

Shirley Whittington



What is soft, cuddly and waits for you in bed every night?

Your pillow of course, and most North Americans can't sleep without one. My favourite handbag is only my favourite because it is easily squashed into an emergency pillow on long trips.

I don't know why we feel we have to sleep on pillows. It's part of the softening-up process of civilization I suppose. Animals that live in the wilds don't sleep on pillows but domestic dogs and cats soon learn to prefer a cushioned surface for slumber.

Pillows are an essential part of my personal going-to-sleep routine. First, I remove my Citadel pillow - the one I use for reading in bed. This is a big bulky pillow, supportive and not slippery. Once removed from under my shoulders, the Citadel is flung across the bedroom - an act of wanton silliness to which I look forward each evening. After a day dealing with recalcitrant things (and sometimes people) picking up that pillow and letting it fly is tremendously satisfying. I have beaned the Squire with it a couple of times, but it serves him right for wandering around the bedroom when he should be all tucked in for the night. Anyway - it's only a

pillow.

The second part of the going-to-sleep ritual is punching the remaining pillow into a shape suitable for sleeping upon. Once the pillow (small, soft, and feather-filled) has been beaten into a customized wedge shape that fits under my chin and shoulder, I relax and await the sandman.

Now I am surprised to read that someone has invented a special neck-support pillow with an undercut edge that looks a lot like the pillow I beat up each night. The big difference is the new "shape of sleep" pillow costs \$65.

So - technology strikes again. We've put men on the moon, invented birthday candles that re-light themselves and typewriters that remember documents they wrote a week ago. Now two men - one of them a doctor - have changed overnights, overnight.

I am glad to see a positive change in pillow technology and I hope that the shape-of-sleep pillow (or at least a flexible softie that can be punched into a shape-of-sleep shape) might be bought in large quantities by hotel owners.

Hotels for some reason dress their beds with oversized bricks which they laughingly describe as pillows. It is impossible to punch one of these things into anything resembling

Pillow talk: software for sleepers

the undercut edge of the \$65 shape of sleep. I would hesitate to throw a hotel pillow across the room. I'd dislocate a shoulder. Any child who started a pillow fight with one of those bags of poly filla (pillow filler?) could easily murder his little sister with the first swipe.

The new shape of sleep pillows are light and soft, on the other hand. I read all this in a full page ad which featured a large close-up photograph of a beautiful girl sleeping. I think she may just have returned from a wonderful party and simply slipped into bed without removing her eyelashes and lip gloss. She is even smiling slightly. It must have been some party.

She is so beautiful and the type in the advertisement is so big and black that the whole page looks like the front page of the National Enquirer.

Further down on the page are these two cut away diagrams representing a human head and shoulder at rest. The first thing I noticed was that the top eight vertebrae are numbered - something which I imagine is a great help to those who make their livings reassembling ancient disinterred bones. I always wondered how they got them in the right order.

Anyway you can see from the diagram that the new style \$65 pillow tucks under your chin and shoulder and those vertebrae - numbers two to eight - are lined up as straight as Prussian infantrymen. That's why the girl in the picture gets to go to so many parties - she is free of nagging back pain and the agony of spine degeneration.

Thus - mankind takes another step forward. First came the basic pillow, then the foam-filled bricks used by hotels and now this neat little neck saver. In between there have been the Esdel pillows - the satin ones that are supposed to keep your hair-do intact; the huge triangular ones with arms that support readers-in-bed; the non allergenic foam ones that keep your head up alright, as if it were perched on a balloon; and the plastic travel pillows which one carries flat then and then inflates enroute - discouraging dull seat mates from further conversation.

I may buy a shape-of-sleep pillow, if I can get with it a written guarantee that I will look as beautiful while I slumber as the exotic creature in the ad.

I'm tired of sleeping with a bag over my head.

Bill Smiley



In a war, front-line troops who have been particularly hard pressed for some time by the enemy, are occasionally given a spell of R & R behind the lines. Rest and Recreation.

It gives them a chance to get clean, to sleep a decent sleep, to eat some real food instead of something resembling dog-food out of a can, and perhaps even get a few cold beers or watch an old movie. Then, supposedly rested, they go back to the front lines, the fear, the filth, the lousy grub, and the physical effort and indignities involved.

Well, I've just had 12 days R & R, and it was great. Now I'm back in the front lines again, and as General Sherman said, "War is hell."

My wife was away for 12 whole days, which I devoted to Rest and Recreation. My kind.

But mine was a little different from the typical R & R of an army unit. Normally, while serving in the front lines of the domestic war, I'm clean, I sleep decently, the grub is excellent, there is no filth, and the only problem is the constant harassment of the Top Sergeant, my old lady.

During my R & R days, I did the opposite to what soldiers do. Let myself get dirty (I didn't shave, wore old, shabby but comfortable clothes, didn't make the bed once, slept in my underwear.)

I slept like a log, but on my own terms, from about 4 a.m. until noon, or 6 a.m. until af-

ternoon. Or whenever I felt like it.

I ate well, but not in the same manner in which I eat on the front lines: meat, potatoes, vegetables and dessert for dinner; a simple breakfast of a boiled egg or a banana with toast, peanut butter and tea. "And don't forget your vitamin pills."

Nope. I had bacon and eggs for dinner. I had ice cream and peaches for breakfast, if I felt like it. If I didn't I had apple strudel and pears, or maybe just a hunk of cheese and a glass of beer.

