

Say Have a nice day - and be prepared to duck!

If you read in the papers one of these days about some middle-aged guy going berserk and punching a pretty young waitress or bank teller right in the mush for no apparent reason, you'll know it was I, driven finally over the brink by that inanity to end them all, "Have a nice day."

It may happen in a restaurant. It will be just after that waitress has served me lukewarm soup, followed by filet of sole. The filet will turn out to be of the boot variety, rather than the sea variety, and I will just have broken a tooth on it. As I am fumbling fragments of bone out of my face, she will sashay off to serve another customer, hips twitching, and toss over her shoulder at me a gay "Have a nice meal now." That's when I will let her have it.

Or it might occur on a Friday afternoon, in the bank. The weather forecast is for blizzards, I'm in a snarky mood, on my way to have two teeth extracted, and my arthritis is giving me a fairly lively foretaste of hell. And this young teller, her feet aching, slaps down my withdrawal, summons an exhausted smile from down around her pantyhose, and chirrups, "Have a nice weekend, eh?"

It's not the grammar or the verbiage I object to. It's the utter insincerity of the suggestion. It means just about as much as if the speaker blew his/her nose and spat into the wind.

Bill Smiley

And it's pretty obvious where it came from. It's one of those American imports that should be banned at the border. It has crept across via the airwaves, issued in treacly tones by signing-off disc jockeys and game show MCs.

And it has been copied by Canadian media people, who ape automatically the mispronunciations of their U.S. counterparts, such as eggsacuation for execution and noshus for nauseous.

From there it has spread like the Black Plague into our airlines, hotels, restaurants, and even our sacred institutions like the banks. I haven't been in a bordello lately, but I'd be willing to bet that when a customer totters off shaky and unshaven into the cold dawn, the madame will coo after him in dulcet tones, "Have a nice day, now."

I have a strong suspicion the damn thing originated in the Deep South, along with such heart-felt maxims as "Y'all come back real soon, y'heah." Which means, roughly, if you want to be ripped off again in our joint, we'll be happy to oblige.

I refuse to believe all those waitresses, air stewardesses and clerks are spouting this garbage from deep in their hearts. Those gals

are tuckered out. They don't give a diddle whether we drop dead, as long as we do it in front of somebody else's wicket.

No, they've been coerced into this phoney farewell by the Simon Legrees they work for, the type who think that if the clerks utter such slop in the Holiday Inn in Texas, they should do the same in the Holiday Inn in Toronto.

And they're the guys I have it in for, not the poor underlings, forced to soil their lips with artificial, cynical so-logs that raise the hackles on the likes of me.

At first I responded to this silly utterance with a reluctant and very concise, "Thanks. You too."

As I became more disgusted with the obvious falsity of such as the dentist absentmindedly muttering "Have a good day" just after he'd drilled two and yanked one, my response subsided to a grunt.

Next step will be to look one of the idiots who issue this inanity right in the eye and calmly ask: "Are you kidding? Who told you to say that? Do you mean it? What do you care what kind of day I have? I don't really care what kind you have."

This might make a few of the more sensitive ones blush. But most of them would just drop their jaw and wonder whether old

Smiley had got into the sauce, to make him so snarly.

It may take stronger measures, and I hope many of my readers who agree with me will join in putting a halt to this pernicious poop.

If it happens in a public place, perhaps we should call the manager and say "This young lady/man is interfering in my private life, in my democratic right to have a rotten day/weekend if I feel like it. Now you, buster, just tell her never to insult another customer with that silly saying, or I'll take my business elsewhere."

This is the only language understood by the type of turkey who thinks such garbage as "Have a good day" is good public relations. Hit him where it hurts. In the P.P. (panic pocket).

Perhaps I am over-reacting. I have been known to do this in connection with Celsius, metric, politicians of every hue, greedy unions, misleading advertisements, town engineers, school administrators, and about 12,000 other things, including the highway robbers known as garage mechanics.

Maybe it will pass, along with other such worn-to-the-heels expressions as "That'll be the frosty Friday" and "All righty" and the ubiquitous "Turkey," which seems to cover a multitude of mental and physical aberrations.

But in case it doesn't, keep your dukes up you purveyors of "Have a good..."

