

Chamber is doing good job

The Chamber of Commerce in Penetanguishene has had an extremely active summer this year, and in many ways has contributed to the life of the members of this community.

How many times do you hear about activities sponsored by the chambers in other towns? Not very often! But in Penetanguishene this summer, residents have been treated to a summerfest, a summerama, and a fleet of boats which brought a number of American tourists, and the Premier of the province, to town.

This Saturday, chamber members are taking part in a donkey baseball game at McGuire Park, to help raise the money still needed for the lights.

Are the local merchants doing all this for the sake of the town? Well, yes and no. What they are doing is good for business. The more people they can attract to Penetanguishene, the more action they can generate, and the more business they can do. As one of the Chamber's directors, Glen Bryant, said this week, with respect to the downtown revitalization program he is trying to implement, "I wouldn't be interested if it didn't benefit me."

This is what is known as rational self-interest.

By doing things which will benefit themselves, the local businessmen are doing things which will benefit the town and everyone who lives in it. By doing things which are good for business, they are stirring up action and interest, both within the town and among the tourists who visit the town and spend their money here.

Businessmen in general have been getting a bad name in the last few years. The prevailing attitude seems to be that if someone is making a dollar, he must be doing something immoral. This attitude is both foolish and short-sighted. A rational, self-interested approach to business and community activity cannot help but improve the lot, not only of those who are in business to make a dollar, but of those on whom the prosperity of the business community tends to rub off.

It is to be hoped that the Chamber of Commerce will continue to be a strong presence in the town, and that the new plan recently endorsed by the chamber, for local input into provincial government, will be successful in getting the interests of the business community and hence the community in general, across to the legislative assembly in Toronto.

Queen's Park report

by Arthur Evans M.P.P.

Land freeze is no answer

We have all heard the phrase "the armchair traveller" — the expert on dozens of countries on all six continents, who has been accumulating his knowledge in the comfort of his living room!

Now Ontario's residents are plagued with a new variety of "the armchair traveller". You can call him "the armchair farmer". This type of individual is extremely well-versed in the so-called "food crisis". Equipped with scads of documents, statistics and dire predictions, he is now warning all urban consumers that Ontario is facing a "crisis of gigantic proportions in the disappearance of food lands in this Province". Such pronouncements will, if repeated often enough, create the correct climate of scaring public opinion into demanding a radical policy on preserving Ontario's best agricultural lands for food.

The story goes that if such drastic action is not undertaken immediately, then we all will be facing ever-declining farmlands and ever-higher food prices. "You see", exclaim the experts, "good farmland is going out of production at the rate of "26 acres per hour". Haven't you heard this figure somewhere before in the distant past?"

So what is the great and grand solution proffered by our "armchair farmers"? Naturally, there is only one: freeze farmland. Notice the very words lack any recognition of private ownership as found in "your land" or "their land". Somehow, in this vast impersonal world, a little detail such as private ownership of land is a mere irrelevancy. What must take precedence is advancement of the public interest over a few grasping, greedy land owners.

Sounds pretty convincing, doesn't it, especially if you just happen not to be a farmer? A land freeze appears on the surface to be a neat and tidy solution for land resources, especially if it's somebody else's land.

Well, the whole proposal just will not stand up to the light of day against a few existing facts. Ontario has a population of about 8 million living on about one million acres. The Province has now 20 million acres of Class 1, 2, 3 and 4 agricultural land (this is the best of food lands, according to soil types). Ontario has another 12 million acres of lower class soils. That is a ratio of 32 million acres of possible food-growing land to one million

acres of housing land. Ontario's populations will increase to about 12 million by the year 2000. Now if all the land required for this 50 per cent increase in people were subtracted from those 32 million acres, it would come to 2½ per cent of the land suited for farming, or about 357,000 acres.

That is, assuming that all our future growth will occur on prime farm land. Even if these figures are not totally accurate, freezing somebody else's land is a pretty drastic means of resolving this trend. Personally, I believe that it constitutes the use of a naval destroyer to eliminate one small fishing craft which is violating the territorial waters of another country.

It's like using a cannon to kill a field mouse. But then these mere considerations will not deter the determination of the "armchair farmer" to reach his objectives. This person has read sufficient reports and gathered enough data on which to base his landfreeze policy.

