

Winterama brings in the business

Another Winterama has come and gone, this one with a minimum of problems and aggravations for the organizers.

Winterama provides residents of the town with an excuse to let loose and enjoy winter, to take a break from day to day existence and forget about the problems associated with the long cold Canadian winter, but it does more than that. It reminds people from outside the town that we're still here, even though the beaches are closed, and cottages are buried under feet of snow.

The problem with summer resort towns, they say, is that there is nothing to do in the winter. Penetanguishene is bigger than that, and it's more than a summer resort town. The trouble is, people from Toronto who have cottages here, and those who don't, just do not seem to realize that.

What Winterama does is it attracts people from Toronto and other areas of southern Ontario, and shows them that Penetanguishene is still alive and kicking all

winter, and that it is an ideal spot not only to vacation in the summer, but to visit in the winter, and to live in.

Winterama also gives local service industries, such as restaurants, a boost right in the midst of what surely must be their slow season.

The thousands of people who came in the cars which constantly poured into town Saturday and Sunday, and who lined the street for the Winterama parade, spent money, and that is good for the town and everyone in it.

Maybe some of them will return to participate in winter sports later in the season, and maybe some of them who had never been here before will come back to see what Penetanguishene has to offer in the summer months.

Anything which promotes this town, its businesses and its facilities, must certainly be considered an asset to the town. And Winterama definitely falls into this category.

Snowmobile races could have been safer

Snowmobile racing, like automobile racing or motorcycle racing, is a dangerous sport.

This newspaper has no objection to snowmobile racing; the participants know the risk they take, and they willingly take part because for them the speed, the competition, and the excitement are worth the risk. Protective clothing and head gear minimize the danger to the driver as much as possible. The risk is a calculated one, as it is in any other type of motorized racing.

However, the spectators at the races held this weekend in conjunction with Winterama were not wearing protective clothing, and for the most part were not aware of the dangers involved in watching the races from the corners of the track. Many of those who chose to watch the races from close up were children, many of whom were too young to appreciate the dangers of a flying snowmobile.

The Maple Valley Snowmobile club, which was in charge of running the races, was, to a certain extent, negligent in not seeing to it for most of the weekend that children were kept out of the dangerous areas.

Late Sunday afternoon, after a number of machines went flying over the bank of the curve at the north end of the track, the organizers finally decided to clear the people away from that area, but not before there had been a couple of close calls with

machines nearly striking spectators.

Presumably the club is not accustomed to putting on races for large crowds composed largely of children. In all probability most of the people who attend their regular events know a fair amount about snowmobile racing and the dangers that go with it. But in the case of the races this weekend, the crowd was made up largely of people who did not know very much about racing, and children who did not know very much about danger.

Admittedly the problems faced by the organizers were not few. It would have been difficult if not impossible to erect fences all around the track, such as they have at Mosport, where automobile and snowmobile races are held regularly, to keep unauthorized people at a reasonable distance from the track. And children are difficult to control they have a tendency to climb over fences and ignore warnings.

It is to be hoped, however, that if snowmobile racing is to be a part of next year's Winterama, somewhat more adequate measures are taken to insure that none of the spectators are injured. To any one who watched all the races over the weekend, it must surely have appeared that the only thing which kept a number of people from being carried off the ice on a stretcher was a little luck.

Thanks to the 'other' men in uniform

The members of the Penetanguishene Police Force weren't the only men in blue who were in evidence at the Penetanguishene Winterama last weekend.

Some 10 to 12 members of the St. John Ambulance brigade were on hand both at the town dock where the snowmobile races were being held, and at the Arena, where an Atom hockey tournament was being played.

These guardian angels had their hands full through most of the weekend, tending to the inevitable cuts, scrapes and bruises, and transporting the occasional victim of a more serious mishap to hospital. These men go through intensive training for their jobs, and

they are paid absolutely nothing.

They aren't strangers to the area either. Every time anyone holds a big hockey game, or any event where people may get hurt, they are right there, inconspicuous when not needed, and ready and waiting when they are needed.

