

Rolled up sleeves for a good cause

Dear Editor:

On Dec. 9, I had the opportunity to visit the Midland Blood Donors' Clinic, sponsored by the Huronia Branch of the Red Cross.

An impressive achievement! The citizens of your communities have generously donated and worked very hard on behalf of those patients in hospital who will receive the benefits of your efforts.

You may be interested to know there are about 1,400 clinics conducted annually throughout the Central Ontario region.

This area extends 30 miles west and 80 miles east of Toronto, and north to Huntsville.

Donor registrations at the clinics range from less than 100 to the highest category of 400 or more donors.

Only 2 per cent of all clinics held in 1981 have

registered 400 donors.

My records show Midland clinic registered 460 donors.

At this time of the year it is important to build up the blood bank reserves two or three weeks in advance of the pending holiday season.

This helps to ensure there is an adequate supply available for those patients who require it.

A timely success by the people in Midland-Penetanguishene areas.

After reading the coverage given by The Midland Times back to Nov. 18, it is clear how the competitive spirit you have generated has contributed to your successful clinic.

Yours sincerely,
—Mr. A. S. Doberstein,
Administrator.



This was the scene at the Dec. 9 blood donors' clinic in Midland. Literally hundreds of donors showed up to give the gift of life

Society says, 'Thanks'

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On behalf of the Midland Horticultural Society I like to express our appreciation for your assistance and co-operation during the past year.

On behalf of the Midland Horticultural Society I'd like to express our appreciation for your assistance and co-operation during the past year.

Our announcements were publicized at the right time in your paper and for this we are grateful.

We do hope your services and help will continue on.

May I take this opportunity to extend an invitation to you for the Society's Annual Meeting and Pot Luck Supper on Jan. 25, 1982, 6:30 p.m. at the Calvary Baptist Church.

Thank you, Sincerely,
—Mrs. Wilma Scharizer
613 Bayview Drive
Midland, Ont.

Shirley Whittington



The vigilantes are still at it. In the US they are redoubling their efforts to sterilize or sweep away books which they consider offensive. The clean-up crew includes some unusual books on its hit list - *Kramer vs Kramer*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *The Thornbirds*, for instance. Non-fiction books that need their mouths washed out with soap include *The Art of Loving* by Erich Fromm, and *Huxley's Brave New World*.

Meanwhile some magazine stands continue to erupt in pustules like *Penthouse* and *Soldier of Fortune*.

SOF, as its fans affectionately call it, is edited by a Vietnam veteran and is a horrifying manifestation of the wild-west, righteous-right spirit abroad in some corners of the continent. A glance at the various editorial departments listed on the masthead reveals the magazine's personality. There are editors in charge of military small arms, hand gun hunting, military history, martial arts, explosives and demolitions and military affairs.

The editors proudly tell the story of how

they persuaded one banker to help them during the hungry early days of the publication. The financier thumbed through a copy, and stopped at a photo of a dead Rhodesian native soldier. "I never read anything that doesn't have a bridge column," he said.

The fund-seeking editor thought quickly. "Oh - we have a bridge column. How to build them, how to capture them and how to blow them up."

He got his loan and SOF is growing steadily under a banner which proclaims "We print what others can't or won't...above all to defend our country against its enemies."

As you can imagine, there isn't a lot of what you might call home centred advertising in SOF. There are no Lipton Cuppa Soup ads, and no pitches from Pampers or Fisher-Price.

In fact, the ads are mostly small, and to my mind, furtive looking. Through mail-order coupons in *Soldier of Fortune* you can buy camouflage suits (known in the trade as

Just another dirty magazine?

"cammies") in a variety of patterns -- "leaf", "woodland" or "desert". You can buy guns and holsters, and a 12,000 volt electric prod which recharges on household current. Also advertised is a blow gun -- "not a toy! Has 100 steel darts!" -- or a folding black-widow wrist slingshot. There are ads for submachine gun cases and for T-shirts inscribed with "Mercenaries do it for profit" or "let me win your hearts and minds or I'll burn your damn huts down" or "Peace through superior firepower".

Soldiers of fortune can send for books called *How Terrorists Kill*, or *Slash and Thrust* or *Home Workshop Silencers*.

For a fee you can learn the art of Ninja -- "the deadliest, most savage and terrifying self defense form known to man". Ninja involves sticking people in sensitive areas with a sharp steel thing. They die silently, almost instantly. "We expect back-lash from our readers," says the copy, "especially the squeamish ones."

Does *Soldier of Fortune* have a sense of

humour? I don't know what to make of this: "For Sale. 2 military jet aircraft made in USSR. Presently in approx 300 mm of water, 75 km off coast of Libya."

The United Nations doesn't take SOF lightly. They have established a committee to look into the publication's policies and philosophies. They are worried about the potential for recruiting and financing mercenaries.

