

editor's choice

Editorial

by HARRY HUSKINS

School Board Trustee Joan Nugent put forward a Motion at the last meeting of the former Board to annex the area around Whitesand Lake and Selem. In explaining the Motion Mrs. Nugent has said that she feels that children from the area are attending school and therefore the residents should be paying school taxes. The Motion was adopted by the former Board without any discussion and without any consultation with the people who will now be called on to pay school taxes.

Serious questions have since been asked about the Motion. What will the new boundaries be? How much will the taxes for an individual ratepayer be? What new responsibilities does the School Board assume in return for these taxes?

These questions were asked at the first meeting of the new School Board and it quickly became apparent that there were no answers for them. The new Board therefore tabled the Motion until its next meeting on January 17 when, hopefully, some of the answers will be available.

Mrs. Nugent has a good point. The handling of this point has been both clumsy and heavy-handed, but that does not detract from the fact that the point itself is valid. Students from Whitesand Lake and Selem are being educated in the school system and residents of the area should be bearing a fair share of the taxes to pay for their education.

On their side the residents have a right to be consulted about a move which so closely affects them. It would seem appropriate that Mrs. Nugent, as sponsor of the Motion and Chairman of the Finance Committee, chair a public meeting in Rossport or at Filane's Fallen Rock Motel so that the residents can hear the proposal for themselves and have an opportunity to speak their minds. Once the facts are in and everyone has had a chance to comment on them, then a proper consideration can be given to such a Motion at the Board table.

The discussion so far has generated more heat than light. On one side Mrs. Nugent has been accused of carrying out one more step of a personal vendetta against Schreiber, on the other side Mrs. Nugent has accused both Board members and residents who have raised questions about the terms of the annexation motion of using their questions as a delaying tactic in an attempt to kill the proposal. There is no evidence to support either contention.

Mrs. Nugent's motion is a good one and it should be adopted. The questions raised about the terms of the Motion are good ones and they should be resolved before the Motion is adopted.

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GRANDPA AND ME



BY MARK TURRIS

Shirley Whittington

The animal cracker zoo

An urgent SOS came this week from a young friend who is having trouble relating to a three-year-old on a day-to-day basis.

Relating to a three-year-old is like relating to an actively occupied hornet's nest, although there may be some who will say I'm being unfair to hornets. The only time you can approach an occupied hornet's nest safely is in the deep of night when the little beasts are silent and asleep. The same applies to three year-olds.

There are days when I feel down, depressed and discouraged, when my life seems meaningless and empty of accomplishment. Then I remember my imprisonment years ago with a three-year-old, a four-year-old, a baby and an incontinent collie. We all survived, and that's an achievement I'd like inscribed on my tombstone.

Those years have since dissolved into a blurred fast-forward of wet mitts and band-aids, limitless laundry and Sunwheat cookies. But some events stand out like stretch marks on the underbelly of life.

At various times, our lives were enriched by three-year-olds who helped Daddy by painting reachable bits of our brown bungalow white; washed Grandma's new car with Ajax cleanser; hid behind a bush and gleefully zapped passing motorists with the garden hose; brought tiny friends in to see Mummy in the shower; threw up in other peoples' cars, activated fire alarms in country hotels; scissored all curls from the head of the pretty little girl next door; ran away, sleepwalked, dawdled, hated peas, and talked, talked, talked.

It was a three-year-old who brought home a dead cat, squashed flat and frozen like a Halloween cut-out. Using the tail as a handle, the child pushed the disgusting thing at me, and asked if I could wash it.

All those dreadful little dramas were acted out against a constant backdrop of yelling, poking, punching and roaring, plus several serious attempts at fratricide.

I did terrible things to survive those years in the animal-cracker zoo, and we have a photo of Mummy sitting in the playpen reading, with little ones roistering in the background, outside the playpen.

Sometimes I took the offensive. When we bought new garbage tins, I lost no time in pointing out how neatly a three-year-old would fit inside one of them. I suggested wall-papering their room in something by Maurice Sendak. I told them if they didn't share their toys, Santa would fill their stockings with boiled turnips and scratchy underwear. Once I took the boys on a guided tour of a butcher shop, walk-in freezer and all. That settled them down for a couple of days.

Sometimes in the relative peace of these child-free years I wish I'd been nicer to the kids when they were little. Then I remember the time one of them threw his Slinky down the toilet and I get so mad I want to phone him up and yell at him.

But it wasn't all bad. We did have some merry times in the kitchen because we all loved to cook and we loved to eat. Cleaning up afterwards was terrible, especially if we were using eggs. A three-year-old can literally kill an egg with kindness, holding it so tightly that

it smushes, right between his palms. Little ones are also good at dropping eggs into snowboots, hot air vents and gold fish bowls.

Obviously we had to be careful in the kitchen about things that were sharp and hot and breadable. We used to have a lovely family custom where the children helped to cut up the fruit and nuts for the Christmas cake. One year as we reached the culinary climax, a butterfingerted kid tipped his glass dish of chopped nuts into the big mixing bowl which was filled with a king's ransom in eggs, butter and fruit. The dish shattered and slivers of glass showered into the cake batter.

That very year another old family custom began. We now annually buy our fruit cake from a service club.

In spite of hideous messes and accidents, baking together was usually fun. The kids enjoyed mucking about in the dough. Waiting for fresh-baked cookies to cool sufficiently to be eaten taught the boys patience.

The kids still love to cook. One of them not long ago served me a marvellous meal of roast chicken. He simply took the bird out of the freezer, made a forward pass into the roasting pan, and turned on the oven. About four hours later we ate—roast chicken and a nice bottle of white wine. That was all. It was a simple but filling meal.

In truth, the only way to get along with three-year-olds is to realize that they will soon be twenty-three-year-olds. Then, if you've instilled the habit of having fun in the kitchen, they'll probably ask you over for a bird and a bottle some night.

