

SUGAR AND SPICE

by Bill Smiley



A great summer

Today the painters came. That sounds like the refrain or the last line of a modern poem. It isn't Today the painters came.

And tomorrow the relatives come, with their dog and children. There doesn't seem to be much connection, but there is.

The painters took all the furniture out of one bedroom and put it in another. So that's two bedrooms unserviceable. That leaves one, for four adults, two children and a poodle. Its going to be cozy.

And last night I lay in the sand by a fire and looked at a star-flung, far-flung sky, and kept brushing aside beautiful women who offered me drinks and food. Mostly sandy hamburgers. And today I have a head full of sand, literally and figuratively.

And the other night I sat by a roaring cottage fireplace on a cool night and hotly debated with old friends such world issues as Rotten Kids, and Dutch Elm Disease. Until 4.30 a.m. Nothing was settled, except the state of my health the next day.

And the night before that, a lady phoned and told us Kim had been in an accident and was in the emergency ward at the hospital. All records were shattered, getting there. A bang on the forehead, two swollen knees, 84 bruises and a three-stitch cut is pretty lucky after a head-on collision.

And yesterday the same Kim took off, hitch-hiking with a friend, for Montreal. Her aunt was horrified that we let her go. Until my wife reminded her (aunt) that she had been married at that age.

And today, thank the powers, Kim phoned and said she was safe, if not sound. She was car-sick all the way, and has a sty on her eye. But she's having an exciting, interesting time, while her parents slowly but inexorably turn gray.

And the weeds in my flowerbed stand tall and reach for the sun, while the flowers peep between their knees like frightened children.

And I haven't been fishing once this summer. And I've played very little golf, all of it

rotten. And I puff like a gram-pus when I swim. And my piles are acting up. And Summer is on the wane.

However, all is not lost. The hedge is clipped and the lawn mowed. The sky is blue and the sun beats down on my beady forehead and I sit at the picnic table writing my column.

My elms are still sound. My washing is on the line, whiter than white. My daughter wasn't killed in that crash. My wife is charging around like a gazelle, after an operation which everyone told her it would take from six months to a year to get over. My banker hasn't got around to calling. And my bursitis is temporarily quiescent.

So what if summer is on the wane? Summer is for babies and bumblebees and baseball players and birds. It's merely demoralizing for us lovers of the spartan life, the hard work, the regular hours.

Tomorrow I'm going to beat my brother-in-law at golf for the first time in twenty years. And the day after, we're going sailing with a chap who tips over every time he's out. This time, he won't tip.

And tonight we'll have a barbecue and the kids and the dog will romp and get in and out of trouble and we'll all bed down on the living room floor, to avoid discrimination. It's either that or I sleep with the dog.

Come to think of it, I'm one of the lucky ones. Think of the farmers, slogging it out in the sun eighteen hours a day, and worrying, worrying about the lack of rain or the excess of it. Think of the factory workers dripping with sweat in one of those medieval plants. Think of the resort owner with a big mortgage who has just been through two weeks of cold, wet weather.

And think of all those poor devils in the concrete canyons of our cities, mushing from one air conditioned bar to another, trying to retain their cool.

I take it all back. I'm having a great summer. Just great.

