

CASTOR COMMENT



Mary Rowsell's Winter Castor

Killed en route

When George Gagne was killed in an accident on Highway 31, en route to his home in Metcalfe just before Christmas, his death broke a link with the post-war era of the Parliamentary Press Gallery where he was Chief Clerk. In effect, this meant that he was in charge of the daily routine operations of the Gallery. His job to see that journalists and Media people were supplied with the necessities of life; and if these sometimes came in liquid form, George was no parlor moralist.

Although a young man, still in his forties, his career stretched back to the days when Alex Carisse was in charge; a harsh-voiced, grumpy mountain of a man who sat at the front desk and barked orders to his staff over the intercom.

Such were the giants of yesteryear. George Gagne survived the years under Alex Carisse and his son, Bob, now gone to retirement. He learned his trade, which was to keep the Gallery members happy, as the Gallery grew from a cosy little enclave of writing journalists, men like Charles Lynch and Ross Munro and Jim McCook, and took in the Media boys and girls, those of the instant reprieve, the clever or saucy on-air questions, the photogenic looks. Finally, he replaced Bob Carisse as the chief functionary of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, sat up front in the chair once graced by old Alex; and, like old Alex, was not above giving a helping hand or a word of advice to a young reporter or a Gallery Old Boy.

To George Gagne, the job came first; he was not one to be impressed by the greats or near greats, whether domestic or international. In his time, he'd seen them all.

One recalls an epic confrontation with one of the great broadcasters, Roger Mudd, of CBS, only a few months ago. Mudd was applying for a temporary Gallery pass. Without even looking up, George said, "Name please?"

Mudd a personable and modest man, even though the owner of one of the best known faces in America, replied without turning a hair.

"Mudd."

"How do you spell that?" George asked.

"M-U-D-D." The great Roger Mudd carefully spelled his name as George Gagne made out the pass.

To his wife and family of five children, and above all, to those on Parliament Hill and in the Press Gallery for whom George Gagne was a friendly and familiar figure, our condolences.

Correspondence

Editor, Castor Review

Concerning your editorial about the annual Hallowe'en wrecking spree, we are in favor of finding a solution to this wanton destruction.

As newcomers to the village we were appalled at what was going on a few blocks away. We are thankful that our children, were home and not taking part in the willful damage of others' property.

Surely other residents are fed up with such carrying on. I would be pleased to meet with the OPP and others to resolve this unsatisfactory situation.

Yours truly,

J. A. Pulfer, Russell

Editor, Castor Review

I left the July 21st 1927 copy of the Russell Leader at Bill Louck's barber shop, Bill mentioned showing it to you.

I read in the Castor Review, December 2nd issue "Sidewalk Talk" the write up about the old paper. I am pleased Bill passed it on to you.

We found the Leader in my mother's (Mrs. Annie Presley) home after her death.

All the best to the Castor Review.

Yours truly,

Viola Presley Stewart

We, the members of the Russell Lions Club, would like to thank you, the people of Russell, for all the support you have given us in the past year. Without this constant support our efforts would by no means be so rewarding.

So from all of us to all of you we extend a Happy and Prosperous 1978.

President: Lion Jack James

Secretary: Lion Cliff Cullen

Treasurer: Lion Gerry O'Reilly

Editor, Castor Review

I enjoyed reading your paper dated December 2nd. Also I remember the ones in the old-time picture and being a native of Russell also attending Public and High School. It brings back fond memories.

I wish your paper every success in the coming years.

Yours truly,

Evelyn (Latour) Palmer

Reaching out

'Twas the night after Christmas and all through a warm Eastern Ontario home kindred Yuletide spirits harmonized shakily in song. And a wondrous moment came to pass. From the lips of those assembled cascaded a carol with a difference, a prayer from a people far away yet close. They rejoiced in French, with natural clumsiness but with feeling, with heart. They were English Canadians, you see, English Canadians reaching out. And the cold clung to the sash.

Sagging bridges

A preliminary study of bridges in Russell Township has determined four to be in terrible shape. One or perhaps all could cave in without warning.

We won't panic. We won't start envisioning bus loads of school kids plunging into the Castor. Even if one of the bridges did collapse, the drop would be so short that there would probably be no serious injuries.

