

So much for content-it can be crass if not cruel

If someone suddenly asks you to make a television appearance, take my advice. Don't. Not unless you can talk with lucidity, intelligence and wit, and have some professional advice.

I went on TV recently and it was pitiful. At least, according to my wife. I thought I was pretty good, seeing that we had no script, lousy equipment, no rehearsal, and everybody involved, including the technicians, was strictly an amateur.

Kim was watching, and she thought I was the best, too, which only goes to show you. (She confided to my wife, in private, that I seemed bored. And I was.)

But my wife kept up a running fire of comment "you look terribly thin. You were the grayest one there. Why didn't you speak up? There was no humor at all. Why did you slump in your chair like a wet rag? You put your hand over your mouth once. What a dull program."

I think she expected a combination of Fred Davis, Pierre Berton, Walter Cronkite and Johnny Carson.

I wasn't exactly a moon shot, or an NHL game, though it was just as interesting as some of the latter we've seen this spring. It WAS a dull program. It had about as much

Bill Smiley

zip and flair as Ed Sullivan interviewing the reeve of Hayfork Centre about the bindweed problem.

It didn't help much that I'd just come from a harrowing day, and had had three hours sleep the night before. Or that I didn't have a clue as to what the program was about. Or that nobody else did.

I was just another victim of a new game invented by the owners of cable television. These companies are highly sought after as a means of minting your own money.

But the CRTC is leaning on them and suggesting that they produce something besides money for the owners; namely, some local "Canadian content."

Our local cable company is in the forefront. It has managed to get itself a television channel, and is turning out Canadian content.



They'd never heard of us. They called the manager, back in town. He'd forgotten about the show. He finally arrived, borrowed a chair for the farmer, and we did the dull show. Cold. It was shown a week later.

Now, I'm not knocking the whole idea. This sort of thing would be great for a small town, where all sorts of interesting things happen. And there's lots of talent around.

But the cable companies had better forget about how many hours of "local" content they can point to on their books, and start spending some money on trained personnel, good equipment, and organization, or the whole thing will be just another farce to slide around the rules and save money.

Two recent examples of what I'm talking about: On one show, we watched five or six buses draw up to a local school and the kids, one by one, get out. Fascinating, eh? Ten minutes. On another, we watched the residents of an old people's home for about 10 minutes, sitting in rows, facing the camera, waiting for "the show" to begin. Crass, if not cruel. But it shows on the books as Canadian content.

If it doesn't improve rapidly, it's just a con game, and should be exposed as such.

This week's column is rated 'D' for do-it-yourself

"It's only a minute's job," I said as my wife pointed out the dripping kitchen tap. "I'll throw in a new washer in no time at all."

Luckily, it was Friday supper time, the friendly neighbourhood hardware store would be open late.

"Will that be flat or domed washers?" so I took some of each. I should have been warned then, the old ones were unrecognizable.

It still dripped. "It must be the 'O' rings," said the F.N.H.S. and the job was done.

This time the water dripped with less frequency, we were definitely on the right track.

A TURN OFF

With the water (both hot and cold) shut off, surrounded by tools in all shapes and sizes including metric (just to be sure), I went back to the F.N.H.S.

"You have seat problems," no sweat. Armed with a seat extraction tool we tried again, the seat wouldn't move. Maybe it was

Ray Baker

the sweat dripping on it.

Maybe the whole sink unit would come out. The retaining clips did but not the retaining nuts.

Having removed the built-in shelving doors and hinges, the drawer was next, but unfortunately it hit the stove, which sits next to the fridge. Meanwhile, the supper things remained unwashed and no water in the house.

Sitting down to logically think it out, I reasoned if I quit now, I could still catch the

late, late show.

DAY TWO, THE SAGA CONTINUES

Saturday dawned bright and clear, with seven hours sleep and some shreddies into me it was back to the F.N.H.S.

"No problem, we have a recutting tool for seats that won't come out," said Bill.

With a magnifying glass on the fine print instructions and each of the seven steps carefully followed, the seats were re-cut.

And so it came to pass on the morning of the second day that two new complete units were

fitted, complete with new washers (flat) new 'O' rings, gaskets, the whole bit.

I defied it to leak, after ten minutes of intense concentration I remembered to turn on the water and the water heater.

Not a drop, not a drip, not a smear. SUCCESS! It was only another two hours returning the special tools to the F.N.H.S., packing away my own tools including metric (just in case) replacing doors, hinges, shelving, clips, and all the stuff you keep under the sink.....and the tap was fixed.

As I said to my better half, "there, it was only a minute's job after all," but her attention was elsewhere. "My vacuum is not picking up like it used to," she said.

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE: Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but 'VISINE' will get it out.

-Ray Baker is a free-lance writer. He and his family reside in Penetanguishene.

New retirement lodge opening

The four storey high, 66 bed retirement lodge, the Villa Retirement Lodge, adjacent to the Villa Community Care Centre in Midland, opens next Monday.

Included in the building are a beauty salon and barber shop, a snack and coffee shop, library, whirlpool room and fitness centre.

