

CITIZEN COMMENT

Wait for results before requesting new school

The French Language Advisory Committee's motion calling for the construction of a french language high school is a premature move.

The committee has decided not to wait for the results of the co-operative evaluation questionnaire to be tabulated before making what was perhaps an inevitable request, because they feel the results won't be valid. Members are saying the questionnaire did not accomplish what it set out to do before the last forms have even been received.

The questionnaire certainly has flaws, but it will accomplish what it set out to determine concerning the need for another high school.

It asked in plain words if residents of Penetanguishene and area want a french language high school. There can be no mistaking the question- it's posed in simple words, both french and english. Half of those who received the survey returned their response, resulting in an accurate reflection of the wishes of the people.

Committee member Romeo Asselin said the man on the street shouldn't decide whether the area does or doesn't need a french language high school, that professionals should make the decision.

Asselin is wrong. Already too many 'professionals' make decisions affecting our way of life. Here we were given a chance at

giving our opinion en masse. What could be more accurate than the parents and students of the area saying whether there is a need for education in the french language from kindergarten to graduation? It will be the children of parents who answered the questionnaire and students who also filled it in who will populate such a school. If they say they don't want a separate high school we shouldn't force one upon them. It's us who must pay for such a facility.

The committee should have waited until the results of the questionnaire were tabulated before rushing to make such demands. They've been allowed input into the program since the outset but have waited until now to condemn it.

If a large number of questionnaire responses point to the need for a french language high school and the Simcoe County Board of Education appears to ignore this, then FLAC should mount an aggressive protest, not before.

To call for the construction of a new school and the accompanying burden on the taxpayer when PSS offers courses in french and the public has not been allowed to make their feelings known, is not a responsible action.

It only helps fan the flame of conflict between the two cultures, a flame that's hot enough right now.



Don't open until Christmas

Christmas carols capture the season

by Shirley Whittington



At a Christmas party last week, we had a good old-fashioned carol sing. A near-sighted lady beat the piano into submission and everybody stood close and sang the songs that have echoed around the world for many Christmases past.

It was a warm and jolly scene. The snow was pelted down outside, and inside there was a circle of friends, giving voice.

Later, someone said rather stiffly, to me, that it didn't seem right, bawling out the carols that way. The whole scene seemed to my guilt-edged friend, to be impure, unholy and faintly sacrilegious.

This worried me. Once home, I dug out one of my most precious books—The Oxford Book of Carols—and found proof of what I'd hoped all along. Carols are meant to be joyous, genial and simple. In fact, the word "carol" has a dancing origin. "Although joyfulness in the words has sometimes been discarded by those who were professionally afraid of gaiety," said my little red book, "the carol is nearer to the ultimate truth, because it is jolly."

That set my mind at rest. Some of my happiest Christmas memories are strung along the notes of Christmas carols.

I remember a small, pyjama-clad child, who could not come to terms with "Good King Wenceslas" and eventually resigned himself to "Good King Wences lost his socks," to which we gleefully added "on his feet's uneven."

Once we all tried to revive the ancient custom of carolling door-to-door. Alas—it is a custom better suited to warmer climates. Our trumpeter froze up totally. We lost our set of jolly jingle bells in a snowbank.

And we were never really sure where we ought to perform. Standing in front of a lighted window was picturesque, but we kept getting drowned out by snowmobiles, and the people inside had their televisions on anyway, and couldn't hear our feeble, frost-bitten voices.

We tried ringing door bells, and singing on the stoop. This gave our listeners the interesting choice of freezing in the open door while we cantered through seven verses of "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen," or of asking us in, snow boots, wet mitts and all.

Those who asked us in pressed refreshment upon us which destroyed our will to continue on our allegedly merry way.

We had more success in singing in hospitals and nursing homes where it was warm, and we had a captive, and passive audience.

When I was at school, we made quite a ceremony out of carolling. There was a festive dinner, complete with a boar's head, ushered in appropriately—"Caput apri defero!"

After dinner we sang beautiful and obscure carols—"I Sing of a Maiden," "Lullay My Liking," "Masters in the Hall," and "Dives and Lazarus." I cannot hear them today without a twinge of sweet nostalgia.

For years I belonged to a church choir and

preparation for Christmas was a labour of love. To join with a full and joyful congregation in "Oh Come All Ye Faithful," while the candles glow on the altar and the organ peals out the beloved harmonies, is for me, an overwhelming emotional experience.

But, a Christmas carol need not be big and impressive to start the choky feeling in my throat. A child's voice singing "Away in a Manger" can do it too. Or a boy soprano, silencing the notes of "In the Bleak mid-Winter".

