

THE BILL SMILEY COLUMN

During his span on earth, unless he is an ostrich, every man is alternately appalled and delighted with life. Perhaps that's one reason the idea of a paradise on earth will never truly appeal to the multitudes. It would be too bland.

In theory, a life without pain, hunger, disease, cold, war, would be embraced by all. In practice, we shun such an existence, even though it could be achieved if all of humanity wanted it badly enough. It would lack spice. And sugar.

Probably that's why the great novels about a utopia are basically satires on man. From More's "Utopia" to Golding's "Lord of the Flies", outstanding writers have portrayed utopia as a paradise smeared by good old human nature, or bad old human nature, if you will.

At two different periods in my life, I lived in an ordered society. They were sort of mini-utopias.

One was in prison camp. We had complete socialism. Everyone got the same amount of food, drink and time in the latrine. There was complete freedom of speech. Everyone shared the duties and chores of the community.

Another was in a sanatorium. We were treated alike, whether ex-private in the army or ex-officer in the air force. Same food, same rules, same shots in the bum for all.

And in both cases, we loathed it. All we wanted to do, in both institutions, was to get out, to get back to the sinful, sordid, disordered, cruel, kind, hurtful, blessed life of the human individual in a crazy society.

If you don't have moments in life that are appalling and delightful, squalid and splendid, you can stop reading now. Close your eyes, fold your arms and lie down. You're dead, and you might as well be comfortable.

When I stop being appalled or delighted by life, I will do what so many kids do. I will start sniffing nail-polish remover or taking speed. Perhaps that is why they do it.

Well, what's to be appalled or delighted about these days? Plenty. The list is endless and you can make up your own.

I am appalled by the Viet Nam war, surely the most senseless since the Hundred Years War. Nobody is winning, nobody is losing, nobody knows who will wear the crown if the stupid thing ever ends.

I am delighted that all my storm windows are on, eighty per cent of my leaves are raked, and that there is oil in the tank and food in the freezer.

I am appalled at the successor to the War Measures Act, which is completely unnecessary unless there is a heck of a lot more

I am delighted that my daughter still loves me so much that on the weekend she allowed me to furnish a new winter coat, new boots, a posh dinner and an expensive show without once mentioning the Generation Gap or saying, "Dad, there's no way you could understand."

I am appalled at the prices charged for said dinner, and the amount of food wasted, to go to the pigs. Why can't expensive restaurants give you a half-portion at half-price or a little more, instead of assuming that you are a hog?

I was delighted, next morning, with breakfast in bed, but appalled at the sixty cents for a glass of orange juice and thirty cents each for muffins. Plus tip.

I am appalled at the manners of many young people, and delighted with their courage and compassion.

I am appalled by the traffic in the city, and delighted when I can park illegally and not get caught.

Life is a balance. Appalled. Delighted. Such are the children of earth. May you long be one of them.

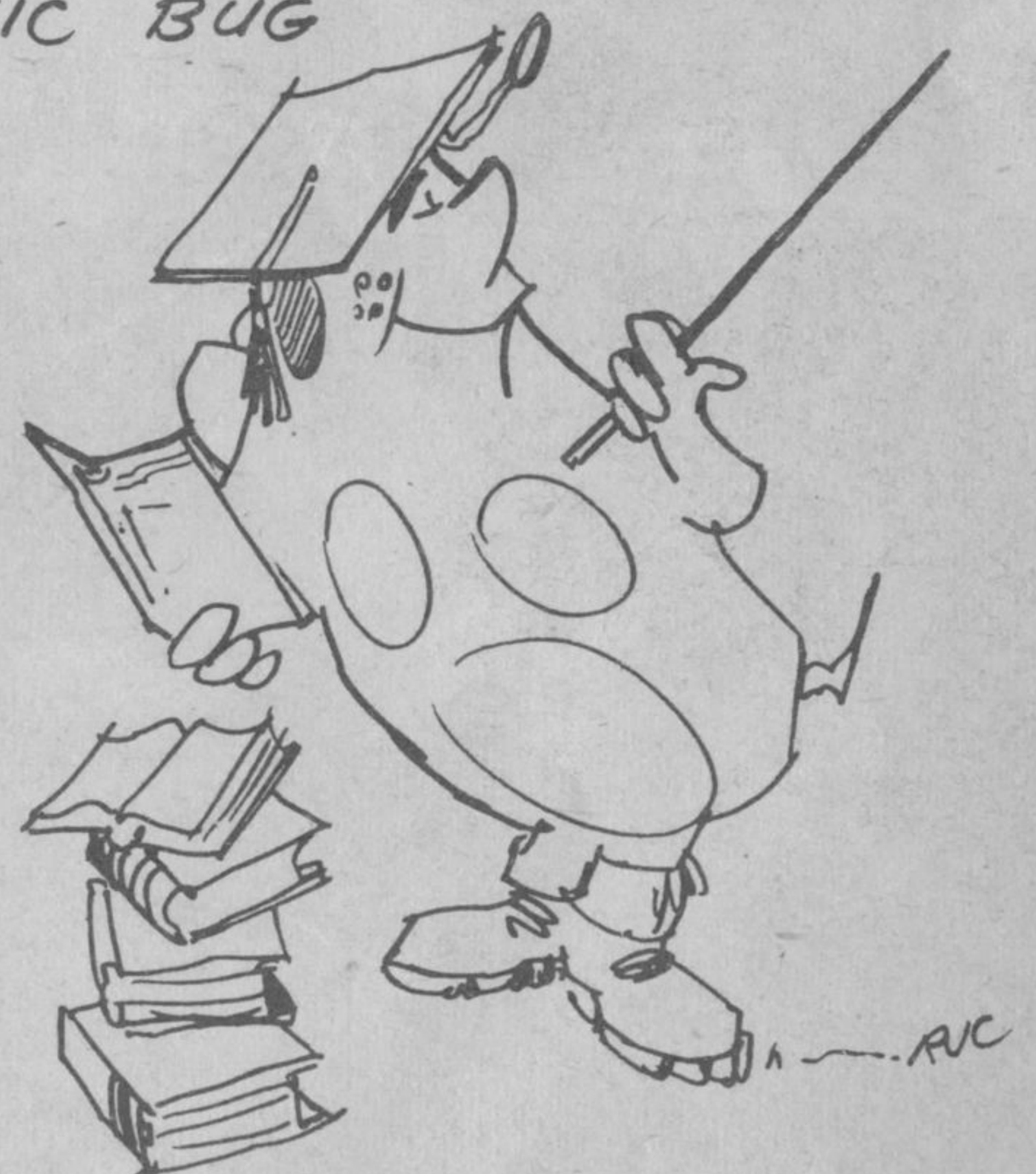
going on than the government admits. My appallment reaches shock level when I think that a cop could enter my house, ask me if I'd changed my socks in the last week, and throw me in jail if I hadn't.

LAFF OF THE WEEK



Guess who's the last one around to have snow on their walk?

TREVOR THE O.P.P. TRAFFIC BUG SAYS:



A WOMAN DRIVER IS A PERSON WHO DRIVES THE SAME WAY A MAN DOES ... ONLY SHE GETS BLAMED FOR IT

Traffic would be a lot safer if drivers tried to keep a little extra margin of safety, says the Ontario Safety League. If you avoid "near misses", you'll avoid accidents.