

CITIZEN COMMENT

Town should give moral support to joint arena study

The idea of a joint arena project for the municipalities of Port McNicoll, Victoria Harbour, Tay and Tiny is indeed a good one.

Although none of the municipalities involved is really in a position to construct its own arena, there is not much doubt that ice time in the area is at a premium, and any ice surface constructed in the peninsula area will be well used.

But, for the moment, Penetanguishene would have little to gain by taking part in any study which might lead to the construction of such an arena, unless of course such a study should happen to recommend that the four municipalities chip in on the Penetanguishene arena floor fund.

The town already has one arena, which should be back in service by some time this winter, and with the new floor, it should last for some time. As well, although no immediate plans have been made, there is a long term plan afoot to build a new arena in the waterfront park area. Space in the park has already been earmarked for such an arena, so it can probably be assumed that,

when the need arises and the time is right, it will be built.

On the other hand, it is obvious that a policy of what might be termed "recreational isolationism" is impractical. The troubles which arose last winter in connection with the loss of the Midland arena, and now with the Penetanguishene arena, have made it abundantly clear that arenas can become a very scarce commodity very quickly under certain circumstances. Any arena built anywhere in the area would certainly be an asset to everyone living in the vicinity.

It is probably inappropriate for the town to jump into the joint study now being started insofar as any financial contribution is necessary. But all moral support possible should be offered to the municipalities which do decide to go in on the scheme. Cooperation between municipalities can only help the area, and additional ice facilities will make more ice time available everywhere, as well as providing a back-up facility if and when the larger municipalities with their own arenas get caught with their plants down. (Ice plants that is).

Queen's Park report

George Taylor M.P.P.

Swiss trains now being used to serve the north

Many of you have probably seen this summer the new sleek blue and yellow passenger trains of the Ontario Northland Railway on the tracks of the riding. If you haven't your curiosity should force you to see them. If you have seen them, here are some questions answered.

In the government's pursuit to provide transportation to the North they purchased 4 used diesel electric four coach trains from the Swiss government. The Ontario Northland Transportation Commission, an agency of the Ontario government, which provides air, bus, telecommunications, marine, rail and tourist services to Ontario's North operates the railway. Finding suitable trains for the Ontario North presented a considerable task since they have to contend with severities in warmth and cold. The diesel European trains became available because the lines on which they were operating were switched to electric trains. The trains were refurbished and certain modifications were made to bring them up to first class operating condition. Qualities of speed, smoothness and comfortably delivering high speed performance under both extreme cold and warm

climate are the characteristics of these trains. They commenced their operations in June of this year and make a stop in Barrie on the run from Toronto. Each train consists of four units, a diesel and a 42 passenger seat open concept coach, a combination diner-salon coach with 32 fully licensed dining seats, full kitchen and a compartment car with nine separate compartments seating 6 people each. These first class coaches are roomy, quiet with picture windows, air-conditioned, public address system, all designed for the comfort of the 146 passengers.

Because of the travelling speed the time has been reduced to the North. The day train goes between Toronto and Kapuskasing.

Four of my fellow M.P.P.'s including George McCague just travelled north on this super train and they confirm the accolades I have given it. For fun, for transportation, or a learning experience take the train ride.

Existing services are constantly being reviewed and up-dated so that the provincial government through its transportation facilities can provide the people of Ontario, particularly those in the more remote areas with safe, fast economical transportation.

Letters to the editor

Metrication in Canada is appalling: reader

Dear Dr. Ryndard:

I am appalled at the forthcoming change of our measures to the metric system. Why after hundreds of years is this country forsaking the successfully proven tried and tested old system which is still used in more established countries than ours such as the United States and Great Britain and the Commonwealth? First of all we still struggle with conversion from Fahrenheit to Celsius, which most of us will never think of solely in Celsius, and which most radio stations still translate in their weather reports. If this does not reveal a general dissatisfaction and unacceptance by the citizens of this country, then I don't know what does? Why are the people of this country forced to swallow measures which complicate their everyday life without at least a referendum from their elected representatives? This is not a democracy. Our people are probably the most apathetic in the world not to voice their objections and protests. Why are we forced to live as if we were a country of Continental Europe, divorced from the roots of our heritage and the mores of our neighbours. I say this country is sick and going to the dogs

if the present government is not brought to their senses by the electorate before it is too late.