The new lodge stands on the site of the brick mansion once owned by the Fraser family and successively by several other prominent Midland families. The renovated mansion became a nursing home about 1965. The new lodge gives residents a view of Little Lake.

Officer assaulted

On Sunday, April 7, there was a report of a noise coming from one of the Lincoln Court Apartments on Main Street.

When police went to investigate the complaint, Con. Tim Vaillancour was struck in the face.

The assailant was charged with assaulting a police officer. In the same incident, a female was charged with resisting arrest. Both were young offenders.

Korean vets, guests get together, April 20

Unit 6 of the Korean Veterans Association will be hosting a "Spring Dining Out" for members and guests at the Watergate in Penetanguishene, April 20, reports KVA official Wally Wilson of Midland.

For more information contact at 526-7943.

It was just one of those crazy weekends in Huronia

Only in cottage country, you say? While some cottagers near Balm Beach were seen raking leaves others were spotted clearing away snow from their summer homes over the Easter holiday weekend.

New school is named after RC educator

Simcoe County Roman Catholic Separate School Board is honouring the memory of a stalwart Roman Catholic educator in the name chosen for its new secondary school in Orillia.

Patrick Fogarty Secondary School will open its doors in September.

Georgian Bay ice: it's a soft touch

The freshwater ice still holding onto winter out on Georgian Bay is among the softest ice around.

Sea ice is softer than fresh ice when it first forms on the salt water oceans. But it becomes much stronger than fresh ice as the salt is leached out over a period of years.

The hardest ice of all is found in icebergs, like the one that sunk the Titanic.

Icebergs are composed of freshwater ice formed on glaciers under tremendous pressure thousands of years ago.

It's the law in Ont.

Sun rises this morning at 5:41 a.m. and sets tonight at 6:58 p.m.

Cars lights must remain on until 30 minutes after sunrise and 30 minutes before sunset. It's the law in Ontario.

Light old oil stoves with caution, say Tay's fire chief

Risk of an overheated oil space heater exploding had Tay Township volunteer firemen rushing to a Caswell's Beach cottage at 7 p.m. last Wednesday night.

When firefighters arrived flames had died down without causing damage to the home.

However, Fire Chief Tom O'Hara says, excessive black smoke from this type of fire will create a real mess inside a house.

He adds, such dangerous flare-ups were a common occurrence when the old style oil stoves were popular. It is absolutely necessary, he warns, to inspect the firepot for excess oil before lighting the stove, because carburetors sometimes leak oil even when shut off.

Law-makers meet next on Monday, April 22

Midland council meets next at town hall on Monday, April 22.

Law-makers normally would have met this past Monday, however, since it was Easter Monday, this week's meeting was rescheduled to April 22.

North Simcoe Newsbriefs

Extra care is necessary during grass fire season

The ground may still be wet during the annual Spring thaw, but the dry weeds and grass left over from last Autumn still pose a serious fire hazard.

Tay Township volunteer firemen were called with a pumper truck from the No. 1 fire hall in Waubashene at 2:30 p.m. Monday, to extinguish a rapidly spreading grass fire in Sturgeon Bay.

Flames had spread to a nearby field while a man was burning grass in his yard. Fire chief Tom O'Hara suspects wind may have been a factor in spreading the fire.

No significant damage or injuries were reported.

Huronia Airport an active place

At least 10 planes used Huronia Airport in Tiny Township last Sunday.

Several from Buttonville and one from Parry Sound were included in the list, a spokesman at the tri-municipal airport confirmed this week.

Wind and fire enough to call out brigade

Town of Midland firefighters report a relatively quiet weekend with just one alarm to an RR 2 Midland address.

A chimney fire was extinguished there around noon without damage or injuries.

Firemen were previously called out at 10:50 p.m. during the windstorm Thursday night, to stand by in the event of an emergency while a PUC work crew repaired a hydro line broken by falling tree limbs along Dominion Avenue.

Minister revokes zoning order imposed in '81

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Dennis Timbrell has revoked the zoning order that controlled commercial development in a portion of the Township of Tiny.

The township passed a comprehensive zoning bylaw which has now been approved by the Ontario Municipal Board.

The zoning order, originally imposed in 1981, has been formally revoked so that land use controls can be administered locally.

SCBE trustees meet this evening

Simcoe County Board of Education trustees meet at the Education Centre in Barrie tonight first for a private session at 7 p.m. and then a public one at 8 p.m.

Spring flooding reported

Some flooding has occurred in recent days in the Lafontaine and Elmvale districts.

The Nottawasaga River east of Stayner has also spilled its banks in some locations as well.

PUC to hold monthly meeting

Midland Public Utilities Commission meets in the PUC boardroom April 16 for a monthly meeting.

The session will begin at 7:30 p.m.

Two alarms for one chimney fire

A woodstove chimney fire in a home on Tiny Township Con. 15 required two visits from volunteer firefighters at Lafontaine fire hall, Monday afternoon.

The fire was brought under control without damage or injury when firemen first arrived at 12:30 p.m. But a volume of bothersome smoke continued to linger in the house until 5:45 p.m. when the volunteers returned with special smoke dispersal exhaust fans.