

The fowling of a lake (honk if you love geese)

The subject today is geese. Annually several hundred Canada Geese take up temporary residence on the shores of a little lake within our town limits.

The lake is so appealing it has been described as the jewel in our municipal navel. Because of the hyperactive alimentary tracts of our visiting geese, the navel now has an awful of-um-lint in it.

When the enormous deep-chested birds first flew into town several years ago, they were a big hit. The resident gulls nearly died of envy. More than one female was seen flexing her wings and saying, "I must, I must, I must develop my bust."

We townsfolk took the big honkers to our hearts. We fed them, and felt noble and Assisi-like. Quivering with patriotism we shepherded overseas visitors down to the lake to see the magnificent Branta Canadensis. A delightful picture of three geese standing at lake's edge, won a Chamber of Commerce photography contest and is now featured in our town's promotional brochure.

Gradually we discovered that Canada geese are quick and efficient grain re-cyclers. They eat, and then they drop their gooseberries all over the grassy lawns and beaches, a procedure which has caused us to re-name the

Shirley Whittington



birds Branta Canadensis Polyfeces.

Summer rains wash the gooseberries down into the lake, and this results in a high fecal coliform count. For two years in a row we've had to close our beach to swimmers because the water is too dirty to swim in.

Since this town counts tourism as one of its primary industries, you can understand that we are now looking at our geese with less than friendly eyes.

That flock has grown faster than crabgrass in the suburbs. Where there was once a dozen there are now hundreds. They love the calm reedy waters of the lake. They find foraging in the grass rewarding. And I'm sure they cry "Alas, my poor brother" every time they hear a hunter's gun go off in the marsh a few miles away.

Our little lake has become the Miami Beach

of goose-dom.

By the time you read this column Goosey Gander and Goosey Lucy and the whole honking herd will have flapped away to warmer southern climes for the rest of the winter. Our lake will slowly regenerate. But next spring, the geese will be back with their sunglasses and air mattresses, and dozens of newcomers who have heard about this goosey paradise from their friends.

By August our beach will be closed again.

We have a few months to find a solution to the problem. We have considered shooting them, a procedure which would require a temporary lifting of gun restrictions within the town limits. But establishing a one day goose hunt didn't sit well with most of us. It seems unsporting to blast the daylight out of a bunch of vacationing geese who have been

living in what amounts to a bird sanctuary. Members of the local Hunters and Anglers Association agree that a goose hunt is not sportsman-like so that leaves us still with about 300 more geese than we need for local colour.

Should we import predators? Anything big enough to capture one of those big birds with the lethal wings would also be a threat to swimmers and picnickers. To set a pair of cheetahs among the geese would in the long run be counter-productive, if it's tourism we're after.

Please be assured that I am not starting any feather-brained Save-The-Geese campaign. I want them out of there—most of them, at any rate. Those long-necked beggars are multiplying so fast we'll soon have to put them on the voter's list.

We have about six months to figure out some way of arranging a climate of co-existence. I'm appealing to all of you who read this column. Some of you in other communities must have had a similar problem. How did you solve it? Cheetahs? Shooters? Mass export?

I'll be waiting to hear from you. We need to know what to do.

Honk if you love geese.

Well folks, it appears somebody hates me

LET'S see. What's new today? Ah. College teachers going on strike. Librarians coming off strike. Auto workers going on strike. U.S. won't help with acid rain. Police demand return of capital punishment. Russians accuse U.S. of noncooperation in their new "peace" overtures. Man stabs woman 48 times and is sentenced to three months.

Well, the magnificence of the world is unfolding in its accustomed manner.

But all is not lost. A black bishop from South Africa has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Eugene Whelan has not been sent to Italy. (Not because he couldn't speak Italian, which he couldn't, but because he was a Liberal.)

It must be giving Joe Clark, who has been stabbed in the back so often it's become a minor irritation, and has had his heart cut out and thrown to the wolves, a great deal of satisfaction to be the ropeman on the guillotine.

