

Shirley Whittington



Last week I was asked to donate a baby picture of myself for a community project. The photo when I delivered it was greeted with giggles and squeals the like of which I have never enjoyed -- not in my whole adult life.

Modesty comes easily to me since I have much to be modest about, but I admit to a strange glow of pride when I realized that somebody thought the infant SW worth a squeal and a giggle.

This is no reflection on me. All baby pictures are cute because all babies are cute. Parents, as far as I know, are not required by law to have their babies formally photographed, but you'd think they were.

The sitting usually comes somewhere in the second year of life, when the kid can sit up without rolling over like an overripe squash and those first chalky, fragile teeth are on display. It must be arranged after that horrible time when a kid yells at any face that isn't his mothers. There is a golden time however when a kid can be persuaded to smile wetly or at least to look amiable for a short time. And so the child is washed, combed, and arrayed in something which his grandmother bought (and which must be washed by hand and dried flat) and is hauled off to the photographer's.

There are no bad baby pictures. Adults

usually end up in the family album squinting, badly overexposed and trying to hide behind a pubescent nephew.

On the other hand, an adult who goes to a professional photographer cannot expect natural results. Most of us get our hair done first and strive to singularize our chins by lifting them as if we were listening attentively to an eight foot tour guide. By the time the zits and wrinkles are retouched. The person in the photograph looks like a musical comedy star of the sixties who might be distantly related to you. There is nothing more demoralizing than to show someone a studio portrait of yourself -- softfocus, aloof yet gracious, elegant, single chinned -- and to hear the viewer cry, 'Migawd. Is that YOU?'

Babies are innocent of wattles and warts and they photograph superbly. One simply plunks a baby on a table and it subsides into its own comfortable plumpness and awaits the silly shenanigans of the photographer. 'See the bunny? Watch the bunny. The bunny's going goo goo. Whooh! See the bunny?'

Lordy. No wonder the babies giggle. Between goos and whoos, the photographer cranks off a whole roll of shots, and the parents then choose the one picture that is most adorable. And this is how we arrive at that smiling rosy cherub - the picture of clear-

Just picture this...

eyed innocence, hope and promise.

Nobody ever throws a baby picture out.

Do you realize that if all the baby pictures on all the bedroom walls in Canada were to fall down at this very moment, the resulting crash would put a sonic boom to shame.

Actually, we need baby pictures. Without them, what would we put on the TV? What would we give to the grandparents at Christmas? And consider the pleasant diversion they offer to overnight guests. Put your visitor in the spare bedroom with the framed infants, and let him guess which is Sarah, Sean, Jason or Jonas.

I know one elderly mother who admits openly that she can't readily identify the three smiling blobs on her piano. 'I think that's Walter,' she'll say, 'but then his sister didn't have much hair at that age so it could be her. Or it could be Arthur. He had a sweater like that.'

The hospital where our daughter was born was so sure that all babies were adorable that it ran a successful baby picture scam for years which netted thousands of dollars annually. An automatic camera took a colour picture of newborns seconds after they were hatched, before anybody had time to get them properly unfolded and ironed out.

The resulting photographs were then whipped in to the bedside of the mother who

was lying there happily contemplating her knees which she hadn't seen for six months. Weak and soppy with newly surging maternal instinct, she'd order dozens of prints. The babies kept coming, the camera kept clicking and the money continued roll in.

I confess to burying that picture of our darling daughter underneath the bath towels at the back of the linen closet, but her first baby portrait is prominently displayed and I wouldn't part with it for anything.

We never throw baby pictures out. I still have my father sitting in an impossibly elegant perambulator which was obviously the property of the photographer. My mother sits like a tiny curly-haired potentate upon a bearshin rug. I am immortalized under a painted tree with a green ball (also the property of the photographer) clutched to my bosom. The Squire is sweetly dimpled, and hugs a sailboat.

Think of this the next time you meet a grizzled adult with a sour face and rheumy eyes. Somewhere in somebody's living room or bedroom, there is a mint copy of that person, unlined, unused, framed and perfectly beloved.

You should especially think of this when that face is yours, staring back at you from the bathroom mirror. Remember -- you were a beautiful baby, baby.

Sure you were.

Bill Smiley



THERE must be something sweet about our big old house. We've all heard about somebody having a bee in his bonnet. But a hornet in the bathroom.

I just killed a dirty big brute a few minutes ago, disposed of the corpse, sat down at my typewriter and heard an ominous sound, like a tiny chain saw, looked up for the source and saw three more of the beasts crawling on a window.

With nothing else handy, I picked up a particularly waspish letter from one of my readers and beat them to death with no apologies to conservationists. You don't play around with hornets.

They'd obviously crawled in the open bathroom window after being 'exterminated' by the chaps doing brick-work on the house. They'd run across a nest in the bricks and thought they's killed all the hornets with an aerosol 'bomb.' They hadn't.

During the summer, one of my grandboys was stung by wasps, cosily nesting in a wood-pile. We eliminated them with a vicious counterattack.

Last week, my wife, touring the outside of the house to check the bricks, came across a

huge, old-fashioned bee-hive attached to a corner of a window. It was not uninhabited as a little careful observance proved.

I had experience as a kid with these things. We'd find them in the woods, get a long stick to knock them down, and usually get well stung in the process.

So, it was down to the store to get a 'bomb.' The instructions said to use it at dawn or at dusk, when the bees are quiet. I decided to do the job at dusk, so had a little snooze after dinner.

