

Citizen comment

The pervading fear of regional government

Local politicians who fear the coming of regional government to Simcoe County have reason to be wary. The contents of the report compiled by the Simcoe Georgian Task Force should only serve to heighten that fear.

The task force report was completed last month with the cooperation of local municipal representatives, and as with many pieces of proposed legislation passed down from the provincial Tory government, it has been well-presented and attractively packaged.

On the surface the task force report sets down a pattern for development in Simcoe County directing growth toward the major centres in the county — Barrie, Midland, Orillia and Collingwood — while leaving valuable tracts of agricultural land in production.

The report outlines what areas of the county will grow and what areas will not. The proposed plan establishes four potentially large urban centres which will act as magnets to the surrounding areas.

In its present state Simcoe County is too large in area and too small in population to be packaged into a regional municipality. The county lacks the large urban cornerstones essential to regional development.

If all proceeds according to plan, four cornerstones will be created in Midland, Barrie, Collingwood and Orillia.

In an address to members of the Simcoe

County council recently, Ontario treasurer Darcy McKeough admitted these four major growth areas would be allowed to expand onto land now held by surrounding townships more easily than before. And these four centres would contain the overwhelming majority of Simcoe County's projected turn of the century population of 500,000.

And with large cities exerting this pull over smaller outlying areas, the aims of regional government begins to take root. All that needs to be done at this point is the organization of these centres and the outlying areas under one municipal government.

That's regional government. When townships and rural villages no longer exist, and when large towns within a county, or region, become well defined and well packaged pieces of real estate.

This is regional government as it exists in Niagara, Waterloo, Hamilton, Wentworth, Halton, Peel, York, Durham, Ottawa, Carleton and Sudbury.

In Simcoe there will be four municipalities within one very large region.

McKeough admitted before council there is a clause in the task force report which allows a restructured government. Following a criticism by Village of Coldwater reeve Earl Brandon, McKeough stated that the clause was "dead — until you ask us to revive it."

We wonder whether the county or the provincial government will do the asking.

Our letters policy

The editorial page of this newspaper is open to any reader who may wish to express a thought or opinion on any subject in or of the news. We'd especially like to see letter or articles dealing with local issues and concerns.

Our only limitation is space. If necessary, letters or articles may be edited at the discretion of the Editor, for good taste or legal reasons. Material may be of any length, and if possible, typed or hand-written clearly so no mistakes will be made.

We will not print any letter sent anonymously to the paper. We ask that writers include his name, address, and phone number in the letter or contribution so that we may verify the authorship.

We can no longer publish a letter whose author has requested that his name be withheld. We feel that a person willing to voice his/her opinion on our editorial page should also be willing to sign his name to it.

The harsh realities



by Ron Jones

Following close in the wake of education week's fanfare and rhetoric comes the harsh reality of education financing. It is an opportune time to give sober thought to Simcoe County's education system. Can the lofty goals enunciated during education week be realized in the light of budget constraints? Is there any relationship at all between "education" and the County Board's fiscal offspring, the education budget?

For sure many of the financial traumas of the County Board originated in the too enthusiastic spending and generous salary scale set up when local boards gave way to the new "efficient" county sized unit. All of a sudden trustees who performed very capably in the smaller administrative structure were dealing with multi-million dollar expenditures and professional administrators only too prone to intimidate elected officials with intellectual flim flam.

Bad enough is the ill conceived budgeting carried on the backs of long suffering ratepayers. Much worse is the deteriorating scholastic environment that emerges as the ratepayers representatives become bogged down in budgeting while the ivory tower hired help direct the education of the students.

A popular view is that the teachers are overpaid, lazy, and are poor examples of the work ethic to impressionable students. Unfortunately the argument is too often true. In an owner operated business like farming an individual showing as little dedication as do some board employees would soon find himself minus a farm and a roof over his head. But where productivity is not measurable and doesn't relate to income as is the case with the teaching profession, the drones seem secure for life.

The Board people will argue that "the federation (Teachers' Federation) is too powerful." You can't fire a teacher as long as he or she shows up for work, sober.

