

Shirley Whittington



I don't move my lips when I read, but lately telling time has become a major challenge involving the use of my own hands and fingers as well as the hands on the face of the clock.

I'm trying to feel comfortable with twenty-four hour time -- an adjustment comparable to metric shock. It is, for instance, hard to learn that you weigh only 55 kilograms without careening off your diet.

It is hard not to crawl back under the covers when the radio announcer tells you it is ten Celsius degrees below zero.

It is hard not to think of 1950 as the year of the Beatles when in reality, it is the time a plane is leaving upon which you must be.

Since I am about to spend two weeks living on twenty-four hour time, I have been practising it her at home. This lends a sharply imperative tone to everything we do. "Get outa that bathroom," I bark. "It's 21:20 and I want to wash my hair."

"Have you shaved yet?" I ask the Squire.

"I see signs of a 17:00 o'clock shadow."

Happy hour is at 17:15 and dinner is at 18:00 and at 23:20 I put my teeth in a glass and call it a night.

I don't know who invented twenty-four hour time, but without it wars and revolutions would start untidily. Also -- people would keep missing trains which is just as well because if the trains themselves were unsure about whether a stated time was ante or post meridian, there would be collisions a-plenty.

There is nothing complicated about twenty-four hour time. You simply add twelve onto any hour that comes after lunch and then tack the minutes on the end. School goes in at 13:00 hours (one o'clock) and gets out at 15:30 (half-past three). By 16:10 the little jackals are home, pawing through the refrigerator. Many of them will have to be driven to music lessons at 17:00 hours.

The only problem is that all this adding takes time. By the time I look at my watch

Time out of hand

and decode the relative positions of big and little hand to make fourteen minutes to eight, then add eight and twelve (secretly ticking off my fingers) and then deduct fourteen from sixty (six and four are ten; borrow one; four and one is five) to get 19:46, it is no longer 19:46. It's 20:04, and whatever was supposed to happen at 19:46 is history.

Some people have watches with twenty-four hour time all marked off round the edges and this must make everything simpler. Then all you have to remember is whether you've had lunch or not.

I am pleased to be learning this new skill and I expect to be treated with a lot more respect as soon as I get the hang of announcing the time with the dry precision of Alec Guinness playing an international double agent. The folks in the grocery store will surely snap to attention when I tell them I'd like my things delivered before 14:30 please. And I can't wait to tell my son I'll pick him up

at the ski hill sharp at 16:15. That will, I think, make him quite nervous.

I plan to add other habits to my persona which will mark me as a well-travelled citizen of the world rather than as someone who grew up in a place called Coldwater. I will eat with my knife and fork in the hands for which they were intended instead of eternally switching back and forth in the North American style.

I will wear a tam.

I will cross my sevens.

I will learn to say "wireless" "petrol" and "cinema". And if I meet you in the street I will kiss you on both cheeks. Watch for me.

It is a far better world to which I go, where the hours are allowed to go out alone with out the accompaniment of Auntie Meridian or her Husband Post. There's only one thing I'm going to miss in this effecient and rational new world, and that's the After Eight dinner-mint.

I love them, but I just can't face them that early in the morning.

Bill Smiley



With 1983 newly arrived, this is the time for the goom and doom merchants, and they're having a field-day.

Just read the other day in the Globe that the western provinces are in a cataclysmic state, bordering on that of the The Great Depression of the Thirties.

According to this garbage, the west is only about two jumps ahead of the millenium, the apocalypse. The learned professor who wrote it is obviously a product of the well-nourished post-Depression era.

It seems that there are all sorts of people out of work in the west. They're having a terrible time existing on pogie and various welfare payments. Many of them scarcely know where the next twenty-four of beer is coming from.

Despite the black smoke of the professor's statistics, he doesn't know what he's talking about, as any survivor of The Depression in Western Canada will agree.