For my own edification, I request copies of the debates and legislation in Mansard which prompted this heinous result and other explanation you might be able to give me as to why the Federal Government deemed the conversion to metric so vitally necessary without any of our elected representatives either taking the trouble to provide an explanation to the public or to receive their opinions. Any further information you can give which might justify the reasons for this legislation would be appreciated. I am the eighth generation descended from founders of this country in several provinces and I am concerned for our present apathetic state and even more for our future. To press my point and those of my colleagues, I am sending copies of this missive to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the newspapers in this country to search out support from other concerned citizens. With kind personal regards, I am,

Yours very sincerely,
William Allison Pinkney U.E.



Quiet flows the Wye

Westward Ho Ho, a modern geography lesson

by Shirley Whittington

Travel is, they say, broadening. It must be. After two weeks in Canada's West, I can't fasten any of my top buttons.

I'm bound to say that our vacation on the other side of Canada was an educational experience. I can't help it. I feel guilty if I have a good time anywhere. I've returned, bursting with interesting information which I will now share with you. (If you've been to Vancouver, you may advance directly to the classified ads.)

First, the Rocky Mountains are very pointy and sharp looking. As we flew over them, it occurred to me that this would not be a good place for the plane to fall down.

The prairies, on the other hand, are as flat as a Frisbee - not surprising, since so much of Canada was scooped up to make the Rockies.

I got up on top of one of the Rocky mountains and discovered that it was overrun with little creatures called whistling marmots. The whistling marmot is sort of a musical woodchuck. Since there is nothing much on top of a rocky mountain except more rocks, there is little else for the unfortunate marmot

to do but whistle. There is certainly no word to chuck up there.

Although Vancouver is a cosmopolitan city bustling with very important looking people, it is not the capital of British Columbia. Victoria is.

This is probably a good thing since the pleasant coastal voyage which links Victoria with the rest of North America gives hot-headed politicians a chance to cool off. The fact that the strait is frequently fog bound is of no significance.

Victoria is an interesting city. The sun does indeed set upon the British Empire there, owing to an unfortunate mistake in the placement of a statue of Queen Victoria which stands outside the Provincial Legislature. They stuck her on her pedestal back to front, with the result that the sun goes down on her every single night.

Victoria has no winter to speak of. This is hard to believe since my trusty Atlas shows it to be practically on the same parallel of latitude as Thunder Bay, Ontario, where they have winter-in spades.

The Squire tells me that Victoria's climate is moderated by the Pacific drift, but what

does he know? He also told me that the most beautiful girls in the world lived in Vancouver.

Also in Victoria we were told (snidely, I thought) that Newfoundland is the only Canadian province where the party in power sits on the left and the official opposition sits on the right. This, they said, is because the heating plant is located on the left side of the Newfoundland Legislature building. I will verify this during next year's vacation. I will also find out what silly things they are saying in St. John's about the way they run things in Victoria.

After all these years of wistful Atlas staring, I was surprised to discover that the provinces are not all different colours. Nor are their boundaries marked with heavy lines on the landscape which made it difficult to know when one was sliding out of B.C. and into Alberta, or out of Alberta and into Saskatchewan.

This is probably not important unless you are a rat. Rats are not welcome in Alberta and are in fact, turned back at the borders. A lady from Calgary told me there are no rats

in Alberta at all.

There is however, a rat in British Columbia. We saw him, taking a midnight stroll along an elegant marble esplanade on Vancouver's fashionable Robson Street. Nobody seemed to care, but as I said, Vancouver is a very cosmopolitan city.

Vancouver is very big on whales. They have a couple in the aquarium there that do tricks. They stand on their heads and make interesting noises through their blowholes. It's remarkable what an intelligent creature will do for a pail full of fish.

Vancouverites are especially proud of their baby whale. It's the only one to be born, and to thrive, in captivity.