Without this dedicated crew of volunteers, it would be extremely difficult to organize anything on the scale of Winterama, and virtually impossible to do it safely.

This newspaper would like to recognize the contribution made by the St. John Ambulance people here and all across the country, and to say thanks.

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 or her opinion on our editorial page should also be willing to sign his name to it.



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Sugar and Spice

We have such a crazy climate in this country that by the time this appears in print some dingbat will have spotted the first crocus peeping its dainty head through the snow.

But right at the moment, any such crocus would have to come from the garden of King Kong.

This winter has been not a little unlike a sort of arctic King Kong — a vast, uncontrollable monster laughing with fiendish glee at the prospect of puny man trying to cope with his whistling, frigid breath, his frosty and fickle fingers, and his extremely bad case of dandruff.

Around these parts we've had 13 to 15 feet of snow, depending on whom you are conversing with. If you are talking to me, you'll learn that we've had 18 feet. My wife would say: "About twelve and a half feet," in that sickening, righteous tone of hers that has made me hurl the hatchet and the butcher knife deep in the 16 feet of snow right behind the kitchen door, to avoid temptation.

Though we have a pretty good running parry-and-thrust on everything from pea soup to politics, from golf to garbage, we just don't fight about the weather. Until this winter. Now it's hammer and tongs almost every day. And I seem to have wound up with the tongs.

I stagger out through the blizzard every morning, brush the snow off the car, scrape the ice off the windshield with my fingernails because she has lost the scraper, and sit there freezing my poorly padded bum for 10 minutes, warming the beast up.

Then I bomb the vehicle out of the driveway, risking my life every morning; because I can't see anything coming, from any direction. I park it on the street.

On the odd occasion when she decides to shop, she minces out to the car, heavily garbed, climbs into a warm wagon, parks behind the supermarket and walks 40 feet to the door. Every time she goes out, it has stopped snowing for one hour, the wind has dropped for one hour, and the sun gleams palely for one hour.

She leaves the car out on the street when she comes home. I clean it off again, buck it through a drift into the driveway, climb through more snow that goes in over my boots, and totter, breathless and forlorn, into the house.

"Why do you make such a fuss?" she queries. "It's been a beautiful winter day." I don't mind her scoffing at my golf game, being able to ski twice as fast and far as I, this winter she's gone too far. One of us has to break: either the weather, or me.

She won't be so dam' smart when she

Oh Canada!

by Bill Smiley

wakes up on the first day of the March break and finds a note pinned to her pillow: "Off to the Canary Isles for 10 days. Hear they're loaded with Scandinavian girls in bikinis or (gasp!) topless. Why don't you go and visit Granddad for a week or so. Love, Fahrenheit Bill." She's a Celsius and it drives me nuts.

But it's not only my wife who has helped, with the aid of this atrocious winter, to depress me. It's the cost.

This is rough reckoning, but close enough. From last November the first, it has cost me, approximately: \$420 for fuel oil; \$120 for driveway plowing; \$50 for the kid next door, snow-shovelling; \$60 for battery boosts, tow trucks and other winter items for cars. That, my friends, is 650 bucks for the privilege of spending the winter in the true north, strong and freezing. Oh, Canada!

You can well say that I didn't need to spend all that. Well, I dang well did. I could have saved a bit on the oil bill by burning the furniture. And I could have saved a bit on the plowing and shovelling if I had been able to quit my job and shovel about four hours a day. But it seems rather a peculiar way to save money. And of course, by now I'd be dead of a heart attack, so where's the percentage?

Tell me, some of my friends who go south every winter. Does it cost more to eat down

there? Less, you say. Does it cost more to drive a car down there? Less, you say. Does it cost more for accommodation? Less, you say, and you add that it can cost \$52 for an ordinary double room in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver.

But don't you get sick of all that fresh orange juice, and those crispy salads twice a day? No, you say.

Don't you feel you are deserting the ship, somewhat, when your country needs you, when it is the duty of every man and woman to put his and/or her shoulder to the car that's stuck in the drift? No, you say.

