getting him dressed, I was sweating and puffing. He was calm and kept to going.

Unfortunately, our house is surrounded by hills. If you start off downhill, you'll be going uphill on the way home. I was smart. I tackled the steepest hill, going up, so it would be easier, downhill, on the way back, when I'd be tired.

Oh yes, I was smart. Near the top of the first hill, an elderly lady, out shovelling her snow, remarked: "Well, you must be a devoted grandfather. I've seen men pulling kids on a toboggan before, but I've never seen one doing it on his hands and knees, pretending to be a sleigh dog." I wasn't pretending.

After three blocks, all uphill, we hit the road home. I didn't know, by this time, whether I was going up, down, or sideways. I was lathered in sweat and my knees were trembling like a virgin's on her honeymoon.

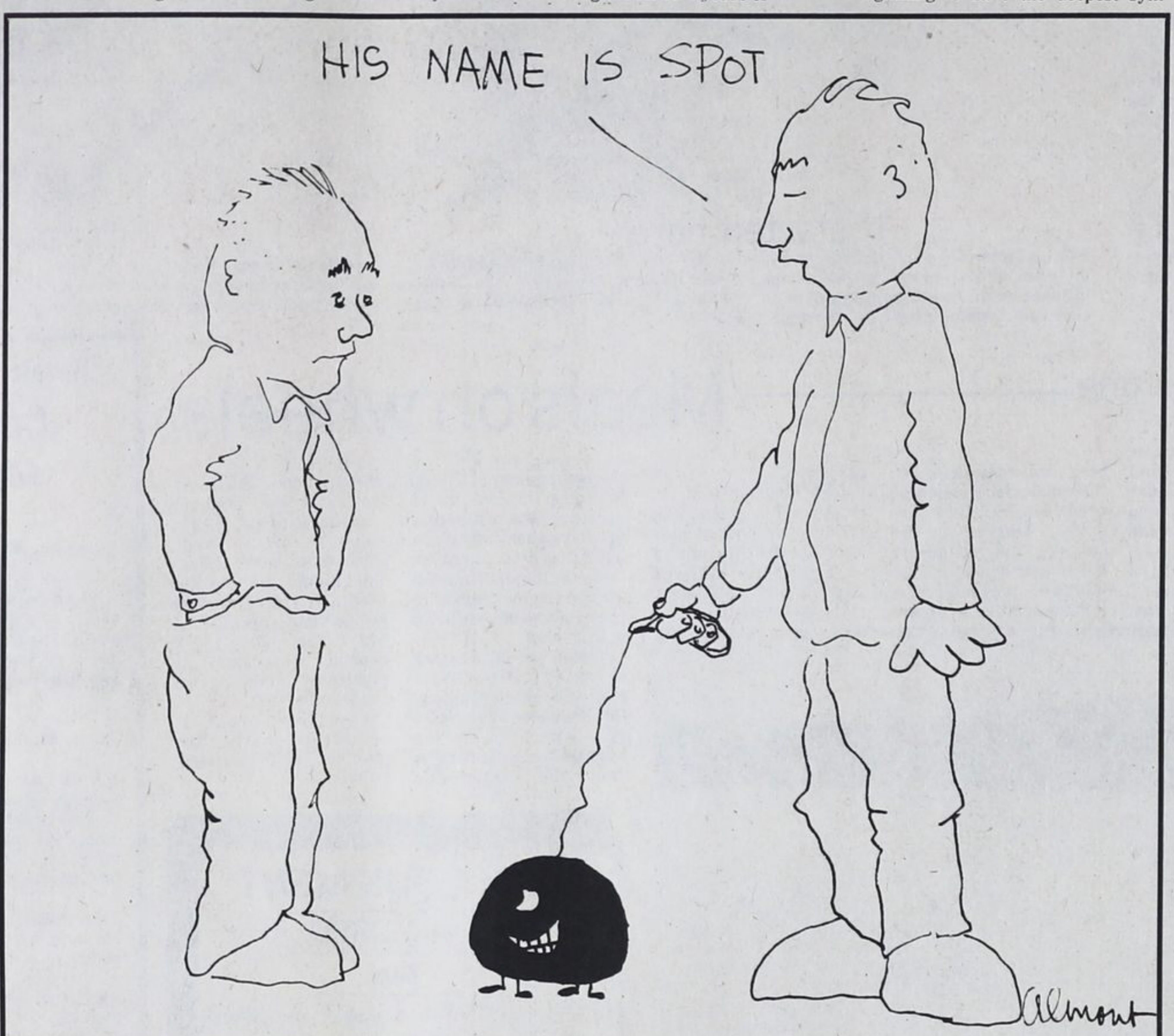
If you're wondering how your heart is, take your grandchild for a toboggan ride, preferably with long patches of bare sidewalk covered with sand. By the end of it, you'll either be dead, or you'll know your ticker is in pretty good shape.

