

Petty politics lead to inefficiency

The first regular meeting of the Tiny Tay Peninsula Planning Board following the summer recess was held last Thursday evening and it was loaded with controversy.

The two longest discussions of the evening centered around the difficulty of getting the various municipalities in Simcoe County to agree on a plan of action with respect to the preservation of the abandoned CN right-of-way which runs through the county, and the refusal of Victoria Harbour to pay its full membership fees to the board for this year.

The member representing the Tiny Township Council Basil Dorion hit the nail on the head when he stated that the board was becoming bogged down in petty politics and was not getting the planning done which it was set up to do.

The problem of cooperation between municipalities has cropped up often in Penetanguishene planning board meetings as well, when the board considers development on the fringe areas of the town, and who is going to install the services for these developments.

The world is a small place these days and

it's getting smaller all the time. Conflict over borders and jurisdictions on a national level is causing enough damage without neighbours on levels as low as the municipal level becoming involved in disputes over such things as servicing bordering areas, and arriving at a common policy to deal with common problems.

Small regional disputes are inevitable. The interests of neighbours are bound to conflict on occasion. But these disputes could be kept to a minimum if the municipalities involved tried just a little harder to see themselves as partners in a total process of improving the lifestyles of residents of the county, province and country as a whole.

No municipality should be asked to carry an unfair proportion of the total load, nor should it be asked to pay for the problems of its neighbours. However, when cooperation is needed in order to accomplish a common goal, it should be forthcoming. Making the area a better place to live is a difficult enough problem without petty politics causing unnecessary delays and setbacks in the process.

Sugar and Spice

The folks next door by Bill Smiley

Last week I mentioned neighbors, and after I'd finished the column, I thought some more about mine.

If you live in a city apartment, you'll probably never know your neighbor two doors down the hall, and will take two years before you are on nodding acquaintance with those next door.

That's fine for some people. They actually like to retreat into their cells, and resent any encroachment on their so-called privacy.

But if you live in a small town, in a house, you have neighbors, for better or worse, and you might as well relax and enjoy it.

Neighbors are not an unmixed blessing. They can be a terrible pain in the arm.

When I was a kid, we spent our summers at a cottage. Next door was an old bat who was the quintessence of a bad neighbor. Everybody else at the lake was part of a big, happy family. Not so this one. She sneered and snarked and caused endless trouble. Finally, she put up a fence between her property and ours, so we couldn't walk on her lawn, which was nothing but pine needles. We solved this by jumping the fence and walking across her pine needles, while she peered from behind the curtains, calling down curses on the brown, bare-footed vandals. That was a nasty one, and caused my

mother, I'm sure, some anguish.

But there aren't many like that. Most neighbors, like yourself, are pretty fine people, if you treat them as you wish to be treated by others.

There is one thing about neighbors. They are like relatives. You can't pick and choose. You takes what you gets. You don't buy a house because of the neighbors, though it might be a good idea to think about it.

I've been lucky all my life, and I've been lucky in my neighbors. In the last town we lived in, they were the salt of the earth. One of them was even decent enough to have his house burn down one night, in a spectacular fire, which I got my kids out of bed to watch. Something they'll never forget.

I don't expect that kind of service from all my neighbors, mind you. That was being neighborly to the point of no return.

But we've been in this house going on 20 years, and I couldn't have done better for neighbors if I'd hand-picked them.

On one side lives a carpenter and contractor. For a guy like me, who can't hammer two boards together without making a hand sandwich, it's better than having a fairy godmother. He is the soul of generosity when it comes to lending advice and nails. And when I'm standing looking stupidly at some

project that would take me a week, he comes over, does it in eight minutes, and, when offered pay, says: "Forget it."

He also has a warm and pleasant wife and a son who has grown into a dandy snow-shoveller and lawn-cutter.

On another side, my neighbor is a sailor. Don't see much of him in the summer, but in the spring, he whistles over the fence and holds out a big newspaperful of fresh smelt or perch fillets. Had to cut down one of my oaks the other day that was threatening to fall on his house. It cost me \$300. But who in his right mind wouldn't trade mere money for a panful of fried smelt, and the spirit behind them?

