



## Mighty crane was Midland landmark

This mighty crane stood for years as a giant landmark at the coal dock in Midland. This picture from the past, taken decades ago,

shows the crane in operation. Above photo flashback was reproduced from an aged

printed we discovered in our own files. Have you a memory-maker you'd like us to

publish? We'd like to hear from you. All pictures will be returned upon publication.

# The Boor War-guess who's winning?

## Shirley Whittington

There are days when public rudeness really gets me down, and this is one of those days.

By rudeness I mean the general lack of manners, the current uncouth crude and vulgar carry-on that is replacing Monday morning flu as our most prevalent public affliction.

For a specific illustration of what I'm talking about I refer you to the disgraceful demonstration put on by those yahoos on Parliament Hill, when our Prime Minister welcomed President Reagan to Canada.

It was the first visit by an American president in nine years. Don't hold your breath waiting for the next one.

A group of our fellow Canadians — the ones in the boor brigade — welcomed President Reagan in simian style.

They waved their paws and their placards. They hollered and interrupted. They chanted — just like Iranian students — about the fisheries, acid rain and El Salvador.

They committed the ultimate discourtesy of

burning the Stars and Stripes in the presence of the American president.

I'm not crazy about acid rain and dead lakes. I want to see the fisheries talks started again, and I don't like what seems to be happening in El Salvador.

But I don't think a public display of bad manners will bring us closer to solutions.

As I watched the mindless mob demonstrating on TV, I remembered arriving at an American airport with some other Canadians, not too long ago.

We were greeted with a colour party, with signs saying "Welcome Canada. We love you." with flowers, polite applause and smiles.

Today I'm embarrassed to be a Canadian and I hope none of those American friends watched TV coverage of our welcome to their head of state.

What we have here is a boor war, and I think the boors are winning.

Go to a concert, and count the insensitive

clods who leave halfway through the last number so they can be the first to get out of the parking lot.

Go to a movie and listen to the jerks behind you yammering about if Donald Sutherland is cute or not and doesn't Mary Tyler Moore look old and wrinkled?

Go to a school and listen to the way the kids talk to their teachers and to each other.

Go to a city restaurant and check out the waitress as she wipes the table with a Javex-impregnated rag, relocates her gum and says "Wad'll youse have?"

Take a walk downtown. In our town, mothers have deposited disposable diapers in the flower planters.

Meanwhile our town planners are discussing the expensive possibility of buying iron girdles, six feet high, to be placed around the trunks of the young trees they've planted.

It's the only way they can think of to prevent people from breaking the saplings off.

These days, everybody is rude. Kids don't write thank you letters to their grandmas any more. Rock musicians treat their fans with grunting insolence, and members of parliament behave — in the House — like

undisciplined children.

I noticed, by the way, that the Parliament Hill mob were on their best behaviour when President Reagan addressed them during his visit.

If they had carried on in their usual uncivil way (disguised in Hansard as "Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh.") Reagan might have been forgiven if he'd sighed wistfully for the company of Bonzo.

It is ironic that rude is a synonym for uncivilized, because the more civilized we get the ruder we become. It may be that technology is making us insensitive and bad mannered.

After all, if Archie Bunker and Alice and the Fonz and J. J. can intrude their apelike idiosyncrasies into our living rooms night after night, some of that stuff is bound to rub off.

The whole thing is making me so touchy that I am apt, lately, to bellow (rudely) at a child who leaves the dinner table without being excused. Which shows you how contagious the whole thing is.

Next week, I will deal with more cheerful stuff, like the decline in quality of wooden spoons. In the meantime, be polite. Please.

# Stormy weather on the home front

## Bill Smiley

Isn't it amazing how little our world really is?

How pretty and small and mean we are underneath our professed liberalism, generosity, compassion?

The situation in Poland is very dicy. The Mexican stand-off in the Middle East is a torch, loaded with pitch, just waiting for a match.

There are bush fires and brush fires of wars all over the world.

Canada is in a mess, politically, economically and spiritually.

There are noses thumbed at the Queen by would-be head-liners. There is a big flap about the constitution.

