

**Contact**  
Community information  
526-9333 9 a.m.-5p.m.

The Sparkles of Happiness Club requests that you save all your old Christmas cards or if you want to keep the message cut off the picture and bring them in to our office. These are then recycled into cards that are given to the handicapped.

We now have a list of facilities available for the Physically Disabled. This list may be picked up at our office at a cost of 75 cents to cover the cost of material. This list was compiled over the summer by our Summer Canada student.

As you go by our building on First Street take note of the new sign with our name on it. There will also be a new sign on the side of the building. Hopefully we'll be more visible to everyone looking for our office.

Christians all over the world celebrate Christmas with a

blending of the customs and traditions of many lands and many peoples. For some, the main celebration takes place on Dec. 24 or 25, while for others it is Jan. 6 or 7. For all, however, the central theme is the same:

celebration of the birth of Christ.

In addition to a wide range of religious observances, Christmas is a time for joyous music, family gatherings, giving of gifts and enjoyment of rich food. Most homes are gaily

decorated with Christmas ornaments and coloured lights, with the Christmas tree being the focal point.

Over the holiday season we will close at noon on Thursday, Dec. 24 and be closed Monday Dec. 28. On New Year's

Eve Day we will again close at noon and be open again on Monday, Jan. 4.

The staff and the Board of Directors of Contact Information Centre wish you the very best of the festive season.

The solution to even the most difficult problem begins with the first step. If you have a problem, take the first step. Call Contact your Community Information Centre today.

—Irene Quesnelle, Administrator.

# Letters

Dear Editor:

I am writing you in your capacity as a significant leader in our community, to ask assistance in making known The Silver Thread.

The enclosed press release will hopefully answer your initial questions regarding this service to our elderly and isolated neighbours.

We would welcome your suggestions as to potential clients, or ways we may improve our service.

The enclosed registration form is available in whatever quantity you may need, by simply contacting us at the above address, or phone number.

How does a caring community reach out to its lonely, isolated, and confined neighbours? That is a challenge that several local agencies have pondered. Now, a new service is about to be launched to address the needs of this segment of our society.

Beginning early in 1982, a program to be known as The Silver Thread, will put isolated people in regular contact with other folk in similar cir-

cumstances and with a group of caring volunteers.

This simply structured communication network will assure that each client receives a daily telephone call, and has ready access to other resources in the community, as special needs arise.

The Silver Thread is a project that brings together at least two of Midland area agencies and additional resources and expertise from others.

Mrs. Nel Peever, recently named citizen of the year, is the primary initiator, having worked for about a year to develop the plan. A joint committee of Telecare Midland and the Huronia Branch of the Red Cross Society will co-ordinate the program.

A great deal of input has come from Richard and Margaret Scott of Penetanguishene, whose interest in senior volunteers and in researching community needs, has helped devise a system of client recruitment. The obvious resources of Telecare, are the existence of a group of trained telephone workers on duty around the clock. The

## The Silver Thread

Red Cross Society will bring to the mixture, their resources for home visitation.

The Silver Thread is designed to serve clients in the whole local calling area since its primary vehicle will be the telephone. There will be no charge for the service, and clients will be asked only to give information relating to their choice of emergency contact persons, and their doctor's name, and a minimum of personal information.

In order that the service may be known to all potential clients, the committee is eager to receive nominations and suggestions from agencies, churches, family members and neighbours, to those who wish to participate. For further information and to suggest possible clients, you are invited to contact The Silver Thread, P.O. Box 187, Midland or phone Telecare Midland at 526-7836.

On behalf of the joint committee, I thank you for your anticipated assistance.

Sincerely,  
Rev. James A. Manuel  
Chairman

## Shirley Whittington



O Christmas cards  
O Christmas cards -  
I really must attend you.  
O Christmas cards  
O Christmas cards -  
I'd like to smash and bend you.  
My address book's mistaken.  
My writing hand is shakin'.  
O Christmas cards  
O Christmas cards -  
I'd rather get than send you.  
Okay. I've got the cards. Have stamps.  
Also address book and city telephone directory. Christmas only days away. Must do cards tonight, or send Valentines instead.  
Cards won't arrive before Christmas. No matter. Christmas season extends beyond December 25. Let people think we keep Little Christmas. Pretend to be Ukrainian. Or French.  
Now-to work. But first, some tunes. Let's find nice record. Wow. Lotta records in here. What's this? Rough Trade? Johnny Rotten? On my record shelf? Kids. You give them a place at the breakfast table and they take over the whole house.  
Ah-h-h. Vienna choir boys.. Good stuff. Now-down to work.  
Pen, pen, pen. Here's one, but dry as dust. Dratted ball points. Must complain to in-