And I chose my own hours. None of this eight o'clock breakfast. Sometimes I had it at 4 a.m., sometimes at 11 a.m.

None of this noon-hour for lunch. At three in the afternoon, I might settle down to a good book, and a big plate of head-cheese, a huge dollop of cottage cheese, a dill pickle, a rosy tomato, right out of a friend's garden, cut into chunks (my wife likes them sliced) and half a can of cold pork and beans. A good protein diet.

Occasionally, I'd splurge on a frozen food meal, but they're generally pretty lousy and very expensive. And another trouble is that I read the directions, and forget them, or get engrossed in a book or newspaper. As a result they were overcooked and overflowing into the oven (a cardinal sin), or they were half-rare and I threw them out.

A rest from the 'war'

And another difference from the soldiers is that I didn't watch any old movies. I don't think the TV set was on more than twice during this golden period. Thus, I didn't have to quibble with anyone about what we'd watch, which I do on the home front. I didn't watch nuthin', and I'm sure I missed nuthin'.

What I did do was go to a couple of movies at the local cinema, all by myself. My wife just won't go to movies, because she falls asleep after 10 minutes. She suffers from insomnia, and can sleep only in movies, on boats, trains, buses, or aircraft, on none of which I can close my eyes.

One of the most restful parts of my R & R period was sitting in the backyard, feet up, reading a good escape novel. No guilt feeling, nothing to do but bat away the odd wasp.

Another was reading the morning paper, perhaps at three in the afternoon, without just sitting there with the thing on my knees, listening to all the troubles about our children, her father, the upcoming wedding, her lack of sleep, and my general shortcomings as a husband and father.

Another was forgetting about money. I just piled all the bills on the counter in the kitchen, and put them out of my mind. She likes paying bills. I abhor it.

Another was the telephone. If I felt like answering it, I did. If I didn't, I didn't. For

me, the telephone is one of the great sores in modern society. Every time it rings, somebody wants something. It never rings to bring you good news. I answered it a few times, found the caller had a wrong number, and quit.

All in all, it was Elysium. A quiet trip to the library to pick up four more books, a coffee in my favorite place, a little shopping, a quiet dinner of cucumbers, ham, tomatoes and a couple of hardboiled eggs, a quiet read until four in the morning.

But paradise were not enow. Despite the fact that I washed four days of dishes, ran the vacuum over the floor, and made the bed, I was caught in the act.

I knew exactly when her bus was coming in. I was to meet it. Despite this, and due to my sleeping habits (I'd had one hour the night before), I had a fine dinner, then fell deep into the arms of Morpheus, and missed the bus. She was, shall we say, purple with rage.

Then she checked the garbage pail, and found there were only two little bags in it. It's usually full. This convinced her that I'd been too lazy to cook a meal and had been eating out all the time. All hell broke loose. Imagine being subjected to a tirade because you haven't filled the garbage pail.

Next time she's away, I'll have three garbage bags full of empty mickeys, frozen food boxes, and great bundles of corn husks.

Powerful new weapon aimed at cancer fight

It packs a punch

A powerful new weapon in the fight against cancer is being installed at the Ontario Cancer Foundation in Toronto.

Called Therac-25, the device is known technically as a high-energy medical linear accelerator and the first unit was formally unveiled at the Atomic Energy of Canada plant near Ottawa recently by federal Energy Minister, Marc Lalonde.

It is more than 30 years since the first cancer therapy machines, pioneered in Canada and using cobalt as the source of radiation, were put into service.

It has recently been calculated that these devices, which are in world-

wide use, have helped to successfully treat more than four million patients, extending each of their lives by an average of a least three years.

More recently, cobalt machines have been joined on the world market by linear accelerators capable of delivering more penetrating X-ray beams. Therac-25, its beam delivering 25 million electron-volts of energy, is some 20 times as powerful as a cobalt unit, (and 4 times the power of other accelerators), represents an all-Canadian design of world leading sophistication and performance.

A linear accelerator is a series of donut-shaped cavities which form a waveguide. Inside, microwaves set up

by a radar amplifier move electrons faster and faster, much like surfers riding an ocean wave. The longer the waveguide, the more energy can be imparted to the electrons. The challenge has been to generate a high-energy beam without using a waveguide so long it is unmanageable in a clinical unit.

The breakthrough came in the early 1970's when Dr. Stan Schriber, working at the Chalk River Nuclear Laboratories of AECL, invented a machine called a Reflexotron in which the electrons were accelerated through the same waveguide twice giving twice the acceleration for a given length of guide. From this

prototype, the clinical models were developed and refined.

Therac-25 is really two machines in one. For the treatment of cancers at or near the body's surface the electron beam energy is adjusted for depth of penetration and electrons are magnetically scanned across the cancer site.

To reach deeper tumors, the beam bombards a metal target making it give off powerful X-rays. These, in turn, are directed against the cancer site. The energy level of the machine is considered ideal for many types of cancer as well as for minimizing side effects.

We all have reasons
to be most thankful

THE PILGRIM FATHERS first observed Thanksgiving in October, 1621.

The purpose then as it was two days ago was to give thanks for a bountiful harvest.

It would be a rare person, indeed, and one to be pitied who couldn't find cause for giving thanks. Yes, our human race has its faults but it has its virtues too, which is reason enough to be thankful not only on Thanksgiving but every day of the year.

We are reminded of a grace a United Church minister taught a five-year-old boy back in 1943 which is a fitting benediction for Thanksgiving: "For friends, for fellowship and for this food we give Thee thanks, amen."