

The abuse was of privilege

Al Roach should not have been surprised to be found guilty of assaulting Patrick Kearns on Nov. 12, 1984. Even if his lawyer had been successful in court in convincing the judge that evidence pointed to the victim of the assault, after the fact, trying to blackmail Roach, the Midland mayor still was guilty of assault.

On Nov. 12, 1984, during a late evening, closed, council meeting, Roach knocked from his chair then-alderman Kearns. Kearns' nose bled. The witnesses who testified were unanimous in describing the violent act.

Roach's lawyer could not dispute the fact of the assault. His strategy instead was to attempt to prove that Kearns, after the assault, tried to extort from Roach his holding of the mayor's position. Kearns' alleged carrot was that he would not charge Roach with assault.

Kearns decided to lay a charge a few days after the assault, when Roach followed putting his hand in Kearns' face with putting his foot in his mouth. Roach told a newspaper reporter that although he had sent Kearns an apology, he would attack him again. The apology was not worth anything, Roach told the reporter.

The presiding judge, Judge Gary Palmer, noted that politicians, almost by definition, have enemies. Politicians are also persons in the community with a high profile. They enjoy great privileges, Judge Palmer said.

"You have sadly abused that privilege," Judge Palmer said. We agree. The fact that Midland's mayor thinks that others abused their political privilege is not an acceptable excuse for physical violence.

Extrabilling coverage unfair

Dear Editor:

I have followed closely the stories which have appeared recently in your paper re: The Federal and Ontario Governments attitudes towards our MD's.

I consider this to be grossly unfair. I have always received good care from the medical people I have come in contact with. They have done everything they could for my comfort and speedy recovery, often handicapped by poor equipment and an acute shortage of beds and facilities and often understaffed.

I have never been extra billed by any MD for their services. I have been a patient in the Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto several times, St. Mike's, the Wellesley, the Huronia and Penetanguishene General hospitals.

I have been under the care of a number of fine doctors, nurses and technicians.

Dr. Robert Archer put the case for the MD's very clearly as it really is.

I agree with Dr. Archer in what he says about the attitudes of both the Federal and Ontario Governments towards our MD's is a red herring to divert public opinion away from the real issues which is lack of adequate funding for all our medical and welfare services.

I have personally seen a lot of examples of this. A lot of the equipment is outdated and in poor condition. Most of our hospitals had to take a 10 per cent or more cut in their available beds, our Huronia Hospital had their number of beds cut by approximately 25 per cent, many patients who were undergoing treatment had to be sent home before they should have been to make room for very urgent cases.

Dr. Peter Cameron addressing a meeting of the

Midland Rotarians said that only politicians and bureaucrats would benefit from a ban on extra billing.

Our MD's are not overpaid for the excellent service they give us. How many people have any idea of the amount of capital an MD has to lay out before he earns any money, first they have to go through Medical School. They have to rent and equip an office, they have to hire a qualified staff, finance and insure a reliable car, pay huge malpractice insurance and a host of other current expenses.

I would say our MD's are the hardest working and lowest paid of any of our top professional people.

Ernie Betty

Interest appreciated

Dear Sir:

We would like to thank you for your interest in our Ice Show "Holidays on Ice" held at the Centennial Arena, April 5 and 6, 1986. It was a most successful show with many local skaters starring.

Many people worked long hours and we do thank them.

Your paper does a noble job of presenting all local news and sport features. We do appreciate your support in our club.

Sincerely,

Nancy Strachan, Secretary

Letters

National forest week important

Dear Editor:

Paper is a forest product. Every time we publish a paper of a magazine, we link ourselves more closely to the forest - its current state and its future.

May 4 - 10 is National Forest Week in Canada. It is a time to let people know of the importance of

forests, of what is happening to them and what they can do to help their forests and themselves.

Your help in making your staff and the public aware of their forests will be much appreciated. Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Jas. D. Coats.

The rites of spring signal last of winter Ray Baker

It's funny (peculiar) writing a weekly column and not being too sure when it's going to be in print. This one for instance was written on Easter Monday and finished off on April 1st (no fooling). So yesterday's news is old and dead so I can't write about news.

What I can write about is the way I felt today about 'Instant' Spring. By the time you gentle readers see it in print the date has gone by but the feeling can be re-captured. The only two columns I have lined up right now are Microwave Parts I and II and not wishing to break up a two-part series you will be into this one long after April 1st.

How quickly we can make the transition from Winter to Spring. How infinitely adaptable we are and how good it feels, were my first conscious reactions to Easter Sunday.

The snow-covered garden, piled high at the edges with black ice, responded first to the sunshine and 50 degree weather, from breakfast time

to noon hour the stuff quickly trickled down the gutter leaving in its wake a two inch layer of sand from the snowplows efforts going way back to last November.

Feeling good in the sun you attack the sand the sure enough, there it is underneath, you've guessed it, leaves from last Fall which you didn't quite get to before the white stuff suddenly hit. But under those, sure thing grass.

The pair of woolen gloves with a pair of cotton gloves inside to add extra insulation and help you feel the car steering wheel which in turn has its own leather cover on — these prized gloves which you have nursed and carefully stored in the same place for the last five months so that you won't lose them, are now discarded like an old shoe.