Up the street a couple of houses lives Gabe. He is a former plumber, and still has the tools and the skills of his craft. When you have guests arriving, and the sink is plugged, and the regular plumbers are having their four-day weekend, Gabe comes to the rescue. In 10 minutes the sink is slurping water again. And Gabe doesn't want an arm, a leg, and your liver.

Across the way lives John, a teacher, a mathematical whiz, and a delighter in the solving of problems. For example, My wife is away for a week, I want to do a washing. I can't get the washing machine going. Call John. He whips across the street, through the

snow, and in five minutes the washing is thinking away. And when my wife is away, his wife nips across and puts a jar of home-made soup inside my back door.

When we go away for a few days, the neighbors keep an eye on the place, as though it were their own: pick up the newspapers, feed the cat, make sure the doors are locked, put the grass if it needs it.

Perhaps best of all is the knowledge they are there, if you need them. A sudden emergency, a minor calamity, and they'll be there to drive you, phone a doctor, bring food, whatever.

This closeness might seem appalling to city folk, with their preoccupation with privacy. But good neighbors don't live in each other's laps. They have their families; we have ours.

We don't encroach on their lives; they don't on ours. They have their friends; we have ours; and they're not necessarily the same.

Poet Robert Frost summed it up, as poets so often do, when he intoned: "Good fences make good neighbors." And he wasn't just talking about fences.

So there you are chaps. Let's see you come up with a fisherman, a carpenter, a plumber, and a trouble-shooter, and I'd say you're as lucky as I am, when it comes to neighbors.

Queen's Park report

by Arthur Evans M.P.P.

Freeze no answer (part 2)

In last week's report I tried to point out that a comprehensive land freeze to save quality farmland would be worse than the disease. To save 32 million acres of food-growing land is to interfere drastically with the delicate buyer and seller relationships of the market place. Massive state intervention in the marketplace does guarantee absolutely that the productive capacity of Ontario's farmers will be severely restricted by a new host of governmental restrictions and directives.

If you examine the food growing capacity of certain totalitarian nations such as the Soviet Union, the state of that country's agriculture is nothing short of national disaster.

An outstanding Canadian futurist, John Kettle, in the May issue of Executive Magazine, observed: "The 1975 crop was the same size as the wheat crop of 1913, the pre-revolutionary base year that Soviet statisticians used to quote to demonstrate progress under Communism." If that is the state of progress in a totally planned economy, then the Soviets are going nowhere fast. They have essentially stood still for the past 62 years.

Nobody can take any solace in this fact or in the fact that the Russians have continually relied upon the vitality and great productive capacity of Canadian farmers, and in particular, Prairie farmers. What happens down the road if world drought occurs?

I have used Soviet agriculture as an illustration of what massive state intervention can do to inhibit and to hinder the productive capacity of farming rather than to foster a climate of incentives to help the farming community.

I can already hear the loud objections of the "armchair farmers" that I have distorted their position with misleading information. They are arguing that Canadian agriculture cannot be used as the shining light of the free enterprise system. I haven't set out to defend the private productive capacity of Ontario's farmers nor to deny that our agriculture needs subsidies and quotas to cushion it against overproduction.

That is not what is at stake. What we are taking dead aim at is the artificial argument that the only salvation for Ontario's foodlands is to freeze them for all time for agricultural use. It's a phony argument which is so simplistic in its daring that it defies comprehension.

No, a total land freeze on foodlands is the worst solution of any set of solutions. Like a lot of things in life, the issue is neither black nor white, but that indefinable gray which wears the patience of the "armchair farmer", desirous of putting into effect the ideal solution as they term it.

Your Ontario Government has gone down a number of other roads to resolving this matter. For example, Ontario by this autumn will have a complete, up-to-date catalogue of the Province's land resources by county. In this way we will have the capacity to note any basic changes in the pattern of ownership.

As a number two step major planning studies have been completed for Simcoe, Halimand-Norfolk, Northumberland and Simcoe Counties. The purpose of these studies is to contain urban growth, support those communities highly dependent upon agriculture and to preserve good farmland. This planning process was a practical example of municipal-provincial cooperation.

