

And now a story about a strange bird

A strange bird is our Hugh. An odd bird, indeed. He can be as cunning and wily as an Egyptian bazaar merchant. Next moment, he can be as naive as a six-year-old who has been slapped for doing something unthinkable in our rectitudinous Canadian society.

I observe him more closely than I have in years, because of geography. For some years, he attended, occasionally, various universities, from Toronto to Halifax. He worked on a boat on the Great Lakes, and another on the Vancouver-Alaska run. He spent five years in Paraguay. There were side-trips to Mexico, Israel, Guatemala, Costa Rica. He's been to Brazil, Argentina, Peru and Bolivia. As a result, we didn't see much of him.

Now, he has rented a winterized cottage at a beach near me, while maintaining his practice in the city. Nobody but Hugh would rent a cottage which he must vacate from mid-June to Labour Day. But he did.

He arrives from the city on Friday evening. Does he rush out to his beloved cottage, which he rented to "get away from the city?" Not on your life.

We have cups of tea, some food, a little yatter. He plays the grand piano and some new tapes he's discovered. We watch late TV. He sleeps late, showers, brings me a cuppa in bed, plays more piano or guitar, and halfway

Bill Smiley

through Saturday afternoon, I almost have to kick him out to go to his retreat in the country.

He returns to my place Monday evening and the same routine is followed. Tea, shower, music, TV. He catches the early bus Tuesday, usually, and goes back to work in the city, where he sleeps on a bed in the clinic he shares. A tough life.

We spat, infrequently, but fairly fiercely. I'm a sceptic; he's a believer. In everything: holistic medicine, astrology, reflexology - the mind boggles when he gets on to the relation between music and the entire body. I ask snarky questions until his dark brown eyes begin to smoulder.

But he has a great personality, and a wonderful curiosity. He is very fit, because he eats only the right foods, except that every time he leaves, my refrigerator is almost cleaned out.

He charms people, and opens up to them. He is an excellent listener, except that he gets a bit of a glazed look when I go on about something he doesn't agree with, or has heard before, or doesn't fit into his scheme of things.

He is completely amoral about money. He

received a small inheritance from his grandfather, and admitted that it was just enough to pay his debts. (It wasn't of course.)

He has friends all over Canada and the U.S., and sees nothing wrong with "dropping in for a visit" and staying a few days. And he's just as hospitable with his friends. He's asked them all up to his cottage, where he has an electric piano, courtesy of you-know-who, a TV, all the appliances, and electric heat.

This may sound as though I thoroughly dislike my son. Not so. It's just that he has a human spirit that is not easy to pin down. He loves his sister (who is another weirdo), his nephews, and, at times, his father. He went on a long trek to see his grandfather, who is in his nineties.

He came home the other night, and found his father draped in his favourite armchair, with a wet towel on his head. Was aghast. "Dad, what's the matter?"

I informed him that I had come home late, left no lights on, carried four bags of groceries, had made a mistep on the back porch, and fallen (still holding two bags of groceries), and had cracked my head on the

sharp side of the porch. By the time he got there, it had almost stopped bleeding down my neck. My mother taught me that a cold compress would ease the bleeding, years ago, when there was no such thing as an emergency ward.

But Hugh was horrified. He insisted, over my objections, that we go to the hospital. (He loves driving my car.) It turned out that the cut was fairly deep and wide, and the doc stuck some stitches in it.

Did you ever try to get a bed in a hospital? It's like getting an engraved invitation to a garden party at Buckingham Palace, except that I doubt the Queen's signature would get you in.

I'd been waiting three weeks for a bed, and there I was, with a little cut on my head, being cosseted and sewn. Oh, it was worth it. They put a great, flapping bandage on the cut, and then tied a thing around my forehead, so that I looked like a hippie or an Indian or a long-distance runner. My neighbor was delighted by my band. But it fell off in a few hours. It was apparently designed only to hold me head together.

So. You see? If Hugh hadn't come home, and wanted a chance to drive the car, I could be sitting, dead cold, in my own blood, still reading the paper.

Baker displays no compunction, jest pundamentals

A pun: A jest consisting of a play on words with more than one meaning. A punster by definition is a person given to punning, (guilty as charged, no plea bargaining, remission, or early release). Funny thing (funny peculiar) is that a punnet instead of being a child punster or even an adult using a mini-pun is, A chip basket for fruit. Surprising what you can do with the English langwitch ain't it? But there is a shortage of puns, seriously (no pun intended), the lack of cash at two Canadian banks this fall didn't get too many cartoons. You could call that a lack of pun-ding I suppose, but don't bank on too many like that.

The best one was a bank holdup. The robber passed a note to the teller. "Pass me small bills in an envelope, I'm desperate." The teller smiled slowly and scribbled in reply, "This is A western bank, so are we".

Read on at your own risk - IT GETS WORSE. The best thing to do, or the worst, depending whether you are a punner or a punnee, is take a well known phrase or saying, and it goes like this.

A pipe and drum band was playing in Make Believe Gardens when a herd of frenzied Indian elephants was driven through their midst by four wild-eyed mahouts. One quick thinking drummer grabbed the nearest

Ray Baker

microphone, and at the top of his voice shouted "BOO". The crowd, momentarily hushed, burst into applause as the herd took off. As the commentator remarked, "Well it just goes to prove the old saying folks, "A herd in the band is worth boo in the hush."

Had enough yet? Anyway you get my drift, as the Grand Prix driver said in the rain to the TV cameramanperson.

Take your own name (please) and jiggle it a bit. I'm lucky. My occupation determined mine. I've always been a beach bum at heart, walking along the edge of the lake looking at Flotsam and Jetsam, or anyone else for that matter. Finding things that were washed up was easy, and in summer, the occasional quarter or dime. In fact, rather than buy one of those metal locators I found an old rake, and began looking in earnest, (he was my partner). The best finds were at water's edge. Which is how I acquired my name, Bay Raker.

