

CASTOR REVIEW

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By Mark Van Dusen

How to put this delicately, it being Christmas and all.

Okay, here goes. The blankety-blank trucks roaring up and down the blankety-blank main street of Russell are shaking my blankety-blank house apart.

There, I said it. Sorry but I just had to get it off my chest. Speaking of which, every time a heavy truck shoots by the front of my house the old pitcher and wash bowl on the chest of drawers in the bedroom rattle as if there was an earthquake. There they go again (you see, my typewriter table jumps up and down too).

It's not just my house. At least half a dozen other residents have noticed the trembling (you can't help but notice when the vibration manhandles you to wakefulness every morning, said one). They have also noticed cracked plaster, fractured foundations, tinkling dishes, chattering window panes, convulsing appliances and groaning timbers. They shudder (whether they want to or not) to think what will happen if an alarming situation is allowed to continue.

Exaggeration? No my friend. Ever since the sewers were installed in the village last summer, some houses along the main street have been quaking from their footings to

Sidewalk Talk

Blankety-blank trucks

their rooftops every time anything heavier than an empty dump truck goes by. I feel like I'm living in a piggybank from which a child is trying to agitate the last few pennies. I'm afraid I'm going to crack an egg some morning and it's going to come out already scrambled.

Residents think that when the sewers were installed the roadbed was weakened so that when a heavy truck rolls by it causes a trampoline effect that bounces their houses. This, coupled with the fact that heavy truck traffic on the main street seems to have increased fivefold in recent months has left them literally in the lurch.

The growing number of heavy trucks is a bit of a mystery. Big flatbeds lugging bulldozers, cement mixers and twenty-some wheeler transports have been streaming through town. The amount of construction, industry or business in Russell, or in the whole Castor area for that matter, can in no way explain the inordinate number of these trucks.

One theory is that the big, big trucks are using village streets and back roads to bypass a government weigh scale that opened on the 417 near Casselman about a year ago. That and vibration aside, there is a strong argument against high volume truck traf-

fic along tight-cornered streets crossed at all times of the day by school children and senior citizens (because time is money to them, these truck drivers often exceed the speed limit). There is noise, dust and diesel fume pollution as well. Obviously, in a farming community in particular, some trucks and other heavy machinery have to use the streets.

Residents took their vibration problem to Russell Township Council a few weeks ago. Council ordered a traffic survey to find out where the trucks are coming from and sent a request to the OPP to keep a close eye on legal load and speed limits.

Since then the situation has improved moderately but not enough and residents, through this column, are asking any truckers within earshot to please slow down when travelling in the village (the most severe trembling comes when fast-moving trucks hit the depressions left in the roadbed by the sewer installation. It's also bad when fast-moving trucks break at a corner causing their rear wheels to jump).

Council said paving of the main street next year should reinforce the roadbed and eliminate the vibration problem. Meanwhile, it said, things should improve when the ground freezes over (or hell?).

Viet Refugees spend first Castor Christmas

Cuu Huynh, 25, and his sister Hoa, 17, have already got their Christmas present.

It came to them in October, when after five months in a Malaysian refugee camp, they were cleared to come to Canada.

Working through the Calvary Christian Reform Church of Ottawa, John and Helena Wybenga of Russell Township sponsored the brother and sister who are now living on the couple's hobby farm.

Cuu and Hoa are believed to be the first "Boat People" to have settled in the Castor area. But others are expected shortly.

Four local churchmen have banded together to sponsor a refugee family and their cause has been boosted through the acquisition of a house at Kenmore.

Dwight and Barbara McRuer have promised the sponsoring committee use of an older, comfortable farmhouse they own near that village. With three bedrooms, the house is ideal for a smaller family, said committee spokesman Rev. James Paul.

"It should be quite an experience for Kenmore residents to have an Indonesian family among them," said Rev. Paul.

The committee has raised about \$6,000 in cash and pledges to help support the refugees during their first year here. With any luck, the family — screened by World Vision of Canada, a mission relief organization — should arrive in January, Rev. Paul said.

Helena Wybenga said the presence of Indonesian refugees at Kenmore should make Cuu and Hoa feel more at home. Not that they're without friends, however.

"They keep in close touch with other refugees in Ottawa and they get letters from all over the world," she said.

The brother and sister are taking English language lessons in Ottawa as part of the readjustment process.

"They're improving rapidly," Mrs. Wybenga said. "They might soon be good enough to act as interpreters for the Kenmore family."

Cuu and Hoa left Saigon aboard one of the refugee freighters after paying about 12 ounces of gold apiece for passage to Malaysia.

"Compared to what happened to some of the other refugees, they fared pretty well," Mrs. Wybenga said.

The pair still have a father, a brother, and a sister in Vietnam whom they hope will also be able to come to Canada eventually.

Cuu is now looking for work and may move to Ottawa but the Wybengas expect to look after Hoa for some time. Although now attending classes in Ottawa, the young lady may transfer to North Dundas High School at Chesterville.

The Huynhs and their adopted family the Wybengas will celebrate Christmas together.

"They know about Christmas," said Mrs. Wybenga, a librarian at the University of Ottawa. "They call it by the French name 'Noel'."

Strangers in our midst

There are strangers in our midst, but we're getting to know them.

The Castor Review is serving as a learning experience for Algonquin College journalism students. Working with their teacher, Mike McDermott, this newspaper has assigned them stories and photographs which they've completed enthusiastically.

We thank students Jane Camm, Patrick Dare, and Estelle Yaternick for their time and effort.

**POETS
OF THE...
CASTOR**

The Castor Review is proud to announce publication of *Poets of the Castor*, a Christmas collection of poetic efforts from local writers. The booklet, illustrated by Russell artist Shirley Van Dusen, is now available at several area outlets for \$2.25 per copy. It can also be purchased through the mail for \$2.50. An order form can be found on Page 14.