As a number three step the Agriculture and Food Ministry is spending \$250,000 on research projects in land use at the University of Guelph. We believe that the results of these studies will prove most useful in developing good land-use practices.

The fourth way of protecting farmlands is in developing guidelines through the Ministry's Foodlands Development Branch. The basic principle underlying these guidelines is that urban development should not occur on good farmlands. Any new housing or the location of industry should use up existing land within the municipal boundaries of a community rather than outside those boundaries. When that choice is unavailable, grouping of development is preferable to scattering over that land.

As a fifth step, Ontario is working with the federal government in updating soils classification in the province at the University of Guelph.

As a sixth step, market value on real property will become the abiding principle in 1978. Farmland will be taxed at 100 per cent but the full amount of the tax will be paid by the province. A farm residence will be taxed at 50 per cent for which the farmer will be responsible in paying. In this way the amount of property tax paid by producing farmers will be considerably reduced and farm production remarkably increased.

As a seventh step, your Ontario Government has initiated an industrial park program with specific emphasis on the north and east parts to stimulate new economic growth and to relieve pressures on good farmland.

All of these means of protecting farmland may not catch headlines but they are practical and useful ways of balancing conflicting uses of our land resources instead of resorting to a total land freeze.

You don't have to throw out the baby with the bath water to start realizing your policy goal. Only the "armchair farmers" want to re-invent the wheel.



by Ray Baker

If you remember, I promised a follow up story on the giant Wahoo. This is it. 'The return of the Wahoo'. Earlier this year as the snow still lay deep and crisp and even in Huronia (perish the thought) a friend of mine did what the birds do in winter, he flew south.

With his wife of a few hours he spent his honeymoon in the Bahamas at the edge of the Devil's triangle, and we all know what kind of funny stories come out of there don't we. This is one of them.

His wife cast her first line into the water and bang a new world record Wahoo for a newlywed wife from Midland. This giant fish varied in weight from 78 to 98 lbs, depending who you talked to. Its length was just under six feet on a clear day.

The Giant of the Deep

Debbie Henderson of 248 Sixth St. Midland contemplated what to do next. There she was in the tropics with her honeymoon to think about and she is stuck with this monster. What to do with it was the question. Consulting the local experts after wading through a crowd of admirers eating their hearts out, Debbie and Bob made their decision.

They would keep it and have it stuffed. The first step was having it hung in the walk-in freezer of the local friendly charter boat owner. No sooner said than done.

But nobody locally was set up to mount such a beast. It was decided to send it to Florida where the worlds famous firm of Pfeuger carried on business as Taxidermists. Their motto 'The Worlds Largest'.

At first the happy couple assumed that this motto applied either to the actual specimens they stuffed, or to the size of the business. Later they discover that "The Worlds Largest" applied to the size of the bill!

But this was all in the future, like all good honeymoons it came to an end. They returned to ice bound Midland and the giant Wahoo completed its own frozen journey to Pfeugers of Florida. The world largest examined it with the skill of a brain surgeon and promptly asked for money to start work.

This done, the couple sat back and waited for the fish to arrive in Midland.

He Who Hesitates Is Lost

More cash was sent, and the world largest began talking shipping charges for actual transportation across the border. The first stumbling block being the description.

Should it be declared as 'mise' or 'personal effects' or maybe 'furniture' as it was mounted on wood. There would also be duty and customs charges to pay. The possibilities under furniture were enormous. Put a leg under each corner you have a table, wire up the eyes and an interesting corner lamp would emerge. You could, at a pinch sleep on it. A 'Bermuda Bed'.

Furniture was out. Customs base the duty on its accredited imported value. How do you appraise a giant Wahoo? Finally the Worlds

Largest described it as a 'Game Fish Trophy' which is logical, and winter months, and spring, and summer, went swiftly by. The end product emerged, customs and immigration were passed and the big day drew near.

The Wall Hanging

Canadian Freightways were the carriers appointed to make the actual delivery. Their trailer backed into Sixth Street in Midland and the six foot plus packing case (coffin) was brought inside. Now came the unveiling.

The giant Wahoo had screws through its belly into the packing case. Made of mahogany the case itself was \$48. Its eyes had been replaced with a pair of genuine Japanese fish eyes. Its original length had shrunk slightly due to its being mounted in an arched leaping position for posterity.

