

opinion

WHAT IF . . . it had been "real"?

I never want to go through another Thursday again, like the one I just went through. It was crazy around the office and the town. I am of course referring to the planned "Mock Disaster" which was held here last week. We were warned in advance that things weren't going to be normal. Oh God, how we were warned! Everybody knew. No one was shocked to hear the town siren go off. No one was shocked when they saw every type of emergency vehicle in town, head for the Rec Centre. Only the people who were passing through Terrace Bay were surprised.

I can understand why we were fore-warned. Because it involved a lot of people in many different ways. The Fire Department had to be notified which makes sense. Kimberly Clark had to be notified ... that made sense. The hospital, the town police, the O.P.P., the store owners, etc. They all had to be informed. That makes sense too.

But I sit here and wonder ... what if? What if "Joe Blow" off the street hadn't have known. That if the Fire Department hadn't have known. What if the hospital hadn't have known. It would have made the disaster seem a little more realistic wouldn't it? There wouldn't have been by-standers observing with smirks on their faces and giggles in their throats, cutting apart the attempts that all departments were making at making this 'mock' disaster seem real to life. There wouldn't have been smart remarks concerning the "running" of the event. There would have been some pretty irate parents screaming, pushing and shoving to break down the doors of the arena, attempting to locate their missing children. Telephone lines in Terrace Bay would have been tied up with people attempting to inform themselves on the emergency situation.

But there wasn't any such things going on. People thought it was a joke. Well ... I'm here to tell you that it wasn't a joke. It could have been a 'real' disaster situation. It could have involved 'real' lives. Thank God it wasn't though, because the people of Terrace Bay couldn't have stopped laughing long enough to realize their dilemma.

Instead of chuckling about Thursday's events, we should all be out there congratulating the key people who were out there trying to save our necks. Thank the town Council for their concern and their ability to handle the situation. Thank the town police and the O.P.P. for their efforts on crowd and traffic control. Thank the hospital for having such dedicated staff and administration who were able to handle the load of victims that were being transported through their emergency wards. Thank the Terrace Bay Fire Department for the many training sessions they all attended in order to gain the knowledge of how to handle such a crisis; and for the expert way in which they handled things. Thank the E.M.O. for their advice on the creation of such an event. And thank your lucky stars that it wasn't the real thing ... THIS TIME!

Congratulations Terrace Bay! You did one hell of a fine job. And you should be proud. I am!

Arthur Black

We're in the money

Today we are going to talk about Being Rich.

Not about being well-off, financially secure or even wealthy ... we are going to talk about Rolling In The Green Stuff. About being Fabulously, Filthy Rich.

What brings this up is not — rest assured — the state of my bank balance. No, what got me on this jag is an article in the current issue of *Forbes Magazine*. You know the publication? It's a magazine for, by and about rich people. I stole my bank manager's copy.

The article that caught my eye is called The 400 Richest People in America. There are some familiar names you might not expect to find on such a list. Yoko Ono is there. The widow of John Lennon is worth something in the neighbourhood of \$150 million.

Which is a pleasant neighbourhood to be in.

Bob Hope's on the list too, and he's even better off. *Forbes* reckons that old Ski Nose is worth about \$200 million.

Now I understand that old Hope gag about not running for President because he couldn't afford the cut in pay.

But Hope and Yoko are mere nickel-and-dimers on this list. There are 14 U.S. tycoons here who have fortunes of one billion dollars or more. And three of those are what you call "double-billionaires" — which means they have at least 2 billion in their wallets.

One of them is Daniel Ludwig, of New York. He's been called "the father of the supertanker". More often, he's just called Sir. Ludwig was last year's richest man in America, but he's slipped to number three this year.

The second richest man on the continent is somebody I never

heard of — Sam Walton of Bentonville, Arkansas. He's the fellow who founded the Wal-Mart Discount Chain, and I guess it's weathering the recession nicely. Nicely enough to make old Sam the second richest American in the world.

And North America's richest man? Chances are you haven't heard of him either. He is Gordon Peter Getty and he's worth 2.2 billion dollars — give or take a nickel.

You have any idea how much 2.2 billion bucks is? It is a dollar sign followed by two-point-two, followed by eight zeroes. To give you an idea of how much clout you'd have with \$2.2 billion ... Suppose you invested it all in a really safe Widows-And-Orphans stock — something that netted you a pitiful 8 per cent dividend annually. Know what 8 per cent of \$2.2 billion is? One hundred and

seventy-six million bucks. That's what you would make annually — without touching the principal!

Or, put another way, \$2.2 billion invested at 8 per cent would give Gordon Peter Getty some 3,384,615 dollars and 39 cents for running around money.

Every ... Week!

So what kind of a man is this Gordon Peter Getty, the richest man in North America? Well, for starters he's the son of the late J. Paul Getty — and that helps. Mister Getty senior was something of a billionaire himself. Oil, mostly. It's a cardinal rule that one of the best ways to become a billionaire is to get yourself born into a nest of them.

Actually, *Forbes Magazine* doesn't tell us a whole lot about the young Getty. I suppose that's one of the advantages of being ludicrously rich — you don't have

to talk to reporters. Even reporters from *Forbes Magazine*.

They did drop a couple of nuggets about the man though: He's 49 years old.

Oh yes ... and he's Not Happy.

Not about being the richest man in America anyway. Gordon, you see isn't all that fussy about money. He composes music. He says he'd rather see his name on the music pages.

Aw gee.

As one of my favourite writers, Rex Stout, once said: "Nothing is more admirable than the fortitude with which millionaires tolerate the disadvantages of their wealth."

