

# CITIZEN COMMENT

## Downtown renewal well worth price

Commendations to Mayor Moreau and Council this week for recognizing and acting upon a potentially dangerous situation regarding the Main Street in Penetanguishene.

At Monday night's meeting, the Mayor introduced a proposal to form a task force to look into the area of downtown revitalization. And council had the foresight to agree with the mayor about the seriousness of the situation.

Towns and cities all over the province—and the country—are realizing the importance of their downtown areas, and taking action to keep their business districts alive and well.

In some cases, towns have reacted too late—or not at all, and most of these have paid the price. An example that comes to mind is the town of Hespeler.

Hespeler's merchants defeated a downtown revitalization move about a year and a half ago. Today, the business section of that town has fallen apart. Many merchants have moved out of the area to the security of shopping malls, and the economic situation has reached an all-time low.

Penetanguishene's move to revamp its

main street is necessary, both for the town's merchants, and for the other residents.

As one council member pointed out, a revitalization of the main street should bring in more businesses, and increase the production of the businesses that are there now. Eventually this economic boom may even lower residential taxes—though that would seem a far-fetched notion at this time.

The most important thing in any project such as this one, is the input received from the public. There has been a suggestion that when the four-member task force is formed, it should hold regular public meetings—possibly in the Council Chambers.

This in itself proves that Mayor Moreau and Council are concerned about public opinion regarding the downtown section. All that remains is for the public to show they are indeed interested. This can be done very easily. The Citizen will be happy to print any letters containing opinions about the revitalization of main street.

The main street of any town is vital to that town's identity—to neglect it would be a sad thing indeed.

If you ever doubt that, visit Hespeler.

## Snowmobile attack a 'weird' incident

Ever heard of someone being attacked by a runaway snowmobile? I hadn't—until it happened to me.

The incident—one of the weirdest I've ever heard of—happened on Champlain Road. When I saw the bright yellow of a Skidoo sailing over a snowbank up the road, it didn't seem unusual. That is until the monster headed directly for the car I was seated in.

At the time all I could think of was the damage the speeding machine would inflict on the green Datsun. By some twist of fate, the rogue snowmobile pulled a quick right just in front of the car, headed up a snowbank, and took off down the road—gaining speed all the time.

After we were sure we were safe from the onslaught, we watched the progress of the adventurous machine. Fortunately for the owners, no one was in the vicinity, on foot or driving.

Probably for lack of other prey, the machine ended up in someone's garage.

Unfortunately the garage door wasn't open at the time. Looking at the crumpled aluminum that had been the door, I couldn't help but smile. The machine didn't kill anyone. Possibly me.

At any rate, that was my first experience as editor of the Citizen. I only hope the other multitude of snowmobilers control their machines better than this one did.

Since I've already been introduced on the front page, there's no reason to say much more.

Suffice to say that I've just graduated from College, and I'm trying to adjust quickly to the working world. Also, I've never spent time in this part of Ontario in winter, as evidenced by the fact that I came here with no snow tires on my car. That's city folk for you.

I do appreciate the cooperation I've received thus far, and I hope to meet as many people as possible during my stay in Penetanguishene.



Across the bay

## Every name tells a unique story

by Shirley Whittington



While we are but tiny red-faced infants, our parents make a decision that colours all our days.

They name us.

One hopes that a euphonious marriage of syllables, leavened with good taste and dignity, will prevail. But rich uncles, passing infatuations, longings for immortality, or desperate attempts at cuteness often get in

the way. Thus, some grown up people are unfairly burdened with unhandy handles.

Still one must choose something in order to avoid mix-ups between the baby and a bundle of dirty laundry. Indeed, the government nudged us into a prompt decision where our daughter was concerned. We dithered around with Martha and Mary, Kathryn and Catherine, until we were given the printed application for family allowance payments. We didn't feel right about listing her as "Whittington, number three, female," so we settled for something simple and short and so far she hasn't complained.

I wonder, though, how Chastity and Elijah Blue will feel about their names when they reach the age of reason. These are the children of the owner of the most over-exposed navel in show business. A long haired singer called Cher.

