

## Comment

### Council must communicate

Russell municipal council is about to strike another budget. And, no doubt, property taxes are about to jump in response. So far, however, taxpayers have heard nothing from their elected representatives by way of explanation.

That, in our minds, is no way to build trust in our local government.

The proper method is to communicate, in understandable language, with all taxpayers before such a serious decision is taken.

*The Castor Review*, staffed by a handful of volunteers, cannot perform his duty on behalf of the municipal government. But the council's support staff certainly can — and should.

And this is easily done. The same mailing list which is used to send us our tax bills can also be used to tell us what is happening with those dollars.

We need to know how public funds are being spent, where improvements and additional expenditures are needed and why the tax increase is necessary. And we should be informed of plans for the coming fiscal year.

Then, allow a week or two for taxpayers to digest and discuss this information before an announced public meeting on the proposed budget takes place.

After, and only after, everyone is given an opportunity to comment on the proposed budget should the final decision be made.

Our municipal government can then go ahead with its decision-making with the confidence that residents understand what is taking place and have had their say.

It is very logical, but depends on our local elected officials realizing that an informed public is its best ally.

### Snowmobiles headaches

One major benefit of living in a country village is its quietness and feeling of security. Especially after a winter snowfall, a calm walk in the crisp country air regenerates the soul.

But, all too often, this is shattered in the Village of Russell when, upon rounding a snowy corner, one comes face-to-face with an impersonal, screaming, life-threatening snowmobile demanding control of the roadway or sidewalk.

Throughout most of Ontario, snowmobiles are banned from municipal roads. Russell has no such restriction. Yet.

Acting consistently, snowmobile owners can end this threat to resident safety by speaking harshly with those who give the sport the bad name it now enjoys in Russell.

If this doesn't happen soon, tragedy will follow. And the victim may not be an innocent by-stander. Three snowmobilers were killed in recent weeks when they, independently, raced their vehicles into the backs of parked snow-covered vehicles.

In response, the president of the Ottawa Valley and District Snowmobile Association has called for a ban on snowmobiles on all municipal roads.

Snowmobiles can be deadly weapons on village streets. Let's not wait for a victim before we act.

## Beaver Bob

### A Band of Angels

You see them every morning as you leave town heading down the highway for the city, the big, yellow school buses, gassing up at Don's or moving out like a parade of elephants. You've noticed that many of the drivers are ladies, pleasant, attractive ladies, dedicated to the care and security of their young charges.

After the job is over, you see the big, yellow mastodons parked in front of the restaurant as the ladies pause for a toast and coffee before going back to their real jobs as home-makers and wives. They are careful drivers, handling the unwieldy buses with the expertise and finesse of stage drivers of old with a little something added.

For many, driving the school bus is an interlude, even a welcome interlude in a crowded day. Some have sheep or cows to look after when they reach home; others go to more prosaic indoor jobs in banks and offices.

Last year, when the school term was up, George at the Reddi-Chef, produced a cake with candles for the lady bus drivers who were enjoying a relaxing coffee-klatch in his place. A nice gesture.

So, as the big, yellow buses fan out over the concession roads, rain or shine, sleet or snow, taking the kids to school and going back at the end of the day to bring them

home, spare a thought and a tip of the hat for the lady bus-drivers. (We know that there are men bus drivers. Your turn will come).

In the afternoon, the Soaps. Soaps. Soaps. Soaps. Unending streams of Soaps. Soaps without number. Soaps beyond compare. Of a sameness and boredom that is cosmic in its completeness. An afternoon of Soaps is like sunbathing on the moon.

Does any advertiser really expect us to buy his products after boring viewers to a condition that feels as though the skin has been flayed from our bodies?

General Dozier, captured by the crazy cats of the Red Brigade, says they forced him to listen to rock music hours on end. This is cruel and unusual punishment. Had they forced him to watch the Soaps, they would have reduced him to a quivering jelly.

#### Agony

#### without ecstasy

Winter brings problems but daytime television is an unendurable agony. Bill and Margaret are bad enough; then there are the game shows with Bob Barker's plastic smile and the unanimous inspidity of his cohorts. Game shows are exciting only to the participants. To the viewers, they are an exercise in agony, like having a tooth drilled.



Winter wagonwheel almost up to its hub in snow. A recent photograph which could have been taken sixty years ago.

Ian Darragh photo

## Bruno Beefs

### Liberals in my school?

When I was in school I did absolutely nothing for the entire year, but, come exams, I crammed and, of course proceeded to take next grade.

Could it be that the Liberal government strategists were in my class?

Of course, we all know that the Liberals have no fear of not being re-elected since they have many follow-up plans to make sure our present troubles dissipate:

- Winter, not being a necessity, will be legislated south — therefore high oil prices will not matter;
- They will subsidize all motorists, including tourists, so that our gasoline prices will be lower than in 1972 — 39 cents per gallon;
- They will unburden all farmers and small businessmen since the country will be run by huge corporations. We, therefore, can live in the lap of luxury on the \$549 per month our welfare system allows;
- To help the average person on the street, the Liberal bureaucracy will raise our non-taxable income by a day's wages; and,
- Our property taxes will be refunded in full — the provinces

need not worry for the bill will be picked up by the federal institution.