As the reader you might well ask: "Why on earth would you impose state control on 32 million acres"? Well, these "armchair farmers" are not programmed to answer such bothersome questions. They have now arrived at their solution and you, the farmer, are supposed to be extremely happy with this informative policy. Common sense is not a commodity known to experts.

These "armchair farmers" have been so "successful" in predicting the case for world hunger that instead of 2000 million or more who were supposed to be starving in 1946, the number of people suffering from malnutrition is 70 million in 1976. But even to have one child or one adult suffering from such a condition is too horrible to contemplate. Such a situation is not to be tolerated, but viewed with a little more perspective. Still, these figures demonstrate that farmers, given the right ingredients, can perform production wonders.

These statistics cannot be applied to justify that the status quo in Ontario's land use policy is wonderful, but simply to illustrate that the "armchair farmer's" solution to the "food crisis" amounts to a plague worse than the disease.

Such an outcome doesn't take too much ingenuity to arrive at in the first place.

Letter to the editor

Thanks for the help

Dear Editor: The campaign for funds for a new facility for the Adult Rehabilitation Centre in Midland has gone over the top! After all the counts are in, organizers will have collected approximately \$27,000.

The assistance of Markle Community Newspapers in publicizing the activities carried on at the centre and in informing the general public of the goals of the Huronia Association for the Mentally Retarded has been extremely generous. Without the support of the news media, many local residents would have remained uninformed of the need for the new complex. In no small way, your newspapers contributed greatly to the success of the campaign.

Organizers of the fund drive, headed by chairman Herb De Jong, performed an admirable service to the community with their hard work and dedication. Many

volunteers and canvassers willingly gave of their time and effort and are to be commended for a job well done.

Most importantly of all, the success of the campaign can be attributed to the generous support of the public. The association's deepest thanks go to those service clubs who donated their time and services and a large portion of the amount raised; to area industries and businesses who were more than generous; to local professional people; and to the residents of the area who donated the bulk of the funds.

Many thanks to all who played a role in making a new ARC building a reality.

Yours sincerely,

Claude Buck
President, Huronia Association for
the Mentally Retarded
Herb De Jong,
Campaign chairman

The Penetanguishene Citizen
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Boy, I can't think of anything more harrowing than trying to write a column sitting at the picnic table in the backyard on a mid-summer day.

I envy those writers who have a nice-quiet study, preferably without windows, in which to do their work. No distractions, no interruptions. Just the writer and his machine, the words pouring onto the clean white paper like sparkling wine onto a white linen tablecloth.

It's almost impossible for me to concentrate on turning out a piece of taut, fascinating, creative prose for more than a minute or two, sitting here today. Too many interruptions.

No only do I not have no windows, if you'll pardon the triple negative, it's just one big window, and I can't stop looking through it. If it was possible to turn my head in a 360 degree circle, I would see an entire world, mostly green, in miniature.

There's my neighbor, Helen, at the clothesline. Uh-huh. Looks like her granddaughter was here for the weekend. Ten diapers on the line, among the towels and sheets. Doesn't believe in disposables. I do.

There's a sawing sound across the fence. Wonder what my neighbor, Jim, is working at this fine, sunny day. Better saunter over and check it out. We'll have a chat about the inequities of the town council.

Here comes Patsy Woods, a third side neighbor, with her little brother. Bad news. One of my huge limbs, about two feet in diameter, the one that hangs right over their house, has a split right up the trunk. Have to go and look. Yeah, that's bad. Patsy. I'll have to call George, the tree man, and have it taken down. Pity, but it will provide some excitement for the neighborhood.

Right behind me is the big, square, brick house in which lurks my old lady, suffering from the mummy of all sunburns. Nose like an over-ripe cherry, chest like a peeling boiled beet. Furious because of the way she looks and feels.

I don't burn. After a dreadful experience as a kid, when I had to sit for two days and nights in a chair, plastered from head to toe with some concoction of my mother's for sunburn (was it baking powder or baking soda?). I keep my lily limbs covered. Oh, I get what we call a farmer's tan, forearms, face and neck, but the rest of me is white as the driven snow.

I don't turn around to look behind me at that house. Aside from my suffering wife inside, there is the outside. That beautiful green vine, so much admired by visitors climbing the brick wall like a giant squid, pulling the bricks loose one by one, and occasionally hurling one down, just above the

back door. At today's rates for repairs, that brickwork will likely cost me more than it cost to build the house, 70-odd years ago.