But the outdoor games are mild compared with the indoor. At least, when he's swaddled in a snowsuit, he can't move much. All he could do was yell: "Go more!" every time I stopped, gasping.

Indoors, he's a living, breathing mobile. Favorite game is to line up at the other end of a 30-foot room, run as fast as he can, chortling fiendishly, and hurl himself, head-first, into my stomach.

On Saturday mornings, I like to read the book reviews in the daily paper. Last Saturday, I spent four hours trying to read a six-paragraph review. In between I was changing records on the record player, which must be playing simultaneously with the tape recorder, fetching drinks of juice and crackers with peanut butter, hoisting him onto the pot (he's too busy to be bothered), helping him build a train, trying to keep him from pulling the cat's tail, and 60 or 70 other things.

No wonder he likes it here. He's like a little prince, with two servile attendants who learn to cater to his every whim.



French television

(From the Barrie Examiner, March 10, 1976)

The CBC and the CRTC have once again combined to strike a blow for Canadian national unity.

This time the blow will be struck in Barrie. It is, of course, the old French-English question.

And the form of this blow has us wondering if it isn't really a blow for French and a blow against English.

The CBC, in that wisdom Canadians are all too aware of, has decided the residents of Barrie want nothing more than a French TV station.

The basis for that decision is, of course, known only to the CBC.

Which is probably just as well. If Canadians knew on what basis the CBC made decisions, heaven-alone knows what the result would be.

In order for the CBC to bow to public clamor for a French TV outlet here, it will be necessary for local cable company, Barrie Cable TV Ltd., to drop one of the 11 channels it now carries.

We all know what that means. One of those dreadful American TV channels will be dumped, thereby saving Canadians once more from themselves.

The CBC has made application to the Canadian Radio Television Commission to permit it to broadcast a French TV signal to the eagerly-awaiting Barrie homes.

The CRTC is as mysterious an organization as the CBC. The CRTC's mission on the Canadian scene is much the same as the CBC's—to save us from ourselves.

Whether we want to be saved or not.

The CRTC, flaunting its non-political structure in the face of Barrie residents, has decided to hold a hearing on the French TV matter.

In Montreal, on March 30, with a deadline for briefs of March 15.

There is something magnificently Establishment-Canadian about that.

Holding the hearing in Ottawa, the nation's capital, would make some sort of sense.

Right away, that means the CRTC wouldn't do it.

So Barrie residents have a little over a week to prepare objections to a move the CBC plans to make. Barrie residents who plan to make personal appearances at the hearing have only to travel to Montreal.

The CRTC knows full well that one week is not enough time to prepare a brief; it knows full well that chances are slim anybody from Barrie will appear in Montreal to oppose the CBC.

The CBC will get its French channel. Barrie residents, who have often and loudly said this is what they want — haven't they? — will lose an American channel without having an opportunity to say how they feel about it.

Thus, Canadian unity is served.

Queen's Park Report

by Arthur Evans
MPP Simcoe Centre

On Tuesday, March 9, 1976, the Third Session of the Thirtieth Parliament of Ontario opened with the Throne Speech read by the Honourable Pauline McGibbon, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. Or to put it more in the vernacular, the legislative store opened for business once more at Queen's Park.

The major theme in this Throne Speech is one of restraint in government spending. I have used this report more than once to talk with you about the idea of restraint in order to beat back inflation. Without becoming tedious, I believe that it is an important topic which requires considerable explanation.

Why? Because the citizens of Ontario want and expect their government to set a good example. They want to know precisely the ways in which limiting government spending will affect their lives in terms of the various public services available to them. Many people are hurting badly from inflation. They have had to make hard choices in their own personal lives about using their money wisely for their basic needs. They expect the same type of leadership at the provincial level.

At the same time, however, people expect their provincial government to save public funds in an efficient and effective manner. In reducing expenditures they do not want to see services affected in a hohol-bolus manner. Within those guidelines the Ontario government is putting that commitment into practice.

Let me illustrate. The Throne Speech outlined the necessity "to maintain the highest levels of health care while at the same time making it as cost-effective as possible." That means reducing the total number of beds, and integrating services among hospitals in the same area.

That does not mean reducing the number of

nursing home beds nor chopping ambulance services, public health units, home care or community mental health programs.

All essential health care needs of Ontario's people will be met, — but health resources will be used more effectively.

Yet operating under such constraints does not render a government inactive. Many things still remain to be undertaken in a host of policy fields. The Throne Speech demonstrated the types of legislative action to be implemented in law enforcement, labour relations, agriculture, housing and energy.

