

Merry Xmas YTL

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He was wrong. There in the Great Hall were nine go-go dancers, bumping, bouncing, twisting and jerking to an amplified madrigal. The noise was deafening. Every once in a while, one of the ladies would stop gyrating long enough to shout breathlessly, "Your true love (puff, puff) sends greetings of the season." By now, what with gathering the eggs, feeding the stock, making nourishing puddings from the milk presented to him by his eight little maids and answering the ever-ringing golden telephone, the knight was busier than a goalie on Stanley Cup night.

In self-defence, he decided to yank up his drawbridge, but before he could do so, he was met at the gate by Lord Thomson, Lord Byron, Lord Nelson, Lord Chesterfield, Lord Cofeatable, Lord Jim, Lord Sprayer, Lord Helpus and Lord Knows, all of whom were jumping around like fleas on a spaniel. "We're

nine lords a-leaping," puffed one of them, "and we're all yours. Merry Christmas, from your true love."

The poor knight was numbed with shock. All he could say was "Okay, but mind you don't step on a goose when you come down."

And he threaded his way through the ladies dancing in the Great Hall, and past the milkmaids who were clattering down the stairs with their pails, and went upstairs to find some extra blankets and pillows.

The next morning, he awoke to the sounds of hollow hammering as if someone were banging on the pipes. They were. Scattered throughout the castle were eleven plumbers installing radiators, hot water lines and drinking fountains. "We're eleven plumbers, said one of them, "piping. And your true love says Merry Christmas. Where d'ya want the water-pik?"

Such a racket! The assorted fowl were filling the air with their cooing and clucking, and the cows were mooing to be milked. The phone kept ringing, five times at a shot. The heavy-footed lords were still leaping through the pear trees, taking care not to step on the chickens. The ladies were dancing up a storm in the Great Hall and the plumbers were banging

on the pipes.

The knight got a headache. He'd begun to think it was terminal when he realized that the frightful thudding was coming not from his head, but from twelve drummers who were marching around his castle banging to beat the band.

Each of them had a letter on his chest, and together they spelled MERRY XMAS YTL, and it didn't take the knight long to figure out what that meant.

The knight rushed for the telephone and called a minstrel friend in London. "Listen," he said. "I think I'm going crazy. On the twelfth Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me - twelve drummers drumming, eleven pipers piping, ten lords a-leaping..." and he continued right down to the partridge in the pear tree.

"Stop right there," said his minstrel friend. "I think we have a sure fire hit on our hands."

And they did. This time of the year, you can hear it almost every time you turn on your radio.

The knight? He sold all he had, and gave to the poor.

He joined a monastery and vowed never to speak to anyone again, especially women.

Maybe you've heard of him. He was known as "Silent, Knight, Holy Knight."

Think twice before giving pets for Christmas

by Marilyn Lee

A puppy or kitten is not the ideal Christmas present says Pete Bidan who runs Huronia Animal Control.

"I take dim view of giving pets for Christmas," he said.

Bidan says he does not agree with the idea of giving a child a pet for a gift because so many times after the novelty wears off, it becomes an unwanted burden.

"If people are giving a pet, and doing it as a last minute thing, it will make them happy for a while but after a few days they find there is more to owning a pet than throwing it some food every so often," says Bidan.

He does not like to see his animals leave the shelter at any time during the year, if they are taken on an impulse.

"When people walk into the shelter looking for a pet I make sure they know what they are looking for. If they aren't sure whether they want a dog or cat, male or female, small or large - I give them somewhat of a

hard time," says Bidan.

"So many times people come in to the shelter and see a cute little puppy or kitten, feel sorry for it and want to take it home before they give any thought to the care it is going to need."

"I feel more sorry for the animal when they get it home because they don't know how to care for it."

He says if anyone really wants to give an animal they have plenty of time before December 25 to give some thought to the idea.

"People wanting to get their child a pet should make arrangements beforehand and really decide on what kind of pet they feel they would like and would suit their surroundings," says Bidan.

There are many places to acquire animals in the area says Bidan, and many types of animals are available.

"I take special care to stress to parents the treatment they will have to provide for a pet. So many people feel their responsibility ends when they have paid their bill

for the animal.

Many times giving a pet can prove to be a problem for all concerned. It begins with the family not taking proper care of the animal. Then the neighbours get upset. The members of the family lose interest in the pet and the parents will call the animal shelter to come and pick up the dog or cat while the child is in school. When the child comes home his pet is gone and his parents won't say anything.