Let's change the subject. In fact, I think I'll break off for a moment, it's so painful. There's the garbage can to bring in. Maybe I'll get my seven iron out of the car trunk and cut some weeds. That's what I use instead of a hoe.

There, that's better. My swing was right on today. Kept my head down, my eye on the weed, took a slow back swing, and one whole flower bed is weedless.

Also pushed the lawn mower under the spruce tree, to keep the rain off, and picked up the grandkids' inflatable swim pool, which, after a week sitting there full of rain, grass and bugs, left a big round dead patch in the lawn. Good work, Bill.

More distractions. A cheeky black squirrel, looking for a handout. Dumb cat rubbing against my leg, looking for the same. There ugly crackles, striding splayfooted and insolent, across my lawn, pecking up the fresh grass seed.

Ahah! What's that noise, down the lane. Better stroll down and see. Great. A Bell telephone truck and two young fellows digging a post hole. Entire neighborhood watches. Machinery digs hole, ere, erect pole with ease. Old timers comment scorn-

fully. Remember when you dug them by hand, with a spoon shovel. Brutal hard work.

There's the fire engine! Better jump in the car and follow. Holy old jumpin'! Why do they let all these crazies follow the fire truck through town at 50 miles an hour? Somebody might be killed.

Wasn't much. Just some dumb housewife let the fat boil over on the stove while she was watching her soap opera. But it might have been a good one, like the old lumber mill last week. That was a dandy.

Should get back to the column. Oh, no. There's the old battleaxe at the back door, wailing, "What are you doing out there, just sitting around enjoying yourself, when you know I'm in agony? Least you could do is put a washing through and sweep the kitchen floor, it's filthy. And you haven't brought me any fresh tea for two hours."

On lordy. Who's this pulling up? It can't be. It is. It's those people we met at a party two years ago and insisted with great fervor and sincerity that if they were ever in our neck of the woods, to look us up. Look at that. Three kids and a dog. Oh, dear.

Perhaps you can understand now why I hate being a schoolteacher and having the summer off and having to write my column out under the trees, instead of writing it at my desk in mid-winter.

Don't rock the boat at the Wye Marsh Centre



by Ray Baker

It was a dull drizzly morning when I saw the notice pinned up on the 'Tradin Post' at the downtown Dominion Store in Midland. "Canoe Trips" it said, "two hours with a guide, no experience necessary, canoes, paddles and life jackets provided." The fee was 50¢ for adults, and 25¢ for children.

We were just back from holidays a day or two soon in order to unwind and put things away. All the gear had gone in the basement in record time for next year and we were at a loose end. This looked interesting (which is more than could be said for the weather outside). I munched on my Dominion Steak (hotdog) and noted the telephone number. Figuring if it's raining now, it will be good tomorrow, I phoned the number. "Sorry, sir, but we are fully booked. If you call again in the morning there may be a cancellation." I did and there was, for three only, so I'll go along for the ride.

An excellent bargain For 50¢ each we had the run of the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre on the outskirts of Midland. That was where the ad had lead us.

It was overcast again with a steady drizzle and we took three ponchos just in case. Our three intrepid voyageurs were ready and the least I could do was help put the canoes on the trailer and drive to the launching site. At this point with the rain, and the soggy marsh, two gentlemen changed their minds and went back, so I had a place after all.

There were two guides, a bearded male and an attractive blonde female called Frances. We got Frances and it stopped raining. What more could we ask?

Leaving off shoes and socks and donning life jackets we embarked in the big six man canoe and Frances gave us a two minute pep talk on water safety with the canoe upright and in case it went bottom side up. And we were off.

After five minutes of gentle paddling, taking our stroke from the fellow in the bow (No. 2 son) we were in a different world. You forgot that just over the hill the busy main highway was full of cars and trucks speeding to and fro. You saw no signs of human habitation and your whole outlook was from a

point around one foot above water line in a soothing, quiet world.

The water snakes were in good supply, crawling and slithering across the muddy feeding platforms made in the marsh by the muskrat and beaver. Frances carefully explained their function in life and the whole interdependence of each creature in this constant life and death struggle for survival in the marsh.

