

Nature trails are for nature

How does one explain to a child that an animal as cute and loveable as a beaver just doesn't have a place in a waterfront nature park?

That is just about the problem faced by the Penetanguishene town council as a result of a letter from the council of a grade seven class at St. Joseph's school, asking that a beaver dam in the waterfront park be left alone.

The children have been studying the area, and have discovered that the beavers have built a dam which is causing flooding on the nature trails the town has built in the area through the park. They feel the beavers will perish if the dam is destroyed, and they may be right.

The town is in a bit of a bind, in that it would cost a lot of money to relocate the trails on higher ground and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources says it won't undertake to move the beavers to another location because there is an overabundance

of beavers in Ontario at the moment. The town will try to find some humane way to deal with the problem, but it may be forced, in the end to resort to allowing trappers to go in and take the beavers for their pelts. It's not a very pleasant solution, and it is certainly not a solution which is going to be easy to tell to the group of children who have taken such an interest in the animals.

It's really too bad, a trifle ironic, that nature is getting in the way of a project which is designed to enable people to see nature at close quarters.

Surely some solution can be found which does not involve the elimination of the beavers, even if it means spending some money, or leaving some sections of the trails submerged for a year or two. If man and nature cannot co-exist on a nature trail, where can they co-exist? That's something which, for some reason, children seem to see much more clearly than most adults.

Sugar and Spice

Fall Notes

by Bill Smiley

A few fall notes of superlative unimportance. My elder grandson, Pokey, is now, at two and a half years, in the pre-kindergarten class at the day-care centre he attends. He gets very annoyed when someone, needling, says: "Oh, you're in the Senior Toddlers' class now."

With a curl of the lip, he retorts vehemently, "No! I'm in pre-kindergarten." Even at that age, there's an immense concern with status. To the Senior Toddlers, the Junior Toddlers are just punks. To the pre-kindergartners, the Senior Toddlers are practically babies.

You remember how it was? If you were in Grade 9 at school, it was the supreme insult if someone asked if you were in Grade 8, back with all those little kids.

It was the same in the service. When you joined, you were a raw, ignorant rookie. In six months, you were looking with tolerant scorn at the new recruits. When you finally got your wings, you looked down from Olympus at those mere children who were starting their training.

Then you went overseas, and were suddenly a raw, ignorant rookie again. After operational training, which ensured that you were a dashing fighter pilot, you were posted to a squadron, and learned to your dismay that you were just a "sprog," the term for a

raw, ignorant rookie. Same thing as a prisoner of war. You'd just been through a fairly traumatic experience, and a very dramatic one, being shot down, captured, perhaps being beaten up. You got to a prison camp, and were looked at with the utmost contempt by old-timers (or perhaps 23) who had been shot down in such exotic places as Crete or Yugoslavia or Norway, and had been "in the bag" for three or four years. You felt like a five-year-old on his first day at school.

Back to Pokey. At day-care, they gave him a psychological label that mildly amused his mother, infuriated his gran, and delighted his grandfather. It was "Sneaky Aggressive." It doesn't sound too nice, but he's tiny for his age, and has to look after himself somehow. What it means, I gather, is that when some bigger kid has pushed you around, you wait until he's not looking, then sneak up and bite him on the ear, or anything else that's handy.

Well, the postal workers are at it again. After one of the most futile strikes ever seen in Canada, they settled, a year ago, for a 29 per cent package, far above the maximum allowed by the AIB. Others, teachers, mill workers, were rolled back, while the uncivil servants of our postal system kept their loot.

As I write, they are holding rotating (and illegal) walkouts, cocking a snook at

government injunctions, and acting like the spoiled children of rich parents. Maybe they've been coddled too long. I'm not yet at the point where I would single out every tenth man or woman in the postal department and shoot the person. But I'm getting there. If Trudeau were smart, he'd call back Bryce Mackasey, eat humble pie, and kill two birds with one stone.

I am ambiguous toward the postal people, which takes some of the sting out of my attack. Most of those in small towns are friends and sometimes neighbors of the people they serve. They're friendly, reasonably courteous and as efficient as the system, one of the most inefficient in the country, will let them be.

It's in the bigger towns and cities, where there is no personal contact between servers and served, that the militancy among postal workers is fostered. The workers feel themselves mere cogs in a big machine, not individuals. The public doesn't give a damn about them, as long as it gets its mail on time. Therein lies revolution, and always has.

But I'm getting a little ticked off with labor in general in this country, along with a hell of a lot of other people who once supported it. We have one of the rottenest histories of strikes in the world, over the last few years.

Even the British working man, for many years a real bearcat when it came to unions and strikes, has realized there is a point of no return, and is cooperating with government in an attempt to slow inflation in the U.K., by limiting demands for pay boosts.

Not so Canadian labor. It's "Gimme, Gimme! Gimme!" Maybe I'm old-fashioned, but I think there's something wrong with the values of a country in which a plumber makes more than a public health nurse, a meat-cutter makes more than a minister.