"Cher" itself is interesting. Does it mean beloved? Expensive? Neither. Cher fits the tongue and the theatre marquee more easily than Cherilyn Lapierre Sarkisian—which is how she started out in life.

On and off, Cher was Cher Bono and Cher Allman, and along the way she had two children which she named for an old-fashioned virtue, and a colourful prophet. Chastity is a fairly easy name for a nine-

year-old to live up to, but she may have trouble when she's a freshman at college.

Meanwhile, her little brother is going to have to get used to people snapping at him: "Never mind the comedy. Just give me your name."

The Squire has more than a passing interest in names. Small wonder. With a name like Dick Whittington, he's been the subject of many a double-take at hotel reception desks.

He also has the largest collection of children's story books of any grown man I know. People keep giving him copies of Dick Whittington and His Cat and each giver thinks he was the first to think of it.

Lately, Shirley has become a difficult name. Every time a script writer wishes to portray a dingbat with a cream puff brain, he dubs her Shirley. (Or Shoiley).

In fact, Shirley was a man's name until Charlotte Bronte wrote a book about a girl whose parents wanted a boy. The boy's name was to be Shirley, and Shirley it was, even though the issue was female.

Some names are so perfectly suited to the bearer that they are too good to be true. Otto Lang is Minister of, what else, transport. A portfolio that was once held provincially by a man called John Rhodes.

The Squire knows a stamp collector called Christian L. Dull, and it's obvious why that man never pursued a career as a night-club comic.

Well, if you don't like what your parents did to you on christening day, you can change your name, and people do.

To read the published notices of such name changes is to wonder about the reasons for the change.

What kind of wild pugilistic visions possessed the parents of Rocky John Frederick, or were they stoned when they named him? At any rate, he changed his name to Mark John Frederick.

And what of Gus James Hewitt, who disgusted himself to become simply James Hewitt?

The most fascinating name change of all is that made by Alexandre Charles-Louis Du Ville. He didn't just change his name. He completely renovated and redecored it to: Ronald Alexander Charles Louis Raymond Joseph Cyr-du-Ville, and that assures him of a whole paragraph on the voters' list.

What's in a name? Plenty.

Ask yourself who you'd rather have a blind date with—Gus, or Ronald Alexander Charles Louis Raymond Joseph Cyr-du-Ville.

Queen's Park report

George Taylor M.P.P.

## OHRP helps people with home improvement

In September, 1974, the Ontario Government through the Ministry of Housing established the Ontario Home Renewal Program (OHRP) to assist owner-occupants repair or improve their houses. OHRP enables homeowners whose adjusted family income is \$12,500 or less to repair sub-standard structural and sanitary conditions, insulation, plumbing, heating and electrical systems. At the same time, the program helps Ontario upgrade and conserve existing housing stock—a factor which is becoming increasingly important as an ever-increasing demand is placed upon our forest resources.

OHRP forms part of the Ontario Government's community renewal program. It is funded on a per capita grants system provided by the Ministry of Housing to the municipalities who are responsible for administering the program and inspecting the houses. In 1974-75, the Ontario Government budgeted \$10 million for OHRP: the 1977-78 figure is \$18 million. Eligible homeowners can receive loans and/or grants up to \$7,500. The rate of interest charged on the loans, from 0-8 per cent, is determined by the annual family income. During the three year period, a total of \$47.7 million was provided to 460 municipalities across Ontario. Some 9,240 units have been repaired or rehabilitated. In all, funds are committed to assisting some 12,165 homeowners.