One of the local radio stations is sponsoring a name-the-baby whale contest. The prize is a trip to other aquaria to see more whales standing on their heads.

I hope you win, since a whale is a rare sight in Ontario. Our entry? There's only one possibility for a baby Beluga - Charles, Prince of Wales.

Is travel broadening? You bet. Take it from a post vacation fathead.

Yarns of the past

by Bill Smiley

I'm engaged in writing a few yarns for Airforce, the official magazine of the RCAF Association. Naturally, this has brought back a lot of memories, some a bit grim, some pretty hilarious.

As the old mind's eye wandered back, something hit me like a cold douche. Not that I've ever taken a cold douche.

Why were we so keen to get killed? In this age of dropouts, draft dodgers and deserters, it seems incredible that thousands of young Canadian males, back in the Forties, were almost frantic to get into the air force, into air crew, and into a quadron, where the chances were excellent they'd be dead within a couple of months.

From the point of view of common sense, reason, logic, it was not any brighter than the Children's Crusade of the Middle Ages.

Why? Certainly we had no death wish. We had no deep urge to imitate ourselves in the breath of the war dragon. We weren't even running to the battlements to protect our homes, our wives and children. Most of us were in school, or just recently out, and didn't have none of them things.

Oh, we knew we had to "Stop the

bawstard Hitler!" as Churchill once told us on an airfield in Normandy. We knew rather vaguely that we were defending democracy and unemployment against the monsters of totalitarianism and full employment, although it was a bit puzzling that totalitarian Russia was on our side.

We knew joining up was the thing to do, that most of our friends were doing it, that a fellow looked pretty fine in a uniform, that the girls were impressed and the hitch-hiking easier.

But why the air force? And why air crew, where the dice were loaded so heavily?

Did we avoid the army because we didn't want to be exposed to the rude and licentious soldiery and get all dirty and grimy in action? Or the navy because we preferred a fiery grave to a watery one?

I just don't know, but most of my friends, and most of their friends, chose the air force, and were dead keen on getting into air crew.

Within a bare few years, most of them were a lot less keen, and many were a lot more dead.

As I recall, it was a real downer for those who failed the tough medical test for air crew. Once chosen, you were filled with despair if you were going for pilot and had to

settle for bomb-aimer, just because you were a little cross-eyed.

Once in training, it was a shattering experience to be "washed out" of air crew merely because you had badly bent up one of His Majesty's aircraft by trying to land at 40 feet up, or had wound up 300 miles off course on a cross-country training flight. It was devastating if you wanted to be a fighter pilot and were shipped off to lumbering old bombers.

I have friends who still bear a deep scar on the psyche because they were made flying instructors and spent the rest of the war in Canada. This despite the fact they were chosen as instructors because they were far better pilots than the rest of us.

This despite the fact that many of the pilots they trained were dead, dead, in no time. None of this was any consolation. They still feel they missed something irrecoverable.

Well I know what they missed. They missed the stupidity of senior officers who didn't know whether they were punched or bored. They missed long, deadly dull periods of training, and short, intense moments of sheer terror.

They missed being shot at, physically, by perfect strangers, and shot down, verbally,

by people on their own side.

They missed the utter blind confusion of the amateurs in charge of the war. Migawd, those idiots lost an entire wing of Typhoons for a full week.

Nobody, least of all Intelligence, had a clue where it was. I air-hitched all over southern England and northern France before I found the blasted thing, all on my own.

Let's see, have I left anything out? Well maybe I have. First I'll take that back about stupid senior officers. There were plenty of those in Canada, too, so you didn't miss them.

Perhaps you missed the joy of climbing out of your aircraft after an operation, lighting a cigarette, and talking a wild blue streak of relief and let-down.

I guess you missed the glory of heading off for a week's leave in a strange country, loaded with lust, a month's pay in your pocket, and the secret sweetness in your head of knowing that nobody would be shooting at you for seven days.

And you did, I must admit, miss the girls. Not all of those fumbings in the blackout were frustrating.

But I still say we were all crazy to volunteer, and even vie to be killed. Must write a paper on that some day.

The Penetanguishene Citizen

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