

Eating in the great outdoors

Shirley Whittington



The ice is off the birdbath and the grass is growing faster than the price of gas. Green shoots are poking up in the garden and the tomato plants are out on their own, awaiting their stakes.

We've got the storm windows off, and the screens are up. The orange tree we brought home from Florida is outside for its seventh Canadian summer and the wicker rocker is on the verandah.

The evening air is thick with the scent of charcoal impregnated with lighter fluid and we have had our first outdoor meal of 1981.

It's summertime all right. It's funny how a nation which espouses sensible notions like Petrocan and hospital insurance and seatbelts, in the summer wants to eat outside with ants and horseflies. This mass defection from kitchen and diningroom is so general that if, in June, somebody says to you, "Why don't we eat out tonight?" you are better advised to put

your barbecue on, not your new silk shirt.

Our ancestors, who cleared the dark forests and created safe shelters for eating and cooking are, I expect, posthumously puzzled. I imagine them, leaning over the clouds and scratching their heads. "Now why would they go and cart all that stuff outside," they muse, "and then cart it all back inside again?"

North Americans spend thousands of dollars equipping themselves with clean and efficient kitchens, and machines to keep hot things hot and cold things cold. They design special rooms for eating, and furnish them with comfy chairs and sturdy tables. And then they spend summer meal hours on backless picnic benches watching their weenies drop through the barbecue grills.

Sometimes eating outdoors is inescapable. If your house has been levelled by fire, flood or volcanic lava, then there's nothing for it to

but to nosh in the great outdoors.

Family reunions and Sunday School picnics are best held outdoors. So are six year-old's birthday parties.

Sidewalk cafes offer another perspective on outdoor eating. It is generally accepted as civilized to sit on a busy street, nibbling overpriced snacks while trucks roll by, belching clouds of carbon monoxide.

Some people every summer load elegant picnics on their boats and disembark on rocky islets where they spread their tablecloths and light tapers in silver candleabra. When somebody from around here says he likes white wine on the rocks, he probably isn't kidding.

Somewhere between the jolly family reunions and the elegant island picnickers stand the millions of Canadians who any time after June 1 actively enjoy eating off soggy paper plates.

We ate outdoors ourselves last night, and I think I speak for all of us when I say it was a ghastly experience which we will repeat again and again until we learn that the kitchen table can be used in the summer as well as the winter.

We set the table, brought out the food and sat down. Two kids had to climb over the Squire to get to the bench at the back of the table.

We then had an animated discussion about who would climb out over the Squire and get the milk and mustard and the things to serve the salad with.

Somebody then passed a full pitcher of ice water through a window, and accidentally dumped it on the person who'd been despatched to receive it.

The telephone rang repeatedly and was never for whoever climbed out to answer it. Hungry flies buzzed the butter dish. The wind blew the paper napkins across the yard. It looked as if it might rain. Cars squealed their brakes at our corner Stop sign, and the drone of neighbourhood power mowers crept closer.

And yet, in some ways it was fun. The breeze was cool and we dined to the burble of the oriole and the impudent whistle of the cardinal.

Yeah - a cardinal. I bet even if I had dinner at a sidewalk cafe in Rome, I wouldn't get whistled at by a cardinal.

Nostalgic time complete with moral

Bill Smiley



TWO waves swept over me the other day. No, I wasn't on the beach at Waikiki or Monaco or even such plebeian places as Florida, California or Mexico, which are now frequented by us common people.

And no, I wasn't drowned, as I know you were hoping. (Two waves. Maybe we won't have to listen to Smiley's blathering any more.) I can swim like an aging, arthritic seal, and it would take more than two waves to do me in.

The first wave came when someone announced at school that the price of pop in cans were going up by a nickel. I was swept by a wave of nostalgia for the days when pop was a nickel.

And then came the second wave, one of revulsion, as I realized what inflation had done, not only to pop, which is irrelevant to a decent life, but to many another cherished aspect of our daily living.

