

## Shirley Whittington



This summer place is a long way from wars and rumours of wars, from recessions and depressions, from horrible eventualities like added taxes on booze and smokes. Here, suspended somewhere between the beginning and end of our holiday beside a lazy river, nothing seems real. We measure the days in swims and bags of ice cubes. Right now, the biggest decision in my day is what time to light the charcoal for the evening barbecue.

This year's vacation reading is Ernest Hemingway, a writer I ignored for too long because I found his prose too spare. When Hemingway comments on his own writing he says he distrusts adjectives. Here, by the sweetly slipping river, surrounded by hummingbirds and orange lillies, I cannot think without adjectives.

There are several clots of little kids at this summer place, and I am amazed at how content they are. Removed from video arcades, Jedi movies, Dallas and ice cream

wagons, they seem much less shrill and hysterical than they are at home. I haven't heard one of them whine for anything. Nor have I heard any raised voices from the resident supervising adults. Everybody is cool.

What are the kids doing? Across from me two of them are swinging on a rope suspended from a willow branch which hangs over a shallow, widened patch of river. Sometimes they swing out a la Tarzan. Sometimes they skitter their toes through the warm water. Sometimes they leap fiercely into the river, or dive-bomb floating air mattresses with their bony bodies.

Farther down the bank two small people are painstakingly making mud pies, something I haven't seen for a long time. These two have forsaken the hot and sterile sand for a nice goopy pile of mud and they're hunkered down there with spoons and cups and a watering can. They are making a

## Campground ladies sing this song

veritable bakeshop full of black confections and they are getting gloriously dirty. Who cares? The river is close at hand.

Next door there is a little girl who lives her entire outdoor life encased in an orange lifejacket. She totters across lawns and hopefully says Hi to anyone she sees. If you say Hi back, she will say Hi, again and so the dialogue proceeds. If there is nobody within Hi-shot, she says Hi to the squirrels and the dogs and the white Persian cat with no tail that lives in the lodge. We call her our Hi-live walking, talking life-jacket.

Riding bikes is big here. The traffic is minimal, and the kids ride so furiously it appears they might take off into the sky like E.T. kids. Bare-foot, with towels over their shoulders, they go like 60 to the beach, to the store, to the fishing bridge or just up and down the dusty road.

Another highly favoured kid activity here is eating. A picnic table, arrayed with Tup-

perware containers, boxed snacks and plastic cups, is set up at the tent trailer behind us. There is always at least one youngster seated at that table, thoughtfully chewing on something.

At night, with all the riding and swinging and eating and swimming and saying Hi behind them, the kids are exhausted and in bed almost before the sun is. Then some of us paddle out to see the long vermilion sunset. Others troll for pike and muskie. Later, if we can stay awake, we play bridge or Trivial Pursuit.

It's a simple life—simply wonderful. Thank you for your good advice about the adjectives, Mr. Hemingway, but I find it impossible at the moment to live without adjectives—lots and lots of large, inaccurate, opulent, sloppy adjectives. But I promise to think about an adjective diet as soon as I return from vacation.

## Bill Smiley



One of the cynical, apathetic remarks of the 20th century is, "You can't fight City Hall."

I think it's American in origin, as are so many of our colourful expressions, but it reflects a conception that has contributed to the skepticism that permeates many aspects of our life.

In essence it betrays a weariness of the individual spirit in a world that is growing ever more corrupt, violent and treacherous.

It means basically that the individual hasn't a chance against the burgeoning bureaucracy, the petty patronage, the you-scratch-my-back-and-I'll-scratch-yours philosophy that has always been with us, and always will but should be resisted stoutly and sturdily whenever it rears its ugly head.

Jesus fought the City Hall of His time, and won, though He lost His life.

Sir Thomas More fought the City Hall of his time, which included his king, the nobility and the clergy, and refused to budge an inch to save his life, because he was right, and City Hall was wrong.

Joan of Arc fought her City Hall, in the form of her own king, traitors to her vision, and an opposing army. She wound up being burned at the stake and became a saint. Her opponents are mere footnotes in history.

Oliver Cromwell fought his City Hall, won his fight, and taught British royalty to mind its pees and quees, if you'll pardon the ex-

pression.

William Lyon Mackenzie took on the City Hall of his day, and though his only battle with it was a typical Canadian charade, he left it smarting.

I could name a hundred others who cocked a snoot at City Hall, and lost many a battle, but won many a war. The United States is a classic example. Another is the Republic of France. Mahatma Gandhi practically had the British Empire begging him to go change his diaper and leave it alone.

Well, it's nice to be in the company of such, even if only for a little while, and only in the imagination.

The Fourth St. Fusiliers, of which I am a proud, wounded veteran, has fought many a skirmish, several sharp encounters, and a prolonged war of attrition against the local town council, and the will of the people triumphed to the extent of a dozen trees being uncut, a new sidewalk installed, and a desert of pot-holes turned into a paved street.

You've heard of the 30 Years War, the 100 Years War, the War of the Roses, the War of Independence, the Boer War, and The Great War, followed by that sickening euphemism, World War II. Not to mention Korea and Viet Nam.