That defense is bloody nonsense. If the federation is that strong and that lacking in social responsibility then it should be legislated out of existence as a liability to education. If the Board members are building a better education system they must risk the wrath of the all powerful federation even if it means locked schools. Few experiences will improve teachers attitude like the limited potential of picket duty, or a barred classroom door.

Of major concern is an apparent unwillingness of board and administration to deal with the problem of the less proficient teachers. There can be various reasons for this as well. Administrators' (once classroom teachers) sympathies will lie with their less fortunate one time colleague, The There but for the Grace of God go I" stance. And, trustees, sometimes too closely liaisoned in some manner with the teachers social environment or in using the Board experience as a stepping stone to higher political achievement are unlikely to make waves that might wash back at some inopportune time in the future.

The County Board System has burdened the taxpayer long enough. It has also in some schools jeopardized the education of children. The County Board may have benefited teachers. It certainly has created a new economic class in society — the administrators. But in balance the county sized structures are one more embarrassment to the Davis Administration and like the ill-conceived regional governments are due for dismantling by the present provincial government's successor.

Sugar and Spice

My wife the wizard

by Bill Smiley

Some women's hearts are won by French perfume, mink coats, and diamonds. I've managed to steer clear of this type.

All it takes to make my wife happy is a new machine. After years of comparative poverty, during which everything we had was second-hand, falling apart, or broken, I am occasionally able to gratify her lust for something that hums, purrs, growls or roars. None of those verbs applies to me, by the way.

It doesn't matter what it is, anything from a kitchen gadget to a grand piano; it pleases her pink, for a while.

Not for her the big bouquet on Mother's Day, the fancy ear-rings on her birthday, the coltupuous dressing-gown for Christmas. She wants no part of such frivolities. Just give her something that beats or churns or sews or polishes, and she's in ecstasy.

I didn't know this when we were first married. I thought she was a normal, greedy woman, and kept trying to please her by buying blouses that didn't fit, sweaters the wrong color, earrings she wouldn't be found dead in.

My first knowledge of her true cravings, in material possessions, came after we'd been married a year. I was a student veteran. Our total income was \$88 a month, believe it or not. Our rent was \$75 a month. We ate only because I took part-time and vacation jobs.

One day I came home and was stunned to discover she'd bought a sewing machine, for \$149.95. She had also signed up for a sewing course, at \$15, and had bought material to make a suit, for \$20. I have never been stingy, but I was a trifle aghast.

She had bought it on the instalment plan, naturally. The story has a reasonably happy ending. She quit the sewing course after a few lessons, finally threw out the suit material, about 10 years later. But she traded in that sewing machine on a new one the other day, and got \$75 for the old one. So her sewing has cost her about three dollars a year, over the years. Even a skinflint couldn't quarrel with that.

Another day I came home and steam started coming out of my navel when she coolly informed me she'd bought a grand piano, for about \$4,000, also on the instalment plan. Our income by this time was just about \$4,000 a year.

"Migawd," I thought. "Hate to do it, but I'm going to have to have her committed. We've gotta educate the kids, pay the mortgage. She'll ruin us."

Once again, her extravagance turned out to be shrewd dealing. She gave piano lessons, the kids were educated, the mortgage is paid. And the other day, an expert told her the grand piano, as it stands, is worth about \$5,500.

I compare these gambits with my own investments, in which a couple of thousand dollars worth of stocks inevitably wind up as 50 shares of moose pasture, and I can't be anything but humble.

This has gone on through the years between, and I've never ceased to be amazed at this woman's thing about a new machine.

There's only one flaw in her aberration. Get her a piano and you never get a meal. She's too busy playing the thing. Get her a record player, and everybody who comes in range must be interviewed. Forget about reading a book or relaxing.

Right now, it's the new sewing machine. It's a beauty, according to her, a Bernina, the Cadillac of sewing machines. It will do anything. In a flash, your garment will have seven new button holes or a monogram stitched onto the pocket in purple thread.