They have lost their value. They are not important anymore. The Skidoo boots with fur toips and warm felt linings are ignored. Even the favourite woolly hat is thrown in the cupboard at the back, ignored. And so are the gaiters you wore a month

ago to keep the snow out of your shoes during a wipe-out when Cross Country Skiing, well they look kind of out of place next to the running shoes.

In fact not even a month ago but two weeks ago I remember going out to check the car windows. To make sure they were closed so snow wouldn't work its way in. Now I've just checked to make sure the window was open so it doesn't get like an oven in there.

What a difference a day makes. Yesterday we made sure all the windows in the house were closed before we turned up the thermostat.

Today I made sure the thermostat was switched right off before opening all the doors. A nice feeling opening the doors and not being in a rush to close 'em before the natural gas bill came to remind you that you were heating the whole of Ontario.

An even nicer feeling is turning the thermostat right down - with a flourish.

Even driving the car feels different today. Run-

ning shoes on the pedals instead of thick soles, bare hands on the steering wheel. The key turns, and the engine knows it's Spring, so does the battery.

And so do the tires, imagine having actual rubber-on-dry-pavement contact. It beats the heck out of snow packed tires on icy roads with great big chunks of frozen slush hanging grimly inside your wheel wells and everybody kicks them off in the shopping plaza car parking lot, remember?

Of course between writing this and you reading it we could get caught, and probably will be, by a late snow-squall but what the heck I've had my taste of Spring, and if we get caught maybe I can taste it all over again.

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE: 'Spring is Sprung, the Grass is Riz, I Wonder Where de Boidies is?'

Ray Baker is a Freelance Writer. He and his family live in Penetanguishene where they enjoy everything about Spring except Spring Cleaning.

Go lightly with Throne Speech

Carey Nieuwhof

Everyone has their big days in life. For some it's their wedding. For some it's their divorce. Others get off on different things. In politics, some get their big days. Others simply fizzle in mediocrity.

Ronald Reagan gets off by promising the use of large weapons across this planet. One supposes his big day will come when that famed Libyan leader (Moammar Khaddafi, Mohammad Ghadafi, Gadaffi, Quadafi, Quadaffi, the guy with funny hairline) finally is swept from the earth. Back here in Ontario, where things are usually quiet, where life moves at a bureaucrat's pace, a certain man has the chance to make his life more enjoyable. That man is David Peterson.

Today, he makes his first real speech from the throne. This is the one that counts. He made one earlier throne speech. No one was listening though, since they were still reeling from the events of earlier weeks. You see, the last throne speech Peterson made was the one which ushered in his coalition government. Everyone was still in shock. They could not believe that 42 years of Tory tradition had crumbled with a sunrise. Now Peterson has a chance to make a big mark with the throne speech. This is his big chance.

For those of you who are not familiar with what a throne speech is, allow me to explain. A throne speech is something a government delivers before a new session of the legislature. Except, the government doesn't read it. The Lieutenant Governor reads the speech. He's the guy who gets a huge salary and walks around doing charity events between sessions. Oh, yes. He also holds receptions. That's very important. We are not sure why, but apparently that is very important.

Anyway, the speech is nothing more than a ton of promises. Peterson wrote it along with his staff and ministers, and the speech will outline what he intends to do during this legislative session. It sets a mood. It gives vague outlines. The speech sort of lets observers know what the government plans to do, but it is never specific enough to divulge any real plans.

Throne speeches are designed to make a government look good. For example, a government will say it's going to restructure the province's transportation industry, while in reality it plans to pave three roads in Bruce County. Well, maybe that's an exaggeration, but the principle applies. Peterson had promised that he would make the

throne speech of the decade. He plans to make it the greatest thing on earth — the plan to rebuild this province from the top down and then from the bottom up. A few words of caution Mr. Premier.

This is Ontario. We are not used to drastic change. We are just beginning to waken from a deep four decade sleep. We are a passive people by nature. Don't shake us up too much.

Peterson has pledged he'll make waves. He wants to be remembered as the Premier who did more than just settle for the status quo. He has pledged that this throne speech would help reshape the province.

You know by now exactly what that throne speech is about. Your scribbler is writing before Peterson revealed any specifics about the speech. He did say it was going to be a barnburner.

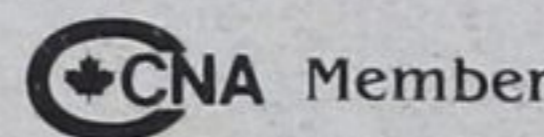
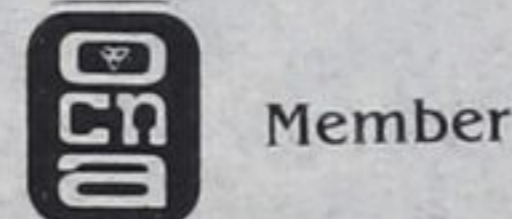
A barn burner? In Ontario? Really Mr. Peterson? Really Mrs. Premier? BE cautious. You could be the one who is burned.

Ontario is a strange province. We like the way things are. We enjoy a little dullness once in a while. We are prosperous. We like ourselves.

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Letters

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