The carols of Christmas are at the core of the celebration for me, whether they're sung in the hushed and expectant atmosphere of a candlelit church, or in the merry ambience of a gathering of friends.

One of my favourite carols is jolly indeed, and so old that Shakespeare may well have heard it sung outside his house on a Christmas night. What better way to wish you a Merry Christmas than:

God bless the master of this house
The mistress bless also
And all the little children
That round the table go—
And all your kin and kinsfolk
That dwell both far and near.
I wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy new year.

Letters to the editor

SCAN letter to P.M.

The following is a letter sent to the Right Honourable Pierre Trudeau, from Midland lawyer and SCAN spokesman John Gorman, on the issue of the demolition of the Hog Bay trestle.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Your predecessor, the Right Honourable John A. MacDonald, made our country what it is today with his "National Policy" of 1878, the most important part of which was the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway from sea to sea. According to A.J. Philips, Executive Director of Heritage Canada, no where is there a site that commemorates this vital part of our Heritage.

At present Canadians are talking separation. The reason: we do not remember our past. Therefore we have no future. In Port McNicoll, Ontario, the C.P.R. have commenced the demolition of the longest wooden trestle in North America, without the opportunity of looking at alternative

development plans for this trestle. It has been abandoned by C.P.R. for seven years and will be demolished completely within the next eight weeks unless you use your political influence to halt the demolition now.

I am a Canadian and I love this country. I have personally spoken with the leaders of the three provincial parties in Ontario, Robert Welch, The Minister of Culture and Recreation, and countless other Federal and Provincial Members of Parliament and Civil Servants, all to no avail. Most care, but will do nothing.

I appeal to you to use whatever means available to halt the demolition so we can possibly develop this site as a National Museum, to our forefathers who built the country, we have today. Then, maybe we will have a future as a nation our children can love and remember.

Yours very truly,
Society for Citizens Advocacy Now
John P. Gorman

Queen's Park report

George Taylor M.P.P.

Searching for new energy

In today's energy conscious world we are naturally looking to alternative means to make use of existing energy sources. Would you eat food produced from the heat of a nuclear reactor? We might, and so might future generations if a study presently being carried out by the Provincial Government is accepted.

In nuclear production of electrical power an enormous amount of heat is produced as a by-product and usually water is used to cool the heat produced. Now the water is taken from a source, usually a lake, and after absorbing the heat it is then returned to the lake. Some European countries now take full advantage of the reject heat created by the electrical power generating process. I also would like to see maximum use made of this energy potential in Ontario where it is economic. The heated water will be used for some other purpose before it is returned to the lake. Therefore, a study committee was established by the Ontario Government earlier this year to consider the potential uses of reject heat from the Bruce Nuclear Power Development.

The study is directly concerned with establishing the conditions under which suitable greenhouse heating and fish rearing facilities could be developed by using reject heat from the nuclear power generating plant.

The important aspects of the study are to examine the economic and technical feasibility as well as to assess the commercial potential in order to promote interest by the private sector in developing the necessary facilities. The Bruce project, which was first launched by the Government last May, at the suggestion and with the support of local communities involved, has

