

Municipal politics American-style: Ron did it

All you Gentle Readers will be thrilled to know that Clint Eastwood has decided to run for mayor in his home municipality. This is excellent news. I would hope the announcement took place in a suitable environment.

The bar is dimly-lit. The wooden half-doors swing and creak in the dusty night. A honky-tonk piano player in the background wears a bowler hat and red arm bands on his shirt sleeves. In the cigar haze girls pose. The space between them is reserved for later, where a bad guy is thrown through the balcony onto a green felt-topped card table in a shower of cards, chips, players and the sprawling dealer, who is wearing a green eyeshade over his brows.

Dusty, sweat-covered cow pokes mix with the rustlers. The big, hairy barkeeper throws down shot glasses, slides foaming pints the length of the wet bartop. These are clutched and cries of "same again" and "filler up" are heard. On a shelf below the bar sits a Colt 45 Peacemaker.

At the far end of the bar, his back to the wall with a total view of the room, sits The Stranger.

Tall, mean and dirty, his steely eyes peer

—Ray Baker—

through his lowered hatbrim and the smoke from his cigarillo. A serape is thrown carelessly over his left shoulder, revealing a well-worn, hand-tooled holster, slick with use. The gun has a muzzle two feet long.

A Mexican bandolier peeps from under the cape, shiny bullet cases reflecting the oil-lamp light.

He taps the bar with one finger and the scene freezes. The melody stops in mid-note. Conversation stops.

A mangy dog cowering beneath a table cringes, and shrinks into a tight ball of fear. The camera zooms for a close-up, the slitted eyes, the cigarillo curled in a corner of a tight-lipped smile.

"I'm gonna run for mayor," says The Stranger. The Banker, dressed in a black swallow-tailed suit with a white shirt and black string tie, flashes a glance, pregnant with meaning, to the President of the Catlemen's Association across the room.

Fall back to a long shot. Two future

characters from Central Casting slide quietly out the side door into a dingy alley. Coconut shells banging together tell us that the two have left town on horseback heading south to the Rio Grande.

Meanwhile, back at the Last Chance Saloon, the Banker gives an imperceptible nod to The Boys, holds up both hands, and says, "Sure folks, why not have The Stranger as mayor. After all look what happened to Ronnie Reagan."

The crowd mumble to themselves, "Mumble, mumble," the over-the-hill but still young-looking and beautiful female saloon owner shouts, "Drinks are on the house, boys."

A Texas whoop is heard from the local bum who is shown sleepily awaking at the sound of the magic words, on the house.

The normal hubbub of conversation starts again, the honky-tonk piano player crashes a few bars, and a violinist appears from thin air

at the side of a deserted mini-stage at one side of the saloon.

A bold 19-year-old ranch hand who is in town for his monthly Saturday-night-fling grabs a hostess around the waist. Together they spring into a high-spirited version of Turkey in the Straw, surrounded by hand-clapping, foot-stomping, poor-but-honest townfolk.

Guns are quietly snicked back on safety under the table. The Stranger sits back, casual but alert.

A long shot of the street. A ball of tumbledweed rolls from right to left, driven by the off-stage air fan.

The street is dark, the saloon bright, as Turkey in the Straw reaches a frenzied climax. You know the Stranger will be elected mayor.

Credits start to roll. End of scene. Finish, part two next week. Thanks Clint. You've made my day.

THIS WEEKS QUOTE: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." William Shakespeare.

Ray Baker and his family live in Penetanguishene. He is a freelance writer and a former western movie buff.

Conservatives favour new mistakes over Liberal ones

by CAREY NIEUWHOF

The Mulroney government is slowly learning the rules of conduct for a new government. The process is painful. They have avoided some classic Liberal errors. Mulroney has not been caught standing in front of two forks painted on the wall as John Turner was. When pictures were taken, the forks looked as though they were protruding on Turner's head. (It made him look like the devil.) Mulroney has not been caught giving the finger to Westerners as Pierre Trudeau was. Trudeau lived to regret that - we think. It's not yet known whether Pierre Trudeau ever regretted anything he did.