surance agent who gave me this one a couple of years ago. They put man on moon; why not make pens that last forever?  
Never mind. Will go upstairs and find old fountain pen. Broad nib. Black ink. Allows artistic flourish, personal statement.  
Found it. Never thought it would take so long. Choir boys grinding around on last groove. Time to flip to side two.  
Now, down to cards. Absolutely no fooling around. No excuses. Gonna finish these cards tonight.  
Thirsty.  
Coffee? Nope-jumpy as hypertonic cat already. Tea? Will spill on cards, probably. Beer? Too soporific. Will fall asleep in middle of C's.  
I know! A spritzer! Half white wine. Half soda water. Classy. Festive. Sparkling, but not gaudy.  
Okay. Adams. Adams? Did they send us a card last year? Can't remember. What the heck. It's Christmas. Best wishes to Gladys and -- and -- what's her husband's name? Tim? Tom? Mr. Adams?  
Jake! It's Jake. Best wishes to Gladys and Jake from -- the Whittingtons? Too cold. From Shirl and Dick and the gang? Too casual. From Dick, Shirley, Peter, Scott, Jane and Stephen? Nope. Three quarters of

the kids don't even live here any more. Let them send their own cards.  
Decide on quiet dignity. Best wishes from the Whittingtons -- Richard and Shirley.  
On to Arkman. Arkman? Who he? Dim memory surfaces of large jolly man at out-of-town wedding three years ago. Relative of groom's I believe. Nice man. Wonder if still alive? Take chance. Send card.  
Archer, Janet and George. Should send letter here. She writes good annual letter. Newsy. Witty. But if I write a letter on every card...  
Oops. Glass empty. Refill, light on soda. While up, slide choir boys into jacket and pop on Oscar Peterson. Da dum ditty-dum. Man lays down good beat.  
Where was I? If write letter on every card, will be here till February. I know. I'll type something up and have it Xeroxed in a.m. Pop into envelopes. Everything tickety-boo.  
Will write something amusing, positive. Season's Greatings folks! Mention year's successes, triumphs, graduations, etcetera. Omit bad news like death of family cat, removal of wart on stomach, multiple summons delivered to front door because son neglected to pay city parking tickets. End with let's get together in 1982. Make 50 copies. Meanwhile, on to Birdwell, Gwendolyn and

Gareth. They separated last summer. Who gets card? Or do they each get one? Okay. Send religious one to her, she has kids. Send Santa with champagne bubbles to him. He living with nurse in Tickled Pink NB. Don't know nurses' name. Include her in "you and yours".  
Aunt Marg Bingley, Winnipeg Manitoba. But where in Winnipeg, Manitoba? What street? Why didn't I keep her address from last year? Rats!  
There goes pen -- all dried up again.  
There goes glass, dry also.  
Peterson peters out. Time for Christmas cardiac arrest.  
Good night and good Christmas to loyal readers of the Alliston Herald, Barrie Banner, Belleville Der Kanadier, Brighton Independent, Brooks Bulletin, Chetwynd Pioneer, Dunnville Chronicle, Fort Erie Times Review, Glencoe Alvinston Transcript, Grande Prairie This Week, Kindersley Jamac Publications, Listowel Crossroads, Steinbach Carillon, Thunder Bay Lakehead Living, Tilburv Times, Tillsonburg News, Walkerton Herald Times, Midland Times, Penetanguishene Citizen and Elmvalle Lance.  
I mean it. Merry Christmas, and love one another.

