

## Tougher laws needed for drinking drivers

The drinking driver is a problem all year, however the consequences of his actions seem all the more insufferable during the holiday season.

Every Christmas a number of festivities are ruined by the death of a family member because of impaired drivers. The odds are greater around this time of year that highway deaths attributed to the drinking driver will increase because we're taught, almost from childhood, that alcohol goes hand in hand with a good time at Christmas.

What we're not taught is that alcohol doesn't go hand in hand with driving an automobile.

Again this Christmas holiday the impaired driver was responsible for many of the fatal and near fatal accidents in Ontario, as is the case during the rest of the year. However the court system continues to let them off relatively easy.

It took years of coaxing and study for the provincial government to pass legislation lowering the speed limit on highways and making the use of seat belts mandatory. It took years, despite proof that both moves would help save lives.

The legislation is paying dividends as the fatality rate on Ontario's roads has dropped significantly. Drivers, who in the past were just too plain lazy to buckle up, have taken up the simple habit of fastening their seat belt before heading to the corner for cigarettes. The result has saved lives.

Nobody has to inform the government of the damage caused by the impaired driver.

And yet despite numerous moves to make the penalty more severe, the government has refused to enact legislation to change what has proven to be a toothless deterrent.

One needs only to visit Penetanguishene Provincial Court on an average day to be made aware of the number of impaired driving charges laid. Over half of the court's time is spent dealing with the drinking driver, and many of the accused are up for the second time.

It's obvious something must be done. It may be sufficient to install breathalyzer machines at drinking establishments or equip automobiles with a mechanism to test the drivers' sobriety before allowing the car to start but chances are the road-side breathalyzers would become nothing more than novelties and the in-car units too expensive to be feasible.

The immediate answer is, as Judge Montgomery regularly says in Penetanguishene court when sentencing the many impaired drivers "to make the gamble of drinking and driving too great to ignore."

To accomplish this the penalty must be increased. It's obvious the standard small fine and three month licence suspension for first-time offenders is not stopping them from returning to court a second time. The government should seriously examine instituting lengthy suspensions and even jail terms for first time offenders. This would complement the seat belt law in making Ontario highways a safer place to drive - and help clear the courtrooms of the multitude of impaired driving charges.

### Queen's Park report

George Taylor M.P.P.

## Major policy changes in 1977 at Queen's Park

The Provincial Legislature has just completed its first session which by previous standards has been highly productive. Personally I planned, acted, and participated on your behalf as best I could for the first session of the Thirty-first Parliament of Ontario was prorogued by Lieutenant Governor Pauline McGibbon on Friday, the 16th day of December 1977, and will not meet again until approximately mid February. About 60 pieces of legislation were approved. The new laws covered a wide field from changes in the municipal election date to a ban on high priced, income tax discounting.

Some of the tasks the Government does has a greater significance for us and the Country. The Ontario Government sponsored a Conference on Canadian Destiny to promote dialogue among citizens about the future of our Canada. It bears emphasizing that it is up to Ontarians, as it is to all Canadians, to become actively involved in the challenge that faces all of us for our Country.

The people in Ontario continued to be plagued by serious problems of unemployment and inflation throughout the uncertain economic climate of another year. It remains, however, that we must seek a healthier, long term solution to our problems. In the meantime continued restraint on government expenditures combined with a stronger more productive private sector will lead to some success.

Some major pieces of legislation and policy changes of the Provincial Government this past session have been as follows: A Provincial Consumer Information Centre will open early in the new year to help consumers across Ontario by making information more accessible to them; an amendment to the Farm Products Payment Act will encourage the establishment of funds by farm commodity groups to protect producers in cases of bankruptcy in the agricultural community.