Mulroney's government has its own problems. There is the standard tuna scandal, the night club episode, and all the other faux pas. However, last week the Mulroney government learned a new rule - the hard way. It learned that you are to never use tax money for partisan purposes. It learned that that can look very bad on a government. At least, that's what the Opposition told them.

The Honourable Andree Champagne, Minister of Youth, learned last week that she affixed her signature to a letter authorizing the use of taxpayers' money to recruit young Tories. She was probably the victim of the Henry Blake syndrome. You M.A.S.H. lovers will understand this.

It is the case where the beleaguered person in charge is swamped by things to sign. The person soon finds that he does not care what

—Viewpoint—

He/she is signing. In a highly bureaucratic society, signing things can get complicated. "What am I signing?", the person in charge asks his assistant. The reply comes: "You are signing to confirm that past signatures will be initialed by you on all official documents to verify that your signature can be substituted by your initials when you feel that a full signature is not appropriate. Sign here please." Confused and befuddled, the person in charge goes through the motions of signing yet another document.

Champagne claims that she did not realize what she was signing, but does confirm that it was her signature. What that means, is that tax dollars could have been used to recruit young Tories. Well, what does this mean to you, - the poor bystander who watches the government snatch huge portions of your income each year? Does this mean that your dollars could have been gobbled up by 12-year-olds in three piece suits?

Sit down my friend, for this fiasco in the Youth Ministry may mean that your tax dollar has been consumed by some young Tory. Do not fear though: if the Youth Ministry has sent you paltry earnings to help recruit young Conservatives, read on. For your scribbler will tell you where to see the results of your tax dollar at work. It will likely be hard at work in Montreal this week. Thousands of Tories are gathering in

Montreal beginning on Wednesday. They will meet to elect a new national executive and tell Brian and Mila how much they love them. It's called a national convention. Amongst those thousands of people in dark suits, there will be several thousand Tory youth. That, I'm afraid, might be where your tax dollar is.

Look hard for your dollar. You may spot an 18-year-old right winger waving a placard. That placard may have been constructed with your dollar. For your sake, let us hope the placard says something you can stomach. Let us hope, for your sake, it does not read John Turner Drinks His Bathwater. You'd think they'd come up with something more original than that, seeing that they are using your money.

You may see your dollar hard at work elsewhere. It might have been used to make a button, or a hat, or a souvenir salt and pepper shaker. It might have been used to buy a 12-year-old one more cherry soda - the soda that finally convinced him to fork over the \$2 membership fee and become a Tory for life. If that doesn't make you feel good about your tax dollars, I don't know what will.

You might even have helped fund a party extraordinaire. The final night of the convention, the Tory youth are throwing a huge bash with the rock group The Arrows. Look for your tax dollar. It might be on stage. With any luck, it was the dollar that bought the

gallon of hair gel each rock group needs today to be seen in public. It's that kind of expenditure that makes you feel proud to be a Canadian.

Yes sir or ma'am, you can be certain that the Youth Ministry has your best interest in mind when they spend tax dollars. Maybe you should write Andree Champagne and thank her for using your tax dollars the way she did. To think that the dollar you could have spent on groceries or a movie might have actually gone into hair gel for the Arrows or souvenir salt and pepper shakers. Aren't you glad there's a federal government out there that knows how to make Canadians feel as if they've made a contribution to society?

You'd better write now to thank the Youth Minister for her actions. She has already announced that she's going to end spending tax money on Tory youth. Apparently, she thinks it's a mistake. She doesn't believe she should have signed that letter.

People around Ottawa have convinced her it was wrong, and your money will now be going to things like job creation and skills retraining. Unfortunate as it may be, one has to suppose that all good things must come to an end.

Carey Nieuwhof is the president of the Glendon College PC Association. He has worked on the past two Conservative leadership conventions. He is a Midland native.

MSS grad excels

Deanne Woods, one of over 50,000 people in North America to write the recent Master of Business North American Entrance Exam, placed in the 98th percentile of all candidates.

Mr. Woods, graduate of Midland Secondary School, is presently in his last year of Engineering Physics at the University of Toronto. Mr. Woods' results make him a top candidate for any business school in North America.



