

Shirley Whittington



"Mummy's at fire practice."

That's how our youngest used to answer the telephone years ago, on Thursday nights. I often wonder what in the world he thought his mummy did every week at the two hour "fire practice".

Was she taking lessons in dismissing people abruptly?

Were we all learning how to load large cannon?

Was it a school for pyromaniacs?

I know now why he was always so glad to see me the next morning, unscorched and whole after what he must have imagined were two hair-raising hours.

Of course it was choir practice that claimed me once a week, and still does. I'll sing until I'm fired, when I suppose that phrase "fire practice" will take on a new meaning.

Singing in a group may be coming back into fashion. It is certainly cheaper than playing a clarinet or a snare drum since you don't have to keep buying reeds or drum sticks. Singing is convenient too, since your instrument is so portable. And, under most conditions, the human voice can be heard without being plugged into a zillion watts of electricity.

I really enjoy my association with our

church choir and I have talked about it enthusiastically to my friends. Some of them want to join our choir but the auditions worry them.

Here's my contribution to music in our community. I'm about to reveal the secrets of the church choir audition so that those of you who are eager to be part of an organized group of hymn-dingers can study at home and pass with flying colours.

Briefly -- in a note-shell as it were -- you must be able to sing, walk without falling down, sew, bake and sell tickets. (If our choir leader were here, she'd go on about being able to read music. Picky, picky.)

The singing part is easy. Either you can or you can't. If you can't, you yourself are usually the first to know.

The other qualifications for membership in a large choir are more demanding. Female choristers have to sew their own costumes -- for secular events anyway. Over the years I have guided my Singer (of course) sewing machine across floral print, salmon polyester, and an apple green crepe which was later updated with a little capelet. I might add that those of us with weight

Confessions of a chorus girl

problems welcomed the little capelets with open (and quivering) arms.

Now our choir wears crisp blazered ensembles for special occasions. We look like celestial airline hostesses.

As well as the ability to make our secular costumes, choristers also have to know how to sew on dome fasteners. On Sundays, we wear flowing robes and various parts of them frequently come unstuck.

Why do singers need to know how to bake?

We socialise frequently and as a group we ingest large quantities of egg salad sandwiches, crisp green gherkins and iced brownies. Sometimes we invite other musicians to perform with us and that gives rise to the Pot Luck supper. Pot luck is not nearly as casual and slap-up as you may imagine. Our Pot lucks are carefully choreographed so that the casseroles, salads and meringue pies come out even.

Male choisters are usually excused from the above duties if they bring a note stating that they are on intimate terms with someone who can sew dome fasteners on and make portable edibles. Potential baritones, tenors and basses have to demonstrate that they understand stacking chairs, and know how to move pianos.

Both male and female candidates must demonstrate an ability to walk without falling down while singing, rading from the hymn book and negotiating the chancel steps without knocking over the flower arrangements. A fair amount of coordination is required for all this. It's a little like rubbing your stomach and patting your head at the same time. If Joe Clark has ever been a member of a United Church choir I am not aware of it. Certainly Gerald Ford never has.

Finally the auditioning candidate is tested on whether or not he or she can sell tickets. An actual test is set up in which a person must persuade a friend to spend two dollars to hear him sing rather than on a watermelon.

The audition concludes with two minor items. Can the candidate carry on a conversation with a neighbouring singer while the director is actually conducting?

Can the candidate sing an entire cantata without once looking up to see if the director is still there?

It isn't easy to become a member of a church choir. Naturally I was thrilled to pass the audition years ago, and I'll stay until they fire me.

As far as I'm concerned, it's an O.K. chorale.

Bill Smiley



SINCE I haven't had time in the past week to brood over a great national, international, or spiritual theme, as is my wont, he said, this week, we'll have to be contented with some short shots, or, as some put it, the shot-gun approach, in which we aim at everything and often hit nothing.

Although she is quite slim, my wife plays a large part in my life. So I'll get rid of her first. And she can take any meaning she likes from that.

You've probably seen a magician pulling eggs out of people's ears, and even out of his own. But have you ever seen an aging teacher-columnist with eggs coming out of his ears? Drop around.

My old lady, torn between inflation and my threats to retire on a piddly pension, has been caught up in a great savings kick. The results would be hilarious, if they weren't so expensive.

I mentioned eggs. Recently she spotted a great bargain on eggs, a saving of about 30 cents a dozen. We already had a dozen and a half in the fridge. She rushed out and bought three dozen.

Have you ever existed on two boiled eggs for breakfast, an egg sandwich for lunch, and bacon and eggs for dinner, for about 10 days straight, so that the eggs wouldn't go rotten? I'm so sick of eggs I can't even eat chicken.

Speaking of which, another bargain -- great hairy chicken legs, at about 10 per cent off. At least you can freeze them, but you risk instant concussion when you open the little freezer in the top of the fridge, and are buried under an avalanche of chicken legs, hamburger, pork chops, frozen loaves of bread, frozen hamburger buns and frozen you-name-it, all bought at bargain prices.

It takes half an hour, and the two of us, to get all that junk fitted back into the freezer, and a running jump at the door to force it closed. Some of you oldsters will remember Fibber McGee's closet. That's it.

She came across a bargain in margarine, and there are eight pounds of it stuck in the bottom half of the fridge. Not even room to cool a bottle of beer.

There was another hot buy on toilet tissue, and we have enough around the house to paper the Kremlin. I'm using third-rate shaving cream because it was cheaper. She hasn't time to iron a shirt, because she's so busy chasing around after "specials".

But I shouldn't complain. The savings are fantastic. However, the narky little book-keeper in the back of my mind notes that I have to buy four newspapers a week, instead of one, and that the gas bill has gone up about 20 per cent because she doesn't do all her shopping in one store any more, but dashes

She's always on my mind!

around to three or four, miles apart. I figure we're only going behind on the bargains at about 30 per cent a week.