Eventually the kid finds out we have the animal and then we look like the bad guys," said Bidan.

Bidan says every year after Christmas there is a surplus of animals brought back to the shelters across the province.

"Last year I had many calls from people who had tired of their animal and wanted to get rid of it."

When Bidan goes to pick up the animals the line he hears most often he says is "This animal was washed on us."

"For every 100 animals given at Christmas, I'd say about five are the ideal gift," says Bidan.

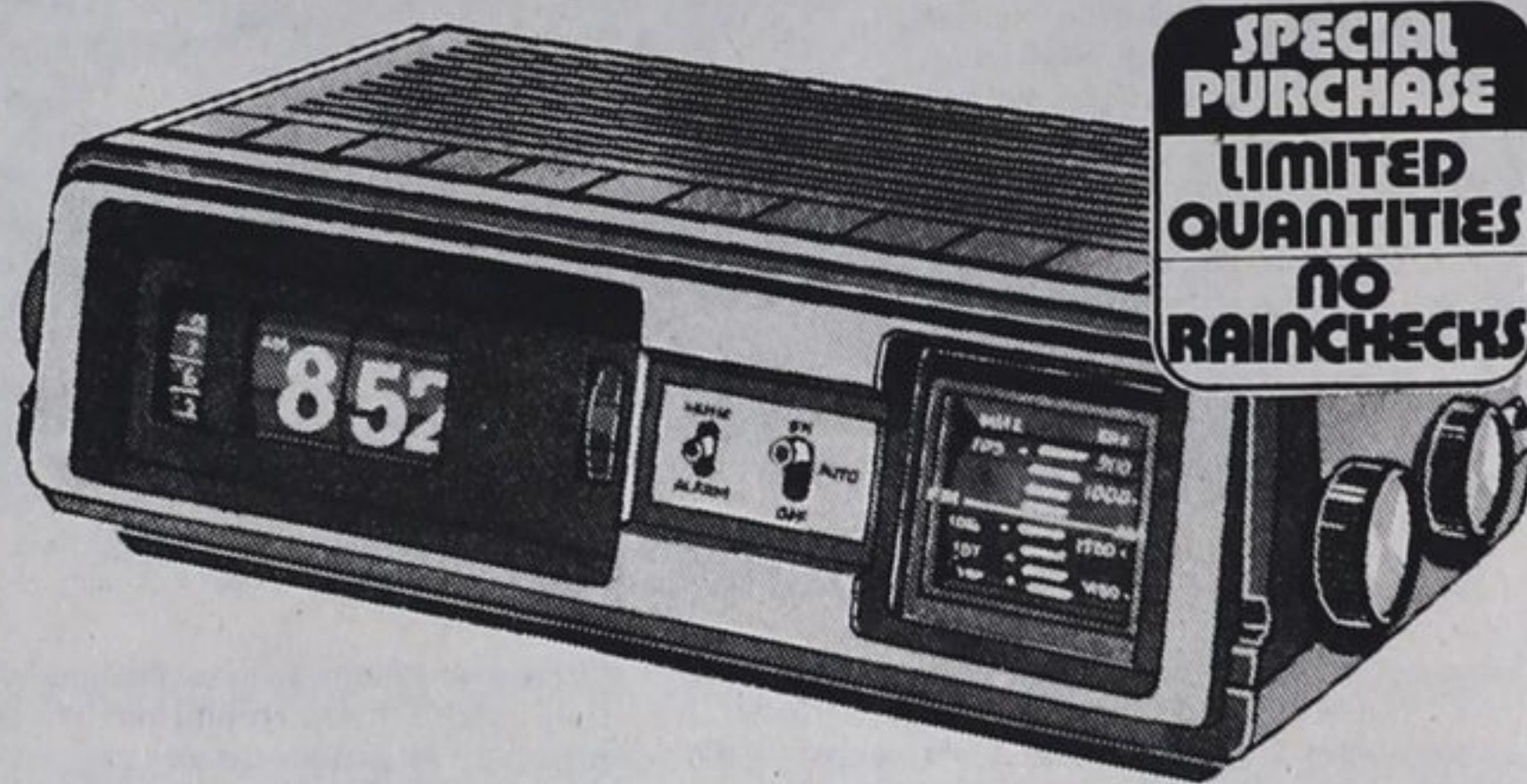


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