

Off the record

The area three committee of the Simcoe County Board of Education is to be congratulated on a common sense solution to a difficult problem.

In its recommendation to the board at its meeting tonight, it will propose a solution to the problem of transporting students in the Port McNicoll and Midland Bay Woods areas to St. Joseph's school in Penetanguishene, which is not only entirely without cost to the board, but which will not upset existing bus routes.

The solution, to have the children take secondary school buses to Midland, and transfer to the St. Joseph's bus there, is one of those things which is often just simple enough to be totally overlooked.

The Board of Education should not forget, however, that with this precedent any

number of children in the areas surrounding Penetanguishene, who had previously not applied to St. Joseph's because of the transportation problem, may now do so. The actual wording of the change in policy which the area three committee is recommending, does not concern itself solely with the Port McNicoll-Midland Bay Woods area, but would allow anyone who has to or wants to attend school outside his or her normal area to make use of any existing bus routes to get to school.

The board should be cautioned once again, that while this excellent solution to the problem at hand will solve it for the time being, it will not serve as a long term solution to the ever growing number of children all over the county who would like to be educated in the French language.

Area three solution

At Monday night's town council meeting, one of the council members raised the complaint that he had read about certain activities of council in the newspaper before he had heard about them through what might be termed "proper channels".

This problem arose in connection with the appointment of a new police officer and also in connection with another matter. In the case of the other matter, it turned out that the story in question had included only facts from a report which had been carried in an open session of council. The councillor had merely missed the meeting and had not read the report.

However in the case of the police officer the information was given to this paper by a reliable source, on the record.

In a number of cases in the past, this paper has respected requests that certain information be kept "off the record". This is something which a newspaper must do. If a

newspaper prints things which are "off the record" certain news sources will inevitably be lost. Information which is given to a newspaper "off the record", while it cannot be printed, often leads the reporter in directions which enable him to get better and more complete stories on the record. The background information which can be acquired "off the record" often helps a reporter to acquire a better idea of the overall picture of a story.

For these reasons, this paper intends to continue to respect requests that information off the record.

The press, however, cannot be held responsible for checking with all possible sources on a story to find out if it should or should not be kept out of the paper. In cases where a story is given to this paper by a reliable source, on the record, it will be printed.

Queen's Park report

Arthur Evans M.P.P.

Home buyer's warranty

"Because there is such a drastic problem in the home construction industry today, I was prepared to accept almost anything, because currently, nothing can get done. Nothing happens."

Those statements, made by the NDP member for Durham East during debate of the Purchasers of New Homes Act, reflects the locked-in nature of the NDP view that only government knows best in every situation. He was referring to the self-regulatory approach to be used in this new legislation.

The NDP views the house building industry as the arch villain of Ontario society. Slay this dragon and government can provide good housing. Rather than an effective blend of industry self regulation and government supervision, this NDP member preferred to have no loaf of bread than half a loaf — even if the solution is practical and useful to the prospective house buyer. The NDP would prefer to see the problem perpetuate itself rather than work to provide some form of protection. New house buyers can be sacrificed on the altar of socialist purity.

More of this aspect later. What does the new legislation do to protect the consumer? No dwelling gets built, much less started without mandatory warranty protection. That means that the house buyer will get a house completed and possession of the property from the placement of the deposit to the landscaping as provided by subdivision agreement.

Say that a house needs some minor fixing within one year from the date of possession — minor repairs are paid for by the builder.

A second level of consumer protection requires that the proposed warranty fund will pay for major structural flaws such as a wall caving in or beams not properly placed if the builder cannot do it.

The final level of protection requires that

the builder be a responsible businessman, one who is really ready to stand behind his homes and one who will remain a member in good standing of the New Homes Warranty Council. No more tricky manoeuvres of going bankrupt in one town and moving on to another community under a new corporate name.

That builder will soon find himself working in another job. Having a bad business performance record will mean that he cannot obtain any additional home warranty protection in which case he will be out of business. Any such builder has a right to appeal to a government body. Otherwise, no more "hanky panky" in the housing industry.

Of course, any realist understands that, like any industry or profession certain bad apples make it difficult for the house builder to get on with the job. It creates a bad image for the majority of builders.

For the NDP, it justifies the need for government intervention because of the "inadequacy of the industry". The only answer to our salvation is to have more government regulating the industry. Governments cannot build homes.

Big government somehow has most, if not all, answers to the perplexities of life. Somehow, it spells the difference between chaos and order. Well, another technique exists to prevent the over-intensifying rate of government growth. That is self regulation by the industry coupled with government supervision and guidelines. It's less costly to because private industry provides specific inspection on new homes.

That is not the way the NDP sees things. The housing industry has to be singled out for punitive measures at all costs — even abandoning momentarily any warranty protection for house buyers until the NDP has its way. Even if it means a decline in housing starts for Ontario.

