

Where were the students?

The really disappointing thing about the election of the French Language Advisory Committee of the Simcoe County Board of Education last Thursday evening was not that so few people turned out, although that was disappointing enough. It was that no students were present.

Considering the interest the students of Penetanguishene Secondary School showed last fall in the amount of French in evidence at the school, it was a bit surprising that none of these students showed up.

Anyone whose native tongue is French was eligible, not only to vote in the election, but to run for a position on the committee. This area's trustee on the school board, Alvin Gravelle said Monday there was no reason why a senior student could not have been elected to the board, and he even went so far as to say that, in view of the turnout, if a student had brought 25 of his friends with him, he would have been elected for sure.

In the mid-sixties there was somewhat of a revolution in the universities of this continent, and the results of that revolution filtered down, to a certain extent, to the high schools. As a result of that revolution, you can now find students on the Boards of Governors of most universities, and in the high schools students are getting an even

bigger say in how things are run. With the lowering of the age of majority in this province a number of years ago, older students were afforded the opportunity not only to try to change the system within the schools themselves, but within the school boards, and even within the legislature.

It is often difficult for a young person to get elected to public office, but in the case of Thursday's election, it would have been easy. The revolutionaries in the sixties often felt that a token position on a board or committee was of little use to them, but they always took the positions when they were available, on the theory that every little bit helped in some way or other.

At that time, it would have been completely inconceivable for a student group to pass up an opportunity to place a student on a body such as the French Language Advisory Committee.

Since then, students seem to have become much more apathetic about politics, and about what sort of an education they receive. It seems a little difficult to take seriously the claim that students are concerned about the amount of French education they receive, when not one of them came out to vote, let alone to run, in the election held Thursday night.

Queen's Park report

by Arthur Evans M.P.P.

On state run car insurance

Strange things happen in politics, as I suppose they do in life. At least, I thought that comment was true, when a few weeks back, the NDP Member for Lakeshore, announced that his party was giving one of its favourite policies a close second look.

It turns out that the NDP was not quite as enthusiastic as it once was about state-run automobile insurance. Not that the state could not administer such a program, — rather, the results were financially and electorally disastrous for the NDP in British Columbia.

From those experiences, Mr. Lawlor concluded, no government should be forced to assume administrative control of a profit-making operation when even automobile insurance companies were shying away from taking on any new liability business.

In other words, governments should take over enterprises with a thriving profit potential. Let these other enterprises sink from their own weight.

Personally, I thought such a reversal was so sudden and dramatic that I had to touch myself to check to see if I was all in one piece. This reversal of basic NDP policy was like Niagara Falls reversing its water flow.

After all, as a legislator since 1960, I have often heard CCF Leader Donald MacDonald sing the virtues of government-owned automobile insurance in Saskatchewan. It is such a successful scheme that Saskatchewan taxpayers are only losing \$2 million a year on auto insurance. Still, that amount of money is not small potatoes for a province their size.

Upon thinking about this great change a little further, I wondered whether the NDP's decision to seek money from business of every size for political campaigns had anything to do with this policy reversal on auto insurance. It seemed reasonable that as the Official Opposition, the NDP had to downplay its socialist commitment in favour of a more humane and compassionate image for the electorate.

But, wait a minute. This serial does not end here...

Chapter Two cancelled these good intentions, as the NDP's Deputy Leader, Ian Deans, promptly outlined the case for continuing state-run auto insurance and pointed out that, while individual MPP's can speak out about policy matters, they cannot change party policy.

So Niagara Falls is not running uphill.

Everything is right with the world—even if the realities are different and even if Mr. Lawlor has exhibited some good solid common sense about auto insurance.

No, an Ontario NDP auto insurance plan would not be a governmental "success" story. Just look at B.C.'s Autoplan.

In its first year of operation, Autoplan "achieved" a \$200 million deficit. On top of that the Crown corporation—Insurance Corporation of British Columbia—gave its employees the right to strike and they almost immediately went on strike.

If you were a consumer in B.C. during 1974 and just happened to have a car accident, you had to be prepared to pay an additional surcharge of \$1 to \$2 per hour on repair work because the body shops claimed the government rates were too low.

To cover these costs, the Barrett government decided to levy a 10c tax per gallon on drivers. Those funds got diverted to other things and never were used for their original purpose.

