

Let's stop grumbling for a change and really dig in

Bill Smiley

IS your life a cultural wasteland? Do you do the same old things, talk to the same old people on the same old subjects all the time? Are you scared to take a risk, smile at someone you've never seen before, do something the neighbours will mutter about? Do you want a decent tombstone, not flashy, but dignified?

Of course you do. You're a good Canadian. You believe in personal decorum, censorship, the family as a unit, and capital punishment.

On the other hand. Do you go for a swim at midnight, sing a song at dawn, smoke marijuana, drink fairly heavily, march in protest parades, live in sin, abhor censorship and capital punishment, and contrive to do something that will offend friends and neighbours?

Of course you do. You're a good Canadian. You believe in individual liberty, acid rain, dirty movies and sexual irresponsibility.

It doesn't matter which group you belong to, or whether you're somewhere in between, you all have much in common.

You despise the government, but won't elect an alternative, since you despise it even more. You are caught by inflation and high interest rates, whether you are a 60-year-old farmer trying to keep the place going, or a 20-year-old punk trying to maintain his habit.

You are basically anti-American, though if you were asked why, you could not give an answer that was articulate.

You feel frustrated, in this land of wood and

water, not to mention nuclear power, because, if you are getting on in years, you see everything eroding around you, and if you are short in years, you see nothing but a stone wall between you and your aspirations.

You wonder vaguely, if you're old enough, what became of the Canadian dream: "The 20th century belongs to Canada." And if you read the papers and analyze the news, you realize that, while Canada still has a high standard of living, we are very low on the totem pole when it comes to production, strikes, economic stability, peace, happiness and goodwill toward men.

If you're very young, you don't give a diddle. There's lots to eat, warm clothes, and the old man will kick in a decent allowance so you can feed the slot machines with their war games.

But if you're a young adult, just about ready to launch into "real" life, you're so bewildered about unemployment, and escalating university fees, and the increasing shadow of the computer, and the wealth of choices of a future (all lacking in security) that you can become so depressed you drop out, or dive into a stream and fight against the current.

This isn't a doom and gloom column. It's merely a look at our nation today. It is so rife

with suspicion, fear of nothing much, anger over nothing much, that we are becoming paranoid.

From the Prime Minister, through the head of the Bank of Canada, you have lost trust, and feel that the ship is heading for the reef with nobody at the helm.

This is nonsense, of course. Canada has been going through this miasma ever since 1867, and before. Maybe the guy at the helm is blind-folded, and maybe we have scraped a few rocks, but the ship's bottom is still sound, and we haven't hit the big reef yet. If we do, we can always scramble into the boats, and become the new Boat People of North America.

We've had the French-Canadian separatism thing with us for generations, John A. MacDonald almost put the country on the rocks, financially and politically, but he dared to take a chance, and had vision. We survived a terrible depression, and came out smelling of roses (and the stench of our dead young men), in two world wars.

Cheer up, you dour, gloomy Canucks. When you have to settle for one meal of ground wheat a day, and have to huddle around a charcoal brazier to keep warm, then you can whine, though few will listen, just as few of us listen to the people of the world who are doing

just that, right now.

Forget about the Yanks. If you don't like their culture invading us, turn off your TV set and get out your eskimo carvings. The Yanks won't invade us physically. Unless they have to, and there's not much we could do about that.

If you can't afford your mortgage increase, you were probably over-extended in the first place. Get rid of that monster, with its swimming pool and rec. room and pitch a tent. Preferably in the local cemetery, to suit your mood.

Pull in your belts. Dump that extra car, the boat and the cottage. If you look at it objectively, they're just a big pain in the arm anyway.

Walk to work. Take a bus to the city instead of your gas-gobbler plus parking fees. Learn to do your own elementary plumbing and electric work at night school.

Ladies. Get the knitting needles out and make lots of shawls, sweaters, scarves and wool socks. You did it for the troops overseas. And god-awful itchy and ill fitting some of them were, but they kept us warm.

Stop spoiling your children with allowances. Let them earn their own money through odd jobs, or do without.