On a recent evening, I watched on television two elderly gentlemen being interviewed. In both cases, the result was an excellent testimony to the human spirit. And in both cases, the old-timers echoed something I've believed for years — that Canada is the greatest country in the world in which to live.

First of these indomitable elders was Conn Smythe, widely known for years in this country as the irascible, out-spoken manager of the Toronto Maple Leafs, when that hockey team was a by-word in Canada.

Smythe is 81, and he hasn't lost much of the tough, blunt attitude that made him respected by many, hated by some, and almost revered by others.

He detests whiner and layabouts, as most

of us do, but he doesn't mind saying so in public. He doesn't like a lot of the things that are going on in this country, and makes no bones about it.

But when he was asked whether he thought Canada, as such, would endure, he just laughed, and said, in effect, that of course it would. It was too great a country, and we had too many fine people (although there are a lot of "skunks") for it to disintegrate or disappear.

What a refreshing change from the purveyors of woe who fill so many columns of our newspapers and magazines, and so much air time, snivelling about Canada's loss of identity, or search for it, or attempt to retain it, or something.

These are the same snivellers who have

been with us since Confederation, warning us that the big bogey to the south is taking us over, and that we'll wind up as a banana republic, or a satellite of the U.S.

These carpers wouldn't know the Canadian identity if it sneaked up and bit them on the backside. They'd think it was an American yellow-jacket, or at least a CIA plot.

One of the most persistent critics of Canadian manners and mores is yours truly, but I sure don't go around worrying about, or losing any sleep over, the Canadian identity.

Nor does anyone else who really knows anything about this country, or who has fought in one of the two big wars. The Canadian identity is just as real, and present, and prickly, as thorns on a rose.

I haven't much of a punch any more, but if anyone suggested I was a Yank, or a Limey, or an Australian, I would be inclined to give him a punch on the nose. And I think most Canadians feel that way, whether their background is Anglo-Saxon, or Japanese, or Ukrainian or whatever.

We're not less boisterous Americans, or less obnoxious Englishmen, or less excitable Italians, or less phlegmatic Germans. We're Canadians, warts and all. There's nothing I'd rather be, and there's no country in which I'd rather live. And if that sounds like chauvinism, so be it.

We have our faults, and we bicker like hell among ourselves, and we may be a mongrel race, but ask 99 per cent of us if we'd like to be something else and live somewhere else, and you'd get a resounding "NO!"

Second old-timer I mentioned was "Jackrabbit Johnson." So named because at

nearly 100 years old, he was still cross-country skiing, living alone, proud and independent. He's a Norwegian who came to this country as a youth, and loves it deeply.

He was asked what were the most important things in life. At 100, you aren't too much worried about what people will think of your opinions. His answer was, more or less, clean air, clean water, nature, feeling good by keeping fit.

Nothing deeply original. But he added that Canada was the most wonderful country in the world. That our young people, on the whole, don't know it. That the big cities — Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver — were not Canada.

I couldn't agree with him more. Our cities are carbon copies of other big cities, or of each other. Don't expect to find the Canadian identity in them.

Don't huddle in a highrise, fight traffic, fence yourself in with television and concrete, and expect to get the feel of this country. If you do, and aside from the language, you might as well be living in Tokyo or Frankfurt or Glasgow.

Get out into that clean air, and that clean water. Breathe Canada in (not, please, while you are under water).

My kids could hardly wait to get away from the small town and off to the city. Now the phone rings only once before it is snatched up as they hope for an invitation to come "up north", away from the city.

Why not be like my wife and me? Stop relying on the plastic life, and get back to nature.



Sunny evening at the fair

UFO lectures make for a dull show



by Ray Baker

It all started six weeks ago. Paul Brent of the C.K.M.P. radio station received a letter from the Ontario Society for Psychic Research headquarters in Toronto. The letter (three pages) explained that a standing committee had been formed from the parent body to study the phenomenon of U.F.O.'s in Ontario and throughout Canada. It went on to say that an inaugural meeting would be held on a Friday night, including such well known personalities in the field as Prof. J. Allan Hynek from the U.S. author of the book 'The Edge of Reality'. His Canadian counterpart, Mr. Arthur Bray, former navy pilot and researcher would attend, and the meeting would be chaired by Allen 'The Unexplained' Spraggett.

Would they (C.K.M.P.) be interested, Paul Brent, knowing my articles on U.F.O.'s in Simcoe County, sent the letter on to me with his comments. The upshot of this was that a friend of mine who is a computer expert for a living and who studies U.F.O.'s for a hobby, and myself, decided to go.