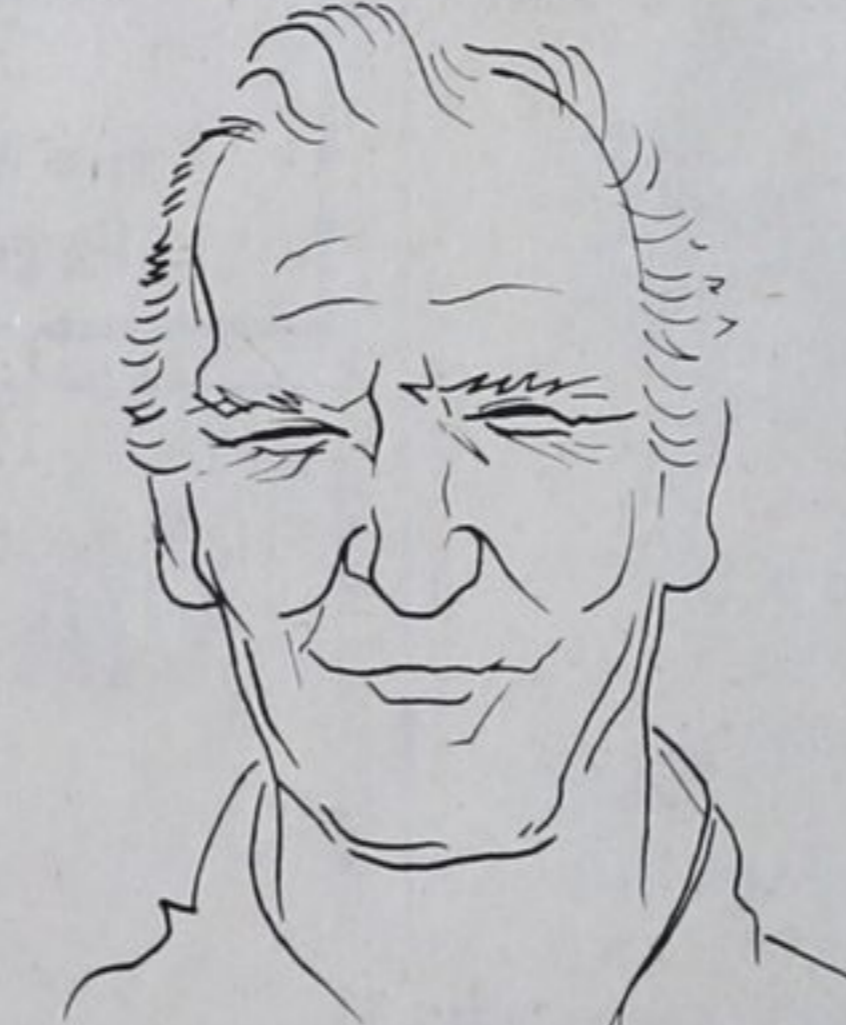
already created wide interest across the Province as to where it might be applicable in other generating projects. There are two future projects, one at Darlington and the other at Atikokan Generating Station, the one is presently under construction and the other planned for the future. Although Atikokan is fuelled by coal and not a nuclear-fired power plant, it would be possible to develop a similar heat conversion process.

The nuclear power process, although very complicated, the use of the reject heat is not so complicated. The project at Bruce involves using warm water from what are referred to as the moderator cooling water system of the nuclear reactors, which otherwise would be rejected back into the lake, and using it to heat greenhouses and aquatic fish breeding facilities. In this way, oil could be conserved and at the same time, food production increased and employment opportunities increased, so that our fast-dwindling supplies of energy and food producing land would be substituted by artificial areas.

The study, although not entirely original, will be one that is again developed by the potential of the Government and the private sector cooperating. The study will not ignore but will also identify the regulatory and environmental consideration which would have to be taken into account if the decision is made to proceed with the project.

I hope that the study suggests that the project is feasible, and it is hoped that the private sector will participate in the design, construction and ownership, financing and operating of the facilities. It is hoped that the study will be completed shortly and that the project will get underway if the study proves positive.

by Bill Smiley



We got an early Christmas present at our place this year. My daughter, who is training to be a teacher, was heading into a hairy week of practice teaching real kids in a real school. My wife, in a sudden burst of compassion and stupidity, volunteered to take The Boys for a week.

At time of writing, we've had them for three days. And nights. It hasn't seemed an hour more than three years.

My old lady has aged a decade, hasn't spoken a civil word to me for 48 hours, and is

threatening to move into a hotel and leave me stuck with the pair.

This morning, in a desperate effort to obtain a little peace, she got up at six o'clock and went downstairs to make a cup of tea and read for a few minutes, in blissful solitude. She'd just settled in a chair when she heard this horrible, familiar sound: the thump! thump! of tiny feet descending the stairs.

It was No. 2 son, armed with a big grin, a loaded diaper and a hearty appetite for breakfast. Her groan awoke me, all the way upstairs, where I was trying to snatch 40 winks, after sleeping, or attempting to, with No. 1 son. He sleeps crossways, upside down, or kitty-corner, and kicks the clothes off both of us every five minutes. It's not that they are bad boys. It's just that there are two of them. Either, by himself, is a delight to have for a visit. But when they're together, it's like a onearmed man trying to cope with a cage of monkeys.

We brought two large boxes of their favorite toys and teddy bears and puppets. They can litter two floors of the house with these in two minutes, then ignore them while you pick them all up.

It's much more fun getting into Gran's innumerable cupboards and drawers and nooks and crannies, and dragging out everything that is not nailed down or cemented over.

On my desk, as I write, are: one baby's bottle, one large strainer from the kitchen, one fire iron, and our only flashlight, carefully taken apart. On the floor behind me is my chess set, 80 spools of Gran's thread,

mainly unwound, and the baby's potty chair, completely virgin.

I am away behind with my mail, and I haven't read a paper since The Boys arrived. Trouble is, it takes one of us to police them, while the other is frantically trying to get something essential done, like ironing a shirt or cooking some grub.