Let's stop grumbling, and get back to a spartan, rewarding life, where ideas are more important than physical comfort. After you, he said.

This column is really for the birds

Ray Baker

Hello, my name is Caesar, I'm a star attraction and I'm famous. I am a South American macaw, to you guys who don't know any better, who think I'm a parrot. That's okay, I've been called worse. I've been called Pretty Polly.

As a matter of hard solid fact I've been called a lot worse, in English and in Spanish. I am totally bilingual. In fact when I first came to this COLD country and took up my rightful place as the centre of attraction at the Sea Horse in Midland's Huronia Mall, I was surrounded by harsh jabber jabber, not at all like my soft, melodious native Spanish.

But, by the time you could say Muchas gracias, I was swearing in English as well. My family is famous for mimicry you know, in any language.

But the way I'm worth a fortune, thousands and thousands of pesos, and that's at least \$3,000 Canadian. But there is no way I'm gonna move from here. Between you and me, if I did, they would lose business overnight. Who are "they?" I don't know. The people

call them Wayne and Neil and they think they run the Sea Horse but I know who's the boss around here.

Wayne and Neil are my servants. They clean my cage, bring me water, and a never-ending stream of fingerends, noses, and the occasional earlobe. I think these people are my admirers. They are called, how you say, customers. They also bring me sunflower seeds and fruit, yum yum, but they also bring me hard times, and I don't like hard times.

The first was two years ago. I was the centre of an admiring crowd as usual, and they moved me to the back of the shop, saying people couldn't get into the store and buy things.

The shame of it all. I was put with the gerbils, the goldfish and those preening budgies! People come to see me, not those macrame, friendship things, arts and crafts

and models.

I've a good mind to open my cage and play with a remote-control jeep I have my beady eye on. I can even inventory 800 items from here. It takes them two whole days to do it.

Anyway, the second hard time was the past 18 months. We moved to Balm Beach Road. Finally, I told 'em (in English), "I miss the kids. Let's move back to Huronia Mall." That got to them. So here we are again. I will perch here while the kids admire me and their parents make Wayne and Neil rich and famous, and they can visit my country on the Amazon.

I have royal connections, well close enough. You know Ray Baker, the one that scribbles a lot? He told me he needed one of my beautiful tail feathers to make a quill; and this parchment he had made with a 100-year-old bylaw on it, well, the mayor would sign it

with my quill, so I gave him one and the mayor has my quill at home. You see how famous I am!

Now, I'm bored with all this talking. I think I'll just perch here and look down my beak at the people, and wait for some new kids to come and talk to each other about me. I've got plenty of time. I'm only 15 years old. You remember my uncle (the one that trained Long John Silver the pirate to carry him around on his shoulder?) Well he lived to be 125 years old, and that's typical in my family.

So I'll be here, see you hombres at the Sea Horse. Bah! The least they could do for me is call it Caesar's Palace. All they've done so far is name a salad after me.

THIS WEEK'S MIS-QUOTE: "Hail Caesar, we who are about to buy, salute you." Marcus Aurilius.

Ray Baker and his family live in Penetanguishene. They are all confirmed nature lovers, which is why most of his columns are for the birds.

BIA will count votes tomorrow

Today is your last chance to file nomination papers, for election to the Midland Town Centre BIA board of directors.

Voting for at least five positions will take place tomorrow, but nominations must be received at the BIA office (third floor, Sterling Trust, corner of King and Hugel), by 4:30 this afternoon.

At least four new directors, elected annually, serve two years each, to ensure continuity on the board. Their two hour board meetings are held bi-weekly.

Winterama meeting tonight

The 1986 Penetanguishene Winterama Committee is still looking for more people to get involved with the fun of organizing the town's 39th annual winter carnival, to be held Feb. 14, 15, and 16.

If interested and full of ideas, don't miss tonight's meeting in the town hall, at 7:30 p.m.

Technical education is meeting's subject

The second in a series of meetings organized by the Simcoe County Board of Education, to address the future of technical education in secondary schools, will be held Dec. 2 in Midland Secondary School, at 7 p.m.