Between her bargains, and her canvassing for the Cancer Society, I can scarcely insert a "diddy-poop" into the conversation any more.

I'll try to get back to my favorite themes: the iniquity of the Finance Minister, the obtuseness of the school board, the rotten weather, the unreality of the administration, the boibles of my fellow teachers, and the adolescent senility of my students. Normal, sane grouching, in other words.

She blithely ignores me as she babbles on about the latest bargain in deodorants (which, on closer examination, proved that we were paying more than the regular rate), and the eccentricities of the people she is canvassing.

Her eyes sparkle with anger as she relates how she approached a house with a car in the driveway, television blaring inside, an upper window curtain twitching, and nobody would answer the door, even after 18 rings, and a quick whip around to the back door.

I try to tell her, after my own years of canvassing, that that's quite normal. When people peek out and see a determined-looking woman, with receipts in one hand, and a pen in the other, approaching their house, they instinctively hide. They know she's either selling something, or wants a donation to something.

And there are the people whose husband "gives at the office," and whose husbands tell their canvassers that "my wife looks after all charitable donations at home."

And then she's a sucker. One pensioner, obviously lonely, kept her in conversation for half an hour, refused to donate a nickel and an hour later, picked her up in his car, drove her to his house and gave her a couple of bucks, "because you're working so hard at it."

At another house, the door was opened by a man who'd recently had a heart attack. His wife had already contributed, but, he insisted mine come in, have a cup of coffee, and hear about his attack. We have played golf with the couple and have known them casually for years. But, in an excess of nerves or something, she game him a kiss on the cheek, right on his front porch, as they were parting. And right across the street from the Anglican minister's. I told her the wires would be humming that night.

And then there was the drunk in the apartment building, and the woman who wouldn't answer her door, but came running out after her in bare feet, and . . . but that's the way it goes.

Fascinating stuff, bargains and canvassing. But I haven't kept my bargain. This was to be a shot-gun column, full of aphorisms, ironies, and biting little snippets. And all I've talked about is that crazy lady I've been married to for 35 years. Oh, well. C'est la vie domestique.

Down Memory Lane

Centennial Fanfare:

The "Down Memory Lane" theme has been acquiring increased significance. The Penetanguishene centennial book has gone to press and it captures both in nostalgia pictures and in prose the history of the town. Remember that you can guarantee a copy of this book by reserving yours with a five dollar deposit at the town office.

Another "Memory Lane" that has recently received community attention is the new centennial row.

Centennial Row is the new raised medians and garden areas that will be constructed down near the dock area. Here the pledged trees will be planted.

The majority of individuals and groups who have pledged trees to this area as well as to memorial park have indicated in the parchment document that their trees were pledged to remember parents, relatives, or a family commitment to the community. These trees will become a living memory and a visual reminder of a centennial celebration.

On Friday, June 4 the First Presbyterian Church will be holding their annual June Luncheon but this year the event has appropriately a centennial theme.

In addition to the lovely luncheon there will be displays of old photographs, memorabilia and articles collected to

recreate another period. The first congregation was comprised of Scottish Regiments stationed at the Military Establishments so it is not surprising to learn that even the building will celebrate its own centennial in 1988.

Tickets can be reserved by phoning Dorothy Beatty at 526-7780. Remember lunches will be served in both Penetanguishene and Midland. A \$3 ticket will enable you to enjoy a lovely luncheon at one of the three servings: 11:15 a.m., 12 noon and 12:45 p.m.

Call and reserve your ticket today. There is a great deal of behind the scenes organization going on to finalize

plans for the last gala weeks of the centennial.

Plans are finalized for Festival des Quenouilles. The Family Life Centre has still not revealed all of the games and activities scheduled for all age groups at their June 20, Family Fun Day.

One event to look forward to is the challenge baseball match between the Penetanguishene Police and the town fathers.

Tickets are presently available for the centennial quilt draw and also tickets for the circus and the heritage banquet are available. Watch for more information and plan to participate.

You and Your Credit



by Paul Mattar, Credit Bureau of Midland, Penetanguishene, Collingwood

In times gone by it was virtually an automatic conclusion that when a man and woman were married that the woman would immediately adopt her husband's family name and use it for the rest of her life.

Today this decision is no longer so readily and quickly made. In fact, as well as continuing to use her maiden name, some women choose to use both her maiden name coupled with her new married name.

When you get married there is no law that requires you to adopt your husband's name.

You are entitled to use any name you want as long as you do not intend to use it for fraudulent purposes.

Regardless of the name you prefer to use, you can have only one legal name on official documents and this includes credit applications.

If you decide to keep your maiden name after marriage, you can retain it as your legal name on all official papers.

If you adopt your husband's name and have all documents changed accordingly, your new name becomes your legal name even if you use your maiden name in other circumstances.

Whose name to use?

If you adopt your husband's name and later decide you would prefer to use your maiden name, you can request that the organizations that you deal with do so on the basis of this name.

It's a good idea to advise your local Credit Bureau of your decision to avoid difficulties on future credit transactions you might wish to complete. It will not be considered your legal name, however, and you cannot force anyone to recognize it as such.

We recently had a case where a divorced woman applied for credit one day under her maiden name, another day under her married name and a third day under her future husband's name.

This was planned and organized confusion

intended to mislead the businesses involved. It goes without saying that the lady had not the slightest intention of paying these accounts back if credit accommodation had been granted.

Many credit grantors frown on aliases and who can blame them. If a person is not responsible enough to use their proper legal name, are they responsible enough to pay their obligations as promised at the time of opening a charge account.

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.