Have you no thought, no slightest sympathy, for the pensioner who tries to get through his frosted windows, who is scared to venture forth because he might bust his back in a foot-skid, or freeze into a statue on his way to the liquor store? Definitely not, you say.

O.K. O.K. I haven't figured it out yet, but I'll devise some way of some day getting even with all you rotten rich who are loafing around in the sun while I battle with the Old Battleaxe about the windchill factor.

In the meantime, it's the least you could do, somebody, anybody, to ask me down for a long weekend. From about the fifteenth of February to the Ides of March would be just right.

Poetic injustice

rhymes. (It strikes me that anyone with a name like Laurie Lee should be careful who he calls a bad poet.)

Since Betjeman hadn't been called upon to write a poem since 1973 when Princess Anne was married, I suppose everybody thought he should have done better.

I'm sure he tried. I imagine him, toiling away in a chilly candlelit garret trying to control the chattering of his National Health dentures. (On \$119.00 a year, could anyone afford electricity and coal for the grate?)

He rubs his hands, encased in fingerless gloves, together, and ponders rhymes. "Let's see. Queen, Queen, what rhymes with Queen? Mean? Bean? Obscene? Plasticene?"

"Oh dear," says he. "That won't do at all. We'll try Elizabeth." Since Elizabeth is

totally unrhymable-with, he may have toyed with the diminutive Bess, which yields mess, distress, and excess, and is equally uninspiring.

The dear man huddles more closely in his shawl, flings the crumpled sheets of unusable material into the fire, and begins again. "Perhaps," he muses, "a limerick. There once was a princess of Windsor, who...upon my soul, that won't do either."

He may even have considered blank verse, in the style of Walt Whitman or Dylan Thomas. "O Queen, Queen Bee, Be our Queen and we'll all get buzzed on Silver Liz."

He senses, rightly, that Britons, with their fine sense of decency and order, wouldn't put up with such claptrap.

So, with the candle guttering low, and the sack equally terminal in its butt, he does just

what you and I might have done. He sets out 24 rhyming, metered lines which say in a straightforward way, that Queen Elizabeth 11 is wise and good, and an okay lady, thus:

"From the look of dedication
In those eyes profoundly blue
We know her coronation
As a sacrament and true."
It's not bad, and better than the stuff my kids pen for me on Mothers' Day, as:
"My mother likes to cook
And she likes to read a book.
And I'll give her a kiss
Because when she goes away it's her I'll miss."

When you come to think about it, England's royalists aren't so badly off. All things considered, it could be verse.



by Shirley Whittington

Sometimes I amuse myself by thinking of jobs I would not like to have.

I would not like, for instance, to be the inspector the day John Diefenbaker takes a compulsory driving test.

Also, I would not like to be Poet Laureate. The Royal poet surfaces even less frequently than the Canadian groundhog. He's expected to show up with his trousers pressed and a fresh ditty in hand for occasions of overwhelming state importance.

In return for this, he gets \$119.00 a year, which is scarcely enough to keep a fellow in rhyming dictionaries and ball point pens.

In days of yore, the P.L. was also given a butt of sack, but these days he gets \$49.50 instead of the sherry, which leads one to believe that as far as the muse is concerned, cash is quicker than liquor.

You can scarcely call \$119.00 a year, plus sack allowance, a living wage. This explains why England's present Poet Laureate is a septagenarian. Poet Laureate-ship is no job for your average young mainstream poet with expensive habits like eating and buying winter boots for his children.

Still, there's the prestige. Chaucer, Skelton (the dead one, not the Red one) and Spenser were all Poets Laureate. So were Ben Johnson, Dryden, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and John Masefield.

We all heard of these boys, although few of us admit to reading their verse while we're waiting in line at the supermarket.

But poor Sir John Betjeman, who currently carries the Queen's poetic license in his wallet, is under attack for the 24-liner he composed in honour of Her Majesty's Silver Jubilee.