## It's in the cards

## Bill Smiley



SOMETIMES, when my family gets particularly active, another word for manipulative, I wish I were a crusty old bachelor, living in a shack up north somewhere, smoking my pipe, reading my old favorites, communing with nature, and quietly and philosophically facing the only sure thing in this world: death.  
These moods don't last long, and they are not indicative of deep depression. I'm not a wrist-slitter or a pill-taker. I'm just a poor old guy, slogging away at his daily chores, caught in the web of a nutty family.  
My daughter, after eight years of alternating between having babies, collecting degrees, and moving from one sleazy place to another, seemed to have reformed.  
A little over two years ago, she got a job, teaching in Moosonee, one of the armpits of Canada. But the money was good, she enjoyed her work, and she swore, "I'm never going to be poor again."  
That sounded pretty good to me, having bailed her out on half a dozen occasions and spent a goodly few thousand on tuition fees, living expenses, baby presents and such. She was offered a department head's position, accepted it, and seemed ready for another year in the north.  
Three weeks later she informed us that she was quitting the teaching game, moving to Hull, Quebec, and looking for a job. Three months later, she's poor again, and hasn't a

job. That's about standard in our family.  
My son is equally impervious to the fact that we live in a capitalist society. Perhaps that's not quiet accurate. But he doesn't exactly ooze with the work ethic. He's not afraid of work, but he's an idealist. That, and 40 cents, will buy you a cup of coffee in this country.  
At present, he works two nights a week as a waiter in a classy restaurant. Makes good money, but working more at that would cramp his other life. On the side, he treats people with reflexology, a type of massage, at \$25 a rattle. So he's not broke.  
But he rents a piano, takes lessons in music composition and jazz, and recently forked out \$500 for a course in healing people. All he wants is about ten thousand bucks to go back to Paraguay, buy some land, build a centre for the dissemination of Ba-ha-i and healing by natural methods.  
When he has money, he blows it. Expensive gifts to his parents long-distance calls, but buys his clothes at second-hand shops. Recently gave us a beautiful book, and a week later applied (to us) for a \$300 loan, interest to be paid. He was "a little short." Only after the cheque was written and gone did we find out what for: to visit an old friend in a hospital in New Jersey. I wept a little, but not for long. I'm insured.  
One thing about Hugh. He brings us interesting guests. The last one was a diviner,

84 years old, as spry as a cricket, and full of either super-sensitivity or you-know-what.  
This octogenarian's name is Campbell. I never got his second name because he never stopped talking or divining. He'd brought his divining-rod with him, and went dowsing around the house. He discovered that there were six streams flowing under our house, sending off radiation that was making my wife insomniac.  
Immaculately dressed, he'd flop on the floor in his expensive gray flannel suit, assure us that you had to sleep with your head to the east, leap up, and do some more dowsing. Claimed he could find water, minerals (oil for all I know). Then he and Hugh went out and pounded stakes into the ground at strategic spots around the house, to destroy the radiation (I think.)  
Campbell was in both world wars, slogged it out on a prairie farm in the depression, worked in mining, and is all set to take off with Hugh for Paraguay, "just for the hell of it." He's a little deaf in one ear, a little blind in one eye, and just plain little, about five feet six. But he's full of ginger and has more interest in life than the average 16 year old.  
Then, of course, there's my wife. Time and again she has laid it on the line: "No more money to those kids. They've been bleeding us for years."  
Then comes a woeful phone call or a down-in-the-mouth letter, and all her resolution

flies out the window. Or down the phone line. She thinks nothing of \$100 a month long-distance bills, when the "kids", 34 and 30, need help.  
Last weekend she phoned my daughter three times, told her she was coming to visit, to take her out to dinner, to take her to a super hair-dresser, and to buy her a new wardrobe. Then she asked me if I could scratch up a grand. And I don't mean a grand piano. We have one of those.  
And yet I hope she carries out her promises (threats?) It would be worth a cool thousand, which I don't have, to get the old lady off my back for a week, buck up my daughter's morale, improve the grandboys' manners, and crash the daughter into a job as head of the CBC or something, which my wife is not incapable of doing when she gets rolling.  
Just today comes a letter from a nephew in Costa Rica, telling me his mother's estate is till not settled, even after my intervention, and that he thinks he's being screwed by a Toronto lawyer, who refuses to answer the boy's letters.  
So I have to dig into that one and do some bullying or threatening. My Uncle Ivan is still the patriarch of the family, at 90. They say I look just like him. I don't want to be the patriarch of the family.  
I just want to be a crusty old bachelor, etc., etc.

## Mine is an active family