Deanne Woods

Mild spell snaps deep freeze

The weatherman was calling for warm temperatures yesterday with the chance of rain or thundershowers late in the afternoon.

Yesterday's mild spell fell on the heels of almost three days of sub-zero temperatures readings late last week, that, thanks to an arctic breeze which rolled in from the deep north.

Midland cops are tops, says Barrie Fire Chief

Midland Police Constables Jack Charlebois and Chris Carlton have received an official Thank You from Barrie's fire chief.

On Jan. 13, according to Fire Chief J.V. McAllister, the two Midland police department members assisted the Barrie Fire Department with a house fire at 212 Bayfield Street in that city.

Chief McAllister wrote to Midland Police Chief Ernie Bates, "Two of your personnel who were passing through our municipality observed the fire, entered the building, warned the woman that her house was burning and after she had been escorted from the building, they directed traffic until the arrival of our Police Force."

Fire Chief McAllister asked that his appreciation be extended to Officers Charlebois and Carlton.

\$27,000 federal assistance announced by MP Doug Lewis

K.B. Tool and Machine Inc. of Penetanguishene, will receive a \$27,000 contribution under the federal government's Industrial and Regional Development Program.

The announcement was made by Doug Lewis, MP for Simcoe-North on behalf of Andre Bissonnette, minister of state (small businesses).

K.B. Tool and Machine Inc. manufactures specialized production machinery and customized tooling and dies. The company will use the funds

towards the purchase of a computer-driven milling machine and a computer with graphic design capabilities. The company forecasts increased sales of \$470,000 and the creation of five new jobs.

The Industrial and Regional Development Program is administered by the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion (DRIE) and provides direct financial assistance to industry in Canada.

—North Simcoe— —News briefs—

Fifteen council members received \$73,654 in 1985

Midland taxpayers paid \$73,654 in 1985 to have a nine member municipal council. Because of the overlapping of councils, 15 men and women were members of Midland council in 1985. The group was paid \$63,195 in salary and \$10,459 in expenses.

Mayor Al Roach received \$12,600 remuneration, \$384 expenses; Reeve Bev Day, \$6,150 and \$58; former deputy-reeve Claude Buck, \$6,010 and \$1,484; former alderman Ian Ross, \$5,600 and \$1,860; former alderman Bob Jeffrey, \$5,800 and \$747; former alderman Dan Herbert, \$6,595 and \$788; Deputy-reeve Nancy Keefe, \$6,200 and \$893; former alderman Patrick Kearns, \$5,700 and \$1,827; former alderman Don Sherk, \$5,540 and \$2,074; Alderman Gail Barrie, Alderman Buzz Brown, Alderman Robert Brush, Alderman Gale Niblock, Alderman Fred Pilon, and Alderman Carolyn White, each \$500 and \$64.

The five members of the Town's Committee of Adjustment as a group received remuneration of \$615. Board of Parks Management member Tony Osler received \$598 in expenses. Library Board member Norman Ranson received \$96 in expenses.

Give from the heart, March 19

Four times each year, the Huronia Branch of the Canadian Red Cross Society arranges local blood donors' clinics for Midland and area residents.

Your next opportunity to "Give the Gift of Life" is next Wednesday, March 19, from 12 noon until 8 p.m., in Midland's Yonge Street Civic Centre.

Blizzard strikes area

An early March blizzard swept in over North Simcoe last Wednesday and Thursday dumping a total of 16 centimetres of snow on the district.

In all since last Wednesday a total of 36 centimetres of snow has blanketed Huronia since the 5th to the 10th of this month bringing this winter's total snowfall to 527.6 centimetres or 207.7 inches.

Spring and summer around the corner

Although recent heavy snowfalls, and the return of cold weather, makes it seem like mid-winter all over again, the shortest day of the year (Dec. 21) is months behind us.

On the first day of Spring next week, March 20, day and night will be of almost equal length.

The longest day of the year in 1986, falls on June 21.

SCBE meeting tomorrow at Education Centre

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

A summary of 1985 operations and net surplus will be reviewed during a study of the board's 1985 audited financial statement.