

opinion

Where did the summer go

I'm sitting here at my desk, reflecting on my past summer. Now, I realize that summer isn't as of yet, officially over, but let's face it ... it's not that long off before the nights begin to turn a little colder ... the kids are heading back to the old grind of reading, writing and arithmetic ... the leaves begin to turn that sickening shade of pale yellow and then burst out into the fall shades of rust ... and the never ending job of preparing not only our homes but also ourselves for the long fall and winter months ahead.

Where did the summer go?

It wasn't that long ago that I bent over the handle of a rake, attempting to clean up the garbage that Mother Nature generously left us on our lawns and gardens.

It wasn't that long ago that flowers and bedding plants were purchased in hopes of obtaining that pie-in-the-sky dream of having the best looking flower garden on the North Shore.

And it wasn't that long ago that I sat in a 95 deg. F auditorium watching the efforts and antics of the school pupils while they tried to present the best school concert ever.

When I try to think of something constructive that I have accomplished over June, July and August, I have great difficulty in doing so. I don't even look back on my summer holidays with a smile on my face. I never took any.

Well ... actually I took a week. I moved from Dorion to Terrace Bay ... during the first week of the terrible heat wave. During the second week, I unpacked all of my household belongings ... sweating and sweltering in that blasted heat. The third week of the heat wave, I finally decided that I wouldn't do a blessed thing ... not even walk, bike or participate in anything physical that might cause excessive perspiring or discomfort. That folks means that I didn't do **anything** ... *sweet-tweet ... zip!*

I hid in the cool comfort of my office or in the comfortable climate of my basement. God! How I abhor the heat. Well ... maybe not so much the heat as the humidity. I moved up from the southern parts of Ontario in attempts to avoid the problem of hot, humid summers. And up until now ... it was working. But maybe it is true what they say on the streets and at the weather stations ... it won't happen again for quite a while. **I HOPE!**

I am actually a spring, fall and winter type of person. I like doing yard work. I like to plant those precious little bulbs and seedlings even if I do know they'll succumb to a horrible death, either through neglect or heat. I like raking fall leaves and the unfamiliar smell of wood smoke in the air. I like partridge hunting, trapping and best of all ... fall fairs.

I don't love winter. I tolerate it. Better than summer! I skate, sled and make a fool of myself by building snowmen in my front yard. I don't even mind chucking the wood into the old wood stove. I know it will end come May.

One thing about the cold months ... you can always get warm via wood stoves, long underwear and my case, a nice warm waterbed. During a hot spell in the summer ... there is little comfort unless you happen to be fortunate in owning an air-conditioner. I don't!

So ... I look forward to autumn, crazy as I am. I look forward to school commencing. I look forward to the numerous fall fairs. I look forward to walking without working up a sweat. And I even look forward to Christmas. I just haven't figured out why!

Arthur Black

Quiet society sounds good

Three cheers for John Beltz! Ahh ... make that three ... *restrained* ... cheers. Mister Beltz is the spokesman for a group called The Right to Quiet Society. It's a 40-member group based in Vancouver that wants to do something about the unnecessary noise pollution we all have to live with.

The Right to Quiet Society isn't tackling horn-honking factory whistles or sonic booms. Not yet, anyway. No, right now the Society is after ... stores. John Beltz is writing letters to all the major department stores and supermarket chains in British Columbia, asking them to please turn off their piped-in music.

I'm with him. It was bad enough when institutional music was Muzak —

goopy, treacherous renditions of "popular" songs and movie themes that were sugary enough to give you a toothache. But have you noticed it's changed? The schmaltz has been replaced by Brain Damage music. Walk through a mall or a supermarket now and you're assaulted by barages of thumping rock and roll. Not good rock and roll — just *urgent* rock and roll. What I call "Buy Now" music.

There seems to be a theory going around that if you can just agitate consumers enough, they'll panic and reach for their Visa cards.

Maybe it works for most people. It just makes me want to get out of the store. I used to enjoy window shopping, but what

used to feel like a leisurely stroll through the mall now feels like a D-Day crawl up to the beaches of Normandy.

All of which makes me delighted to hear about John Beltz and the Right to Quiet Society. It's nice to discover that I'm not the only one who doesn't appreciate being decibelled to death while I'm shopping.

This is not the first foray for Mister Beltz and his friends. Last year they took on ghetto-blasters. And they won.

You're familiar with ghetto-blasters? Those suitcase-sized, barely-portable radios you see being lugged around by young, vacant-eyed louts? As far as I can tell, ghetto-blasters feature neither an off-switch nor a volume

control knob. I've never encountered one that wasn't cranked-up full-blast. Ghetto-blasters will seek you out on the street, in parks, at the beach and in the bush. Last month I was riding on a streetcar in Toronto. The whole car was vibrating in time to a raucous ghetto-blaster carried by some gormless oaf near the back.

You'll find ghetto-blasters at municipal pools too. But not in Vancouver's municipal pools. Last year Mister Beltz and his peace-seeking colleagues decided they'd had enough afternoons by the pool destroying by radiototing idiots. They petitioned the Vancouver Parks Board to give lifeguards the right to request users of loud radios to turn them down or hit the street.