Under the Social Credit Government, some insurance rates had to be increased by as much as 200 per cent. While that is an extreme example, it is by no means unusual. Manitoba under Autoplan experienced \$25 million deficits, and now a 15 per cent annual surcharge is used to cover Autoplan expenses.

Imagine what the Ontario deficit would be under a state-operated insurance plan if the same principles were applied here: in the hundreds of millions of dollars because of our population size.

Having said all that, if you believe that I think the private insurance companies are perfect in their insurance rates, far from it—although their record on rates is at least a realistic one and not artificially inflated to hide the true cost. The Consumer and Commercial Relations Ministry confirms that insurance rates of these companies are increasing at the same rate as the cost of living. Not comforting, but at least closer to reality than the state operations of the NDP Western provinces.

I must ask the NDP leader just how, if the NDP believe in fairness and equal treatment for all, they would justify taxpayers who neither own or drive cars subsidizing motorists? Wonder what the answer would be?

Letters to the editor

Looking for volunteers

Dear Editor:

In June 1976, the Volunteer Coordinator at the Mental Health Centre, Penetanguishene, conceived the idea of getting together a "History of the Centre" from earliest times to the present. He asked for a volunteer to work on the project. Miss A.E. Porter, Retired Director of Nursing at the Mental Health Centre volunteered for this history writing among several others; in particular Dr. B.A. Boyd is involved.

Much information has been obtained and the later years from June 1951 particularly, have been given good coverage.

However, there is a dearth of information regarding the era from its first becoming an insane asylum until around the second world

war. I have spoken to different people and I am sure if they would be good enough to write down on paper, what they remember, we would relate it.

For example, I am told that there was the beginnings of a new building where Toanche now stands and then the Government changed and nothing became of it; or, who was Medical Superintendent before Dr. George C. Kidd or Superintendent of Nurses before Miss Snider.

We need someone to drop us little messages of what they recall!

If you can help, please send any information you may have to:

Miss A.E. Porter, P.O. Box 579, Penetanguishene, Ontario.

Sugar and Spice

Charting your life

by Bill Smiley

Had the 'flu this week and took a couple of days off work. That made 10 days in the last 15 years on the job. And I rediscovered the reason I will, time and again, totter off to work when I'm practically on my hands and knees with some ailment.

It's because I nearly go out of my skull with boredom when I'm home sick.

I'm not saying my wife isn't a delightful conversationalist or a charming companion. She is. But when you have the 'flu you want neither delight nor charm. You just want to be left alone like an old dog, to live or die as the Lord decides.

She won't leave me alone. She brings me a big breakfast to bed when all I really want is a sharp harikari knife. After once spending a year in bed, in a sanatorium, I hate eating in bed. Trying to balance a tray on the knees. Spilling coffee on the sheets, with the inevitable blast from the laundress. Dripping gooey egg down the front of your pyjamas.

Then by lunch-time, I'm so bored with bed that I stagger up and dress, dying or not. And she starts again. I should have some lunch to keep my strength up. Have you taken your anti-biotic pills, dear? Maybe you should watch TV for a while to keep your spirits up. Would you like another cup of tea?

I don't want another cup of tea. I'm drowning in it already. I don't want any sardines on toast, or cheese bits in the oven,

or nice tasty soup. My pills make me dizzy. TV makes me want to throw up. This has got to be the swine flu. Am I really dying or will I just be paralyzed for life. Does God really exist? If He does, why is He dumping this on me?

Well, all that is bad enough. But during this session, the worst happened. I ran out of reading material. By the end of Day Two I had whipped through three library books, two daily papers twice a day, and a half-dozen weeklies, a couple of news magazines, and the directions on the cereal box, in English and French.

The inevitable occurred. I was forced to read one of those women's magazines that my wife buys occasionally at the supermarket when she sees an interesting recipe. It plunged me into an even deeper, almost suicidal, depression.

One of the feature articles told me I must love myself first, if I were going to amount to anything. I plowed through it with growing disgust, considering that at the moment I despised myself, modern medicine, my wife, and almost anything else I could think of.

When I got to a list of things I must do if I were to love myself, and read, "Not having orgasms." I threw up all over the livingroom rug.

After settling my stomach with a hot toddy, and finding nothing else around that I hadn't

read twice, I picked up the magazine again, in sheer desperation. The other feature article plunged me once again into abysmal gloom. It was called, "Chart Your Way to Success."

When I read about the author that she is a professor of educational psychology, I should have stopped right there. I know how much those birds know about real life. They live in a dream world of stuff like "positive reinforcement" and "negative feedback."

