



## Oktoberfest fun in the air

Two years ago Town of Midland marked its centennial complete with a super long parade down King Street. Members of the German-

Canadian Club danced all the way down the parade route.

Since this is the month to celebrate

Oktoberfest, especially when members of the German Canadian Club combined with Midland Rotarians to host Oktoberfest last

Saturday at Civic Centre we thought you'd enjoy a look back to 1978 and these Oktoberfest type dancers.

# The abdication of Queen Nicotine

## Shirley Whittington

This week marks an important anniversary for me. It is exactly one year since I got up in the middle of the night to have a cigarette. It is exactly one year since I left the house, locked the door, then unlocked the door and checked every ashtray in the place to make sure I hadn't left a live butt burning somewhere. It is exactly one year since I have phoned a neighbour in the middle of the night to beg enough smokes to get me through till morning. It is exactly one year since I burned a hole in something — or someone — I loved.

Having written that, I know I have now lost at least half my readers.

People have never smoked cigarettes and are shrugging their shoulders and saying "Big deal." Smokers will be equally unimpressed. They hate to be reminded that their habit is unhealthy, expensive and anti-social and they also hate nagging. They are probably all over on the sports page by now.

But there will be a few of you out there who are tired of the whole paraphernalia of smoking — of losing lighters, and hunting up ashtrays and stocking up for the long weekend — and who may be thinking about not smoking for maybe a day. Or a couple of

days. Or a week. Or forever.

### Smoker

This column is for you. This is what worked for me, the champion cigarette smoker of the world.

If you decide not to smoke for a day or two, throw your cigarettes away. Ditto for your ashtrays, your silver plated Ronson table lighter and your collection of Bics. Don't try any of this coy nonsense where you have six cigarettes a day for a week and then just one cigarette a day with your after dinner coffee. Quitting smoking is like ending a love affair. An agonizing complete break is, in the long run, easier.

When you finally go on the 02 wagon, tell everybody. Tell your kids and the milkman and the guy at the next desk and all the folks in the coffee shop. That makes it almost impossible to sneak a surreptitious drag, and if you do go back on the weed, you'll lose a lot of face.

Clean your teeth a lot. Somehow when your mouth feels clean, you'll feel less anxious to violate it with hot dirty smoke.

Think of someone you respect and love and would like to be like. (Of course, my dears this won't work unless your idol is a non-smoker. Yes you can, if you try.) Every time you want to smoke, think about that person.

Knit, or crochet or whittle. I have quit smoking three times and I have made three afghans.

### Non-smoker

There is no miracle drug which will turn you, overnight, into a non-smoker, but there is some chewing gum which helped me. It worked for two reasons. First, it tasted so unutterably vile that I wouldn't have put it anywhere near my mouth if my doctor hadn't prescribed it. Second, it gave me a little package to carry in my purse.

When others reached for their du Mauriers, I reached for my vile gum, and ritual was honoured.

This is a cruel ploy, but it worked for me in the early days when I was fairly sure I would die of longing if I couldn't have a cigarette while I was having coffee or a drink. I used to look around at all the other smokers in the restaurant.

Try it. Ugly, ain't they? Stained teeth. Wrinkles. Squinty eyes. (If you're in the habit of dining with movie stars and other glamorous souls, this-smoking-is-ugly trick might not work, but try to imagine what they

look like with their skin off, especially around the lungs.)

A final word to the would be non-smoker. There is no pest as vexatious as the recently converted non-smoker who goes into a little routine every time somebody lights up in his presence. He moves the ashtray. He begins waving his hands about.

He starts to cough and mutters "Filthy habit." He forgets, absolutely, how offensive he was in the days when he was the one who filled the air above the bridge table with used smoke.

### Unloved

To carry on thus is to make yourself unloved and a pest.

I have smoked for more than half the years I've been alive. I started when butts were 33 cents a pack. I smoked voraciously and relentlessly. I smoked before breakfast, in the bathtub, in bed, and once — I think — while swimming. Sometimes I used to wake up in the middle of the night and pad downstairs to have a cigarette.

I'm not trying to sound like a repentant bore. I just want you to know that I smoked a lot and enjoyed it, and if it's possible for me, Queen Nicotine, to stop, almost anybody can.

If you make that decision I wish you luck. Try to think of not smoking this way: it's a death defying act.

# The best holiday? Thanksgiving

## Bill Smiley

As a Canadian, what is your favorite holiday in the year? Think carefully, now. (No objection to Yanks playing the game).

Originally, our holidays had religious overtones. Hence, the term holy days: Christmas, Good Friday, Thanksgiving.

Then we developed patriotic — or, if you prefer — political holidays. These include such stirring times as Dominion Day, now better known as the First of July; British Empire and Commonwealth and The Queen's Birthday; Armistice or Remembrance Day.

Finally, we have a few pure pagan holidays tossed in: Labor Day; Civic Holiday and New Year's Day.

Well, let's start at the bottom, and eliminate. Civic Holiday has no significance whatever.

It's the day on which everyone gets out of town for the weekend, except the local merchants, who are supposed to get a civic holiday, but spend it working like mad at the

service club carnival, raising money for some worthy cause. It isn't even a national holiday. Big city stores ignore it.

Labor Day, as we all know, far from being a tribute to organized labor, is a day on which nobody does a tap of work, except for getting their kids ready for school, or closing up the cottage.

The next in insignificance is difficult to choose. We have Dominion Day, of course. Once it was a day of horse races, picnics, boat excursions and speeches in the park.

Now it is merely a day which, annoyingly, doesn't always fall on a Monday or Friday.

And we have that whatever-it-is Day in May. It used to be Queen Victoria's Birthday. In the morning trees were planted. For the rest of the day, and night, you burned your fingers on fire-crackers and your eyebrows on Roman Candles.

I guess what we're supposed to do now is sit around and think of our Commonwealth

brother in Zambia and Senegal, or the Queen, whose birthday is in another month, or something? What we actually do is open the cottage, or go fishing.

And then of course, there is New Year's Day. Hangovers and broken resolutions. Actually, New Year's depends on how fervently you first-footed it on the preceding eve.

It can be as bleak as a beverage room, or as rambunctious as a rooster.

But ahead of it there lie three cold, dark, dreary and deadly months of winter.

The two saddest holidays of the year are Remembrance Day and Good Friday. And, appropriately, they come at the most dismal times of the year.

On Nov. 11th the sky weeps, the widows and mothers weep, the flags droop at half-mast and the bells toll.

The only joint in town that jumps is the Legion Hall.

After the solemn rites have ended, old cronies gather to exchange lies, enjoy good food and drink, and listen to the inevitable speaker trying to convince them it was all worthwhile.

Good Friday is gloom, darkness and bitter wind, remnants of snow drifts. A day of death, sacrifice and sorrow. Cold, cold and the earth is dead and frozen.

Christmas is another thing. A season of peace and joy on earth with goodwill toward men, according to the ads and the interminable carols. But, let's be honest. By the time The Day has arrived, you are baffled, bushed and broke.

That leaves nothing else but Thanksgiving. That's my choice, every year. It's the best Canadian holiday.

First, there are the physical delights. Weather is usually fine — brisk and bright. Scenery is magnificent: blue, bronze and crimson. Blood bubbles in the veins. Fire feels good. Food tastes like never before. Lungs lap clean air.

Sleep is sweet, smooth and as dreamless as whipped honey.

And then there's the thanksgiving itself. Thanks for good health. Thanks I'm alive. Thanks for children.

Thanks for a good harvest, or fat beef, or a steady job. Thanks for a chance to go on living through another year of those other holidays until I can say thanks again.