Being swept by two waves of strong emotion is not an easy thing to cope with, and I had to fight off students who crowded around, saying: "Are you alright, sir? Can we get you a Coke or something? (They'd never think of a stiff Scotch.) Maybe he's had a stroke and we'll get a day off." And so on. A moving experience.

But I was so upset by the twin waves that all day I kept calling Shakespeare George, Bernard Shakespeare and Dylan Thomas, Bob Dylan. My students didn't know the difference, so it didn't really matter.

That night, however, I looked back on the experience, and realized what it was. I had been exposed to mal du temps, and barely rescued by la memoire du fin de siecle.

I hope nobody will cancel subscriptions because of the last paragraph. I am not trying to shove bilingualism down anybody's throat, and I think Pierre Trudeau is a...well, you know what I think.

What all that bad French means is that I got a pain in the ass, then one in the pocketbook, both relieved only by memories of times past, accompanied by the inevitable association that I'm just about ready to be put out to pasture. Except that nowadays they just send the horses to the glue factory. O.K., Glue Factory, here I come, and if I can even make a couple of things stick together, I'll still be two jumps ahead of a millionaire who hasn't been able to make one marriage stick together.

Ah! Those golden days. When a nickel would buy you: a Pepsi, a cup of coffee, a

phone call, a chocolate bar three times as big as those anemics of today, a good (?) cigar, a ride on the carousel or the Ferris wheel.

When a dime would buy you a hamburger, a piece of homemade pie, a Saturday matinee, three eggs, a good (no question mark) cigar, a draft beer, a bottle of milk, a loaf of bread. It's true, you unbelievers.

Those were the days when two boys received from a minister of the church one dollar and a half for working eight or nine hours cleaning up the huge grounds on which his huge manse was located. My older brother got the dollar, I got the half. The minister complained about a few leaves.

A couple of weeks ago, I engaged a young man and his crew to clean up our yard. It cost me \$175.00. I didn't complain at all.

Why didn't you do it yourself, you'll ask. Laziness, business, sore back, and the fact that I can't get any young people to rake leaves any more, even for three or four dollars an hour. They get an allowance from their stupid parents that makes that sort of demeaning labour not worth looking at.

But that half-dollar from the manse was wealth, to me. It meant ten bottles of pop, five matinees, a night at the movies with a girl friend.

I asked the young entrepreneur who did my place how his business was going. Only in his twenties, he sounded like a right-wing conservative. He claimed that young fellows don't want to work anymore, don't do a decent job when they do work, don't show up for

work, and are generally unreliable, shiftless, irresponsible, and plain lazy.

"Then how do you get guys like the ones who worked so hard at our place?"

He admitted that he had to get someone who was hooked on motor-bikes or racing cars, and needed money to supply the habit.

In my day, of course, if you had a habit, it was something as expensive as biting your fingernails or sniggering at off-colour jokes or drinking so much Pepsi you got pimples, which wrecked your love life, which was non-existent anyway, so it didn't matter.

I'll never forget the time I found a dollar bill, in the snow. It was the first one I'd actually ever held in my hands. I dreamed of eloping to the South Seas with a girl I had my eye on in Grade 5.

But it was not to be. There was certainly enough money there, and I think she'd have gone with me. Her parents were on relief. But it was not to be.

With considerable pride, I told my mother about the dollar. She promptly went all Presbyterian on me, took the buck from my grimy paw and announced that we'd have to find out who'd lost it.

That was my last chance to run away. I don't know what happened to the dollar bill. It probably went into twelve pounds of hamburger (yes, it was three pounds for a quarter, with some "dog bones", now known as stewing beef, thrown in free.)

I don't quite know the moral of this column. Maybe it is: Never Trust Your Mother. But I don't think so.

Investor's Inquiry

by Charles Colling
Last week I gave an outline of how to evaluate industrial type stocks.