Was listening to a couple of younger (around 40) colleagues of mine recently. They couldn't understand why their parents were so concerned with such things as bargains, and turning off the lights that weren't being used.

"I guess it must have been the Depression."

chortled one. "They haven't got over the hard times, and they're scared of being destitute when they're old."

"Yeah," smirked another, who makes about as many dollars in three years as his father made in fifty. "they seem to have this thing. They run all over, looking for bargains, and worry about keeping up the house."

Neither of these chaps, or their wives, or their children, has ever missed a meal, unless by accident. Neither has ever lived under the umiliating cloud of having to "go on relief," the ultimate in soul-destroying.

"Yabbut, I paid unemployment for years," they chorus. Right. They paid in about \$100 a year, and the minute they're fired, they start to withdraw over \$100 a week, and there's no shame, no humiliation involved. The gum-mint "owes" it to them.

They will never have to live in second-hand clothes, or eat potato-skin hash or pea soup bolstered by barley. They'll be horrified if they can't send out for a pizza, or Chinese. They will never have to ride the rods, looking for non-existent work, or depend on a good-hearted housewife to give them a meal, or sleep in jail.

In short, these youngish middle-aged men don't know what a real Depression is.

They don't know what a world war is.

It just isn't fair!

They'll never know the searing reality of not knowing where the money is to come from to pay the fuel bill.

It's hardly likely that they'll ever see their mothers weeping brokenly over the sewing machine at midnight, which I have. It's improbable that they'll miss a lot. If things get tighter, and they will, these chaps may have to curtail their daughters' dancing or skating or piano lessons.

Inflation and the price of gas may forestall them from driving their sons, with sixty dollars worth of hockey equipment, to the arena at 5:30 a.m., feeling all good, and a fatherly glow, after they've dumped, or picked up, the kids.

But they'll miss the closeknit loyalty of a family in truly hard times, when everybody accepted the cold fact that there was no money. And everybody chipped in to help.

They'll miss the warmth in the family circle that is playing parchesi or monopoly or crocholine, instead of competing wildly in a TV pushbutton Bar Stars or Outer Space Freaks game where nobody wins except those who peddled it at \$299.00.

They'll miss telling their kids stories, because the kids get a better story on TV.

They'll miss the heartache of the children who want a doll and a pair of skis and have to

settle for suits of long underwear.

They'll miss the thrill of children who look awed and exalted when they're given a dim for the matinee, instead of looking surly when their allowance is cut to three bucks a week.

They'll miss the often boring, but somehow tenuous experience of having cousins by the dozens (family connections are outre now.)

And they'll miss perhaps the most important experience of all: the knowledge that somehow, despite all adversity, they have kept their pride, have swum against the stream, keeping their heads up and trailing their families safely behind them.

I don't envy them too much, these youngish middle-aged men and women, many of whom are friends of mine.

They are good people. They have all the right ideas. They bring up their children right. They treat their parents (fairly) well. They are not vicious, or malicious. They have worked hard for the cocoons they have spun.

But, dammit, they don't know what hard times are. Or they've forgotten, in some cases, I want them to suffer. And the trouble is, they won't. They just go on being happy and comfortable, and complaisant. IT ISN'T FAIR!

Investor's Inquiry



by Charles Colling

Almost every bank and trust company have some kind of Registered Retirement Savings Plan. There are also a number of other institutions who handle them as well.

Wherever a Registered Retirement Savings Plan is opened, the plan must be registered with Revenue Canada, Taxation and allows tax deferrals on the investment.

Transfers may be made from one plan to another and as long as the monies in the plan are not taken out in cash, the RRSP remains in effect under the current tax rulings.

One of the rulings on registered retirement plans is that a person may contribute to more than one plan.

This policy might confuse people into thinking contributions are limitless but this is not the case. Aside from collecting a number of receipts and papers which must be safely placed, the possibility exists of over-contributing, which, in turn, creates a great deal of red tape to overcome. Over-contributing is taxable! Refunds without tax implication are possible. The responsibility for filing an appropriate return rests with the

RRSP news and notes

person holding the plan and must be completed within ninety days of the end of the taxation year. A special form is obtainable from the District Taxation Office.