The West is howling separatism. Quebec still wants it, psychologically.

Even Newt is threatening a referendum on separating. Shame, after all that federal money poured in to ensure the perpetuation of the Liberal government.

Outside, as I write, the great February storm is raging: snow, high winds, rain, freezing.

Tomorrow will be one of those days when the school buses don't run, the smart kids in town will roll over and go to sleep after looking at the snowbanked windows.

And a few dumb kids, and a lot of dumb teachers, will stagger through the storm, at risk of life and limb, to keep the stupid school

open.

And yet, all these storms, international, national, and local, don't bother me half as much as the one in my own household.

Here's where the suspense begins. Wife left him! Nabbed by the cops for mope and gawkery?

Poles and Russians have been clobbering each other with ten-foot poles and vodka for hundreds of years.

The Jews and Arabs have been doing the same for three thousand years. Likewise the North and South of whatever: Viet Nam, Korea, the U.S. Likewise all sorts of black people all over Africa.

In Toronto, the cops punch up the gays, who respond with violence.

In the West, a whole can of worms has been opened, and the worms all turn out to be from Ontario and Quebec. In parliament, lies are told, fingers pointed, desks thumped and the government goes right on dazzling us with one hand, and with the other, lifting money from our wallets to help out poor little old Massey-Ferguson, poor little old Chrysler, poor little old Petro-Can.

While that bulwark of idealism, the NDP, nods and smiles, and taps its foot to the Liberal tune.

Right outside my window, the snow is coming down so hard that the wind has no time for sculpturing.

One guy is trying to climb the hill sideways, in his car. Another has just rammed his into a snowbank and walked away.

He is the one who boasted that he never used snow tires, because he had radials.

Across the country, people are driving under insane conditions, taking their own lives and those of others in their hands, to get from nowhere to nowhere.

And yet, as I said, all these storms seem trivial compared to the domestic storm. More suspense.

To generously, not to say wildly, paraphrase King Lear; "Blow, storm; lie, politicians; smite, Middle-Easterners; plot, Slavs. Go to it, and the best of luck to yiz all."

But your plight brings little sympathy, no tears, from one who is spider-webbed into a binge of decorating. As I am.

Most women do their spring decorating in the spring.

Mine, just as perverse as the day I asked her to marry me, and she retorted, "Why should I?" does hers in mid-winter.

Don't ask me why. I'm likely to erupt in a fountain of bad language.

I'll swear my eyes are permanently crossed from looking at wall-paper samples.

After the first four books, they all begin to look alike. Same with paint. After inspecting peach, ivory, mushroom, off-white and six others. I wouldn't know a red cow from a purple pig, if I bumped into one or fell over the other.

Not that there's a difference of opinion. We did agree on the wall-paper. At least the design.

She liked the stuff that was \$14.95 a roll. I was swept away by the stuff, identical design, that was \$4.95 a roll. But the difference is chicken-feed, as you'll agree. Some chicken.

But it's not that. It's not the money. After all, you can't take it with you. Though I doubt if I'll be around long enough to take anything anywhere, even the garbage out to the roadside, after the latest decorating orgy.

It's the little details. She can't seem to sort out the order of things.

She makes a deal with the painter-decorator to start on a certain day.

The day before he is to arrive, she rushes out to pick the wall-paper. Wall-paper is like the Canadian mail. It gets there when it gets there. If ever.

Next day, she arranges for a cleaning lady to wash the woodwork. The lady, much sought after, can come only between the painting and the papering.

This means that the paint goes on over dirty wood-work and there's nobody to clean up after the plasterer, who makes such a mess that the wall-paper looks like the dunes of the Sahara. And so on.

I could write a book about decorating. All I'd have to do is listen to my wife before breakfast, before dinner, after dinner, and before bed. Which I have to do anyway.

No wonder colleagues say when I arrive at work: "You look exhausted." Substitute "harassed," "frightened," "desperate" or "frantic," and you have the average Canadian male when his wife decides that the homestead is shabby, disgraceful, slummy, and so on and on and on.