Because the demand exceeds the resources available, by \$7 million, the Ministry of Housing was unable to meet the total amount of grants to which all municipalities were eligible. In order to meet its budgetary constraints and assure that all municipalities received a proportion of the funds available for the program, the Ministry of Housing approved the application for grants to which the municipalities were eligible "in principle" and forwarded an accountable ad-

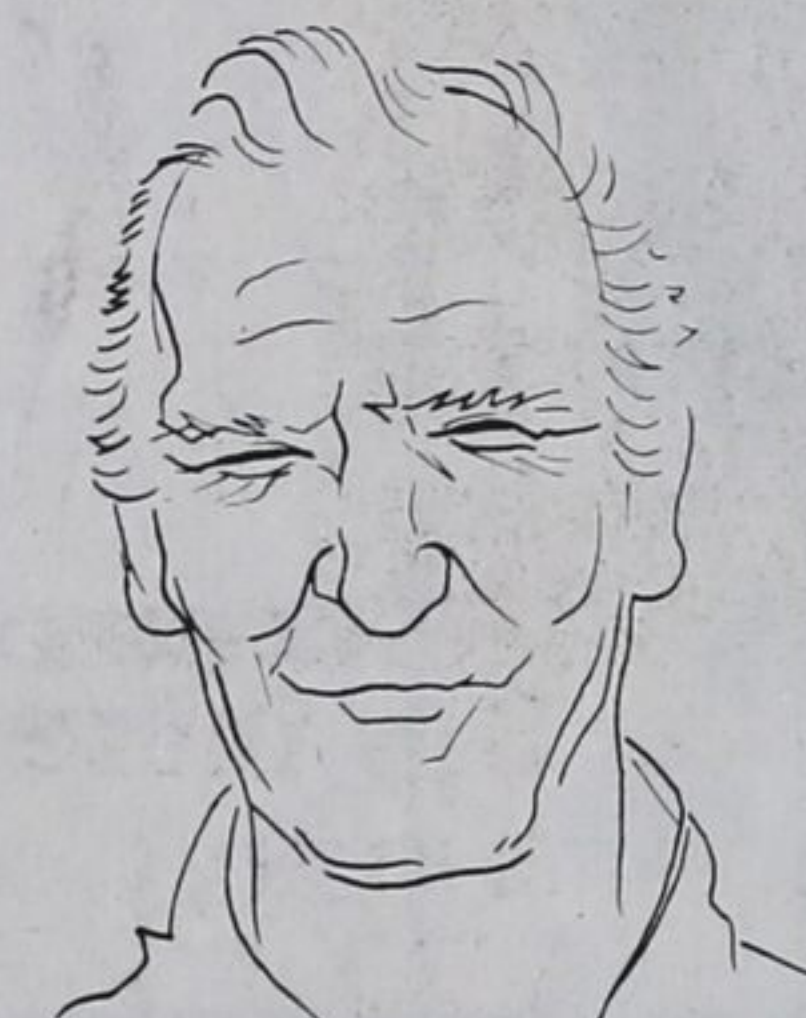
vance to each municipality. There is an understanding that additional funding will be provided if, and when, additional resources become available. Using the City of Barrie as an example, it was eligible for a total grant of \$149,516.60. To date, the city has received \$99,807.25 in grants for OHRP, with further funds to be provided if additional resources are available.

In Simcoe County, 17 municipalities are participating in the program and five others are being processed. Municipalities in Simcoe Centre that have benefited from the program are: Penetanguishene, \$46,596; Flos Township, \$31,343; Tiny Township, \$40,000; and West Gwillimbury, \$17,329 for the 1977-78 fiscal period.

Although several municipalities have pointed out that the demand for OHRP grants exceeds the funds which they were allocated, it is important to understand the context under which the funds are allocated from ministry resources. In order to meet its commitment to Ontario taxpayers to limit the growth of government expenditure and work towards a balanced budget by 1981, the government is strictly enforcing its budgetary restraint program. As a result, each ministry is carefully controlling its expenditures. This will have a long term benefit for the taxpayers of Ontario.

The Ontario Home Renewal Program is a good program because it enables many people to improve or repair their homes who might not have been able to do so. At the same time, OHRP is helping Ontario conserve its existing housing stock and making homes in this province more energy-efficient. This program, and others, represents a concerted community renewal program designed to preserve our architectural heritage and the quality of housing in Ontario's communities.

by Bill Smiley



It must be nice to be one of those people who sail into a new year with high hopes, great expectations, and firm resolves. I am more inclined to back into it gingerly, head ducked as though awaiting a cuff from fate.