It isn't that they fight a lot. They fight all the time. The older one is very intelligent and very curious. He'll find something like the short step ladder, climb it, and see how hard he can jump on the floor. The younger one tries to emulate him, gets in the way, gets a kick in the face from big brother, squeals in mingled rage and pain, bites big brother on the calf, and they're into it.

Last night, after dinner, they wanted their mitts on. One of us wearily struggled them on, anything for peace, and the two immediately started boxing. For real. The little guy would absorb a punch on the ear, go down laughing, struggle up, rush his brother, and overwhelm him with a flurry of punches. He's two years younger, but just as strong and twice as pugnacious.

This sort of thing is hell for a mild, middle-aged couple who believe that little children should be kind and sweet and generous with each other.

I was almost drowned the other night when I tried to give them both a bath at the same time. I used to bath them singly when they were tiny, and it was a lovely experience, being so gentle and careful that the little heads didn't get a bump, or the eyes get soap in them.

The ghost of columns past is risen

by Ray Baker

One of the editors reminded me the other day that a photograph occupied the space my column used to fill. We agreed it was an improvement. But too late, my fingers itched, the ribbon was trembling with anticipation and adrenalin coursed through the hydro outlet to the typewriter keyboard.

Besides, where else could I send a Christmas card to thousands of people courtesy of the Markle chain, at no charge, other than blood sweat and tears? So here is an instant column-recap-Christmas-Happy New Year rolled into one.

I'm pleased to see Shirley and Bill still in there, when I was a regular there was talk of a cartoon or caricature instead of the photo on the column. I don't know what the editor will use on this one, if it ever gets past him, but congrats to the artist, Mr. Niblock.

Christmas Past

The good old days are whatever you make them. For today's teenagers it may be the wide-eyed innocence of yesteryear through a firm belief in Santa Claus, happy days. For parents, the sheer joy of seeing Christmas

through the eyes of their children is all the reward they could ever have asked. For the newly wed or those with a newborn child, Christmas past is another world, as they look ahead to a lifetime of Christmases together as a new family unit.

For the old folks it's nostalgia, it's a "do you remember" time as the old man with the scythe and hourglass fades out and the infant 1978 is being born. So each of us in our own way remembers Christmas past. It's a feeling, not just a calendar date of December 25th.

Christmas Present

And it's goodwill towards men, or to use an old pun, "man embraces woman" otherwise the phrase would go "Goodwill towards humanity".

Our thoughts should go out to the people who would like to spend Christmas at home but can't. The policeman, doctors, nurses and staff at the hospitals, P.U.C. and Hydro workers, taxi drivers. Their Christmas day is spent working that we may enjoy the services and protections we don't normally

think about. The new CHAY-FM station and our own local station are working. Why only the other day a weatherman reminded me at 7 a.m. that the temperature in Tampa was 24C. So I staggered out to drop the garbage, amidst snow and ice. Thanks, I needed that. Standing freezing and wondering what Christmas would be like on a sun drenched beach. Ah well...

The Salvation Army, on windswept plazas doing their thing for the needy. God Bless em, give till it hurts. At my own church Rev. Al Farthing is working Christmas day for his flock (I'm one of the black sheep).

And let's not forget Mom, who probably works harder than on the other days of the year.

Christmas Yet To Come

Every year we complain about inflation then we inflate ourselves with turkey and Christmas pud, because Christmas is a feeling—goodwill look at the coming year. Charles Dickens classic 'A Christmas Carol' shows that Christmas yet to come has alternate futures, depending on ourselves. Moreland Lynn, Vince Moreau, and the

Reeves of the four adjacent municipalities are plugging for more business and industry for our area. Merry Christmas gentlemen.. and keep pushing.

For the families with less money in the kitty this year and maybe next year, who keeps the spirit of Christmas alive for the kids and family, in these times of adversity. Mom that's who. So o.k. all you gentle readers give her a big sloppy kiss, right now. And say thanks. Hopefully it will keep her going until better days.

The space that the photograph now occupies normally has just about gone, along with 1977, and there is so much more to write, but let me close as I have done for the last three 'year ends', to you and yours, from me and mine. A very Merry Christmas and a more prosperous New Year. I cannot improve on the closing line of Tiny Tim in Dickens 'A Christmas Carol': "God Bless Us, Everyone".

Ray Baker is a Manager at RCA's Midland plant and a freelance writer for the Markle Community Newspaper chain (once a year)



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Publisher
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Member of Audit Bureau of Circulations
Member of the Ontario
Weekly Newspaper Association

Subscription Rates: Home Delivery: 20c Weekly,
\$10.40 Year

Mail Subscription \$9.50 yearly in Canada
\$24.00 USA or foreign

Audit Bureau of Circulations regulations
require that mail subscriptions
be paid in advance
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