A recent copy carries this ad: "Now hiring: Four man team. Domestic winter operation. Five day duration. Hi risk. Higher compensation. No legal hassles. Prefer 'Nam vets or ex-police. No amateurs please."

We are standing on the edge of a new and uncertain year. *Soldier of Fortune's* phenomenal growth suggests that we may be in for a terrifying wave of new pornography in which killing and violence is glorified.

Meanwhile censor forces in the US are restricting access to *The Art of Loving*. There goes another cuckoo.

Bill Smiley



SOME old fogies get all het up every year, and write letters to the editor, deploring the increasing commercialism of Christmas. I used to do this when I was a young fogie, but I've quit.

What's the difference? Well, a young fogie gets all upset about things that should upset only old fogies. As he gets older, he really doesn't give a diddle. They can play "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" on the first of July, and it doesn't bother him.

An old fogie, on the other hand, is a young fogie who has molded his ideas early, and left them there to moulder. Or increased the rigidity of his early opinions until they are molded in iron. He likes "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas", but doesn't want it played until there is some snow, and Christmas is imminent (not eminent, as my students insist).

I prefer to be a middle-fogie. This is a person who listens to young fogies, old fogies, nods solemnly in agreement, and wishes they had buried "White Christmas" with Bing Crosby, its perpetrator.

In other words, the young fogie dances in the latest, frenetic style, because he doesn't want to be called an old fogie. But he thinks it is decadent. He'd like the return of the waltz and the schottische.

While an old fogie shakes his head at the

modern, openly sexual dancing, knows the dancers are all going to the hot place, and would like to see the return of the waltz and the schottische (polka, what have you?)

The middle-fogie says, "Jeez, there but for the grace of God, Go I." Or, "Holey ole moley, I wish my arthritis would ease up. I'd love to try it, especially with that girl who's just kicked off her shoes and displayed her navel." He'd like the return of the waltz, but never learned to count past two in the one-two-three of the waltz, and gets tangled up, and falls on his face, in a fast polka or schottische.

This brilliant analogy, gentle reader, if you are still there, represents my attitude toward the commercialization of Christmas. I can turn off the commercials and ignore the town's brave decorations. Or I can crab when they commence, or are erected (sorry, that's a dirty word now).

Or I can say, "Cheeze'n rice, I wish I were back in business again, pulling in all those dollars that should be going for food and fuel."

As a middle fogie, I choose to shut out the carols that begin Nov. 1st, ignore the drooping angels on town decorations that were erected (there it is again) on Nov. 8th, and merely set my teeth, grit them a bit, and try to get through the Christmas season, bearing in mind that the Minister of Finance wants a

This column has something to do with Christmas

little piece of every action going on in town, out of town, and across the country.

The aforementioned gentleman, if you'll pardon the euphemism, after preaching a budget of equity and restraint, went out to lunch with a few of his ilk, and ran up a lunch bill of between \$600 and \$2,000, depending on which version you read.

That, to me, is the real Christmas spirit. His boss, King Pierre the First, has expressed similar sentiments. "If they can't afford filet mignon, let them eat boiled sumac bushes". Very tasty, by the way, and a true national dish, along with pumpkin soup.

I don't really know where I'm going with this column, but I have to live up to the billing another teacher gave me this week, after he'd arm-twisted me into talking to his creative writing club:

"Wednesday afternoon, we are going to have a seminar on writing, headed by Bill Smiley, former reporter, editor, publisher, and author of a syndicated column that appears in more than 150 papers across Canada." It sounded great. Like those November Christmas carols. But I cannot say, "That's a lot of crap, John."

Little do the kids know that I was a reporter because everybody else was doing something useful; that I was an editor because nobody else wanted to take the blame; that I was a publisher only because I owed half of a \$30,000

mortgage; and that I am a household word across Canada, almost inevitably preceded by the prefix "bull".

My colleague didn't mention that I wrote stories about nothing happening in town that week, just to fill up a hole on the front page; that I infuriated merchants and township reeves and little old ladies, and had to bear the brunt; that I personally carried the newspapers to the post office in bags weighing about 280 pounds; that I helped stamp and roll up the out-of-town papers; or that I am neither rich nor famous.

However, the show must go on, whether it's "Good King Wenceslaus" in November, or yours truly talking a group of youngsters into adopting the glamorous life of journalism, at 60 hours a week, and basic pay a little below unemployment insurance.

But I must admit, the Christmas spirit sort of grabs you, whether it's by the pocket-book, or the short and curly.

Just this week, I wrote a letter of recommendation for a student. If somebody checked it out, I would be on the stand for perjury, moppery and gawk. But, what the heck, a commercial is a commercial, even though it's a tissue of lies, half-truths and exaggeration.

Those Christmas commercials can't bother a middle-fogie. I just wish I were being paid for writing some of them.