For the next two hours we drifted through a panorama of green and brown green bushes, and grass, plants and waterily pads. Brown shoots and decaying vegetation. All part of the marsh which has a definite life all its own especially when softly explained to you by an attractive blonde. Two huge blue Herons were studied through the binoculars (also provided). The Herons were watching us, the interlopers, in this their own territory.

And it rained again The canoes loaded again and the jackets stowed away, we had lunch, some milk and a

Mars bar, the four of us wandered around the exhibits and watched a good Wildlife film in the movie theatre.

The most striking exhibit read 'do not open this box, it contains the most destructive creature on earth' and of course we did, and of course it contained a mirror. And after the solitude of the canoe trip it was a sobering thought.

Now it was time for the boardwalk walk across the marsh and our new guide was (guess who) Frances. She assured us with a confident air that "the special time to see a marsh is in the rain." I bet she says that when it's sunny as well.

Wearing our waterproof coats (provided) we listened to her. She was knowledgeable and I think brave, asking the little guys to dip into the gunk at the bottom with nets, she would turn them out like a housewife examining tomatoes in a supermarket, and explain all the creatures she found in this gunk. We all learned a lot. Not only from this smelly black



Beausoleil Island in the Summer

Caveat Emptor — let the buyer beware



by Shirley Whittington

This week, we send 19 years of vitamin pills, dental check-ups and shrill nagging, down to the big city to achieve some Higher Education.

The Student Prince has gotten himself an apartment - a heated broom closet with a hot

plate and a tiny fridge - and he'll be on his own.

I worry. His father says he'll get along fine. "At his age," says the Squire, "I was out working to finance my own university days."

"At his age," says his grandfather, "I was fighting a war."

"At his age," says his grandmother, "I looked after a one roomed school and walked four miles to and from my boarding house." At his age, I said to myself, I was an irresponsible, naive nit, gullible and easily swayed. Which is why I worry.

So I took my son aside, and looked up at him in what I hoped was a stern and forbidding manner. (I have not been able to look him square in the eye for a couple of years now, unless we're both sitting down).

The city, I told him, was bigger and more complex than he could possibly imagine. He would find there the kindly interest of the local business people, nor the understanding fatherly approach of the local constabulary nor the honest friendship of the folk in the community where he was raised.

In short, I told him he'd be at the mercy of hustlers, hucksters, pick-pockets, swindlers, vice peddlers and other entrepreneurs all eager to part him from his money.

"Choose your friends carefully," I advised, "and remember you're down there to study, not to play. And if you buy something, remember - Caveat Emptor - let the buyer beware. Don't sign anything..."

I could tell my homily was affecting him deeply. His eyes had a kind of glazed look. He was clearly mesmerized by the torrent of good counsel, and I could tell from the way he sighed when he got up to answer the ringing telephone that he was really sorry to cut the interview short.

Morally, I felt I'd done my best with the boy. The next worry was his physical being. In a heated broom closet with a hot plate, he'd need dishes, a garbage pail, a frying pan, a toaster.

So I set out on a Saturday morning garage sale to make up his trousseau, as it were. (Garage sales, as everybody knows, are gold mines for the Caveat Emptor shopper).

There were two toasters at this sale. Both were shiny, unscratched, automatic. I agonized over the choice. Then I spotted the difference that only an alert shopper would notice. Toaster B was lacking a plug.

I bought toaster A and hugged myself all the way home. In the kitchen I demonstrated it. "This is for your apartment," I said. "Now you set the timer, put the bread in - see how it

goes down automatically - then you wait a minute or two and up will come a perfect piece of golden brown toast."

We waited. And waited. The toaster glowed with heat and we could smell the bread cooking inside.

My son said he thought he could smell something burning.

Ah, the impatience of the young! "Wait, wait," I said. "It'll pop up any minute now."

It never did. The bread blackened, the kitchen filled with smoke, and the only way we could halt the holocaust was to unplug the thing.

The Caveat Emptor Queen had bought a two dollar automatic incinerator.

Just then, a friend of the family walked in. "I have just," he said, "made a magnificent buy at a garage sale. A toaster for two dollars. The plug was missing, but I replaced it and it works perfectly."

His kid's going down to the city this week too, and one presumes she'll have a functioning toaster in her luggage.

My son, alas, may have to make his toast on the hot plate.

At his age, his mother was gullible and easily swayed. She still is.