Well, a lot has been written about them, and millions died in them, but for sheer intensity of emotion, I think the Fourth St. War outdoes them all. That's the reason for this bit of

## You CAN fight City Hall

history. In three or four hundred years, the Fourth St. War may be almost forgotten, were it not for some humble scribe to get it down on paper.

It has lasted between seven and nine years, and the veterans will even argue hotly about the duration.

I do remember that the hundreds of children who were going to be slaughtered by traffic if the town council achieved its insidious ends are now replaced by grandchildren in many cases.

I do remember that the first rush to the barricades was about as organized as the French revolutionaries' attack on the Bastille.

I do remember that one lady threatened to chain herself high in the branches of a maple tree if the town engineer carried out his plan of massacreing maples. There were other threats of a similar but unlikely nature, such as everyone lying down in front of the bulldozers, blowing up the town hall while council was in session; or kidnapping the town engineer and giving him a cement-barrel burial in the bay.

Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed. After half the street was ruined, the works department ran out of money.

Over the years, they tip-toed around the potential explosion, filling in the odd pot-hole and letting the street turn into the semblance

of a long-forgotten country lane.

But this spring, falsely feeling that the ancient hatreds had cooled, with new people moving in, and old people dying off, they foolishly raised the desecrative idea again. Cut down the trees. Tear up the sidewalks, make it a one-block thruway to nowhere.

Like an old, dormant volcano, the people rose in their might and descended on the works committee like a disturbed hornet's nest.

The air was filled with vituperation, calumny and blasphemy. Council cooled off like a bull confronted by an angry elephant.

Another meeting was called. Again the people rose in their wrath. They formed a committee. It consisted of a brilliant mathematician, a contractor, a doctor, a lawyer, and an indomitable nurse. Not just a few angry people to be baffled by engineering jargon.

I don't want to go into the brilliant counter-attack, the superb tactics, the incredible strategy of The People. It's too exciting. You wouldn't sleep tonight.

But we won. The trees stay, the sidewalks will be rebuilt, the thruway will continue to be a residential street, thousands of children will not be cut down by thundering trucks, and the road will be paved.

You can fight City Hall.

## Travel news, views



by CAROL MERKLEY

The Scandinavian Airline system has launched hovercraft service between Malmo, Sweden and the Copenhagen airport...trips across the 26 km Oresund channel will take about 30 minutes...the carrier will lease two 80-seat hovercraft for at least 10 round trips daily.

### Fly Cruise Program

Esprit has introduced direct flights from Toronto to Los Angeles for its fly cruise programmes...package rates starting at \$1,299 per person include return airfare via American Airlines, transfers in Los Angeles, eight meals per day, and first-run movies...the Tropicale departs Los Angeles Sundays from Sept. 18 visiting the ports of

Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan and Cao San Lucas.

### Amelia Island

Located 29 miles northeast of Jacksonville International Airport (about a 45 minute drive from Jacksonville) in Amelia Island, Florida, the Amelia Island Plantation features activities for the whole family. The property has some 21 tennis courts (some lit for night play) as well as a stadium court for tournaments; a 27-hole golf course; complimentary on-site transportation; rental of bicycles, electric cars, paddleboats and other sports equipment; a youth program for kids from three to 12 years of age; and a variety of other activities such as fishing, windsurfing, beach club, health spa. During 1983 and 1984,

## Hovercraft service offered

the property is offering a Magnificent Four package which features four days accommodation in a two-bedroom, two-bathroom villa (with a view of the golf course) for \$81 U.S. per person. The property covers some 900 acres and features four miles of beach.

### Wardair Peripherals

In addition to its traditional Wardair Class flights into California from Toronto, Holidays by Wardair offers both a choice of hotels and a selection of car rental firms. For the summer season, hotels range from \$39 U.S. to \$58 per room per night. In the downtown Los Angeles area, one can choose the Sheraton Town House on Wilshire Blvd. The country-

style resort features a Garden Room Restaurant, Olympic-size pool, tennis complex and large gardens. By the airport, accommodation is offered in several hotels including the Quality Inn Airport. This family-style facility has been recently renovated and has a 24-hour coffee shop, lounge, pool, laudromat and airport shuttle service. Cars are offered from either Alamo Rent A Car or Avis with special rates established for three days, one week and additional days. Alamo cars are all automatic and airconditioned. Rates range from \$66 for 3 days and \$79 per week for an economy size car. Compacts, intermediate full size cars and station wagons are available at additional cost.

## Gus Brunelle: Gone but not forgotten

Midland's popular, hardworking and conscientious harbour manager of many years has given up the job, following medical advice.

It was a mark of Gus Brunelle's interest in his work that as often as not he wasn't to be found in the office on the dock, but outside attending to some detail. If he was in the office a caller had to get to the point because as often as not he wouldn't have long to chat.

Gus Brunelle remains Midland's harbour master. The harbour master deals with the coming and going of the big, commercial ships, a much less complicated job. He will be working as harbour master from his home.

Any appearances at the town dock from now on will be as a visitor. He will be welcome.