In fact, I'm so fed up with labor that if my own union, the teachers' federation, asked me to go on strike over some real or fancied grievance, my first reaction would be: "Drop dead."

Where there is injustice, it must be rectified. But where there is only greed, getting as much as you can, and giving as little as possible, I've had enough. And that applies to sex and sympathy, as well as labor.

Last item in these futile fall notes. For two weeks I've been wearing a magnetic bracelet which is supposed to relieve my arthritis.

I'd have been just as far ahead to stick an onion in my ear, and go out and swing, by the tail, a dead cat at the moon, like Huck Finn. A colleague suggested this. He's right.

And a happy Remembrance Day to each and every one of you, too.

Halloween madness

Thank goodness some of us have our heads screwed on properly.

Penetanguishene Town Council has resisted the latest wave of madness which was started in the big city and picked up in Midland.

It seems the powers that be in these places think little children would be better off trick-or-treating on a Saturday night than on the 31st of October, which happens to fall on Sunday.

There are a number of reasons for this, some of which have some validity, others of which are ridiculous. The main reason seems to be that with the switch over from Daylight Savings Time to Eastern Standard Time, it will be lighter on Saturday night than on Sunday night. This, of course cannot be disputed, but what self-respecting ghost or goblin would be caught dead in the broad daylight.

Another reason offered is that Monday is a school day, and it would be unwise for children to stay out late on a Sunday night. But, as was pointed out at Monday night's council meeting, when Halloween falls on a week night, as it does now and then, nobody tries to have it moved to a Friday or Saturday night. Why should it be any different this year?

Halloween, or All Hallows Eve, as it was originally called, was scheduled on October 31st for a reason. Our government has seen fit to have Queen Victoria's birthday celebrated on a Monday for the convenience of the working man, and to a certain extent, that makes sense, although one might have a difficult time convincing Queen Victoria of that.

But if we don't draw the line on Halloween, before we know it, we'll be celebrating Canada Day, and even Christmas, on some day convenient for all involved.

A 'little un' — but not to be underestimated



by Ray Baker

She is only a 'little un' five foot nothing in her bare feet, but not to be underestimated by six foot three Public Officials as they found out when she started asking questions about the wage scales of the various municipal employees last year. Some were frank, others not so frank.

It was not all work and no play either. I have personally seen her at a Balm Beach corn roast eat more than twice her own weight in corn-on-the-cob (or so it seemed). Under her guidance the chain continued to win prizes in the national competitions for best front page, best columnist (why not indeed) and best editorial page....She also drives a car.

I told you we would get back to the car. It started out innocently enough the developed into 'the most accident prone staffer in the newspaper business' contest. She was in the lead with fender-bender record, closely followed by Vic Mcodecki the Ad Manager. Having broken his leg playing tennis he leaped (on crutches) into the No. 1 spot. Sure, fighting for the title, immediately began counting pedestrians, and took the front, Vic, buying a new house stepped into his back lot and came out not smelling of roses, but covered in poison ivy.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

I think as a farewell parting gesture it should be considered an honourable draw, unless Vic sends a copy of this column to Oakville. Where someone else can take up the challenge.

Seriously though, as a freelance writer I am going to miss Sue. My own desk at home is modelled after hers in the newspaper office. You can't see the top for papers, menus, reminders, random junk completely coversat and spills over the sides. I figured if it works for her, it must be a winning combination. When the paper moved to its new location last year it took no less than seven men to carry it...and that was with the drawers out.

THE TEDDY BEAR DID IT

The Teddy Bear that sits on the pile of overflow of paper at the side of her desk put it all together. Where else in the stern, deadline-chasing environment of a busy newspaper office would you find a cuddly Teddy bear? Having assured myself it was not a leftover from the previous male occupant I realized it was her link back to sanity. A touch of femininity whilst doing a hard demanding job. And Why not.

Her greatest assets I realized but recently. Out of all the dozens of columns of mine which as a freelance I just drop off once a week on her chair (don't ask why not the desk), she has not altered a word. Corrected my atrocious spelling, yes. Checked it for libel and defamation, yes. Even crosses a few 's', and dotted an occasional 't'. But never chopped a word.

To me this shows excellent judgment and superb literary appreciation on her part.....

what more can I say. Gonna' miss you Sue. All the best. Ray Baker is a Manager of Midland's RCA

plant and a freelance writer for Markle Community Newspapers. He and his family live in Penetanguishene.....



Autumn silhouettes

Crazy weather, eh?

Who says Penetanguishene doesn't have something for everyone?

Where else in the world can one see, in the space of a few hours, brilliant sunshine, overcast skies, rain, snow, hail, and sleet?

Last week was a meteorologist's dream, or nightmare, depending on whether he was just studying the weather or trying to predict it.

It's really too bad such brief periods of unpredictability could not themselves be predicted, because the town could surely

figure out some way of marketing them to schools of meteorology. The budding weathermen could come from miles around, camera's and notebooks in hand, to study the freak occurrences. Naturally they would spend their money in the town's stores, restaurants and hotels.