But the situation is serious enough to warrant immediate replacement or reinforcement of the sagging structures.

We know township council wants to launch remedial work as soon as possible. Let's hope the Ministry of Transportation and Communication can be persuaded to approve the necessary grants with dispatch.

Crackpot fringe

In addition to its worthwhile contributions, the Canada Council has achieved an unenviable reputation for coddling the crackpot fringe in the arts while neglecting more positive and constructive area.

There is no need to go back to the piano smashing episode of a few years ago (sponsored by the Canada Council) nor the subsidy to the self-styled "City Fool" of Vancouver. A more recent example has been produced by a British Columbia M.P. who has risen in Parliament to complain about the Canada Council subsidising poetry that is not only (by any definition, even the author's) pornographic, but downright rotten.

Since a considerable amount of the money handed out by the Canada Council comes from Canadian tax-payers, it is clearly the right and duty of MP's to question its use.

While the Canada Council has done some good things, it is time to ask some hard, pointed questions about the way in which it takes to its bureaucratic bosom people whose purposes as well as their accomplishments are, to say the least, extremely dubious.

A man and his mission

Martin Bielz is a big man with an athlete's frame, honed by hard work and constant action. At one time he was a celebrated oarsman and Olympic coach in an Eastern European country. He had an apartment, a car and a modicum of fame and fortune. He left it all for a farm not far from Russell. Now he wants to institute a bus line so that residents along the Castor can get to and from Ottawa with a minimum of discomfort and inconvenience.

He has successfully negotiated the first step, permission from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, even though his application was opposed by one of the major bus lines.

"I just got so damn frustrated at not being able to get into the city unless I drove myself, that I decided to do something about it," Martin says.

He will have two school-type buses, picking up passengers in Morewood, Russell and Metcalfe in early morning and bringing

them back in the evening. He is convinced that the operation will be a success and is looking forward to getting into operation in February, as soon as his schedules are approved by the Ministry of Transport.

On his farm, Martin raises a few beef cattle and in his spare time works for the Federal Government in the Physical Fitness Division. He says the money has gone out of beef and he stays in it because he likes to have a few animals around.

One of the major problems of people coming to settle in Canada from Europe, he says, is that Canadians are so busy improving their lot that they have little time left to discuss abstract subjects like philosophy or the arts. Certainly, this is a problem in every society and maybe with people like Martin Bielz around, when he isn't busy running his buses, raising beef cattle or drawing up fitness programs, it will eventually be taken care of.

The view from foggy bottom

First came the snow, cutting the Castor villages off from the outside world. On Saturday afternoon the parish priest was unable to get to Russell from Metcalfe to celebrate mass; the road to Embrun was a nearly impenetrable mass of sticky and slippery snow as the dismal sky sent down its white arrows to the earth below.

One could almost believe the old stories of the difficulties of getting between Russell and Embrun by horse and cutter, as

the whooping wind drove the snow before it across the stubbled fields.

On the main streets of the villages lights poked timid fingers in the clinging curtain of the dark; and the snow went whirling out over the dark chasm of the river.

After the snow came the fog; morning and evening the landscape stood shrouded in a spectral curtain, drifting apart

(Continued on Page 9)

CASTOR REVIEW

"One Canada"

Box 359, Russell, Ont.

Editor: Mark Van Dusen, 445-2080.

Reporters: Karen Bowley, 445-2051; Joyce O'Reilly, 445-2008; Suzanne Schroeter, 445-5709.

Photographs: Mary Rowsell, 445-5244.

Advertising: Theresa Griffith, 445-2820; Joan Van Dusen, 445-2080.

Layout: Stuart Walker, 445-5707.

Out of Town Mailings: Nylene McNeill, 445-2018.

Submissions, preferable typed,

double-spaced are welcomed, publishable at the discretion of the editor.

Published by Castor Publishing, Russell, Ont.

President: Thomas W. Van Dusen.

Printed at Eastern Ontario Graphics Ltd., Chesterville, Ont.

NEXT DEADLINE

Feb. 3

NEXT ISSUE

Feb. 10