Makes sense from the life-guards' point of view. They have to be able to hear swimmers yelling for help and one ghetto-blaster could mask the sound of the Titanic going down.

Anyway, the good news is that The Right To Quiet Society won. The city pools of Vancouver are now a haven from unsolicited radio noise.

I hope the movement spreads. I'd like to see the day when any one of us could perform a citizen's arrest on anybody guilty of gross noise pollution. (Actually, all I'd really like to see is a return to good manners and common courtesy — but why be a Pollyanna?)

In the meantime, let's hear it for John Beltz and The Right to Quiet Society.

Stotto voce, of course.

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Hole in the Fence

No. 5 Brussels Sprout and the Magic Potion



Colour the imaginary Brussels Sprout light green.
Colour the real Brussels Sprout dark green.

In today's story, little Brussels Sprout finds out that the Magic Potion does not solve his problems.

The next day, Brussels Sprout is telling everyone how much he likes Mr. Cabbage. "Mr. Cabbage is so big and strong," he says. "I'm going to be like him one day." Radish and Onion laugh. "Did you hear that?" says Pea. "Brussels Sprout thinks he can be like Mr. Cabbage." "Oh, shut up, Pip-Squeak," says Brussels Sprout.

Brussels Sprout is very upset. Then he remembers the Magic Potion. "Mushroom said it can make you be anything you want to be. Maybe the Magic Potion will make me big and strong and clever like Mr. Cabbage," he thinks to himself. "I can be like Mr. Cabbage if I want. You wait and see," says Brussels Sprout. "You're dumb like Potato," says Radish. "Dumme, dumme, dumme," they all shout together.

Brussels Sprout runs to the hole in the fence to find Mushroom. After what seems like a very long time, Mushroom appears.

"Mushroom!" Brussels Sprout exclaims. "You can help me!" "How?" says Mushroom quietly. "I don't think I can be like Mr. Cabbage," says Brussels Sprout. "and I know I can be like Mr. Cabbage if I have the Magic Potion and I'll show them!"

Mushroom smiles and reaches into his bag. "Sure," he says. "But first you must pay me. Give me your cap." "You didn't tell us we have to pay," says Brussels Sprout.

"You always have to pay," smiles Mushroom. Brussels Sprout hesitates. He likes his cap very much and he doesn't want to part with it. But he wants to show everyone that he really can be like Mr. Cabbage. Reluctantly, he hands over his cap.

Mushroom places the cap on his head. "Here you are," he says, handing Brussels Sprout the Magic Potion.

"Will it work?" asks Brussels Sprout. Mushroom just smiles and disappears.

Brussels Sprout isn't sure whether to take the Magic Potion. "What will Mr. Cabbage say if he finds out?" he thinks. "On the other hand, I've already given Mushroom my cap." Brussels Sprout makes the decision. Quickly he takes the Magic Potion.

A little later, Brussels Sprout meets the others. "Hey, look who's coming!" shouts Carrot. "Oh, it's just runty Brussels Sprout," he exclaims.

"I'm not runty," says Brussels Sprout. "I'm as big and strong as Mr. Cabbage now."

"You're still as weak as you ever were," Brussels Sprout says. Carrot says, "I think you should have your glasses fixed," says Brussels Sprout in the kind way Mr. Cabbage would say it.

"If he's as big and strong as Mr. Cabbage, then I'm as mean as Bully Cucumber," says Tomato, waving her fists wildly. Everyone laughs and ignores Brussels Sprout. Brussels Sprout doesn't mind. He just walks off.

Later, he comes across Cucumber, who is bullying Potato as usual. "Stop that," orders Brussels Sprout in a stern voice. "I won't allow you to bully Potato like that."

Cucumber can't believe his ears! "What did you say?" asks Cucumber. "I said, don't bully Potato. Pick on someone your own size," says Brussels Sprout calmly.

Cucumber roars with laughter. Potato hides in the ground. He knows there is going to be trouble.

"Run," Potato cries. "Run, Brussels Sprout."

Cucumber kicks Brussels Sprout and sends him flying in the air. Brussels Sprout hits the ground with a bang. When he opens his eyes, he sees Potato standing over him. "Are you all right?" asks Potato anxiously. "Yes, I think so," says Brussels Sprout. "Why did you stand up to Cucumber like that?" asks Potato.

"Because I took the Magic Potion," says Brussels Sprout. "It made me think I was big and strong like Mr. Cabbage, but I wasn't. Mushroom took my cap. Mushroom cheated me."

Potato laughs. "Why would you want to be like Mr. Cabbage anyway? I like you just the way you are."

"And I like you too," answers Brussels Sprout.

The Hole in the Fence, a 132-page colour illustrated storybook published by Health and Welfare Canada, was developed in cooperation with provincial alcohol drug commissions, foundations, stores or by sending a cheque money order payable to the Receiver General of Canada to: Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Hull, Quebec, K1A 0S9.

A family guide to this preventive drug education and living skills program contains story resumes, colouring pictures, home crafts and discussion ideas. It is available free, on request, from **The Hole in the Fence**, Box 8888, Ottawa, Ontario, K1G 3J2.

Egalement disponible en français sous le titre **"Mes amis, mon jardin"**.