Further legislation will provide a means of mobilizing new sources of risk capital for small businesses and special tax incentives for investors in debenture investment corporations; Responsibility for the administration of all services for children with special needs was transferred to a single ministry, being the Ministry of Community and Social Services; Services in French for French speaking Ontarians were expanded; The Municipal Elections Act has been ex-

tensively revised. Among the changes, municipal polling day will in future be on the second Monday in November; New policy initiative by the Ministry of Correctional Services for a Community Work Order Program was devised whereby petty offenders who are not considered a threat to society will work on projects and carry out needed services in the community; Other legislation changed restrictions on the size of trucks allowed on highways and banned the use of radar detection devices in cars. Premier William Davis announced that he will bring in the Spring legislation on drinking to increase the legal drinking age for which I have asked many of readers to comment upon.

There are two other major pieces of government legislation—one on Family Law Reform and the other the Omnibus Package on Occupational Health and Safety are to be studied during the recess to be brought on again in the Spring session.

Mass job reductions in Sudbury by Inco Limited and Falconbridge Nickel Mines Limited produced a Select Committee which is to study the problem during the recess and report back to the Legislature.

With the standing in the Legislature of 125 seats, being Progressive Conservative 58, Liberals 34 and N.D.P. 33, a strong spirit of co-operation was prevalent during the Fall sittings just past compared to the earlier sittings which I was involved in the summer. In addition, the New Democratic Speaker, Jack Stokes, angered some members with his strict interpretation of the rules, however, I was very pleased to see his firm hand bring some order to the Legislative House.

The work load of this session in my opinion has been extensive with some 60 Government Bills being passed and receiving Royal Assent during what was considered a relatively short working sitting. I was pleased to work on your behalf and I believe that this Province will see success in the future. We have a strong vibrant work force—we have the resources—we have talented people with determination to work hard, long work, work diligently for themselves—their families and their community.

There is a future for us, a positive future, a strong happy successful future. People before us have met challenges. We will meet our challenges and overcome them. We are strong, innovative, industrious people. If you work on your behalf—I will work for you to achieve the opportunities for ourselves, our families, loved ones and community.



Stalactites in the making

## Letter writing-an art we may lose

by Shirley Whittington



A Vancouver postal carrier interviewed in a national magazine said ruefully that people rarely write letters any more. Most first class mail, he said, is "business stuff - bills, accounts, statements and government cheques."

He's right. Aside from those annual reports that some people enclose in their Christmas cards, how long is it since you've had a nice, newsy letter?

There are a lot of reasons why the art of personal letter writing is declining. There's no use writing to Aunt Milly to tell her not to come for her annual visit because the septic tank has backed up. The post office is more bungled up than your septic tank will ever be. And your plumbing will be clear and running long before your letter will be.

Anyway, if you must send a message by mail, there's no need to chew the end of your pencil wondering how to say it. You can now buy illustrated greeting cards with messages that cover almost every situation except why the payment on the car is late.

Thinking of you, thank you for the party, wish you were here, I love you - for half a buck you can be as eloquent as anything, and you don't even have to get out your thesaurus.

Most people regard letter writing as a chore. This is because that is the way it was taught to us in school. In the junior grades, we printed letters to the caretaker thanking him for his careful brooming. Later we penned responses to mythical situations set out in our English composition texts:

"Pretend that you have just spent two delightful weeks with your Aunt Jean and your Uncle Horace on their turkey ranch in Upper Nomenclature. Write her a letter of thanks. Watch your spelling. Write neatly. Do not use 'I' to begin the first sentence." I never understood this constraint against

beginning a letter with "I". Our letters did take peculiar opening turns, like "Dear Aunt Jean and Uncle Horace: The two weeks of visiting at your delightful turkey ranch were very much enjoyed by me."

Incorrect spelling? Clumsy erasures? Inadequate margins? We wrote the blessed things again and again, until we got them right.

Learning to write business letters was even more demanding. We had to apply for mythical jobs, and we still couldn't open with "I", but we had to include in the first sentence some indication of how we heard about the job opening. This led us into verbal labyrinths like: "Your advertisement in the May thirteenth 1947 issue of the Indecent Expositor was interestingly read by me."

People these days seem to lavish their letter writing skills on the editors of magazines and newspapers. A man was once introduced to me as simply, "Billy Bedammed, who once had a letter published in Time Magazine."