We're probably the only people in town who can read in bed without taking a book. We just turn down the sheets and spell out what she has stitched all over them. Things like: "Cold feet make cool bed-fellows" and "Some limousine is my sewing machine," and "How now, brown cow." It's a lot of fun, but it's hard to get to sleep with all that Braille stitching tapping out messages on your anatomy.

I'll admit the new machine will do everything but button up your fly. But it's

playing havoc with our domestic life. She can't drag herself away from it.

The Old Lady is up at five o'clock in the morning, sewing. She sneaks down after the news at 11 p.m. to whip off a few stitches.

I have to get most of the meals. She has time to iron only one shirt and wash one pair of socks at a time, which rather keeps me on edge, sartorially. I am barraged with totally incomprehensible terms such as tucks, darts,

pleats, basting, gathering.

I know it will end, once she is on more familiar terms with her new toy. But until then, it is rather like living with the child who has discovered what fun it is to pound on a drum.

Maybe I should have got her one of those garden tractors, with a tiller and cultivator. At least she'd be getting some fresh air, and I'd be getting some peas.



Sparkling water

Our world - funny peculiar and funny ha-ha



by Ray Baker

Both funny peculiar and funny Ha Ha...Take the suicide rate in Japan for instance, currently at an all-time high since the Halcyon days of W.W. II and the "kamakasi" pilots. I guess you could understand it in wartime with each side full of emotion and patriotism. Suicide missions were undertaken by both sides, but the Japanese refined it to a fine art.

And now its back again, even high police officials are saying it is an honourable way to

go. All debts and shame are wiped out and the memory of the dead person is thought of with honor. There is more to this face saving thing than meets the eye.

Everyone into the act
As a last desperate resort, say as a result of the recent Lockheed fiasco maybe it's a way out. But when a road sweeper in Japan commits suicide because he can't keep the roads as clean as he would like.....

In England, overpopulated, inflated, and forever stoic comes the news that fish and chip shops, as much a basic diet as roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, are closing down by the score, the reason...the fish is too expensive and the potatoes are in critically short supply.

From the same country you'll be pleased to learn that a factory making inflatables is doing record business.

You want a rubber, life sized tank or a plane, there you go. They will reproduce anything for which there is a pattern. As a newly emerged country trying to frighten your neighbours you can buy a complete arsenal of guns, tanks, planes and rocket launchers. You deploy these in tactical formation and feel safe. Until you see their army. But not to worry. The other side is armed with rubber rifles. It's a real mind blower.

This firm deals with anybody so if you ever want a Rolls-Royce to park in front of your 'Gone with the Wind' style mansion fine, just inflate the Rolls. If you live in a bungalow,

well buy an inflatable mansion no sweat (as they say in the deodorant ads).

Pyramid power
Pet rocks are going out and Pyramid Power is coming in. Well, what the heck. For a couple of dollars or so you get the chance to buy a small pyramid to put under your bed. This will apparently cure anything from early morning sickness to a touch of rigor mortis.

One devotee claims the Pyramid will prevent cancer. As proof of this he cites the case of a rabbit which gave birth to a perfectly normal healthy baby rabbit. There was nothing wrong with the mother in the first place, but the fact she produced a cancer-free offspring was enough for the Pyramid fan.

Anyway a friend of mine is using one to cure his sick plant. Unwittingly I told him the corner should face north, it should be a base. If anything exciting happens I'll let you know.

Black power
"I've lived here for fifty years and I'll fight if I have to" This is from Rhodesia. What's fifty years in the life of a Continent? For thousands of years the black man lived there. Then we came along and gave it names like South Africa or Kenya or after Cecil Rhodes, Rhodesia.

The ratio of Black-White is frightening, millions to one in some areas. I am reminded of Jomo (burning spear) Kenyatta, imprisoned for suspected Mau-Mau activities

and released just in time to take over as Premier, on the birth of the newly emerged country. In Rhodesia under a civil disorder situation it could be yet another bloodbath. "But I'll fight if I have to," said the man. And apartheid goes on.

