



Number spells \$100,000

It was Midland's turn last Thursday evening to host the weekly Wintario draw, and tens of thousands of viewers got a capsule view of the town by way of a short film clip between

draws for amounts reaching \$100,000. Host Faye Dance, with the aid of co-host Art Austin in the audience, called out the winning number combinations as they were pulled

from each of six drums and posted on the board above. Dance, above, reads out the number worth \$100,000 to six people last week.

The Wintario draw in Midland put the town on the map thanks to the draw being televised over the Global Network.

Crusading for singles (gloves, socks...)

Shirley Whittington

Not long ago, a little kid came to our door with a great idea. I've forgotten what it was that he was selling. The great idea was on his feet.

He was wearing one grey sock and one dark blue one.

He may have been colour blind, but I prefer to think that he has a liberated, practical and free-thinking mother who has enough sense to realize that her kid can get along in life without feet that match like bookends.

I blame Noah for our obsession with matched pairs. After he got the seams caulked on his boat and the decks varnished, he invited the animals to climb aboard, but not in any old way. They had to come two by two. Nor was it possible for the anteater to go up the gangplank with the giraffe. The pairs had to be matched and ever since the human race has been tyrannized by the search for symmetry.

Today, everything from salt and pepper shakers to end tables and living room lamps must match. We are beset by headaches and inconvenience because none of us has the courage to face the world in unmatched

socks, mitts, gloves, earrings or cuff links. We have become a stereo-visual nation.

Just last week, the family put me through the annual chilly autumn morning quiz. This is where everybody comes into the kitchen (Singly. Not thank goodness, in pairs,) and says, "What have you done with my mitts and / or gloves?"

The answer is that I gathered them all up last spring and stuffed them into the hall bench. The fact that I stuffed them singly is what bothers everybody. Thirty fingers scramble through the hoard, seeking two reds, two down-filled, two pigskin — two anything — just so they match.

All those little fingers could go warmly out into the world and I could get back to my coffee and newspaper if only their owners realized that people who wear mitts and gloves that don't match do not get arrested, nor are they sent home from school with a note from the principal.

Two or three times a week there is a near mutiny here at Rotting Hall because somebody's sock drawer is empty. It has even

come to pass that some of our young people have had to wear the same pair of socks two days in a row, because a matched clean pair was not immediately available. They'd rather be unclean than eccentric.

Opposites, they tell me, attract, but I see little proof of this in the hands, feet, earlobes and French cuffs of this country. We are obsessed with the need to enclose our lives neatly in matching parentheses.

This mania for matching means that we all have little caches of things that don't match hidden away in our homes. Because they don't match, they are useless to us, yet we can't bear to throw them away.

If only we could rid ourselves of this fear of psychotic imbalance caused by unmatched socks or salt and pepper shakers! How rich and varied our lives would be — and how blessedly simple!

I go to a gym class a couple of days a week and the instructor frequently shouts things like "Right knee. Up!" or "Left foot, forward and back." I never get to the up and the forward and back, because I always seem to be working on the difference between right and left.

If, on the other hand, I were marked like a boat within my left hand and foot covered in a red mitt and sock respectively, and the

starboard side of me slip-covered in green, I could navigate anything confidently.

Purposely mismatched gloves would have helped me through that crisis when a backseat driver, directing me in fairly heavy traffic, said urgently, "That's right. Go left. Straight ahead." By the time I got everything unravelled, we'd missed what we were looking for, and we all had to go around the block again.

I think it's time those of us who have stores of perfectly good but non-matching socks and mitts and gloves and candlesticks came out of the closet. We should form an unmatched activist group. Employers should be required by law to hire at least six per cent of their work force from among those whose socks don't match. Children's literature should contain frequent reference to children who ride bikes, throw snowballs and ring doorbells wearing mitts that don't match. There should be special sections set aside in restaurants for diners who like unmatched crockery.

If you feel strongly about ending the tyranny of perfectly matched pairs, why not write to (Dear) Abby Van Buren or Ann Landers! They are the acknowledged authorities on North American tradition and manners, and everyone pays attention to what they say.