But the Liberals are not all nice guys. They are going to get tough with multinational corporations, foreign investments and our own banks, by:

- Cash grants, by the federal government, to any corporation having its parent company outside Canada can only be sent to its main office after it promises, in the near future, to bring it back;
- Profits can only be removed from Canada in sums not greater than \$100 million at a time;
- Foreign investors will be asked to swear allegiance to our Leader (Chief Trudeau, who can be recognized by the colour of his plummage) — this ceremony to take place every Saturday morning on Parliament Hill; and,
- The Chief's financial wizard will, personally, ask the chartered banks not to raise interest rates to more than 40 per cent — giving us all a clear guarantee. And, also, the banks will promise to supply, at their expense, one square meal a day to each Canadian. Of course, the soup kitchen will be limited the first few years. All in all, they have my vote. R.I.P.

## The Castor Review

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It looks like Spring's coming down the Castor so look before you creep...and speaking of the river, rumour has it that Loretta Rombough won the Russell Winter Carnival Fishing Derby with a marinated minnow for bait — seems Loretta swirled her bait in a handy bottle of wine before dropping it into the icy Castor, and moments later, a five-and-a-half pound whopper staggered to the surface: a pickled pickerel who used to hang around down the hill from Benny's Hotel...for those interested, the South Nation River Authority's \$2 million river study is winding down but before it does, there will be public meetings in watershed-communities: Russell, Embrun and others...

The crew this month, valiantly: Marc Bélanger (News) 445-3252; Jack McLaren (Sports) 445-2131; Donna Nordenstrom (For Kids) 445-2936; Barbara Overall (Grist) 821-1155; Tom Van Dusen (Comment) 445-5770; Lola Wood (Horse Bits) 445-2976; Greg Rokosh (Recreation) 445-2874; Eileen Hamelin (Calendar) 445-5335; Gillian Rokosh (Circulation) 445-2874; Ian Darragh (Photography) 445-3092. Joel Nordenstrom and his magic pens were back on the lay-out tables, Maria Darragh gazed through her kitchen window, Jude made it to paste-up night, Kit Collins dropped it for intelligent comic relief, Connie Belanger continues to shine on paste-up, Bill Potter came out of the darkroom and his photos shine, Tommy Van Dusen threw himself into page make-up, and the ever-popular Santilli family: Bruno, Diane, Maria and Bianca...extra special thanks to Suzanne Schroeter, the busy little beaver who cleaned the office from top to bottom and didn't tell anyone...bouquets to all the good folks who brought us laughs in the dead of winter with Winter Carnivals...th-th-that's all, folks, gd'nite.

Next meeting and deadline: March 17

Next issue: March 26

## From my

### kitchen window...

Ah-h,  
a nice cuppa...

by Maria Darragh

We all have our obsessions. With some it's woodstoves; for others it's pet rocks; and, for a select few, it's elves. My own little obsession is tea.

It is amazing what images the word tea conjures in people's minds. Little old ladies in starched lace with arched backs daintily pouring tea into the Royal Albert. Chinese meals followed by green tea which one tries once out of curiosity. Little girls' tea parties. Tea, as a few of my trendy acquaintances would say is passé, definitely passé. Really?

Orange pekoe is the super-market special, of course. But there are many more. Peppermint, papaya, golden seal, cahaparral, lemon grass, spanish eucalyptus, bear-berry, camomile, and black tea to name a few.

Whatever the variety, there is nothing like a good cup of tea. Poured on the weak side and steaming hot into a fine bone china cup. Why china? Coffee mugs are very porous and easily absorb the oils from coffee and the scent from dish detergents. It's hard to taste the tea in a coffee mug.

Those who are not devoted slaves to tea cannot begin to comprehend the torture to one's palate in drinking a badly made cup of tea. Making tea is not as easy as boiling water.

To date the worse insult to my tea-loving taste buds occurred at the home of my younger sister who sadly does not share my little conceit.

It was with great glee that she told me how little she'd paid for the enormous pack of teabags which she hefted from her kitchen cupboard. (My sister is on a tight budget while her husband finishes his studies.) The water boiled merrily and I thought at least the sawdust brew will be hot. She turned the kettle off and made tea.

It sat on the counter stewing while my sister went to fetch her baby from its crib and did the things one does to one's baby upon its awakening.

When we finally sat down to tea she generously spooned in the sugar without asking my preference. We battled fiercely over whether to add milk or not. My sister, who has taken a premed course, argued that it is healthier to have tea with milk. "See the inside of the tea pot. Black stains. That's what will happen to your stomach."

I never thought my innocent little obsession would be a health hazard. Still I'll willingly blacken my innards for the delicate and subtle flavour of tea any day. With its exotic origins and gentle rituals, tea is more than a drink. It is a pause to be slowly and deliciously savoured in an otherwise grindingly hectic or dull day.

My husband's Granny Ethel had a time-honoured remedy for life's little ills. Whenever she was dissatisfied with her lot in life, she'd make a pot of tea. After a cup or two she said she felt ready to face the world again. In a pinch she would even read the tea leaves and tell you your fortune. You could always count on it being good: the tea and her grand-motherly predictions for your future.