And yet, years ago, letters were so lovingly written, that many of them have survived as literature. William Cowper once signed off a lengthy and graceful letter with: "Be pleased to remember us to the young ladies and to all under your roof and elsewhere who are mindful of us. Believe me, your affectionate W.C."

Which is a far cry from "Say Hi to the gang for me."

Lord Chesterfield's stuffy letters to his son remain as models of excellence. "Dear Boy," wrote the venerable Lord. "There is nothing as delicate as your moral character, and nothing in which it is in your interest to preserve pure."

Which is a far cry from "Keep your nose clean, kid."

When Thomas Moore visited Niagara Falls in 1904, he wrote his mother, "My whole heart and soul ascended toward the divinity in a swell of devout admiration which I never before experienced."

Which is a far cry from "Dear Mum: The falls is nice."

Percy Shelley once wrote to Mary Wollencraft: "How are you? Write—especially about your health, and how your spirits are..."

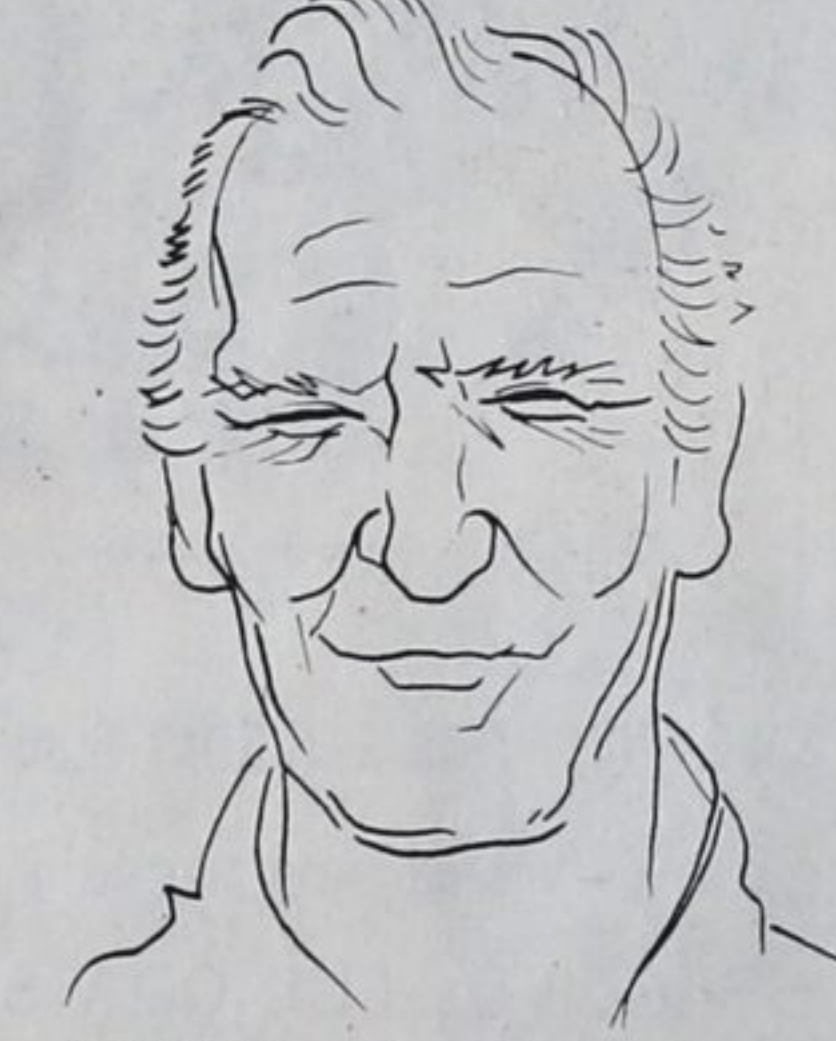
Which is a far cry from, "How are you? O.K. I hope."

Maybe graceful letters, like spats, are out of style. Yet George Bernard Shaw once answered those who scoffed that letters were only scraps of paper, this way: "Remember that only on paper has humanity achieved glory, beauty, truth, knowledge, virtue and abiding love."

Looking for a little glory and abiding love? Write a letter to a friend today. Just remember. Don't start with "I".