But I pressed on. After wading through three sacharine endorsements from people whose whole life she had changed, I went on to this: "You too can follow in the footsteps of Lee, Mark and Doris. You can define and attain your own success."

It seems that all you have to do is make a chart, divided into three periods, each representing a third of your life, beginning at the age of five. Then you list three successes for each period and opposite each, list why it was a success for you.

Out of sheer ennui, I started a chart. In the first period, from five to 15, I could think of only one success. I won one fight with a belligerent urchin named George Cornell, with whom I tangled frequently. It was a success for me because it was the only one I ever did win.

In the second period, from 15 to 30, again I could think of only one success: I learned to

fly an airplane. But this wasn't such a great success since, because of it, I spent a stretch in a German prison camp.

In the third period, from 30 on, I couldn't think of a single success. I became a newspaper editor through sheer accident. All that got me was 10 years laboring as a galley slave to pay off the mortgage on the paper.

Then I became a teacher, which any damn fool could become in those days. They were pulling bodies in off the streets because of the baby boom hitting the high schools. I became head of the English Department purely because nobody else was qualified, not on merit, experience or dedication.

I became a syndicated columnist by chance. All that gets me is a deadline hanging about my neck like a big old albatross.

By the time I'd finished making out the chart, I realized, not for the first time, that I was an utter failure, and that it was going to take a lot more than a chart to change things.

It was then that I made my one and only resolution for 1977. And all subsequent years. I will never again, should I be forced to peruse nothing more exciting than the small print on toothpaste tubes, read another woman's magazine from a supermarket.

Immediately I made this resolve, I felt a lot better, and next morning was back at work.

Change in the supermarket: Yes!

six weeks in the cutting room of a frozen fish plant," and then he snaps the pic. No wonder the before's always look so startled and dejected.

Then the subject is led, (one hopes) into a secluded chamber where her features are analyzed by a team of cosmetic sharpshooters.

Piggy eyes? A low forehead? A chin like Mussolini's? Never mind that you have spent the last twenty years of your life praying that nobody would notice that you have a nose like a spotted sweet potato. The clinicians see all, and I expect they make snuffy notes on their clip boards.

The woman who survives this trauma is then transformed with hair colour, lotions, blushers, tweezers and the like. Then she's photographed again, and she looks radiant, years younger and like somebody else —

usually Pat Nixon.

The copy writers chronicle the transformations in lyrical prose. "We emphasized Angela's beautiful eyes by outlining them in sapphire mink, kissing her lids with liquid moonlight and stepping on her glasses."

"Helen's severe hair style made her look years older than her girlish fifty-one, so we lightened her locks with a gold dust rinse, teased the ends into a saucy flip and shortened her too-broad forehead with fluffy bangs. Now Helen looks like the hat-check girl at the Rialto Bar and Grill."

"Mary's heavy brows and too-dark lipstick dated her and made her fine features look coarse and heavy. We slicked her lips with Heavenly Gloss and thinned the brows into a fine arch. Now Mary looks as if she has leukemia, but her family will be very very

nice to her for a few days."

Sometimes I wonder if it would be possible, in a large publishing centre, to be a make-over groupie. Could a woman who had had her hair lightened and her brows thinned by the beauty editor at, say - Woman's Day - then rush over to the offices of Family Circle, only to have the clinicians there throw up their hands in horror and send her out into the streets with her original ebony locks and her plucked brows pencilled in?

I'm only kidding about hanging around the supermarket, unkempt, waiting to be discovered by a beauty editor with a deadline. Unkempt is the way I am, and probably the way I'll stay.

But if you know the editor of Psychology today, you could give him my phone number. I'm used to my face, but sometimes my mental condition worries me.



by Shirley Whittington

These days, the women's magazines are full of beauty make overs.

I read through four of these Cinderella stories the last time I was at the hair-dresser's. All of them featured before and after shots of women who had been limping along for years with underslung chins or chubby ear lobes. Transformed, they smiled out at me with the kind of confidence that can only be gained if you've been made over by Good Housekeeping.

What happens to these ladies after they've been given the treatment? So many magazines are being Professor Higgins to so many plain-faced Elizas, that one would expect the streets to be teeming with gorgeous looking women. Which if they are, I hadn't noticed.

