

## Shirley Whittington



You'd be forgiven if you thought the CP Style Book was a collection of fashions for railway workers.

It is, in fact, a tiny handbook of how to write reliable, accurate bright and impartial news reports.

Canadian Press is a co-operative news-gathering and distributing agency. The CP communications system stretches right across Canada to member newspapers. Broadcast News, a wholly owned subsidiary of CP, makes news available to radio and television stations.

Since all of us are consumers of CP products, either through newspapers or radio and television, it is reassuring to know that somebody is riding herd on bad spelling, dropped participles and wrongly attributed quotes. The news may be bad but the messenger is impeccably correct.

Aside from the wholly understandable preoccupation with accuracy and fairness, the CP Style Book has something to say to all of us who toil with words.

To begin with, CP hates clichés. The hand-

book carries a long column of words and phrases for which it claims any alternative is an improvement. Blanket of snow, death's door, flatly denied, miraculous escape, totally destroyed and picked up the tab—all are odious, apparently, to CP editors.

The CP style book sheds light on a number of misconceptions and popular inaccuracies.

There is no 's' in St. John Ambulance. The name of the insurance company is Lloyd's. (Lloyd's of London is a movie title.) Members of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry don't like to be called "the Pats". Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, however, doesn't mind "the Van Doos".

Last Post is British; Taps is American. Witness box is Canadian; witness stand is American. There is no such place as Skid Row, says CP. It's Skid Road. (My dictionary disagrees, but it isn't on the CP payroll.)

There are some words which just don't belong in news reports, says CP. They are awfully, authored, mortician, finalize, very, host (as a verb) jam-packed, stash, stomp and know-how.

## Canadian Press grooms stylish writers

The handbook provides a list of words which most people find tricky to spell. For me, reading that list was like meeting a bunch of moody old friends. I knew them all; had agonized over their spelling; tried them out different ways on bits of paper and finally looked them up. For the insecure speller, weird, nickel, niece, buses, and Mmabatho Bophutatswana are roadblocks. It is awfully nice of the CP people to put them all in one list.

In CP-land, males up to 16 are called boys; over 16 they are youths. A married woman (if addressed as Mrs.) is always referred to by her husband's given name, not hers. Ms. should only be used when requested.

Canadian Press editors hate (as I do) forced feminizations of perfectly good words. Sculptress, executrix and poetess all get sharp pencils through their hearts.

CP likes body, not corpse; scotsman, not scotchman; start, not commence; and 10 Downing Street, not Number 10 Downing Street.

You can see that newswriting is harder than it appears, and it is good to know a book of

rules exists.

No such constraints apply in the ad writer's world. I imagine your average copywriter, straining to produce the perfect panegyric for an apartment condominium mews tower estate grove height residence or just plain furnished flat would faint dead away if forced to obey CP style. Those who employ "lavish, luxurious, costly, incomparable magnificence" to describe five rooms and a bath would swoon if told to write tight.

Business ads lean the other way to avoid whimsy, and they end up just as opaque. Implementational techniques, state of the art, hands-on technologies, direct marketing interface, downstream sectors—if a CP editor ever got her hands on that stuff, she'd soon put it into plain English.

Fortunately the house of publishing has many mansions.

News writers will continue to abide by the CP Bible. Advertising copywriters will always be gaseous and overblown.

But columnists can do as they please.

Some days, I feel as if I was just born lucky.

## Bill Smiley



Glad I'm not a small-town, down-town merchant these days. I'd probably be developing an ulcer and not sleeping too well at nights.

Bane of the small-town merchant used to be the big town or small city not too far away, where there was more variety for the customer.

Despite the most rigorous attempts of the small town merchant to educate the people, in their arbitrary fashion, went sashaying off to the larger centre on a Saturday to spend their shekels. They still do.

But another bogey, three times as fearsome, has come out of the woods to give the small town merchant nightmares and cold sweats.

It began as the supermarket, usually built on the edge of town, where taxes were much less, and there was lots of room for parking.