## The RCMP scandal has been overblown

by Bill Smiley



CANADA is split right down the middle these days. And I don't mean the Quebec thing. It's the Mounties.

On the one hand, we have people screaming that the cops with the red coats are a bunch of scoundrels. On the other we have an equally vociferous group defending their every law-breaking deed.

I agree with both sides, for a change. I hate the thought of living in a country where my phone can be tapped, my mail opened, and my property broken into by a secret police.

But I think people who believe that any police force, in any country, that can combat terrorists, kidnapers and hijackers

without breaking the red tape of the law occasionally, are extremely naive.

Every so-called civilized nation in the world has its secret police, as any spy story reader can tell you. The only difference lies in their etiquette, and the degree of deviousness and ruthlessness employed.

They run all the way from the bumbling British M.I.5 through the slippery American C.I.A. and the sharp French Surete to the Rugged Russian K.G.B. and the brutal, simplistic sadists of some South American countries.

Among the secret police of the world, I imagine the RCMP are probably ranked about 48th, coming just after Iceland and New Zealand. They simply are not ept, devious or ruthless enough to stand any higher.

Despite all the thundering fulminations of the hot air artists in Parliament, the idea of the Mounties as a secret lurking terror in this country, threatening the civil liberties of all of us, is almost hilarious.

They haven't enough money, men or brains at the top to be anything more than an irritant. They are probably outnumbered by members of the Opposition looking for publicity, dissident former Mounties who have quit the Force because they had to get their hair cut, and smart journalists who seem to have no trouble turning up the redcoats' latest caper whenever they feel like it.

It's true they have been accused of all sorts of dreadful things, most of them illegal. They have tapped phones and planted bugs. As do industrial spies and the Mafia and probably a lot of other organizations we don't know about.

They have opened private mail. I'd like to know how they go about this, unless they stand by a post-box and snatch the mail from your hand as you're about to drop it in. Otherwise, they could wait three weeks to get their hands on a likely letter, the way our postal service works.

They have committed arson, so they say. So have a lot of merchants, but the latter call it having a fire sale.

Burglary. They stole dynamite, go the charges. No pun intended. Not a bad idea, really, when the dynamite belongs to some bad guys who are known, with good reason, to be about to blow up something they should not with it.

They have withheld, deliberately, information from the politicians who are supposed to be keeping an eye on them. So what? If they told the politicians everything they were going to do, the latter would either try to grab some votes by stopping it, or try to grab some votes by taking credit for the act, if it worked.

This is some crazy country, when it comes to secret service work. Remember that poor Russian spy who tried to turn himself over, with a load of documents, to Mackenzie King, back in the cold war days? He was told to go peddle his wares elsewhere, and the poor guy walked the streets in winter, looking for someone to defect to. Somebody finally took him off the streets, and he uncovered a huge Russian spy ring in Canada.

Then we had the massive overkill when a two-bit outfit in Quebec, the FLQ, pulled a couple of kidnappings. What a shemzzle! Hundreds of ordinary citizens were arrested with nary a habeas or a corpus, the army was called in, and the kidnapers made monkeys

of the mounties and the Montreal gendarmes. After strangling one of the victims and turning the other loose, the hoods were escorted by police to Montreal airport and flown, free, to Cuba. And thus Canada's police forces, with incredible ineptitude, announced to the whole world that the way to deal with terrorists is to buy them off. It's been going on ever since.

Sorry, but I can't get all worked up about the RCMP, and its alleged trespasses. It's a great stuff for the Opposition, but it's more like Gilbert and Sullivan than the Gestapo.

That doesn't mean I'm not aware of the potential gravity of the situation. Sometimes I hear a soft click just after I've picked up the phone. Maybe it's the Mounties. But most likely it's my wife, on the upstairs telephone, trying to catch me making a poker date when she's going to be out to sewing class. (I usually let the other guy talk, put down the receiver carefully, race upstairs and catch her in the act.)

And when I took my grandboys to see Santa Claus at the big department store, I warned them, "Don't say a word to that guy in the red coat with the beard, even if he asks what you want for Christmas."