The man in the moon
In Canada high speed car chases result in deaths. But the chases go on in the true tradition of Starksy and Hutch and Police Story. It is expected that car chases are a must.

In Turkey they had a "moon shot" of their own recently. Every year at the same time everyone comes out at night armed to the teeth and fires at the moon. This keeps away the evil spirits or whatever until next year. So far there are no reports of anyone in the moon shooting back at them.

To close off this column on our funny world I have a funny request to make. As a runny nosed infant, a western hero of mine was called Johnny MacBrown, (the same era as Hopalong Cassidy). The trouble is my wife and friends say they have never heard of him, that I'm making him up.

Would any of you gentle readers having information as to the whereabouts of Johnny MacBrown or any background information please come to the rescue in true western style.

Ray Baker is a Manager at Midland's RCA plant and a freelance writer for Markle Community Newspapers. He and his family live in Penetanguishene.....

You're probably happier than you think

by Shirley Whittington

What with all the news about earthquakes in South America, Italy and Russia, I've an uneasy feeling that the world is literally coming apart at the seams.

No wonder. There are so many of us breeding, quarrelling, striking, wasting and consuming on the old space ship that it could very well suddenly disintegrate, just like the one-hoss shanty.

On the international scene, the Arabs are mad at the Israelis, the Indians are mad at Canada, Canada is mad at Montreal, and the Irish are mad at each other. Tatty old Britain is sinking by the pound, and South Africa is suffering from terminal colour blindness.

And in Las Vegas, that world capital of selflessness and brotherly love, an honorary doctrine in humanitarianism has been granted to Frank Sinatra—a crooner with rumoured Mafia connections who can frequently be heard bawling about how he does things his way.

Can a poor bewildered tax-paying, God-fearing Canadian find happiness in such a depressing mish-mash?

Yes.
In the spirit of those popular magazines which offer self-help quizzes to determine how popular - SEXY - clever one is, I've drawn up a test that should convince you that you're happier than you think.

Grab a pencil - that nice white one that came with your census form will do nicely - and rate yourself.

Score ten points if you can somewhere, look at a tree that you planted, and that is thriving and growing much bigger than you ever thought it would be.

Score ten points if your mother (or mother-in-law) has told you lately that, all things considered, the grandchildren aren't turning out so badly after all.

Score ten if the slacks you wore last summer still fit.

You get ten points if your smallest boy says he doesn't think he'll get married because he'll never find anyone as nice and beautiful as you.

Ten more points are yours if you have

recently found something you thought you had lost forever, like your most comfortable walking shoes, the fraternity pin a boy gave you in 1954 or your birth certificate. (If the birth certificate dates back to the thirties, lose it again.)

You get ten points if you overpaid your income tax and the refund has arrived. These points are deducted if you spent the money on something useful. They are doubled if you blew it on a hot pink patio gown with a plunging neckline to wear to a pool party to which you probably won't be invited.

Score ten if somebody gave you a bunch of lilacs or dandelions this week. You get ten more if you took somebody a bunch.

Score ten if your husband still hasn't noticed the dent in the rear fender where you bumped into the parking meter last February.

You get ten points for every loving, handmade greeting card you've got this year. (I'm still smiling at the cryptic message printed inside my Mother's Day card: "Happy Mother's Day and I hope you have many, many more.")

Score ten if the kid who broke his leg skiing last winter has the cast off and is not limping perceptibly.

Score ten if you have within the last seven days done something utterly foolish, like watching a late movie with the old man and a well-chilled bottle of white wine, or changing the colour of your hair.