During this session, the Honourable William Newman will introduce a voluntary farm income stabilization plan. This plan will differ substantially from the compulsory scheme put into operation by the previous New Democratic Government of British Columbia. In addition, new goals will be set to increase productivity of agricultural lands, and the use of less productive land for housing.

Whenever a farmer produces more commodities, it is necessary to provide practical ways of selling that produce and ensuring the consumer that produce is carefully inspected. In that regard stricter meat inspection of poultry and livestock will be enforced. Many more overseas trade missions will be promoted through the Ontario Food Council, whose additional responsibilities will include research into food prices.

The very essence of our long term stability as a society lies in a strong and vital agriculture.

To help maintain the public safety of Ontario, substantial improvements in Ontario's administration of justice will be undertaken. Specifically, the number of judges will be expanded to meet the backlog of cases in all levels of courts.



by Shirley Whittington

Last week a friend complained that she felt as if she were living in the middle of a situation comedy. I know what she means. It's the same way around here. We even have commercials.

When the kids run out of conversation they prattle on about static-cling and PH balance and two whole beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun. And they can do that one backwards.

At least with television you have a choice of situations and plots. A TV log allows you to choose between Happy Days ("Fearless

Fonzie attempts to leap his motorcycle over a record fourteen garbage tins") or Gilligan's Island ("Erika Tiffany-Smith, in search of a husband and a place to build a hotel, arrives at the island in her yacht and falls for the Professor").

I wish I had some sort of a similar log to warn me of what's in store for me each day. That way I'd have a choice, and I'd know whether to leap out of bed with a glad cry, or to just pull the covers over my head and shudder.

Such a log would look like this, I imagine. CANADA A.M. This hour features Mum and each of her four children in a series of in-depth discussions. Watch as she urges her daughter to eat a sensible breakfast, the Little Kid to comb his hair and make his bed, and the two oldest boys to get up. Join the mirth around the breakfast table as Daddy discovers that the power has been off and the kitchen clock is forty minutes slow.

THE NEWS AT NOON: The Little Kid comes home for lunch and announces that a big boy took his hat and he hates long division and he can't do his papers after school because he has to go to a birthday party and he needs a present.

SPORTS BEAT: That Girl rages in, slams the door and bursts into tears. Her team lost the basketball game because the other girls were bigger and they cheated and the referees were mean and it's not fair.

Anyway, her running shoes are all crappy and she thinks she sprained her thumb and she's got two hours of dumb homework.

CELEBRITY COOKS: The Little Kid decides to surprise the family with home made peanut brittle. He dumps peanuts (one pound) and sugar (one pound) into a large frying pan, turns on the stove and goes to call Kevin on the telephone. Surprises abound in this smoke-filled half hour.

UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS: Upstairs this week, right at the edge of the top step are Daddy's hammer, a basketball and two plastic glasses encrusted with last week's chocolate milk. Meanwhile, on the bottom step of the same staircase, is a fresh tube of toothpaste, a grade thirteen geography text and a pair of platform shoes. The crumpled heap on the landing is Mummy, who has tripped over the basketball, and has given up saying, "When you go upstairs (downstairs) take that stuff up (down) with you."

MEDICAL CENTRE: Mother is baffled by a keyless tin of sardines. Father opens it for her and cuts his thumb. There are no band aids. They are all in the basement, holding the Big Jim Ski Jump together. Don't miss this colourful demonstration of what a sudden onrush of high blood pressure can do to a man with a cut in his thumb.

EVENING NEWS REPORT: At the dinner table, That Girl announces that her grade 8 class participated in a survey of the use of

alcohol in the home.

She and her classmates were asked questions like "Do your parents keep alcohol in your home?" "If so, who drinks it - Mummy or Daddy?" "Is it wine, beer or hard liquor?" "Have you ever drunk any of Mummy or Daddy's alcohol?"

The old folks are assured that the kids don't have to sign their names to the questionnaire, but they realize, with a sinking feeling, that That Girl's handwriting is as distinctive as a social security number.

LATE NIGHT MYSTERY: Wide awake beside the snoring sleeping giant, Mummy ponders life's Big Questions, like - why is the furnace making that funny noise? Did anybody remember to mail away the fire insurance premium? Will the oldest boy pass his biology? And if he does, and money can be found for his Higher Education, will he be able to find a job if and when he graduates? How will she get the press mark out of last year's skirt which she has let down to this year's length? Why does the car stall at intersections? Did she turn the iron off?

And that's the way life is around here - a peculiar blend of My Three Sons, That Girl, and Father Knows Best.

We're the Odd Couple, and I'm the bitter half.