Before opening any plan, consider your contribution limits for the year and take particular care that you remain within the limits.

Revenue Canada issues a booklet on Registered Retirement Savings Plans--annually revised--to be used as a general guide. It is available through your District Taxation Office.

To my knowledge it is the best available material covering Registered Retirement Savings Plans. It is not a hard sell for one

particular plan. It discusses all aspects and leaves the final choice of plan to the person most concerned--YOU!

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

Bird watching comes with bird feeding

by Mrs. I.A. Garside

When I began reading and inquiring about the subject of wildlife around towns and cities, considerable material surfaced. All of it was worthwhile but time limits.

Before continuing I will tell you about a husband and wife I met briefly last summer.

Quite a few years ago they came from an area in Europe which had been badly impaired politically and physically by war. Canada, with its wide open spaces, resplendent nature and freedom of speech was the land of their dreams. Wanting a nature retreat, they bought a piece of property sloping down to a lovely lake east of Georgian Bay.

They are employed in Toronto and worked weekends and vacations to build their northern home. It has a cathedral-roofed livingroom, huge fireplace, expanses of glass and decking, plus all modern appliances.

A manicured lawn leads down to the water. Most of the surrounding trees have been cut down to allow the sun to aid the winter heating, to provide garden space and easy

grass cutting.

From the chronicle of complaints, it was questionable if they could tolerate or appreciate nature. Birds singing wakened them early in the morning. Skunks frightened the wife. Squirrels dig up the lawn. They don't like the sound the loon makes.

"Rabbit, racoons and heaven knows what get into the garbage and steal from the garden."

"Once there was only our motorboat. Now there are so many racing around. And the fishing isn't good any more either."

The final straw came when I asked about an unusual gnarled tree across the way.

"I really don't know. We are only beginning to find out which ones produce good firewood."

With that I stood up abruptly to leave, with a barely civil, "Perhaps you should think seriously of living permanently in a city."

Recently a Toronto paper carried an account of the bequests of a former resident who was nature oriented. One of them is for \$7,000 annually for trees to landscape major roads

approaching Metro Toronto. So far in our area we are blessed with being able to hear and to see the birds, uninterrupted with traffic noise and high rise buildings. What a pleasure it is, particularly in winter, to hear the chattering of sparrows, to search for the owner of the call "chickadee-dee" or suddenly catch the flash of the red cardinal or the impudent blue fellow.

It is recommended that if you are going to feed birds in winter, to continue the practice regularly until spring arrives. This applies particularly in cities, if there is a heavy snow cover and if you have a bird feeder.

For winter feeding, place the feeder so that it is sheltered from the north wind. Be sure there are no perching parts of metal since a bird may freeze its toes if it touches the metal in severe cold. An inverted metal cone on the feeder-pole protects the feed station from squirrels or climbing cats. Libraries and field guides are sources of information on types of feeders, food to provide and kinds of birds which can be attracted.

Merchants are stocking the

packaged bird seed mixes. Heading the list of favourite food appears to be sunflower seeds, then peanuts, dried corn and millet.

You can make (or buy) a feeder to suspend. A small log with holes drilled in it can be stuffed with a mix of beef lard or suet into which has been blended cracked peanuts, raisins, sunflower seeds and millet. This concoction can also be put into a mesh bag and hung from a clothesline or tree limb.

Toronto Humane will shortly be publishing an article on their winter bird feeding program. Some excerpts--in the late fifties Canada geese were raised in captivity and released in Toronto parks supposedly to enhance the city. Previous to that the same thing was done with some mallards and black ducks. The birds do not migrate because they haven't been taught.

During the migratory season, the Society avoids additional feeding. Depending on the length and severity of winter, the feeding program covers the period of December through March.