This is not another junk drawer column - honest

Let me put your mind at rest straight away. This is not another column on junk drawers. After last year's three-part series on that vital issue, enough is enough. Although come to think of it, I do have enough material and inputs for just one more column on junk drawers, and more than enough for two columns on junk yards. But later in the year maybe. For now you Gentle Readers are in for a treat: the exciting world of the cup cupboard.

This life-sustaining facility is normally located to the right of the kitchen sink at three levels.

Level 1. The bottom shelf contains the favoured ones: those cups which through either long association or ease of handling have endeared themselves to the user. More on this later.

Level 2. The "second class citizens" of the cup and pot world. The ones that might be used if the first selection is either in use, or ready for washing, which nobody will consider as an option until desperation sets in.

Level 3. A combination shelf of finger glasses, egg cups, strange looking drinking utensils and, at the very back, things that only adults on tiptoe can feel and see.

Ray Baker

Today's absorbing saga will deal exclusively with level 1, the most favoured ones in daily use, and the logic, or lack of logic, behind this seemingly mis-matched collection.

My own favorite (for coffee only) is a white teacup, wide top, narrow base, small handle, ringed in blue with a blue crest and the legend Bore. Underneath (although this is hard to see when you're using it) are the words, Arabia, "Wartsila", Finland.

Three hundred feet long, 50 feet wide, 26,000 tons, 300 passengers on three decks, the SS BORE was built in Finland in 1953 to cruise the Pacific. In 1977 it caught fire in Montreal and sank. My coffee cup was acquired from the purser's cabin three years ago, when the vessel had been raised and towed to Lake Erie. I'm sure I won't get another cup like it.

Mom, says another one, just three letters both sides, that's it. Guess who that belongs to? As an option another one made in Japan bears the following legend: Barbara,

mysterious stranger, Saint Barbara was a third century Christian martyr and lived near Istanbul in Turkey. She was beheaded, etc., A nice cheerful cup no? NO!

Narrow tops, big broad bases and big handles. Two of em, side by side like twins, occupy a place of honour. Simply marked FORD 1910 in brown on brown. They sit next to a McDonald's plastic tumbler with all the McDonald characters on the side. This one is unbreakable, or at least droppable, which is probably why it has lasted so long on level 1.

Four nondescript grey-brown cups are in there hiding in the corner, and so they should. The pattern showing through the glaze is a series of drips round the top. No doubt intentional but definitely not my first choice.

One ugly big grey-green one was so unattractive and avoided because of its shape: (big on top, narrow in the middle, and a wide base), that it was physically removed from the first choice location and relegated past second, third and even fourth choice. It sits

on the key rack shelf, full of keys for which no known lock exists.

The ultimate humiliation of course is being put on the desk in my den to keep pens and pencils in. Some of them still have handles (the cups, not the pens and pencils).

The purpose of the cup cupboard of course is to make it easy and accessible for daily use. The very top shelf is a No No, containing as it does a crested Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee cup, and a Marriage of the Prince of Wales to Lady Diana Spencer cup, which, of course, are never used. My great grandchildren can cash them in. For company, the blue and white china is taken off the hook and more time is spent looking at the 17th century street scenes in the pattern than using them. But enough for today about the bottom shelf in the cup cupboard. I've got writer's cramp. Time for a coffee. Now where is my SS BORE cup?

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE: "Many a slip, twixt cup and Lip," Old English saying. Ray Baker and his family live in Penetanguishene. He is a freelance writer. They are surrounded by cups from all over the world.

Evening landscape design course

Landscape design is an evening course being offered in Midland by Georgian College. Course leader Stephen Woods of Native Woods Landscape Construction of Midland says that the eight week course will help students make a landscaping plan for their property. Students need a photograph of their property, and a survey. Registration is in advance of the first evening, Feb. 4. The cost is \$65. For more information telephone Stephen Woods (526-4158).

Coldwater library will benefit

Village of Coldwater is one of 18 communities that will reap the benefits of grants to be awarded from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture.

A total of \$23,350 has been earmarked for Coldwater Memorial Library.

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Mark Scott
(Tom not present)

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— Greg & Faye