Feel some pity for poor old Eugene, and poor old Bryce Mackasev, who didn't get to go to that villa in Portugal. One of two things happened. Either they had too much pride to scuttle into a judgeship or the Senate, or they were too greedy to settle for something so small and so sordid. Your guess.

You may, believably, wonder what all that leads to. We shall see.

It's extremely difficult today to be an alert, aware, compassionate person when policemen are shot like rabbits, there is war all over the world, children are starving, men

Bill Smiley



beat up their women, and you haven't even got your leaves raked.

As a sad, sad result, we are inclined to turn in upon ourselves, to blot out the horror and the violence and the brutality of society, and to lock ourselves into a little cupboard composed of money and "things" and "relations," hoping the nasties will go away. They won't.

Perhaps our wincing and flinching are an example of the human spirit trying to stay alive in a time when the brutishness of the Middle Ages looks like a Sunday School picnic, in comparison.

Pershaps it's something older than that: a retreat to the family, the cave, the tribe, when the earth shook and the great beasts howled their final agony. And man whimpered. Hey, that's pretty good, eh?

Don't worry. Im not going to go on like a guru. I'm just trying to establish the fact, which every reader knows, that our own affairs become more important than a train wreck in Italy, a flood in India, or an outbreak of the dire rear in Hayfork Centre.

To get to the point, the Mulrooneys are after me. Not Brian and Mila, bless their hearts.

They can take a joke. They wouldn't try to rub me out. I don't think.

No, it's the double oo Mulrooneys that are upset. I made an unfortunate remark in a column about "Mulrooney" sounding as though it was the other side of the tracks. It was about as funny as an old rubber boot. But I did applaud the lady Mila, for many aspects of her character.

Now this. In my old paper, where I was editor, appears this scurrilous bit:

"Re Bill Smiley's column

So far as Mila Mulronee and a 'name sounding from the wrong side of the tracks' is served up by 'Mr. Constant Mouth, 1944, Bill Smiley (ex-naxi war camp nightmare)';

"A Mulrooney myself, I ponder "constant-mouth's deeds of heroism or heroism / not. "And do not make sport of his torture, nor judge his (imprisoned utterings) he now sings: 'fell well' or 'He that cannot praise.'"

It is signed: "Barbara Mulrooney, Clan Mulrooney, 3-dimensional writer- poet, -artist humanitarian."

What in the name of whatever is a three-dimensional writer? Anyway, there were a lot of...and...s in the published letter, suggesting

it was originally libellous or worse. Just don't plant a bomb in my bathroom, or I'll have the whole lot of the Smileys down on yiz Mulrooneys and we lived on the other side of the tracks, too. When we felt like it.

But closer to home, somebody hates me. It's sort of nice. I'm sick of being a good, gentle, kind man like Bill Davis, Prime Minister of Ontario, who was also described as shifty, ambiguous, slippery, ruthless and so on. Media tripe.

A man from a neighbouring township, wrote me a hate letter this fall. It was supposed to be witty, but devolved into sheer malice. It was an attack on teachers.

I'll quote only bits. Most of it is libel. "Willy, you remind me of the provincial handle on the thunderbug—always there but never in.... You, along with the effete corps of over-rated and over-paid so-called teachers, are always articulating some complaint about municipal provincial and federal legislature."

I won't bore you with the rest of it, because it is boring. It suggests that none of us has the guts to tackle the establishment, or run for office.

Robert S. O'Neill, I was a town councillor when you were wetting your Pampers. I have been challenging the Establishment for years, in this column and face to face.

I have been president of a large tourist association. President of a publishers' association. Treasurer of the local Red Cross; Member of the Library Board. Member of the church board.

Contact help Rotarians with bulletin board

Contact Information Centre will now be assisting the Rotary Club of Midland with the Community Events Bulletin Board located on the Midland Public Library lawn.