"It's a nice Valentine's Day card poem," sniffed a fellow poet called Laurie Lee, as he scanned the true blue, beautiful/dutiful



The snowmobile is no competition for this bunch

Today a man's car is his castle

car game.

If you remember a previous column I got out from under the Columbia Record Club. Well they have ammunition in their armories I never dreamed of. As a consumer on their 'mug list' I take my hat off to them. Their latest letter left me totally unprepared...it starts.

"The colour was chaste white, still the car glowed like a rare and opulent jewel." Small wonder, the radiator and steering columns were gold plated, so were the controls and levers, the headlights, the door handles, the running board and the bumpers. The rich silk upholstery was piped in leather and edged in gold. The owners crest was studded with precious stones.

It was the stately Pierce-Arrow, specially built in 1930 to the personal specifications of Riza Khan, the Shah of Persia."

How's That for an Attention Grabber

So the Record Club is a dead issue. Enter the Book Club. Well not really books, they are described as "22 magnificent volumes" so they can't just be books.

The 'World of Automobiles' it's called, and the above extract is just one small item. The first one comes free, (the book not the car) then 21 at \$5.95 each, that's around \$150 with P and P.

No, they are not going to get me on this one, I'm not going to weaken, even though it's "the most comprehensive colour collection of all times." No sir, even if "it's a sparkling well, that is always there to refresh you with

the pure theatre of motor sports, the regal paternity of Limousines, Broughams and Phaetons that made automobile history" they don't miss a trick. But I'm not going to weaken.

Meanwhile back in 1977.

Away from the Pierce-Arrow
Saw some footage of the 1977 Van show the other day. You remember Vans, they used to be simple transportation. So we are looking at \$18,000 worth of interior goodies, and special features. Like wall to wall fitted deep shag, matching the dashboard, steering column, glove compartment and radio.

And that's just the cab. The inside is something else. Water beds. Tailored covers, expensive wall hangings, old coach lamps and mini-crystal chandeliers, french provincial telephones in Ivory and Gold. Hot and cold running taps with quad sound, strobe lights and side tables...and that's just the inside.

On the outside is the (by now familiar) teardrop window. The \$1500. paint job with the message pictures ranging from Woodland scenes to far out Science Fiction themes. In glorious rainbow hues. Are you there Riza Khan?

In answer to the question "why". One response was "it gives me something to do" the other was "why not". I like the second one, and why not indeed?

If the Shah of Persia could have a jewelled personal crest, today's van addict can have a technicolor dragon. For gold plated bumper read C.B. radio.

For leather piped, gold edged, silk upholstery, red crimson shag for the stately Pierce-Arrow read G.M.C...and why not? Full Circle

You don't have to be the oil rich magnate to enjoy a 'Different Car' all the customizing shops, the specialist body shops, and the pages of the Canadian Tire catalogue are brimming with ideas to make your car different to the rest. We've all done it, bought the car a present. Whether it's a wheel cover or a compass. I even bought my old pick-up a 97 cent plastic ash tray, with a cheap suction pad that falls off in cold weather, filled with plastic ash.

If you want to move up from '97 to \$50,000, you can buy a replica Stutz Black Hawk Speedster 1928, with power everything and 'V8' engine. I know one man who has a thing going for his 1955 Buick which he brings out each Summer and puts away every Winter.

So nothing has changed, we still love our cars. What else but a romantic attachment could have prompted Emil Jelinek in North Africa, and early Daimler-Benz dealer, to christen the latest model after his favorite daughter Mercedes.

So I'm not interested in cars as you can see. I'm not going into the Book Club and that's that...The first one is free, though now I wonder...

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...



by Ray Baker

There is an old truism that says "man loves best what he spends the most on." Based on that concept, man must love his car the best, when you think of the price of gas, oil, maintenance, license plates and running cost, and I'm not even going to mention insurance.

So we pay for our luxuries. Even simple transportation. I'll get back to that one later. But the man (or woman) with enough cash or credit gets exactly what they love most in the