I think, from experience, that you have to be young and naive or old and religious, or just plain dumb, to expect the next year is going to be any better than the last.

For example: I know I'm going to be one year older and uglier; I know I'm going to

have fewer teeth and less hair; I know I'm going to be utterly flabbergasted at the ardent thievery of the government when I make out the cheque for income tax on the last day of April; I know that more and more of my friends, relatives and colleagues are going to be struck down by cancer, heart attacks, a broken marriage, or the crud.

I know that my daughter won't be able to get a job as a teacher, after a gruelling year of preparing for same and raising two kids on the side.

I am quite certain that my two grandboys are going to get steadily more difficult to handle. (One of them, not quite four years old, made a dreadful suggestion to a lady in a store not long before Christmas, as my wife and I looked around wild-eyed, pretending we didn't know him or each other.)

I got a raise this year, but am perfectly aware that it doesn't allow me to keep up with inflation. I saved some money this year, for the first time in 30, by continuing to drive a 10-year-old car, but I know every dollar tucked away (and paid taxes on) will be worth 82 cents when it comes time to spend it.

I know full well that during the coming year I will have to undergo the ordeal of a federal election, in which a bunch of nincompoops try to convince me that they can run the country better than a bunch of turkeys.

I am fully cognizant of the fact that my wife is going to be on my back in 1978 for moral turpitude, physical lassitude, and mental ineptitude, not to mention a number

of other things that can't be classified in a family journal.

Economically, the country is, depending on your point of view, either up the creek without a paddle or going over the falls with a motor stuck in high gear.

Next fall, my students will be the absolute worst I've ever had, there will be more of them, eight will be on drugs, six will be alcoholics, five will get pregnant, and I'll be taken off to the funny factory.

Why don't I just shoot myself then, instead of heading into 1978 with all these bogeymen riding my shoulders? You may well ask.

Because life is the life. As my daughter once remarked at the age of six, and which I have since considered one of the great philosophical gems of the 20th century.

Of course I'll be one year older. But I'll be one year smarter, at least in theory. It's not true that I'll have fewer teeth. I'll have more. I'm getting that euphemism called a "partial plate." Less hair, but I can always get a toupee or a fall. Uglier, for certain, but there comes a point when ugly starts to become beautiful. "His face has a lot of character," they say, meaning that you look like something that just swam home from the Crimean War.

Sure my buddies will be stricken with everything from a slipped cervix to a swollen colon, but a couple of them were marked up for the big final registration last year, and came through with flying colors and a heightened love of life.

Maybe my kid won't get a job teaching.

Maybe it's a good thing. How would you like to spend your working hours with a bunch of teachers, as I do?

O.K., my grandboys are really rotten. But they aren't any more rotten than their mother was 20 years ago. She's just now beginning to admit to us what she was doing when we thought she was at Sunday School.

I'm slipping behind financially, but who isn't? My prisoner-of-war pension soared by 7.5 per cent on Jan. 1, so I'm on the glory trail. It is now almost 60 bucks a month.

No question, we'll have a federal election. But what's to worry when our Grand Guru, Pierre Himself, says that if we all think positively, the economy will pick up? Who can argue with something as solid as that? Certainly not the poor dope who has been out of work for two years. He's probably not thinking positively.

No doubt, no doubt at all, that my wife will be on my back through 1978 for all the things mentioned, and some new ones she'll think up. But what the hell? I'm used to it; and we're still man and wife, although she might quibble about that designation, or parts of it.

As for my students next fall, they will undoubtedly be the same mixed bag of mixed-up adolescents they have always been, and we'll get along fine once they realize that Mr. Smiley is a bit senile and must be humored.

Last year was pretty bad, and this year will be worse, but life is the life, and it sure beats lying there in the graveyard with your hands on your tummy.

## The first rust hole is the toughest

By Terri Howell

It's that time of year again - the time when winter finally gets to me. It isn't the never ending snowfalls, the driving in zero visibility on icy roads or trudging through slush, that has got me down - but the inevitable damage that winter does to my car. Sunday, I discovered my first rust hole.