This week will deal with mining and oil or as they are commonly referred to now, resource stocks.

As far as the senior stocks in this classification are concerned, some of the formulae that I listed last week can be used, such as Price earnings ratio, cash flow and with caution, yield.

I say this, "with caution" because some companies, in prosperous times will pass this prosperity on to the shareholders in the form of exceptionally high dividends for varying periods of time. This, in itself is a risk as dividends in any form can only be paid if the profits are there to warrant them.

The junior exploration companies are a vastly different breed of

animal. These questions must be carefully considered:

The financial position of the company and the ability to raise additional funds if needed.

The size of the property, a claim is only about forty acres. So many mines in the past have found good grade ore but the property was not large enough to warrant any further development.

The closeness of the property to civilization, transportation, power and labour forces.

Another important factor in both metal mines and oil drilling is the type of soil or rock, as the case may be and the depth or length of time it would take to reach a target. Some drill targets can be reached in a matter of a week or two, others take months and in the meantime the stock is relatively dormant, waiting for results.

A further important factor to look for is the

proximity of the property to other producing mines. It is not difficult to find out in which direction a vein or orebody is headed and consequently the position of the property in relation to the known entity.

This is not always the case however, as in British Columbia a lot of ore lies in pockets rather than veins similar to the way oil lies in pools. Hence, drilling in these cases to find the extent of the product can be very time consuming and expensive.

For those that are trading this type of stock, the psychological factor is very important for example; you purchase five hundred shares of a stock at fifty cents per share.

The stock goes to sixty cents per share in a day or two and you have made fifty dollars and feel you might do better.

At the same time, the person down the street bought five thousand

shares at fifty cents and in the same day or two makes five hundred dollars and takes the profit.

This sale could jeopardize the price of your five hundred shares, so don't be greedy. Consider all the aforementioned factors plus the price range of the stock in the current and previous years, then use your judgment. Nobody every went broke taking a profit.

In sending in questions to be answered in these columns, please remember that Securities Commission Regulations will not permit giving opinions or recommendations on any specific securities.

All other signed inquiries will be answered as soon as possible. In all answers only the inquirer's initials will be used. Address all questions to "Investor's Inquiry" c/o The Midland Times, Box 609, Midland, Ontario.

You and Your Credit

by Paul Mattar
Credit Bureau of Midland Penetanguishene, Collingwood

Credit can cause satisfaction or frustration. It all depends on how you handle it.

If you are to be the master of your own destiny, you must have the time to be conversant with credit and get to know what it can do to you as well as what it can do for you.

There are many "rules of thumb" that are supposed to tell you just how much credit you can afford, but you should always remember that the one who finally pays is you and your family.

If you remain conservative in your approach to the use of credit, it can be a blessing and can lead to a richer, fuller and

more enjoyable life.

It can give you the things you want to enjoy today while you are saving to pay for them tomorrow.

Most people are capable of using credit facilities in a responsible and intelligent manner, but there is a minority who never quite understand that after the "buying now" part (the part that we all seem to enjoy immensely) there comes the "pay later" part.

This is the part that tends to be ignored, then it arrives as an uncomfortable shock.

Rather than look at the "rules of thumb" (percentages just don't always fit us personally) let's consider some of the sources of credit.

Some we take for granted, some we don't consider credit, but can get us into trouble if we don't watch out.

Consumer Credit

(banks, credit unions, loan companies, trust companies, retail stores, mortgage companies, life insurance companies, pawnbrokers, loan sharks) - Convenience Credit (florists, milkman, variety store, service stations, garages, and anybody else who will trust you for a few dollars for a few days) - Utility Credit (home heating supplier, hydro, landlord).

In future articles, we will be going into detail on some of these types of credit with a view of showing you how you can make your credit count.

If you have specific topics or questions you would like to have discussed, just write to "You and Your Credit," P.O. Box 176 Midland, Ont., or call Paul Mattar at 526-5468.