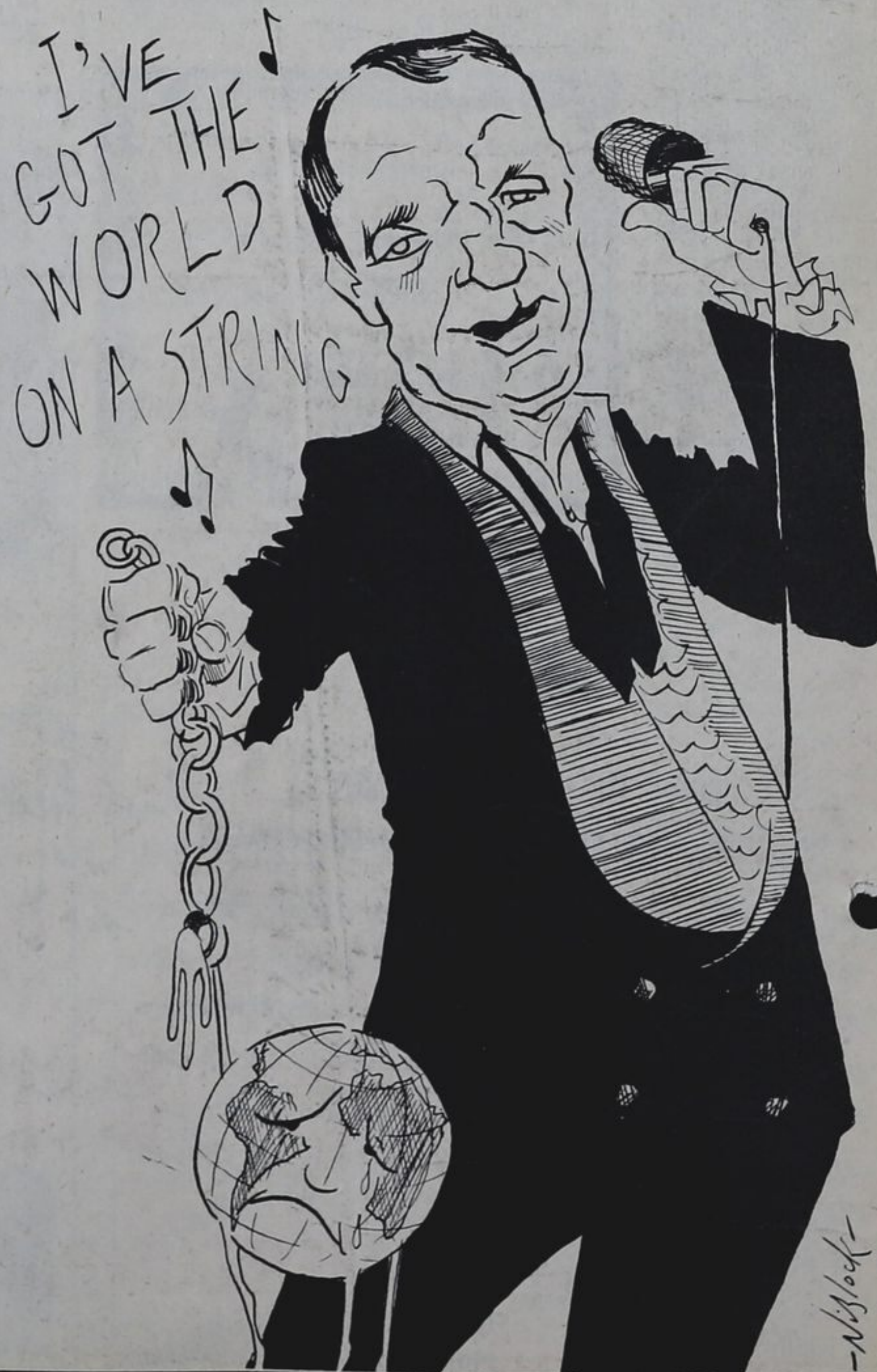
You get five points if you have lately turned the stereo up loud, and danced the cha-cha in your own living room. By yourself.

And five more if when you had your passport photo taken, the man allowed you to smile. Finally, add five points if you have found a mosquito repellent that really works.

Now, add up your score. If it's below 25, it looks as if the bluebird of happiness has permanently forsaken your windowsill, and has been replaced by the cuckoo of quiet resignation. Don't feed it, and it will go away.

If you scored over 80, you're in biscuit city, baby.

Celebrate with a few lusty choruses of "I've got the world on a string", as sung by the old blue eyed humanitarian himself.



The Penetanguishene Citizen

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