Last summer I sold my '68 Dodge Coronet 440 because it's first rust hole had spread like measles on a little kid, over the entire car. My father's words still ring in my head. He said, "sell the heap before you have to travel Fred Flintstone style with your legs dangling through holes in the floor boards."

When I bought the car for the astronomical price of \$100, it had the occasional rust hole which my dad, in the course of fixing the transmission, changing the bald tires and putting the new brake shoes and linings on, had stuffed with dum dum and sprayed gold - the colour of the car.

The garage mechanic who safety checked the car never caught on, although he did mention in passing that in places the body looked like someone had stuck bubble gum to it and covered it over with paint.

When my "new" car was all fixed up - I mean, I really thought I had something. Never told a soul that the "440" was the model number and not the size of the engine. Most people thought my car would go like

stink. Frankly, at that time rust holes were the farthest thing from my mind.

But as the Pope must be Catholic, cars in southern Ontario must rust. The first rust hole appeared six months after I bought the car.

I guess I always thought that the dum dum would drop out somewhere on the highway and the holes would be visible again before any new holes suddenly appeared. But quite the contrary.

My room mate and I were leaving for a rowing practice in Ottawa at 5 a.m. Liz was dozing beside me, had turned toward the floor. All of a sudden a sleepy voice casually mentioned, "I can see the road."

"So," I said, not looking at her.

"I'm not looking out the window," came the reply.

We pulled over to the side of the road and covered the gaping monstrosity on the floor with the side of a Kellogg's Corn Flakes box that we found under the seat. Liz promised not to tell the other team members as they piled in, for fear of causing mass panic. We were very careful not to step where the hole was and we winced each time someone new got in the car that didn't know about the hole and stepped hard on the worn flaked box. I wonder how many people wondered why the floor sagged a little on the passenger side. The Ottawa winters did that car in. Slowly

rust holes crept all over the car. The fenders were the next to go and soon I was the only person on record that could check my oil without opening the hood.

Then there was the nice spring day that I discovered that the trunk had rusted out sometime in the winter and the contents - my moldy rowing duds among them - were soaked with spring slop and slosh. The bolt that held the spare tire in place was rusted on and held on to your hats - the jack was rusted beyond use.

And how can I forget the day my boyfriend giving someone a sales pitch on what a fine car I had, kicked a hole through the quarter panels right before my very eyes.

It was a year and three months after the purchase that my dad gave his warning to send the car to the junk yard. The sad part about the whole thing is that with 100,000 miles it still ran like a charm and in the last 30,000 had never left me stranded once.

With the passing of the Coronet came to '72 Cortina - the fourth in a long line of Howell Cortinas. It didn't have a rust hole and I suspected they would be a long time in coming since my uncle, who sold the car to me, takes such exceptional care of his vehicles.

I polished and scrubbed and cleaned the underneath of the body faithfully. My uncle also did periodical "service checks"

generously greasing the body to ward off the impending salt. I thought I had the world by the tail - all summer I bragged thinking, I had made the deal of a life time. Imagine finding a non-rusty 1972 car.

So you can imagine the tears that flowed on Sunday afternoon. There it was like a dynamite blast in some rock - a gaping rusty hole in the fender of my car where everyone I bragged to will notice. I poured a quarter of a quart of oil down the hole in order to make myself feel better. The sad part again - is that the car still runs like a charm, but if rust holes on Cortina's are as infectious as rust holes on Coronet's I'll be shopping for a new car in the near future. In the meantime dum dum here I come. The Midland winter will be the one that does this car in.

There are of course two consolations. My boyfriend drives a '63 Dodge which caught rust disease about 10 years ago. The last few years have been less painful for it with the rust spreading more slowly than at first. His words of wisdom are to buy a car that is already rusty and spare myself the agony and tears as each piece of metal drops away.

My second consolation is to look at the cars driven by the other members of our editorial department - most of which have seen more than this Midland winter.

My car with its one rust hole still looks new beside some of those cars. No offence fellows!

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