He probably has a dossier on me. When I was 17 I wanted to go and fight in the civil war in Spain. Years later, 20 years before anyone else in this country, I urged editorially that Canada recognize Red China. I once inadvertently voted NDP. And you know what those add up to.

"He's a RED!" as they'd have said 30 years ago. Today the Mounties probably have me down as a "potentially delinquent liberal with leftist tendencies," in a file marked TOP SECRET.

## Let's demand better weather conditions

by Ray Baker

Its the old story, everybody complains about the weather, but nobody does anything about it. Until now. My understanding is that around 350 odd meteorologists or whatever, went on strike for better conditions. In my abysmal ignorance of these matters I can only hope that they are on strike for better weather conditions.

And about time, too. I don't like mail strikes, and the police strikes in New York where the villains had an 'open sesame' to all the lovely loot in the classy department stores. Or again in Montreal when the boys in blue went out, leaving the brinks armoured cars up for grabs. I would have supported a walk out in 'the good old days' with nine year old boys and girls working twelve hour shifts in the damp darkness of a Yorkshire coal mine, or seventy two hour weeks in the 'dark satanic mills'.

The chances are I would have finished up on the treadmill, and my descendants would

now be speaking with a marked Australian accent. However, I must not get serious. I did a serious column last year, and enough is enough.

I wish to go on record as supporting this strike for better weather conditions. We all should. Here are some suggestions for them.

1. Light rain for two hours. 3 a.m. to 5 a.m. each day on Tiny, Tay, The Harbour and Port, and that part of Penetanguishene that falls to the East side of West street, next to Austria Printers.

2. The rest of the area, and Midland (except the annexed land on Heritage Drive) no rain, no drizzle, no intermittent showers.

3. A glorious sunrise each day. No clouds. Starting with deep orange-red through yellow to white.

4. Mid 20c all the year, with the exception of Thanksgiving and Christmas. Thanksgiving to be a heavy rain followed by sunshine. As the Earth steams and the greenery dries we can smell the goodness of the Earth. For Christmas a light dry snowfall at 2 p.m. (1 p.m. Eastern Standard Time) for thirty six

hours. The overflow going to the ski-resorts. Seven random days of heavy snow falling directly on the schools so the pupils and staff get their regular time off.

So Far So Good

It would affect the travel agents. But sunlight, with C.K.M.P. and the P.M.C.L. can then package a deal to the rain forests of Ecuador. Or the slopes of Kilimanjaro to escape the eternal sunshine. Not having weathermen in Ecuador they are stuck with the rain forests. They would visit us to see our three (at least) crops a year.

A Federal law discriminating against the Indians would be enacted. No tribal rain dances to take place, as this would upset the balance of the weathermans nature. International power politics would be involved as the Russians are already working on the weather as a weapon.

By seeding the clouds, a permanent Monsoon season can be induced in South East Asia. Boggling down all troops. Blowing the clouds away from the Sino-Russian border will give you an instant dessert. Wind power

suitably harnessed will create a tidal wave to make the Poseidon Adventure look like a drop in the bucket. So the striking weathermen must make it a global thing. From the Eskimos to the Aboriginal. From Perkinsfield to Patagonia. Or it won't work.

The Other Side Of The Rainbow

However, if I've been misled and all they want is better working conditions, no way. To lounge in air-conditioned comfort and tell us its going to be hot enough to fry an egg on the lawn, or recline in central heating and discuss a windchill factor of 40 below. No sir. Back to the Farmers Almanac, which is more reliable, or Grandpa's left kneecap which is more consistent.

And would one of them please explain something which has bugged me since an (alleged) forecast last fall, stating we could expect "either intermittent precipitation or occasional rain" how's that for a choice, weather we like it or not.

Ray Baker is a Manager at RCA's Midland Plant and a freelance writer for the Markle Community Newspaper chain (sometimes).

**The Penetanguishene Citizen**

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Member of Audit Bureau of Circulations  
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Weekly Newspaper Association

Subscription Rates: Home Delivery: 20c Weekly,  
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