And if you come across a little baked bag of giblets, don't say a word. Nobody's perfect.

Arthur Black

Santa kind to some

Well, I don't know how good Santa Claus was to you this Christmas past but if you didn't get quite all you expected, you can take comfort in the knowledge that some of your fellow Canadians found their stockings stuffed to overflowing.

Particularly if they were federal Members of Parliament.

Our representatives on the Hill got themselves a dandy little post-Christmas pick-me-up. As of this month, they will each receive a basic annual pay package of \$67,100. That's just over 50-grand in straight wages plus an expense allowance of \$16,800 per

Tut tut ... don't put on that long face. Their wee pay raise is strictly in accordance with the government's restraint program. A mere six percent.

Mind you it is about 52 percent more than they voted themselves three years ago, in 1980.

And of course we're only talking about garden variety, run-of-the-mill MP's here. Parliamentarians who do more, get more.

A lot more. Cabinet ministers, for instance, will be struggling along on \$105,600 this year, as will the Commons Speaker, Jeanne Sauve, and Leader of the Opposition, Joe Clark.

The Only Prime Minister We've Got will have to make do with \$124,600 in 1983.

And the Senate? I'm glad you asked. You'll be happy to know that Canada's senators have been looked after too. They will now receive \$50,000 a year plus \$8,200 for cab fare and whatnot.

True, it's a little less than an ordinary MP will make ... but the advantage is, no one expects the Senators to do anything for it.

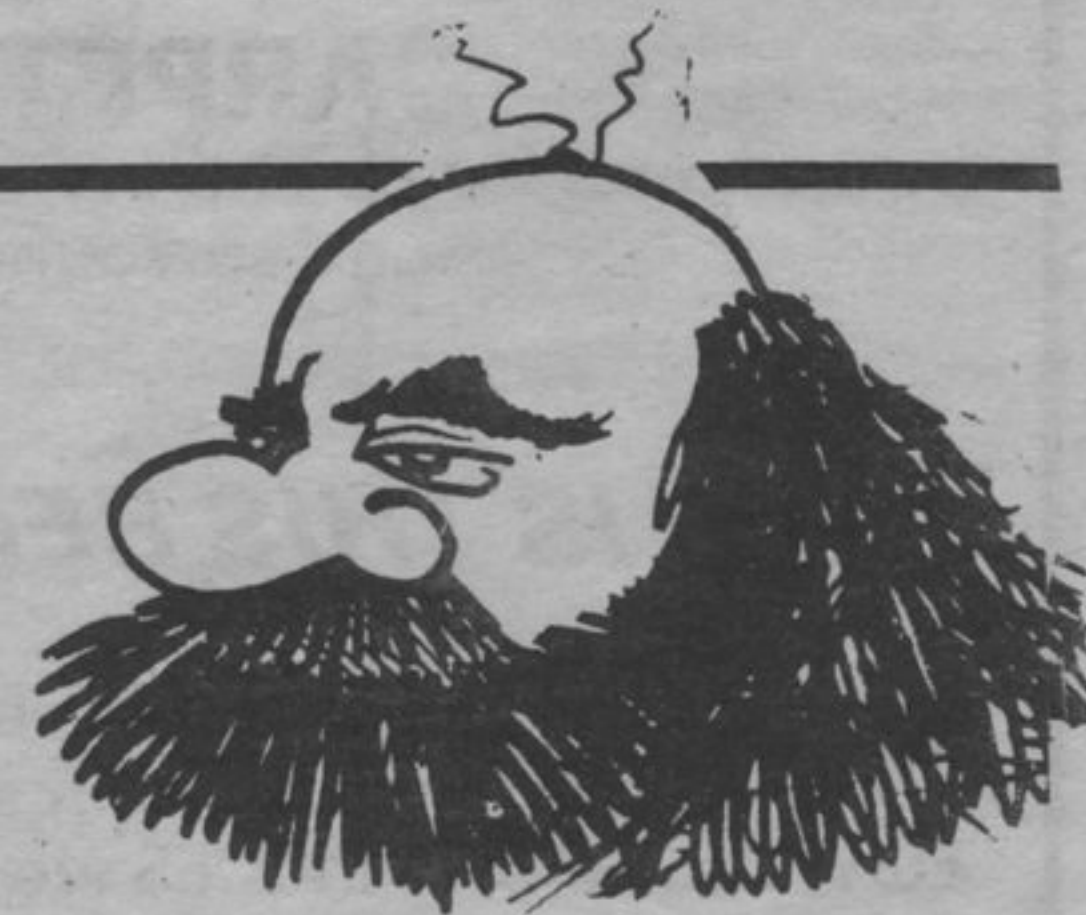
Which brings us to the most spectacular example of pre-Christmas Bytown largesse ...

Let's here it for Michael Pitfield.

ing-up everything that barely functioned in Ottawa, the 45-year old whiz kid and good-buddy-of-the-PM has gone to his reward — albeit a trifle prematurely. Mister Trudeau has made him a Senator.

Mister Pitfield stands to — well, not *earn* exactly — let's say "pick-up" about \$1.6 million in salary; \$250,000 in tax-free perks; and \$100,000 in pension benefits over the course of his 30-year appointment.

That works out to darn near two million dollars from the public purse. And all Mister Pitfield has to do for it is keep breathing until



Nice work if you can get it.

Yes, it may not have been that great a Christmas for many Canadians (the one-and-a-half million who are out of work spring to mind) — but the folks who run the shop did very well.

That's the way it is when you're in a position to play Santa Claus for yourself and your friends.

But don't feel left out, dear reader. You played an important part in this Yuletide bounty too.

After all, where would Santa Claus be without his toiling slaves?