

CASTOR COMMENT

Sorrow and loathing

We write this piece with sorrow and loathing. Sorrow that in the Free World it is still possible for someone sick and demented to fire at and wound the President of the United States. Loathing because apparently the price of keeping away the crackpots is such that freedom itself is threatened.

President Reagan has let it be known that he does not intend to be a prisoner in the White House, as Richard Nixon sometimes appeared to be. Nevertheless, a society cannot tolerate that its leaders shall forever and continuously be in danger from the assassin's bullet.

Certainly, as a result of this latest outburst of mania, security around the President will be tightened. Some will ask how could it be tighter than it is. Well, when it is possible for someone not only unauthorized but with a record of unauthorized gun possession to take his place in a press lineup, then something is wrong.

No one should be allowed to buy a gun without a permit from the police. Before issuing a permit, the police should check out the applicant for a history of mental illness or criminality.

No defence needed

Some Russell residents will recall a year or so ago a meeting in the arena where Mr. Frank Warnock, president of Loeb's which operates the I.G.A. stores, appeared as a spokesman defending high food prices. He was adroit in appearing as a defender of the farmer at the same time.

The latest figures published by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture cast rather interesting light on what happens to prices after the food leaves the farmer.

Let's take a simple, everyday commodity like chicken. Price at farm gate, February, 1981, .95 cents. Supermarket price, \$1.36 per pound. Pork, Farm gate price, .95 cents per pound. Supermarket price, \$1.80.

Now, let's look at cheese. Supermarket price, \$2.61 per pound. Farmer's price, \$1.46. And so on down the line.

So, Mr. Warnock really had no call to defend the farmers in the context of high food prices. According to the OFA, the farmer is getting less of the consumer dollar than he was two years ago. The supermarkets are getting more.

This is particularly true of milk prices, where the supermarket price of \$2.33 for a three-quart pack compares to what the farmer gets, \$1.41.

It all adds up to this. Consumers could cut food expenditures in half simply by driving out to the farms and buying direct.

Sometimes their lives

We were planning to comment on the tragedy that rocked Iroquois March 19. Five volunteer firefighters were killed in one fell swoop when their emergency truck collided with a freight train. Russell Fire Chief Norm Inglis, who travelled to Iroquois with a contingent of local volunteers to pay tribute, says it for us.

"These volunteer firefighters served their community for little or no compensation. Their only reward was a job well done and the knowledge they were providing a vital community service. This tragedy reminds us all of the risk involved each time we answer an alarm.

Men like those five in Iroquois give freely of their time and effort to protect the lives and property of their neighbors. They will be remembered by all of us for many years to come.

CASTOR REVIEW

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Second Class Mail Registration
No. 4218 ISSN 0707 - 4956

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

Published by Castor
Publishing, Russell, Ontario.

President: Thomas W. Van
Dusen.

Subscription rate: \$4.00 a year;
\$5.00 out-of-country.

Printed by Performance Print-
ing, Smiths Falls.

NEXT DEADLINE
APRIL 27
NEXT ISSUE
MAY 9

NEXT MEETING
APRIL 23

Beaver Bob

Trailing the Felton Feline



The Fantastic Feline — also known as the Gananoque Cat, the Brockville Bobcat and the Felton Feline — has been spotted in Russell.

A Russell lady was having her breakfast the other morning when she saw a large black shape bounding across the field at the back of the house. It disappeared behind the Public School.

By the time her husband got to the window, there was no sign of the animal. A few days earlier, the cat, which has left a trail of shattered nerves from Gananoque to the Castor, was spotted in Felton.

Lorraine Jacobs was watching TV, when the set started moving across the stand on which it sat. She got up and looked out the window. The cable attached to the set at her home on Felton Crescent, three miles out of Russell on the Morewood road, was vibrating like a banjo string.

She called George Dunn and he went out into the yard. The German Shepherd, Rex, was barking at the foot of a big, old maple back of their white tool shed. In the crotch of the tree, over his head (George Dunn is six feet five) was a large black animal.

Looking out the kitchen window, Lorraine could see the black creature in the tree, overlapping both sides of the trunk which at that point was eight inches through.

"That was no house cat," Lorraine said. "That was a big cat."

George said the cat had a small head, a long black tail, hanging straight down and was a little bigger than a bob-cat. It was pure black, with yellow eyes and did not seem at all bothered by the barking of the police dog. It looked down with an air of calm indifference.

"This cat seemed about the size of the dog," George said. "It was a big sucker, all right."