A friend in need I wrote to the Psychic Research Council asking for speaking time and requesting a chance to 'tape' the experts for C.K.M.P. speaking time was full but "please come down early and meet the committee". So we made plans.

Friday night we went down to 'Trawna' and feeling hungry we went into 'Harvey Wallbangers Gold Rush Steak House' on Bloor. I took the \$2.48 'Klondike Ribeye' charcoal grilled, with all the fixings, and washed down with draft beer at a rough-hewn table surrounded by mementoes of the gold rush era.

A notice said 'No more than ten to a bed, no crawling over no horses after midnight'. I noticed a 1972 Sun newspaper award for the best meal award under \$2 issued in diploma form.

The Auditorium at 50 Bloor St. W. was slowly filling. The committee we had to meet had not arrived so we sat directly in front of the podium and waited for 8 p.m. Around 250 people were there and from overheard conversation they came from a radius of 100 miles. Age around 35-40 and a 50/50 mix of male, female. They looked a serious minded audience. We were ready for a real 'live' meeting.

It was anything but live. The program started 10 minutes late. Well o.k. Allen Spraggett didn't show at all and the stand-in M.C. a professional broadcaster, pronounced Psychic as Cylclie. And Prof. Hynek took the stand.

His lecture (Circa 1970) was a grade nine high school calibre with a captive audience of students caught with a spare period. A set presentation. He followed with slides which were neither new nor exciting. We sat quietly and he sat down.

Arthur Bray of Ottawa gave case histories of incidents in Canada. 99 per cent of the audience either had memorized them, or it was 'old hat'. My own brief case contained more up-to-date material than his. Ah well, we sat quietly and he sat down.

The question and answer session that followed really set the standard. The audience lifting the tone of the meeting to the level it should have started off at way back at 8:10 p.m. The most innovating thing, literally 'dragged' out of the speakers, was a new computer adaption where a blurred photograph could be made clear as the computer, taking hundreds of reference points from the good portion, would project the rest based on the highest probability.

The cream donut The tape recorder stayed in my case, time had run out and we had not bothered even taking notes. We left with our files closed and an air of resignation. We will not be taking out memberships. A disappointing evening which bears out the old saying "it is better to travel hopefully than to arrive". On the way back we found an allnight Donut Shop. And there was this huge donut, full of cream and jam. It must have weighed a pound. With two coffees and some pleasant conversation we were back home to Midland and Penetanguishene again. So C.K.M.P. did not get an interview. Sorry, Paul. And we learned a lot. And the best of luck to the offspring of the Psychic Research Society of Ontario.

But that Klondike Steak with baked potatoe and sour cream, washed down with draft beer. Boy that was worth the journey all by itself.

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

Fluffs make a listener's day merrier



by Shirley Whittington

Some poet lariat at the CBC is trying to rope me into watching a new summer show, with a promotional poem which concludes this way:

"The stars are happy, harmonious, anything but dour, CBC's laid on a laid-back new show, the

relentlessly happy hooker with "Have Coppertone, will travel" tattooed on her tummy. And that's about as laid-back as the CBC's likely to get.

Actually the laid-back approach to the broadcast word has been around for some time. We all know about the CBC announcer who identified his network as "The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation." And I once heard one of his associates make plummy reference to "the Minister of Wealth and Hellfire."

Insiders tell me that most sportscasters pray fervently that the London Hunt and Country Club will never be the scene of major golf tournaments. "London Hunt and Country Club" is a phrase which broadcast-casters approach with the careful deliberation of a jet pilot making a fogbound instrument approach.

In spite of careful approaches, bloopers happen, and I love them. They lend piquancy to otherwise gloomy fare.

Reflect for a minute on the prodigious menace suggested by a weather report which noted that "a thick frog is creeping over Southern Ontario."

Imagine the civic courtesy exhibited in that city where "banners and placecards" lined the streets in honour of a visiting dignitary.

I've always been pessimistic about Princess Margaret's marriage, ever since I heard that she was betrothed to a "Come-over."

The mysterious far-Eastern cadences of Emperor Hirohito's surname almost up to one of our local announcers. He struggled, with mounting hysteria, through hourly permutations of those four similar syllables, worked through "Horatio" and "Hiroshima" and finally dropped the item altogether. He's gone now, possibly to join the staff of CBC poets.

Once during a southern vacation, I heard an American announcer introduce a program of Strauss waltzes with the assertion that "Vienna was the Hot Monday of nineteenth Century European culture."

Hot Monday? A sizzling preface to Pan-cake Tuesday, perhaps?

No. Just a laid-back rendering of the script-writer's classy "haute monde". Well, everybody's laid back these days and such fluffs can only make a listener's day merrier. But watch out for that Sunshine Hour, or the thick frog, whichever comes first.

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 letters 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.



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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

Second Class Mail

Registration Number 2327

