

THE WALL

By Bill Brearley

I must first explain that my wife Joanne and I have very different personalities. I was brought up in a predominantly Northern Irish community in the east end of Toronto, when Toronto was tory blue, except for July 12th, when it was orange. This, and my career in teaching, led to an innate conservatism in starting new tasks as well as politics. My wife, on the other hand, spent much of her formative years in LaBelle Province, specifically in Montreal. This perhaps explains her enthusiasm for tackling new tasks with Gallic gusto.

After a brief walk around the pond, and a bowl of porridge, the wife informed me that today was the day. Yes, a wall was to be torn down in our little home. This would free up a view out a second window for our sitting room. A friend with architectural experience has assured us that this wall was not load bearing, since it was interior and noncontinuous. Slowly I dragged myself to the sound source of trim being crouched by a wrecking bar. As the pieces accumulated, I took it upon myself to be the remover of the waste as the lady of the manor proceeded to destroy part of it. Dust flew, nails popped and sheeting cracked.

After awhile I joined in the fray. She had a point, it was fun popping those giant twist nails and other devices used to anchor the thin plywood to the studs.

"Oh", she said, "I can see you through the crack in

the sitting room", and sure enough we had breached the wall at the library cupboard. The shelves of the cupboard surrendered to our unremitting assault. Occasionally the structure would revenge itself with a spray of dust or a flying nail. As the wall bared its innards to us, I knew we were travelling back in time. A newspaper stuck to studs referred to food, it didn't say what kind, at two cents for -- pounds. This is old. I half expected to see ads for bustles or horse powered combines, but no. The paper was so aged it could only be read in a few places. Under the layers of plywood and paper was our ancient wooden wall encased in studding, both old and new. The library shelves had been I believe, in the original entrance to the pine frame house. The adjacent display case appears to be the original exterior window.

Now we must rethink whether the wall is load bearing or not. Whilst removing an excess of very determined nails, I could hear some disturbing groans from the studs and ancient timbers behind them. Ah, now there's more light through cracks to the sitting room!

Not wishing to have our one upstairs room downstairs, we stopped.

Professional or good amateur advice is now needed before the wrecking crew continues with its work. After the five to six hours of activities, the renovators collapsed into two separate chesterfields.

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A particularly Libran time for the world came in the late 1970's and should have improved national cooperations and communication. Perhaps it did. It was certainly an era of extremes. Three powerful leaders - Pierre Trudeau, Jimmy Carter and Margaret Thatcher were all Libras. And in the USSR, after a period of experimenting with electrical impulses

which produced the coldest winter in history, it signed a weather treaty with the US. Then, in 1977, a new asteroid, Chiron, was first seen and such a sighting is recognized as beginning some new lesson for man/woman/kind.

It remains to be seen whether this new chapter of Mercury retrograde, equinox and new moon in Libra brings us lessons through extremes. But it could.