After they went to work, the cat made good its escape and continued on an odyssey which appears to have begun somewhere near Gananoque a couple of weeks ago and taken it to Brockville, Mountain and then to a big maple tree behind Lorraine Jacobs' tool shed in Felton.

It was only when Lorraine described the cat to her mother that her mother recalled reading about the big cat reported along the St. Lawrence.

I was in Felton on the track of the big cat on a day of drizzling rain, hail and glimpses of sunshine. Felton Crescent sits high off the road, an area of big old trees, bungalows and Scandinavian style chalets. At the top of the crescent you look down over a checkerboard of fields falling away to Kenmore and Marvelville.

In the dripping woods, binoculars showed no sign of the big cat, although we did pause to note a few significant depressions in the soft earth.

There were no reports of chickens missing or any attacks on farm animals. From the fact that the cat was in the yard approaching the house when the Shepherd dog went after him, it might well be that this is a tame animal, perhaps a pet or a zoo creature on the loose. He appears to look on houses as a source of food.

George Dunn said the cat did not appear in the least savage. "He was glossy and well fed. But big. Real big."

In spite of the big cat's apparent friendliness, George had no desire to approach any closer.

"He was just too big. I didn't want to mess with him."

Bruno Beefs

With Bruno Santilli

March 30, 1981, at approximately 2:45 p.m., while listening to my favorite radio station, a news flash interrupted a Glen Campbell song.

What was being said had no immediate impact. Quickly I changed stations in an attempt to pick up a repeat.

Yes, there had been an assassination attempt on Ronald Reagan, the President of the United States of America.

My brain scanned its storage areas for other incidents. Within seconds, I was shocked all over again to recall the murder of John Lennon, followed by a tragedy

not lacking in its own gore... the bombing of the train station in Bologna, Italy. Unfortunately, the list does not end so quickly but I believe the point I want to make is already showing.

Somehow, society is breaking down at a more rapid pace than we care to admit. The eventual disintegration of the family unit is less apparent now than it will be in the future but definitely more pronounced that it was 20 or so years ago. Only we can stop or at least slow down the deterioration of our social values and retain to pass on the future generations the beauty we still possess.

Correspondence

Editor,
Castor Review.

As a faithful reader of your publication, I must say I am generally impressed with the quality of your work. There is one point I feel compelled to bring to your attention, however.

Your sports columnist, Gary Ris, made the incredible blunder earlier this year of picking the Toronto Maple Leafs to finish sixth — I repeat sixth — in the NHL over-all standings.

As you well know, with only two games left to go in the schedule, they were in grave danger of not making the playoffs.

Perhaps in keeping with otherwise fine standards on which you insist, an apology or acknowledgement of this error in the RisRap column would be appropriate.

Sincerely,
Jim Sheppard,
Parliamentary Editor,
Canadian Press.

Editor,
Castor Review,

I caught a few words on the radio about Rosseau, a little town in Southern Ontario, and a few more which indicated that a book was being reviewed. I am rather deaf but heard enough to be interested. A note to the station brought your name and address and the title of the book, "Poets of the Castor." Could you please tell me the price of the book and in what way Rosseau is concerned?

Yours truly,
D.E. Coate,
Rosseau.

Editor's note: The book reviewed on the air is "Poets of the Castor" published by Castor Publishing and the price is \$2. Rosseau is not, of course, involved. The town referred to is Russell.

Editor,
Castor Review.

I am very pleased to find your article on bird watching in this area, in a recent Castor Review. In the ten years we have lived here, my husband and I have compiled a list of over 60 species we have casually seen without going on any specific bird-watching trips.

Yours sincerely,
Mary Atkey,
Vars.

POETS OF THE... CASTOR

It is a rough ride,
I'd rather walk
I often told myself.
"Mother, please slow down the horse."
The train whistle can be heard,
loud and clear.
We are approaching the bridge.
Looking down I see the fish
In the crystal clear water
Almost blue in appearance.
Beautiful, I say.

This is an important day.
Saturday.
Because today, we buy all we need.
Again the train whistle sounds —
I look around.
My, what a bustling community.
The mill, the feed store,
The grocery store, the drug store,
The barber.
So many businesses, it boggles the mind.

"Excuse me, sir, do you have a light?"
"Sir!"
"I beg your pardon."
"Do you have a light?"
"Aren't you a little young to be smoking?"
"I have my father's permission."
"I wonder..." I think to myself.
—Bruno Santilli

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