The supermarket bit heavily into the sales of grocery stores, drug stores and hardware stores, to mention a few of those afflicted, selling everything from toothpaste to lawn chairs.

Mind you, the supermarket didn't give the personalized service, the follow-up on repairs or returns that the little merchant did. But it was kind of exciting: lots of people to gawk at, a veritable cornucopia of goods to choose from, easy parking.

Fighting what, in many cases, was a rear-

guard battle, the family business, the small merchant, modernized his store, joined with his fellows in sprucing up the downtown area (helped by government grants), and finally realized that he had to advertise, after years of believing there was no need, that everybody knew where he was and what he sold.

In many cases, and in many small towns, it was too late. Despite what became desperate efforts to fight the trend, there began a sort of rot downtown: a big turnover of small businesses that lasted only a short time; the closing up of old family businesses as their owners saw the light; the "for sale" signs on downtown property. It was rather sad.

Then came the real crusher: the development of malls. Every small town or village with any self-respect suddenly acquired a "mall".

At first these were neighborhood affairs: just an acre or so with half a dozen shops. A drug store, a dry-cleaning outfit, a take-out food restaurant, and two or three other service shops.

Then the big boys moved in. Sniffing the wind, they knew a golden-egg goose when they smelled one.

They bought, or leased, huge chunks of land just outside the town, where taxes were minimal. Often it was bush or tough, useless land.

Then came the bulldozers; down went the

## The bane of their lives

trees. The big paving machines followed, and virgin territory became a vast expanse of asphalt.

As the downtown merchants shivered in their boots, the wheelers and dealers, the mall-builders, lined up customers who would rent or lease space in the "grand, new mall."

Within an incredibly short time, the jerry-built edifices went up, the mall blossomed into a combination of the old Saturday night in a small town, and a fall fair, and many a downtowner experienced the kiss of death.

What is the attraction of a mall? Why do hundreds, then thousands of shoppers pour into the malls, like cattle being led to the slaughterhouse?

Well, they have something for every taste. Video games for the kids. A place to meet and ramble and shoplift for the teenagers. The heavy scent of hot junk food in the air. A certain excitement at being part of a moving mob. And of course, a huge grocery store, dozens of small boutiques, and vast chain department stores where you can buy almost anything, and which can undercut the small merchant on prices, because of their volume buying.

Add to this easy parking, where even the most maladroit motorist can find a space. Even though the shopper must walk a quarter of a mile from his car through rain or snow.

And then there is the allure to the pig in most of us. Make out a careful list of essentials. Talk to yourself. Steel yourself against

all blandishments. And, after all this, I'll bet you spend far more at the mall, flourish your credit card more often, than if you had shopped carefully downtown. Human nature. We can't resist all those goodies.

The shopping mall is the ultimate monument to a materialistic society. And let's face it, the price is very often right.

Aside from the shopping, the mall is a crowded, noisy, exciting place, on the surface. For the home-bound housewife, the glitter and the gaudiness and the danned music represent an escape from the dull drudgery of house and kids.

There are gimmicks and sales and specials, and a place to sit down, rest the aching dogs, and have a coffee. There is variety and color and there are sounds and smells that take the individual out of his little rut.

And after all, if all those other people are shopping at the mall, it must have something going for it. Right?

And those clever devils who set up the malls don't miss much. They jam in a drugstore, and a hairdressing salon, and a trust company or a bank, so there's really no need to go downtown, is there?

Personally, I hate malls. They are too impersonal and noisy and crowded for me. I feel like an animal, in a mall. I have a sense that I am being manipulated by some socio-psychologist who first conceived the idea.

I'll go on shopping downtown. But hundreds of thousands won't.

## Travel news, views



BY CAROL MERKLEY

Ski operators in Alberta are gearing up for another season with a series of packages and special events. The big news at Lake Louise is the appointment of former Canadian national team member Ken Read as Director of Skiing.