They are, of course, twins.

The mail service, erratic, undependable

Bill Smiley

I DON'T know that there's much point in writing this column. The posties are at it again, as I write, with wildcat strikes, slowdowns and whatever you want to call them.

And since the column is syndicated, nationwide, it depends on the mail, erratic and undependable as it is. It would be a little expensive, to say the least, if I had to use courier service to Kamloops, B.C., and Truro, N.S., not to mention 100-odd places between.

However, it's an ingrained habit, like the Saturday night bath, so I'll bungle out a column anyway.

Something that truly amazes me is that there has been no physical response to the constant postal strikes, sometimes employing violence, often flouting the law.

In my mind's eye, I can see some little old lady, sore as hell because she got her pension cheque a month late, creeping up behind a post office truck and hurling a bomb through the back window.

Or some deserted wife, desperately dependent on that welfare cheque, taking a can of gasoline into a large post office in a large city, sprinkling herself liberally with

the essence, striking a match, and immolating.

But in this country, the first example would get life imprisonment, where a murderer gets ten years with three off for good behavior. And in the second, some good souls would start a fund to help her children, and within a week would have raised \$482, by which time the story would be on page 24.

However, into each life some sun must shine, though there wasn't much around this past summer.

My wife had been feeling poorly, as we used to say, for some time. After six months of blandishment and threats, I got her to see her doctor and have a check-up.

Today she tells me that she phoned the doc and she's as sound as an apple. I asked her if she'd had him take an X-ray of her head. Everything else is functioning normally. Her reply was short and to the point.

Back to school after several weeks, I am beginning to wonder why I didn't quit teaching 10 years ago and go to work in a mental institution. At least there you can stuff the inmates with tranquilizers.

One more year of teaching Huckleberry Finn, and the best place to find me is floating

down the Mississippi on a raft, smoking a cornucopia pipe. I quit teaching Grade 13 because I was getting madder than Hamlet.

The people who write course curriculums and advocate the one-on-one relationship with pupils are about as close to reality as the Ayatollah Khomeini or Idi Amin in his last few years.

If they had their way, it would be like Moses walking around among the Jews, asking each every one, "Now, what do you think of the fourth commandment? Do you think ass is a bad word?" Or Hitler, strolling through Germany for 88 years, querying the population about the pollutatory effects of ss cremations.

Fortunately, most teachers with an ounce of intelligence, and there are several of us, completely ignore the millions of dollars worth of "directives", and try to teach the kids some semblance of morality, decency, integrity, and whatever our subject is.

In 20 years, I'll bet I've taught 12 kids to answer, when I've asked if they have read a certain book, not to say, "No but I seen the movie."

I have taught at least 15 not to use the dangling participle, "Riding my bicycle, a dog bit me."

And I don't give a diddle. They've learned a lot more than that, and I have letters to prove it. They've learned not to laugh at people who are physically or emotionally or mentally

slow, and to help them.

They've learned that nationalism is stupid, that two wrongs (depending) sometimes make a right; that two and two don't always make four; that you should question things that don't make sense; that emotions are nothing to be ashamed of, and so on and on and on, said the boring old teacher.

If I don't want to get heartburn or something, I'd better stop talking about teaching. I've seen two many colleagues break down physically or mentally to take much stock in it. The kids go through the mill and emerge in all kinds of shapes: beautiful, grotesque, funny, dour. I think their genes have more to do with it than Miss Entwhistle, who crucified them in Grade 9 for spelling errors. Or Mr. Entwhistle, who taught them that:

"Beauty is truth, and truth is beauty. That is all we know and all we need to know." Which is a lot of crap.

One last cheering note. An article informs me that there is no way Canadian tourists can go to Europe anymore, because the prices are literally out of this world. Glad we sneaked in a couple of trips when they were merely exorbitant.

Canadian tourist operators should be brushing up on their Japanese, German and Italian. We're going to be swamped, with that pallid Canadian dollar. Canada is a steal for foreigners with a sound currency.