HOWARD M. GRAHAM

ONTARIO LAND SURVEYOR

wishes to announce

the opening of his office at

182 NORTH CUMBERLAND STREET

PORT ARTHUR, ONTARIO

TELEPHONE 344-7561

MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. Box 1164

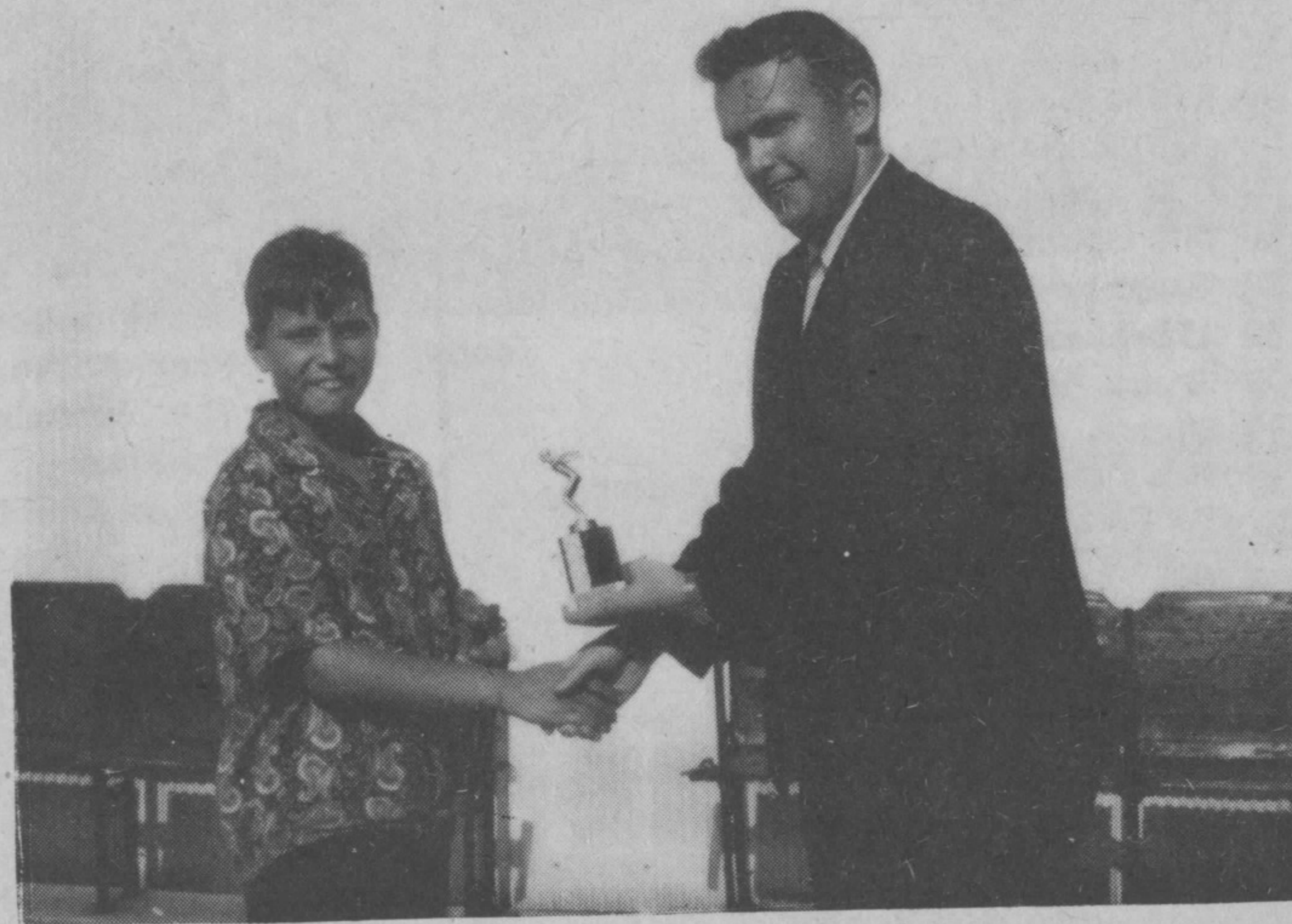
Recreation Briefs - cont'd from front page

Ballet for Children and Ladies' Keep Fit Classes

Once again we have obtained the services of Mrs. Barbara Kirkup for these classes if there is a large enough enrollment. If you are interested, please phone the Recreation Office - 3542.

Upholstery Course - Indications are that there is a growing interest in this craft, but we still need a few more registrations to warrant bringing in an instructor. Telephone the Recreation Office if you wish to be included in this class - 3542.

Photo below shows Mr. Frank Anderson of the Recreation Committee presenting Maurice Cadieux with a trophy.



Canadian telephone users can now call across Canada for one dollar or less. The cheapest coast-to-coast rate at present is \$1.95 for a three-minute call. The new after-midnight rate will also apply to calls originating in exchanges not yet served by Direct Distance Dialing.

Also in effect is an extension of the night rate period from 4.30 to 6 a.m. for person-to-person and station-to-station calls.