

# Down memory lane



## Photo Flashback from 40 years ago

It was 40 years ago when these employees of Fern Shoe Co., Penetanguishene, got together for a group picture. The free world was at war with the axis powers and it was a time of sadness as fathers, brothers, uncles "joined

up" to fight overseas while back at home the war effort carried on in supplying our troops with the where-with-all to carry on the good fight. It is fitting since Remembrance Day is less than a week away that we feature this

picture as a memory maker since it will conjure up in the minds of many...how it was in not only Penetanguishene but in Canada, 40 years ago.

## A trip ( and fall ) down Memory Lane

### Shirley Whittington

"Nostalgia sure isn't what it used to be," said a friend last week. Quite so. Nor is it being used the way it used to be.

In the old days, nostalgia was something you slipped comfortably into, the way you'd slide into an old pair of slippers.

One sighs — at the sound of a saccharine saxophone, perhaps — and wallows in past joys, imperfectly recalled. A summer dance hall: young love; perfect moon; silent canoe; bliss.

That's the way nostalgia goes.

But lately, nostalgia like everything else, has been perverted to suit the market place. A singer dies or loses his voice. His work is re-issued immediately as a nostalgia item.

The telescoping of the time between actuality and the recalling of it has become ludicrous. People have lunch, and get

nostalgic about the toasted Danish they had at coffee break. I know a lady, settling into plumpness, who tells me she's nostalgic for her knees.

Nostalgia is big business. Things which are normally found in Salvation Army stores and rummage sales — fedoras, narrow ties, Hawaiian shirts, hats with veils — now form the inventory of ultra-chic big city boutiques with fanciful names like Flying Down to Rio.

Second hand clothes? Not when they're washed in nostalgia. They become born-again fashions of the New Wave.

You can now buy plastic replicas of the gothic style wooden mantle radio that Grandpa listened to George V1 on. You can buy plastic imitations of old telephones, and Tiffany lamps and Coca-Cola trays. If you have enough money you can even buy full sized kits which will make antique sports cars

so you can ride along and feel nostalgic about F. Scott Fitzgerald.

I'm waiting for somebody to market a plastic back-yard privy with a half moon in the door. Or an electric cookstove with the elements cunningly concealed under iron plates, a warming oven on top and a reservoir for hot water at the side.

Nostalgia isn't like it used to be because now it's being used to sell things. It has become an aphrodisiac for lovers of credit.

The telephone company knows how to use nostalgia. They run television ads, which feature soft focus re-runs of yourself as a cute little stumblebum, or a bashful bride or a proud young parent. That's you, isn't it, wobbling along on your first two-wheeler, with Dad's steadying hand on the back fender? Swallow the lump in your throat and go make a long distance call to the old folks.

A cheese company makes a commercial using an announcer whose voice sounds like a rusty gate.

This is to show that he's not your run-of-the-mill fast-talking 20-original hits announcer. Au contraire. He is an avuncular old coot

who leads you by the ear down memory lane to the old general store where folks sit around the cracker barrel and tell jokes and trade gossip.

His cheese, he says, taste the same as the stuff you bought in that old cracker barrel country store.

I've never been in a store with a cracker barrel in my life, but I fall for this ad every time. This proves that sometimes you can even be nostalgic for something that never happened to you.

And why are the ad agencies selling phone calls and instant coffee and sausages and cheese by doing nostalgia numbers on your television set? Because they know that these are uncertain, troubling times.

They know that most of us talk around each day with knots of dread gnawing at our stomachs. A trip into the land of soft-focus memory offers fast, fast relief.

We all get mushy and receptive — perfect targets for the pitch.

Nostalgia sure isn't like it used to be. It used to be a self-administered drug.

## Autumn is always best in Canada!

### Bill Smiley

Do you like autumn? I do.

For me, it's the epitome of all that's best in Canada. You can have your spring, glorious spring, with its drizzles and its mud and its chilling winds.

You can have your summer, with its particular pests — tourists, bugs, visitors. And you can most definitely have winter in its every possible aspect.

Just give me about six months of that September-October weather, and you couldn't drag me out of this country to the island of Bali.

I know that, according to the rhythm of nature, fall is supposed to be a time of dying, of melancholy, of shrivelling on the vine, or preparing for the deep, dead sleep of winter.

Maybe Canadians are just contrary, but they don't react in the way they're supposed to at all, in the fall. Instead of carefully preparing for winter, drawing in their horns, and going around with long faces, they bust out all over as soon as that first nip is felt in the morning air.

Perhaps they're just fooling themselves, but Canadians act as though they love the fall. They come to life.

They bustle. They form committees, make plans, have parties. They even start going to church. Perhaps it's just a last hysterical fling, a frantic escape from reality, with the grim prospect of six months' winter ahead, but they certainly burn with a clear, gem-like flame while it lasts.

Where is the sober householder who should be chinking up the nooks and crannies, putting on the storm windows, getting in his fuel supply, and battening down all the hatches for the bitter voyage that looms ahead?

I'll tell you where he is, on his day off. He's standing in ice water up to his nipples, trying to catch a rainbow trout.

Or out on the golf course, so bundled with sweaters he can hardly swing. Or he's sitting with a noggin, watching the football game on television. That's where he is.

And where's the guidewife, who should be knitting woollen socks, putting down

preserves and canned meat, airing the flannelette sheets, patching the family's long underwear and quilting a quilt?

I'll tell you where she is.

She's on the phone, talking about what she's going to wear to the tea.

Or she's off in the car to attend a wedding. Or she's out playing bingo. Or she's taking in an auction sale.

Or she's sitting around with her feet up, watching the afternoon movie. That's where she is.

It must shake our pioneer ancestors rigid to look down, or up, from their present abode, and see us preparing for winter. About this time of year, grandfather was killing a beef, shooting a deer, salting down a hog, making apple cider, stacking vast piles of firewood and hustling his wheat to the mill.

It must rot his celestial socks to look down and see his grandson hunting deer for a holiday, buying his pig pre-cooked at the meat counter, and laying in his fuel supply by picking up the phone and calling the oil dealer.

And what about Granny? In her day, fall was the time when you worked like a beaver, making sausage, spinning wool, putting eggs

away in waterglass, filling the root cellar, making candles and soap.

She must do a little quiet cussing, in the shadow of her halo, when she sees her granddaughter facing up to the rigors of winter: racked by the dreadful indecision of whether to buy a home freezer or a fur coat; torn by the dilemma of whether to have the cleaning woman come once or twice a week.

But, of course, that's looking at only one side of the situation.

Granddaddy didn't have to worry about anti-freeze, atom bombs, income tax or payments on the car. He didn't need suppositories, diets and a new tail-pipe every time he turned around.

And Granny didn't have to cope with a kitchen full of machinery, kids who were smarter than she was, and the late movie. She didn't need sleeping pills, cigarettes or psychology.

Sav, come to think of it those WERE the good old days. They didn't have much, but what they had was their own, not the finance company's. No auto accidents, no alcoholics anonymous, no aspirin.

Let's stop worrying about the hardships of our pioneer ancestors and get back to sweating over our own neurotic chaos.