And what of the flops? There must be some candidates for the big make-over that are failures. Does the beauty editor fling down her tweezers and cry, "We blew it on this one, gang. Put her down for a head transplant." And does the magazine pay for the psychiatrist that would be needed to give a woman back her sense of self-worth after failing a course in her own self improvement.

And where do the beauty editors find their raw material? One four page spread was conducted in a supermarket, and everyone from the cashier to Aunt Lucy, who had just slipped over town to pick up some liver for the cat, was transformed into Debbie Reynolds.

Now, every time I go to the supermarket, I stand around a lot with my shaggy brows and heavy chin, and hope to be beset by a white-coated clinician and a photographer.

Photography is very important in these make-over features. The before picture is always taken just after the subject has been given some distressing news. "Peanut butter causes cancer," says the Photographer, or, "Madam, you look as if you had spent the last



A sunny winter's day in Simcoe County

Opening night at town council



by Ray Baker

Election promises are like summer rain, on a hot day. They don't last long, soon disappear, and they are most refreshing at the time. One of my election promises was that "I will keep you informed". So now the Municipal Elections have been and gone...

Here is the First Article

It starts off where we all swear at each other, oops, I mean the Official swearing...in

ceremony. The taking of office for two years on Council. The format is typical throughout the province, and certainly similar in the six municipalities of Tiny, Tay, Midland, Victoria Harbour, Port McNicoll, and dear old Penetanguishene with some minor variations that have become traditional over the years.

I'll try not to be too serious otherwise you gentle readers will tune out, turn off, and miss all the fun. So eyes down for a full house.

Over the decades legislation has said that the council will take office before the end of the second week in January. We just made it even though our official meeting is not until the last Monday of the month.

First you get an invitation which extends to your wife, which triggers off the instant response "I don't have a thing to wear", but the day arrives and you turn up at 7:20 p.m. with the others and the two Water and Light Commissioners (or P.U.C.) The Town Clerk shows you to a chair and you wait to be called. It's rather like being back at school.

The Swearing

The lawyer calls your name, and with one hand on the bible you swear a solemn oath not to get involved with any bribery, corruption, or any type of mayhem which your office would make you prone to. Visions of harbour-gate and the interminable prosecutions and accusations from the Quebec scene spring to mind. This is a solemn promise as you may be party to spending millions of (your) the taxpayers' money during the next two years.

Then you swear allegiance to the Queen, no problem. Then you sign the two declarations you've just made and you are shown to 'your seat'.

One of the rules of conduct in council is that you never say anything bad about the royal family. Well I figure she never says anything bad about me or my family, so live and let live. Another rule says that you don't say anything bad about the provincial or federal politicians. Now that one is going to be hard to keep. Anyway I got the chair two steps from the witness box, sitting between the Reeve, Art Stewart and Councillor, Ron Bellisle, (who almost tapped the polls) so I'm going to have to behave myself.

The Speeches

The lawyer reminds you all of the moral and legal obligations of the oaths and the ceremony is given spiritual guidance. The Rev. Sid Maddock said that humility was a must (don't let the office go to your head) that if you do a good job nobody remembers, if a bad job nobody forgets, that "the people are fickle" and finished on a happy note of "you can do it." You know Sid is so sincere, so genuine. Instead of seeing him read from notes you feel he should be carrying tablets of stone.

Father Desroches gave us a thought from Dag Hammarskjold "act for today, the past is gone the future not yet here. Do your best". The Mayor then makes his inaugural speech, in our case it was a ten year review and challenges for the future. We were dry and

warm inside. The weather outside was something else. Heavy snowfalls and the worse conditions for years with nothing running and practically everything cancelled, but in spite of all that two dozen brave souls, housewives, typists, former Councillors, and the hardy "media" had struggled in. God Bless you all. So with the speeches over now came the good part...

The Reception

The Mayor wearing his chain of office announced reception and adjournment. Like magic, tea, coffee, sandwiches, and delicious cakes made their appearance. Lighted candles were laid out and I thought for the moment the P.U.C. commissioners speech on Hydro conservation had hit the spot, but no, they were decorative only.

So everyone circulates and eats and drinks and the evening comes to an end. I felt I had to record it for all you readers that couldn't attend as well as my promise to 'keep you informed' there was only one sad spot. One let down.

Congratulating the Mayor I said I looked forward to the next meeting, with the coffee, delicious cakes etc. He replied "no way. Coffee, cakes, and candlelight are once every two years, now we get down to business". Well it was worth a try, you can't win em all.

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

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