Lake Louise will offer an expanded shuttle service between Calgary airport and hotel operators in the village. Family skiers will be pleased with the major expansion of daycare at the resort area. The Chateau Lake Louise will again be open this winter. Several ski packages are available. Six days lodging, five days skiing and hill transfers start at \$174.

Sunshine Village is planning a series of events to celebrate its 50th anniversary. The ski area, which boasts the longest ski season in Canada, closed in June last year. All in-

clusive ski packages are available from \$50 a day. Mount Norquay, located just ten minutes from Banff, will again offer night skiing in 1984.

The ski resort is famous for its steep slopes, but greater terrain is available for less skilled skiers. The Marmot Basin in Jasper is expanding its ski school, chair lift and other amenities in 1984. The area is famous for its deep powder.

### FUN SUN CUTS PRICE

Fun Sun Adventure Tours has reduced the cost of its Costa Rica packages for the 1983-84 season. People who book and pay in full prior to Dec. 15 for travel up to April 30/84 will receive a \$75 saving per person off the price quoted in their brochure.

### NIAGARA FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Niagara Falls, Ontario, is about to expand

its tourism season as it kicks off the "Festival of Lights" which run from now to Feb. 23/84. While the winter is traditionally a slow time for the Niagara Falls area it is hoped that the \$900,000 investment in decoration, entertainment and promotion will generate between \$15 to \$20 million in tourism revenue.

Events during the Festival of Lights are kicked off by Niagara Falls' Santa Claus Parade and continue with Dec. weekend performances by the Glen Miller Orchestra, a live Sesame Street performance, a concert by Victor Borge and special Christmas Carolling concerts.

During January and February, events will include ice sculptures, a snowball softball tournament, the Miss Teen Niagara Pageant and a Second Honeymoon Valentine's Dance (on Feb. 17/84).

## Let's hit the hills

### MGM GRAND OFFERS SHOWTIME PACKAGE

The MGM Grand Hotel—Reno will offer its popular Showtime at the Grand package again this winter. The economical package features lodging at the resort hotel and a choice of the cocktail or dinner performance of Donn Arden's musical extravaganza, Hello Hollywood Hello.

The US \$29 cocktail show package includes two drinks at the performance. The dinner show version includes a breast of capon entrée and its priced at US \$45 per person. Prices are based on double occupancy and include all taxes and tips on package features. A two-night cocktail show package is US \$47 per person and a two-night dinner show package is US \$63 per person.

Showtime at the Grand will be offered through April 26/84.

## Computer age comes to family YMCA

Midland Y's Men's Club in co-operation with the YMCA released plans for the launching of a comprehensive computer education and computer literacy project in the Midland area. With an initial grant of \$12,000 by the Y's Men's Club to assist in the purchase of computer equipment and programming

materials, the Y will become the focal point for introductory computer courses in this area of Huronia.

Within a few days the first computers will arrive at the Y in preparation for the first courses scheduled to start during the week of Jan. 16, 1984. Instructor training has already started for the classes

which will operate on six week modules.

The major emphasis of the program will be to assist people in the utilization of the microcomputer as a tool to increase efficiency in the home and small business as well as to explore applications in music, art, and creative entertainment. Students will have the opportunity to receive

firsthand instruction in basic programming as well as explore the exciting land of LOGO.

This language utilizes a "turtle" on the computer screen and is an interactive program for young people to teach basic mathematical concepts, logical thought processes, problem

solving and language development.

The COMPUTER Y's project will also provide the opportunity for special one or two day seminars for business groups or educators in the area to experience "hands-on" applications for their specific needs. Also "Komputer Kamps" for kids are scheduled during the

March break period with classes each day from Monday to Friday.

For additional information call the YMCA computer hotline at 526-7828 or drop in to the Y and pick up an

### Dec. 13

Christmas coffee hour, 9:45 a.m., at Midland Alliance Church. All ladies are

welcome. The program includes vocal and instrumental music, a special feature and carol singing.