Woke up when my wife came in, beaming as though she'd climbed a ladder and bombed the bee-hive, silly nit, without even having me there to hold the ladder for her. Anyway, we got rid of that lot.

A few years ago I was having a new roof put on the house. The roofers ripped open a hornet's nest and the neighbors were treated to the sight of three men doing what appeared to be a Spanish fandango 30 feet up in the air. It was funny, but not to the roofers, who were badly stung.

To bee or not to bee. I hope that is no longer the question. I don't want to wind up with a bee in my bonnet about bees, wasps

To bee or not to bee!

and hornets. But I wish they'd go and build somewhere else.

A lot of other strange things went on this past summer. The back of my house looks naked, after being covered for years by a beautiful vine. Had the whole thing torn off because it was creeping into my brickwork like an octopus.

Somebody stuck tow lines of stakes with red tops around two sides of my house. Somebody else put dabs of paint of various hues all over my lawn. Green, yellow and red. I suppose one's the Bell, another's the gas company, and the third is the public utilities, or maybe just someone who likes painting lawns.

I've never seen any of the mysterious painters, and am beginning to grow uneasy. If they all start putting in cables and gas lines and water lines under my lawn, anything could happen, with today's workmen.

Can't you imagine them getting all tangled up down there? Pick up the telephone and you get an electric shock. Turn on the tap and gas hisses out. Flip on your furnace and water comes gushing up through the ducts.

We've had workmen hurtling in and out all summer carrying pipes and things, as we

switch to gas. We've had men come and dig up the lawn in the wrong place, replace the sod sloppily, and leave another gash that will turn brown and die.

We've been awakened every morning by great thuds and pounding as the brickwork progresses. But I feel sorry for the masonry men. They just get their scaffold up and the rain comes pelting down. They sit in their truck until it clears up, climb the scaffold, and get soaked in another shower.

We had family from the middle of June to the middle of August, three days holidays, then more family. Two 90th birthdays in the connection.

My heart sank as that letter arrived near the end of August, that cheery little letter from the high school principal, telling us about Opening Day. I felt as if I'd had no holidays at all.

To cap it all, I'm broke. New furnace and brickwork cleaned me out. Painting the house will have to wait until next summer.

And I hope you had a grand holiday, too, especially if you took it in August, which was more like October.

Investor's Inquiry



by Charles Colling

Option trading on stocks has been around for a long time although only in the past seven years or so has option trading been carried on in Canada through the facilities of the Montreal and Toronto Stock Exchanges. Previous to this, option trading was carried on in the unlisted market and in those days applied primarily to penny stocks.

Exchange traded options are all transacted through the Trans Canada Options Corporation. These options give the holder the right to buy from the Corporation in the case of a Call option, or sell to the Corporation in the case of a Put option, the number of shares or units of the underlying security to which it pertains. These options are at a stated exercise price plus commission prior to a fixed expiration date.

For example, "ABC May 20 Call" means a

call option covering a unit of trading (one hundred shares) or ABC stock which may be purchased at twenty dollars per share at any time prior to the expiry date of the option in May. For this option to work for the client, ABC stock by May would have to trade sufficiently above twenty dollars per share to cover the option premium plus any brokerage charges involved. In the case of a dividend paying stock, the holder of the shares, not the holder of the call option, would receive the dividend.

This risk of purchasing Calls may be illustrated by comparing Investor X, who, for a total investment of Two Thousand Dollars (plus commission charges) buys one hundred shares of ABC Limited at Twenty Dollars per share. Investor Y, who invests Two Thousand Dollars (plus commission charges) in Calls covering one thousand shares of ABC

Option trading

Limited, on an exercise price of Twenty Dollars per share. (hypothetical)

Both X and Y anticipate a rise in the market price of ABC Limited, but should their expectations not be realized, X's loss would be quite different from Y's loss. If, at the expiration of the Calls, the price of the shares of ABC has fallen to Fifteen Dollars per share (and assuming ABC has paid no dividends), X will have suffered a paper loss only of Five Hundred Dollars (plus being out of pocket the commission charges, and his investment will be worth Fifteen hundred dollars. He will not be required to realize his loss, and may recover it should ABC shares later rise in price while he still owns the original hundred shares.

Investor Y, on the other hand, if he has not sold the Calls, will have suffered the loss of his entire Two Thousand Dollars (plus commission charges) with no possibility of recovery. Indeed, in the above example,

Investor X would have had no gain or loss (other than commission charges paid) if the market price of ABC had remained at Twenty Dollars, but Investor Y would have lost his entire investment. Moreover, if ABC Limited had paid dividends, they would have been received by X as a shareholder but not by Y as the holder of Calls.

Owing to space limitations, this discussion will be carried on in the next column.

Charles Colling is the resident manager of Yorkton Securities Inc. in Midland. In sending in questions to be answered, please remember Securities Commission Regulations will not permit opinions or recommendations on any specific securities through this column.

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.

Kathy Tune can be proud of her logo

CONGRATULATIONS to Wyevale Central Public School pupil Kathy Tune.

The Grade 5 D'Aousts' Bay youngster came up with the winning design in the Wyevale Recreation Logo Contest which was open to all students in the school.

Kathy's logo will hang in the parkette in the heart of the hamlet for all to see. Kathy Tune, her family and friends can be proud of her accomplishments. Well done Kathy.