The board is inviting members of the community to attend and to participate.

Macs mean money for Rosewood

On Thursday, the local McDonald's Restaurant will be helping Rosewood, the shelter in Midland for battered women and their children. Rosewood will receive \$1 for each Big Mac sold that day.

Rosewood will be opened as soon as required fire doors and a fire escape are in place.

OPP has little to report

Midland OPP yesterday reported a quiet week, with a total of 76 general occurrences.

Four charges were laid under the Liquor Licence Act. Two charges of impaired driving and five 12-hour suspensions were handed out.

Two charges of shoplifting, seven thefts, one assault, and four cases of wilful damage were reported.

A total of 18 accidents occurred. Two involved personal injury. Under investigation are six break and enters.

Gordon Coukell Farmer of the Year

Stayner area dairy farmer Gordon Coukell has been chosen as Simcoe County's Farmer of the Year for 1985. The award was presented to Coukell at the annual banquet, held at Creemore, on Nov. 15.

Gordon Coukell has been involved in just about every facet of the dairy industry. He has served on the Simcoe County Milk Committee since 1974 and has been its secretary-treasurer since 1976. He has represented the milk committee on the SCFA board for a number of years and was recently elected to serve as a director on the Ontario Milk Marketing Board. He has been active in 4-H work, farm management courses as well as other community activities.

The Farmer of the Year award is sponsored by the Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture. All affiliated farm groups are invited to submit applications. The winner is chosen by an anonymous selection committee which is not connected with the SCFA.

On our way to a white Christmas

After a relatively late first snowfall, on Nov. 9, winter has rallied with a total of 24.6 c.m. of snow over Huronia, so far this season.

Although the snows began Nov. 2 last year, by December only two centimetres had accumulated.

Midland's weatherman Mel Curtis, who has kept track of such facts for Environment Canada since 1948, is confidently predicting a white Christmas.

North Simcoe news briefs

Midland gets grant to update plan

A community planning grant of \$9,462 has been awarded to the Town of Midland.

Municipal Affairs Minister Bernard Grandmaitre says the grant will assist the community in reviewing the updating of its official plan.

Community planning grants are designed to encourage municipalities to resolve land use planning issues to reflect municipal and economic priorities.

The grants may also be used for special studies to develop community improvement policies; to determine the feasibility of using data processing technology in the local planning process; and to assist in implementing the Planning Act.

Old council meets for the last time

Penetanguishene's law-makers held their final meeting of this term's council last night.

The council for the next three years will be

sworn in at the Town Hall on Dec. 9 at 7:30 p.m.

At last night's meeting, Mayor Ron Bellisle, Reeve Art Stewart, and Deputy-reeve Frances St. Amant, along with Councillors Ray Baker, Don McNee, Ken Tannahill, and Lionel Dion, said their goodbyes to Councillors Larry Bellisle and Bob Klug, making way for the newly elected Bob Cascagnette and Bob Sullivan.

For more details about the meeting, see Friday's Huronia Weekend.

A new warden on Dec. 10

The 144th inaugural meeting of the council of Simcoe County will be held Dec. 10 at 1 p.m., in the administration centre in Midhurst. A successor to Reeve John Moreau of Port McNicoll will be elected warden of the county for 1986.

Tomorrow last meeting of board

The final meeting of the outgoing Simcoe County Board of Education will be held on Nov. 27, at 8 p.m.

A meeting of the new board will be held Dec. 2 at 8 p.m.

The new board of education will be inaugurated Dec. 11 at 8 p.m.

Farmer Olympics

winner from Creemore

Jim Steed, a Creemore area beef farmer, was this year's recipient of the Farmer Olympics award at the Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture annual banquet on Nov. 15. The presentation was made on behalf of the S.C.F.A. by past president Marion McArthur.

The Farmer Olympics competition, held in conjunction with the Collingwood Fair, involves a number of tractor driving skills as well as a list of questions regarding farm safety. The SCFA considers the competition to be of value in promoting safety with farm machinery. It hopes to see other fair boards in the county promote it as well.