They would certainly find it interesting here, provided of course they didn't mind coming loaded down with sunglasses, umbrellas, winter coats and boots.

Letters to the editor

Don't destroy beaver dam

A Péditeur. Des castors ont construit un barrage à l'embouchure du ruisseau "Copeland's Creek" et les sentiers de la nature au parc municipale ont été inondés. Nous apprenons que des employés de la ville songent à détruire ce barrage. Si ce barrage est démolé, les castors n'auront pas le temps de reconstruire ailleurs. Ils vont mourir de froid

et de faim. Nous vous demandons de faire tout en votre pouvoir pour protéger ces castors. Nous vous remercions d'avance et de votre coopération.

Conseil de la classe 7D
Noel Duquette
Celia Dyer.

Observe Energy Week

Dear Editor: This year, the people of Ontario will spend an estimated \$7.5 billion on all forms of energy. In short, we've been spending about \$900 annually for every man, woman and child in the Province on energy. Up to 20 per cent of that could be saved through properly maintained vehicles, better driving habits, more careful consumption practices and properly insulated homes. Through conservation we could reduce the rate of growth of overall energy costs dramatically.

The Ontario Government has proclaimed the first week of November Energy Conservation Week in order to increase public awareness of the need to conserve energy. An increased public awareness should stimulate

people to take steps to reduce their energy bills this winter.

We hope that the savings that can be made will ultimately add up to a billion dollar reduction in the Province's overall energy bill by 1980.

I would like to invite your readers to write to you and share their own reasons on how energy conservation can be achieved in everyday situations.

I hope that during Energy Conservation Week you will publish some of the best ideas your readers have on energy conservation for personal and community benefit.

Dennis R. Timbrell
Ontario Minister of Energy

The emergence of a middle aged sex symbol



by Shirley Whittington

Tell your daughter she can't have a sleep over for a dozen friends, and you're mean.

The next time one of them flings this in your face, tell them the kind of mean you are is the golden mean. Because if you are old enough to have kids who disapprove of everything you do and challenge everything you say, you're middle aged and that has suddenly become hot stuff.

This hit me like a hot flash last night when I was reading about Norman Lear, the king of television's situation comedies.

"Face it," says Lear, "Marty Tyler Moore is not a child, and Phyllis - she's my age and she's a beautiful woman." He also considers Maude to be a very hot and profitable property.

Lear really believes in the marketability of middle age and this got me thinking in a more optimistic vein than usual. Brigitte Bardot is 40 and so is Burt Reynolds. Pierre Trudeau captured the hearts and mind of this country when he was beginning to be middle aged. Now he's sliding down the other side of the hill, and his charisma's broken.

Even some of the young people I know are starting to look middle-aged. Fashion conscious girls have cut their hair and are wearing longish flowing skirts.

Just last week I met two young men about town who were wearing fedoras and pin striped suits. They looked about 19 years old, going on 40.

What's happened is that the current tastemakers were kids in the fifties. All through the sixties, they gloried in their youth and freedom and said openly that they wouldn't trust anybody over 30. Now suddenly, they're 30. They've reassessed the situation and decided it's okay for people to get middle-aged.

Getting back to Norman Lear, his newest project is a show which stars Nancy Walker. She's 50 years old, and has been married for 25 years, to the same man. This would seem thin material for stardom, but there's more. In her new series, she plays a mature career woman with a handsome husband and a daughter who's a bit of a jerk.

You get that? For once, the mother has the smarts and the kid is a ding-a-ling.

This is almost too much for me to comprehend, but there's even more. It says right here that Nancy Walker (she's 50, remember) is becoming TV's newest sex symbol.

All these years I've been accepting mid-discendence as inevitable. When I went to the oculist to find out why they were making the

print in the phone book so small, I cringed when he said it was because I'd passed my 40th birthday.

I used to be embarrassed when salesgirl caught me looking through the sequined T-shirts, and asked me what size my daughter took.

When bus drivers and gas station attendants started calling me "Lady" instead of "Miss", I went into a three-day decline. After a lifetime of eating carrots and wearing sensible shoes so I'd grow up to be healthy and strong, it bothered me to find my teeth crumbling, my midriff slipping and brown spots on the backs of my hands.

But now, thanks to middle-aged Norman Lear, my worries are over. He's made middle age chic, and for once in my life I'm in the right place at the right time.

My kids may think I'm inflexible and mean.

My doctor may think my eyes are past their prime.

My husband may insist that I'm not getting any better, just older.

But I've got news for all of them. In a couple of years, I'll be a sex symbol, just like Nancy Walker. And now, if you'll excuse me, I think I'll go out and curl my eyelash.

The Penetanguishene Citizen



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Weekly Newspaper Association
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\$10.40 Year
Mail Subscription \$9.50 yearly in Canada
\$16.00 in USA
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