

SCHREIBER NEWS (continued)

structures for schools. Attending the meeting were W. Farrell, Mrs. F. Cruickshank, G. Dodge, H. Boudreau, C. Linton and F. Sechesky of Terrace Bay schools. W. G. Furlonger and Mrs. Russell Macadam, of Schreiber Public school. Mrs. Bill Mullins of Schreiber Separate school and Mrs. Leo Godin, L. R. McCuaig, Mrs. Vic Costa, and Principal E. E. Forgues of Schreiber High School.



Photo by Inez McCuaig.

Kathy Willan, a Grade One pupil of Holy Angels' School who recently visited Disneyland provides a vivid experience for her classmates when she showed them an experience chart which was developed after a discussion with them about her trip. Her teacher, Sister Loyola, was particularly pleased since "creativity is", she said, "in essence, the core of the language experience Reading Program now being used".



The Friendship Valentine Tea, given by the U.C.W. was poured by Mrs. C. E. Prinselaar, wife of the minister of St. Andrew's United Church, Mrs. Bill Stefurak, of Holy Angels' Roman Catholic Church, Mrs. Ralph Morrill, of St. John's Anglican Church and Mrs. John Spillane, President of the U.C.W. Servitors were Mesdames D. Condie, J. Johnston, D. Wilkinson, C. LeBlanc and J. G. Scott. The bake table and candy booth were looked after by Mrs. Nelson Smith and Mrs. Oscar Niemi. Committee in charge: Mesdames R. Mcadam, O. Laine, B. Gerow, A. Gordon, and B. Jacomb. Assisting Mrs. Roly Gander at the Explorers' Valentine table were Judy Lengyel, Jane Davis, Donna Garlick and Debby Smith with master Jeff McCanna lending a helping hand until the girls arrived from school.

Photo by Inez McCuaig.

by Bill Smiley

Goodbye old friend

It was quite a blow to me to read recently that the Warton Town Hall had been destroyed by fire. Admittedly, the catastrophe didn't rank with Hiroshima, or the San Francisco earthquake, or even Hurricane Hazel, but it hit me pretty hard.

It was rather like reading of the sudden death of an old girl friend. You knew she had gone to fat and drink. But you could remember when, at her best, she was the heart of your life.

A lot of personal memories came crowding back when I read about it. That ugly old building with the shaky bell tower on top was one of the hubs of my existence for more than a decade at a special time in my life.

It was when I was young and my family was young and I was learning the newspaper business. I didn't have a mistress. I didn't hang around the pubs. I didn't take part in all-night poker sessions. I just went to the town hall. I spent more nights in its council chamber, crouched over the rickety press table, than I did with my family.

On more than one occasion, my spouse, a tender young wife and mother, displayed psychoneurotic tendencies toward the old town hall. At least twice she suggested I move a cot into the council chambers, and not bother darkening her bedroom door.

I'll bet I attended more than a thousand meetings in that town hall. It was the only non-denominational meeting-place in town, and it was there that great causes were launched and collapsed; that political careers were begun and ended; that human triumphs and tragedies were recorded. And I was in on all of it.

It was a regular breeding-ground for lost causes and last-ditch battles. We fought such behemoths as the CNR and the government; we lost. We battled to salvage moribund industries with heavy transfusions of local cash; and some of us are still anemic.

But a lot of good, positive work was done there, too. The commercial fishermen, the farmers, the resort owners and the merchants met there, fought with each other, but

emerged, united in each case, to fight for their existence, and the betterment of the area.

Another function of the council chamber was that of court-room. This was one that I didn't mind seeing go up in smoke. It's the only time the council chamber smelled bad — on court day. Most of the time it smelled dusty, waxy, and cigar-smokey and just plain old. But on court days it stank: hangovers, puke, fear, shame, curiosity and the law.

But that was only one part of the old town hall. Across from the council chamber was the auditorium. And what memories that brings back. Concerts, plays, recitals, dances and political meetings. It even had a balcony where elderly ladies could watch the Sailors Farewell Dance in comparative safety.

Our children made their public debuts there. I'll never forget the night Kim, age three, dressed in a bunny costume, spotted me in the audience, burst out of the dance line, and hurled herself into my arms.

Or the night Hugh, about nine, won the grand prize in the music festival, even though two of the notes on the piano did not sound.

Or the night I was an unwitting sucker in an elaborate practical joke, at a concert. I was to pretend I was playing a trumpet solo, while a real trumpeter played the piece off-stage. He double-crossed me. Warned the audience what was going to happen, and when I went into my routine, no sound. Felt a fool.

Or the nights the old girl and I stumbled through our lines with the local little-theatre group. Or the great New Year's Eve dances, when the whole town was out, flying. Got a sock in the eye at one of them when I Auld-Lang-Syned a pretty young matron in the usual fashion. Not from her. From my wife.

Town halls, those great, ugly, draughty chapters in our history, are burning down, falling down or being torn down. They are being replaced by modern, efficient "municipal offices," which have about as much tradition, humanity and warmth as a filing cabinet.