But very, very, impressive. At its middle rear section a serrated mounting bracket enabled them to hang it in any position. From leaping up to nose diving down. Against their white wall the blue, fading to grey with vertical black stripes forever reminds them of their honeymoon. The total cost through the Worlds Largest was around \$400 but what the heck, its a once in a lifetime thing.

Debbie and Bob are selling their house shortly and moving into a new one, providing they can find a new house with a living room wall big enough and strong enough to house the World Largest of course.

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.



A leisurely sail on Penetanguishene Bay

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.

Economizing in the air - how 'bout rubber bands



by Shirley Whittington

Air Canada is losing money I hear, and has increased its fares. This means that people who fly a lot will have to pay more to do so. Since Air Canada has also gone to Ottawa to ask Daddy for an increase in its allowance, people who do not fly will be subsidizing those who do.

This happens all the time. A farmer who

has a bad year may apply for government assistance to subsidize his loss. At the same time, consumers pay more for whatever it was that the farmer wasn't able to grow very much of. We get our pockets picked stereophonically.

I can't do anything about crop failures or bad weather, but I've put some thought on the plight of the airlines and it seems to me that corners could be cut, which is what I do when I'm spending more than I earn.

Why not encourage passengers to bring their own lunches aboard? Meals aloft are a lot of fun, but it costs money to batter-fry that chunk of chicken (or veal—I'm never sure) freeze it, put it in its foil coffin, thaw it, heat it again and serve it.

If passengers could bring their own lunches aboard, it would save money and incidentally solve another problem of air travel—the constituted aisle.

This is what happens when somebody has to go to the bathroom and the aisle is blocked by the stewardess and her checkbook. Unless the passenger is prepared to play in-flight leap frog, or to step on the laps of aisle-seated passengers, he's stuck.

When he finally gets aft, he'll emerge from the air borne biffy in time to meet the coffee tea or milk wago head on.

I know people who have traveled together on short flights and have barely seen each

other. One of them has always been hung up in an aisle somewhere.

Paper bag lunches would solve this, although I'm aware that there are some glamorous women and vested business men who wouldn't be caught dead carrying a greasy bag of sandwiches.

These people would have to travel first class, where meals would still be served. But, they'd have to finish all their vegetables before they'd get dessert. This should cut down on waste, and save money.

It must cost a bundle to uniform all those stewardesses. Why can't they dress the way they do at home? Thus, on breakfast flights, I'd expect to see them in flannel robes and curlers. I usually serve luncheon in jeans and a sweatshirt. Why can't they? Most of the young women I know spend a lot of time in crushed cotton and wedgies, and I think that would do fine for the cabin crew. Male stewards who don't look good in wedgies could chose their own footwear.

How, I hear you saying, will we distinguish the stewardesses from Aunt Hattie who is flying east to visit her sister for a week? The girls will be immediately recognizable by their spiky eyelashes gleaming fingernails fixed smiles. (I'm talking economy, not grinding poverty).

In-flight movies are great but since most of us fall asleep half way through or lose the

thread of the story because the ear plugs hurt, let's drop commercial movies. This would be a good chance for the airline crew to show some of their coloured vacation slides. ("This is your Captain speaking, and that's my wife Edna last summer at Collarbone National Park. I'm sorry her head's not in the picture but our six year-old took it and he's small for his age.")

Fuel costs seem to be the biggest factor in Air Canada's deficit. I wonder if they've looked into the possibility of using really big rubber bands?

Could they get all the economy class passengers up to the roof of the terminal building, and encourage them to flap their arms very hard and repeat together, "I think I can, I think I can!"

I have one final suggestion. Why doesn't Air Canada gather up all its planes, take the wings off and fit them with steel wheels? They could set them on the miles of existing track criss-crossing our country that the railways seem determined to abandon.

On either side of the Rockies, it would be downhill all the way, and the air traffic control people could chat with each other in French, English, Cree or Portuguese without precipitating a national crisis.

After all, as Flanders and Swan have pointed out, if God had meant us to fly, he wouldn't have given us the railways.

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