A peculiar blend of My Three Sons, That Girl

Pages torn from the editor's notebook



by Kevin Scanlon

The Screaming Citizen is pleased to feature the recollections of that slightly-more-than-mad Western writer, Kervin Saddles. In this first excerpt from his upcoming book Shootout At Penatant Gulch, he gives us an insight into life on the range.

It was in that cruel cold winter of '75-76 that I first rode into Penatant Gulch. I rode alone. My faithful mule not being partial to hitch-hikers. Though it was unknown to me then, poor ole Samson, great mule that he was, was not long for this world. Never even noticed his fatal case of pneumonia since my smoker's cough ruled out hearing anything short of a landslide, a 5.6 earthquake or the popping of a cham-

pagne cork.

Samson died slowly and noisily outside the Camaraderie Saloon, attracting a large crowd. Many thought they knew why his four legs were pointing at the evening sky.

"Must be the fuel pump," one wag suggested.

"Sounds like a clogged carburetor," another commented.

"Definitely the universal," said another voice.

It didn't matter. Samson died as stubborn as ever.

Attempting to drown my sorrows in the saloon I ran into a man I had previously known only by reputation. He stood alone at the bar quaffing ales and trading verbal retorts with all comers. There were few.

Humble Charleboogie had a mouth as quick as an angry rattlesnake and used it like a streetfighter uses a switchblade.

I felt brave and sidled over to him. He seemed friendly enough at first. Even bought me a shot-glass full of beer.

Then his true character came through. Trying to ignore his abrasive comments I said, "Are you trying to intimidate me?"

"I wasn't getting friendly," he responded. "No, that's intimate."

"Never been in a prison in my life."

"No, that's inmate."

"Sounds more like a cough remedy to me." I knew I could be no match for such a mind and moved on.

It was a few weeks later that I heard the

fearful news. Twenty days of writing when I felt like it and drinking when I didn't left my mind three spaces short of complete paranoia. La P'tite Folle had arrived in town.

It should be explained that the protectors of sanity in the community, the ever-deadly Smokey Butte gang, had left town a week previous. Riding south into the winter sunset with not so much as a backward glance. Penatant Gulch was left wide open for any interloper.

La P'tite Folle fut la femme la plus dangereuse dans la region et partout elle plaça la crainte de Dieu dans le coeur des hommes.

I should have been careful but wasn't. My only weapon, a 45-calibre Underwood tripe-writer, was buried with my mule so I was on the spot when I spilled her tripe cognac by accident in the saloon.

She said something in French which I didn't understand.

Then she said something in Japanese which I didn't understand (though I was certain it meant the same thing).

Then she said something in Spanish which I didn't understand and I began to wonder if I hadn't dropped into a United Nations meeting by mistake.

Then she said the same thing in English and I understood but could never repeat it.

"Let's go outside!" I said angrily.

"Justement," she replied and followed me through the bat-wing doors to the street.

A storm was blowing up. Tumbleweeds

bounced crazily down the dark street in the harsh wind. I was suddenly afraid.

We took our positions fifty feet apart. Her eyes burned hatefully through the swirling wind. Then she pulled her weapon from inside the buckskin jacket she wore.

A hair dryer!

A chill rode up my spine as I realized I was absolutely defenseless. A voice called to me from the boardwalk.

"Here," he said, "take this."

I caught the 22-calibre Remington portable on the first bounce. It was not the best but it would have to do, I thought.

She flicked the dryer too low and I felt the first blast of warm air pass my arm. A close call! I typed a quick swear word which slowed her then followed with an insinuation that her parents had not been married at the time of her birth. It knocked her to her knees.

Suddenly she flicked the dryer to high and drove me sideways with a hot blast. As I scrambled to my feet she fired again but I moved quicker. I typed the words "female chauvanist" and the battle was over.

The crowd surged around me and lifted me onto shoulders. We moved back inside the saloon and the low ceiling almost gave me an unwarranted and not-much-needed lobotomy.

As for La P'tite Folle, she left town that night and we all heard stories about her adventures in Mexico but she did come back again.

That, as they say, is another story.

The Penetanguishene Citizen

1975 PRIZE WINNER
CANADIAN COMMUNITY
NEWSPAPERS ASSOCIATION
BETTER NEWSPAPERS COMPETITION

75 Main Street
TELEPHONE 549-2012

Andrew Markle
Publisher
Victor Wilson
General Manager
Kevin Scanlon
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Member of Audit Bureau of Circulations
Member of the Ontario
Weekly Newspaper Association
Mail Subscription \$9.50 yearly in Canada
\$16.00 in USA

Audit Bureau of Circulations regulations
require that mail subscriptions
be paid in advance

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