Have you cried "Uncle" yet? Did I tell you about the intrepid explorer in darkest Africa? Looking into the legend of (no, not Baby) lost animals. His search led

him into the darkest interior where the native legend had it that an animal existed that was so rare, and unknown, that it was called (in a local Dahomey dialect) a rhary, or in phonetic pronunciation a rare-ee. The intrepid explorer traded his last bag of shiny beads (this was before the newly emerged African Nations obviously) for a photograph of this beast, described variously as fat-thin, huge-small, hairy-bald, tusked and toothless. In fact it was none of those things.

The headman, in exchange for the explorers Rolex oyster wrist watch, agreed to expedite an expedition. Every man, woman, and child person was organized and the hunt was on!

For 40 days and forty nights it rained (sorry wrong story) until finally they came in sight of their quarry. At the top of the quarry sat the rare-ee, cleaning its talons with a toothpick made from the calcified root of the perennial flowering Peruvian walnut shrub.

It was humming softly to itself. The headman explained that it also sang. Currently it was engaged in a (fruitless) search in the adjacent orchards for a mate. It

had been a 1,000 year search and the explorer realized in a flash (it was light-ning as well) that this was the last remaining specimen-person on earth.

Urging caution, who didn't listen, the explorer pressed on. In the forefront was every man woman and child person the top of their quarry was located on the edge of a precipitous drop, well known to all of you who have a) read King Solomonperson's Mines or b) watched any Tarzan movie over the past four decades, with the exclusion of Tarzan Visits New York.

Before the explorer could say the Dahomey equivalent of "Jack Robinson", every man, woman, and child person had tipped the beast over the deepest cliff in 20th Century-Fox Africa with wooden poles.

As it dropped it burst into song! "What was that?", asked the explorer of the headman. "To me," replied the headman, "It sounded like a spirited rendition of "It's A Long Way To Tip A Rary."

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE. "Humour, the world's best medicine" World Digest.

Ray Baker and his family live in Penetanguishene. He is a freelance writer and a confirmed herbalist. He strongly recommends that this column be taken with a pinch of salt.

North Simcoe news briefs

375 Christmas hampers are to be packed here

This year, Midland Salvation Army will be packing a total of 375 Christmas hampers which will be distributed from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Dec. 23.

According to officials at the local Citadel, applications for hampers will be taken by the Army until 3:30 p.m., Friday, Dec. 13.

Meanwhile, there's to be a Tin Can Show at Pen Theatre in Midland next Saturday, Dec. 14 at 1:30 p.m. with proceeds (can goods) being turned over to the local Sally Ann's.

We're still ahead of last year

At press time yesterday, this winter's snowfall still stood at 37.6 centimetres or 14.803 inches.

By this time last winter, 27 centimetres of snow had blanketed the district.

OPP spot checks aimed at nabbing drunk drivers

OPP in District 7, which takes in Midland-Penetanguishene, will be conducting spot checks this months in an effort to crack down on drinking drivers.

So far this month several spot checks have been already conducted in North Simcoe with more to come.

Scarlet Fever outbreak in school population

Simcoe County is presently experiencing an outbreak of scarlet fever in the school population.

Scarlet fever is a bacterial infection caused by the streptococcus A bacterium. Its early signs include fever and a sore throat. A distinctive rash appears on the second day of the illness.

The rash is a diffuse red blush with many points of deeper red which blanch under pressure.

Usually the rash will first appear on the upper chest then on the trunk, neck and extremities. The face, palms and soles are usually unaffected. Over a period of one week the rash will disappear. Severe forms of scarlet fever are characterized by high fevers.

If you suspect that your child has contracted scarlet fever please contact your family doctor or your local Health office immediately, because severe complications may arise if this condition is not treated promptly.

MacDonald will visit Shrine, Friday afternoon

Flora MacDonald will visit the Martyrs' Shrine Friday afternoon, before attending an early evening Progressive Conservative fund raising cocktail party in Midland.

The federal minister of employment and immigration will be in the Budd Watson Gallery from approximately 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The earlier part of the day she will spend in Orillia.

MacDonald is the second federal cabinet minister within the past four weeks to attend a fund raising function in Simcoe North. Otto Jelinek appeared in Orillia.

Tickets to this Friday's cocktail party cost \$15.

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Medi-Vac missions 75: O'Hara

During the past 11 months there have been a total of 75 Medi-Vac missions in and out of Huronia Airport, reports John O'Hara, airport manager at the tri-municipal facility in Township of Tiny.

"About half the trips go to either Island Airport in Toronto or Pearson International while most of the others are scheduled flights to Belleville."

SCBE trustees to meet tomorrow

Simcoe County Board of Education trustees meet tomorrow night at 7 p.m. in private session before their 8 p.m. public one at the Education Centre in Barrie.

It will be the last meeting of the new board until Jan. 8.

Chalk up busy November for police

During the month of November, Midland police investigated 26 reportable and 15 non-reportable motor-vehicle accidents on town streets.

They also probed 11 break-ins and laid 58 charges under the Highway Traffic Act.

During the same month, a total of 461 tickets were issued for parking violations in the town.

6th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LOBSTER BRUNCH

AT THE THE BUDD WATSON GALLERY

Sunday, December 15, 1985 — 12.30 p.m.

SHRIMP & SCALLOP SALADS
LOBSTER TAIL or ROAST BEEF
DESSERTS and REFRESHMENTS

Guests of Honour

JOHN ARPIN CATHERINE WILSON
NORBERT KRAFT BONNIE SILVER

ADULTS — \$30.00 CHILDREN — \$15.00

All Proceeds to Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of Canada