Each month Contact will check its book of coming community events and update the bulletin board.

Remember to let Contact know about your event as soon as possible.

And now there are three in the leadership race

Ontario Conservative Party leadership aspirant Roy McMurry made it official Friday.

The provincial attorney-general intends to join Industry Minister Frank Miller and Agriculture Minister Dennis Timbrell in the race to succeed Premier William Davis.

Meanwhile, Larry Grossman the provincial treasurer is expected to be the fourth candidate when he announces his intentions this week.

The premier's replacement is to be picked at a late-January leadership convention in Toronto.

Floats are needed for Santa Claus parade

Considering entering a float in Midland Civitan Club's annual Santa Claus Parade, Dec. 1?

Theme of the parade is Christmas cards. Contact Mike Tinney at 526-7269 or 526-3069 or Dick Ivens at 526-9814 or 549-2052 for more information.

Newspaper's editor emeritus once owned Barrie paper

W. K. Walls, 77, died in hospital Saturday after suffering a heart attack.

William Kenneth Walls was former editor, publisher and owner of the Barrie Examiner and had served as the paper's editor emeritus since he retired in 1970.

Born in Elmvalle, the late Mr. Walls moved to Barrie in 1909 where his father founded a weekly newspaper which later merged in 1915 with the Examiner.

During the early 1900s, both Mr. Walls' father and uncle owned The Elmvalle Lance.

Public meeting, Nov. 12

Midland council next public session is Monday, Nov. 12.

It commences at 7:30 p.m. at town hall.

North Simcoe Newsbriefs

Fact Finder brought in

Education Relations Commission has appointed Prof Gene Swimmer of Ottawa to act as Fact Finder in the negotiations between the teachers and the trustees of the Simcoe County Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

Prof Swimmer will meet with the parties and write a report setting out which matters have been agreed upon and which matters remain in dispute. The report may also contain recommendations for settlement.

The appointment is made under Section 14 of the School Boards and Teachers Collective Negotiations Act, Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1980.

Crime Prevention Awards presented by Taylor

Solicitor-General Crime Prevention Awards were presented Monday by George Taylor to OPP Cpl. Brad Nudds and OPP Const. R. L. Coyey of the Barrie OPP, to Peter Juneau of Penetanguishene, to Project Angus and to City of Barrie Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit.

Stolen motor-vehicles

It's been reported, one car is stolen in Canada every five or so minutes.

During 1983, a total of 50 motor-vehicles were ripped off in the district patrolled and policed by Midland detachment of the OPP.

Last year 432 were stolen in District 7 while in 1982, 545 were ripped off, OPP records tabulated at OPP district headquarters in Barrie show.

Meanwhile a total of 3,677 motor-vehicles were stolen in the province during 1983 down from 4,283 in 1982.

Winter arrives early here in North Simcoe

Hail, along with a trace of snow and winds gusting up to 60 km/h prompted residents in North Simcoe last Friday to look for warmer clothes.

Cold northwest winds were expected to spread snowflurries throughout this district this week.

OPSEU has new president after O'Flynn retires

Ontario Public Service Employees Union, which represents a good many workers in this area, has a new president.

He's 34-year-old Jim Clancy of Toronto. Clancy takes over from Sean O'Flynn as president of the 77,000-member union.

O'Flynn is retiring after heading the union for six years.

Flu bug is back for another season

Don't look now but the flu bug is back. This is the time of year when the flu takes its toll.

To beat the bug at its own game, now's the time to have the District Health Unit in Midland give you "a shot."

Snow makes another appearance

For the second time this month snow has made an appearance in North Simcoe.

Yesterday, about a centimetre of snow fell on the Gateway to the 30,000 Islands.

Meanwhile, the weatherman is calling for a sunny day today with some cloudy periods while mainly cloudy weather is expected tomorrow and with it the chance of more wet snow.

Snow made its first appearance this autumn on Friday when it was coupled with hail and wet rain.