Of course, Mister Stout made that observation in earlier, less inflationary times.

I'm sure he would've included double billionaires in there too.

The Terrace Bay-Schreiber News is published every Wednesday by: Laurentian Publishing Co. Ltd., Box 579, Terrace Bay, Ontario. P0T 2W0. Telephone: (807) 825-3747.

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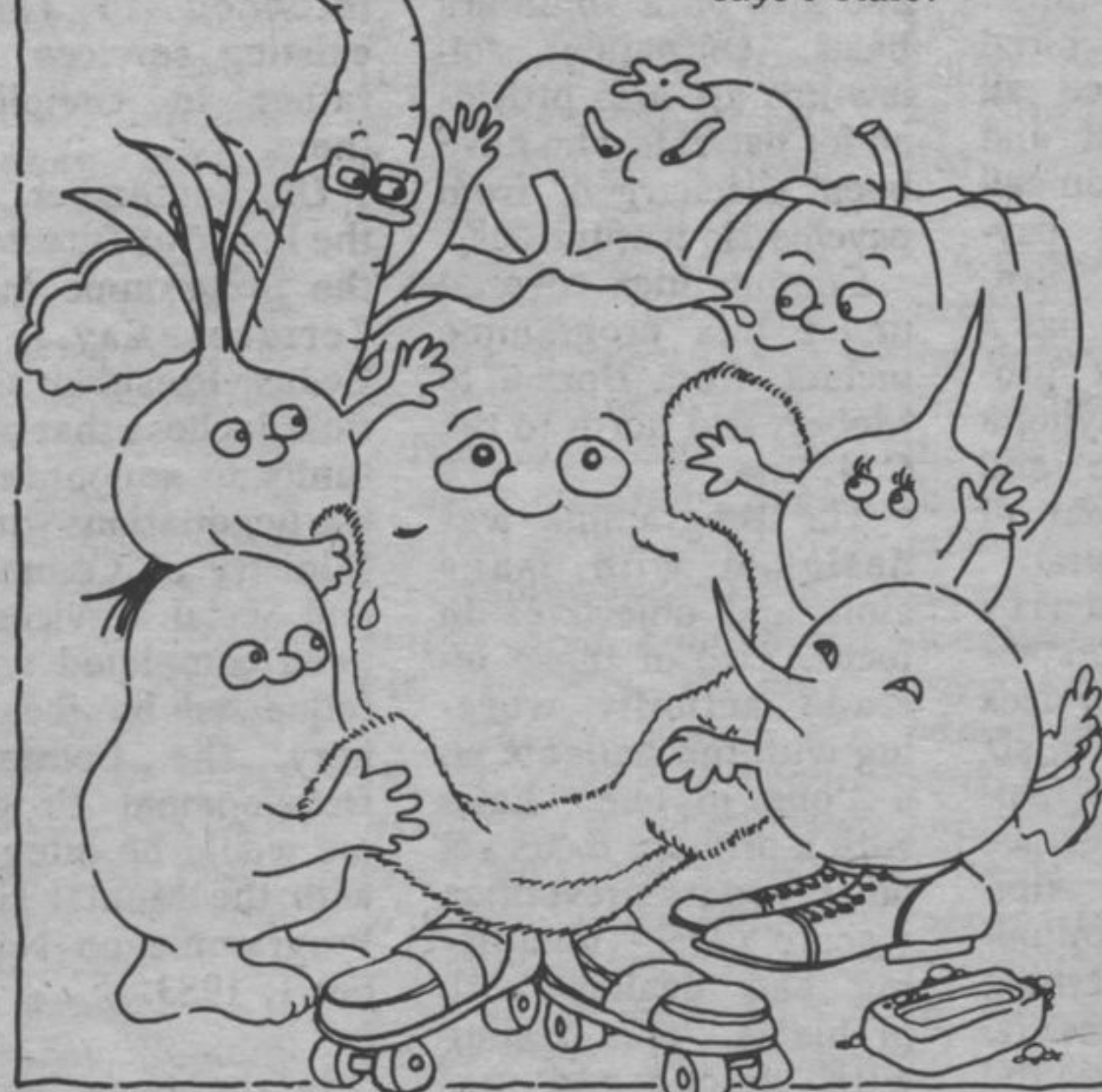
DEADLINE: Friday NOON
Subscription rates: \$10.00 per annum (local); \$14.00 per annum (out-of-town). Second Class Mail
Registration No. 0867.



Hole in the Fence

N° 12 Eggplant gets a scrubbing

"He's not as bad as Mr. Cauliflower says he is," says Potato.



Draw happy smiles on all the Vegetables. Colour the picture.

In today's story, the youngsters learn that adults are sometimes wrong.

A little later, Onion has an idea. "If Potato's colour washed off and he wasn't Eggplant," says Onion, "then maybe Eggplant isn't really Eggplant either."

"Hey," says Radish, "let's find out." Led by Radish, they all go off to find Eggplant. Carrying soap, sponges, brushes, and a bucket of water, they march to the edge of the Garden where Eggplant is sitting all by himself.

Eggplant can't believe his eyes when he sees them approaching. "Finally," he

thinks, "they've come to make friends." He smiles broadly and holds out his arms.

Splash! The bucket of water is thrown over his head. Without any warning, Eggplant is scrubbed from head to toe.

"Ouch, stop," cries Eggplant. But no one pays any attention. They scrub and scrub, but it doesn't make any difference. Eggplant stays just as purple as ever.

"Why are you hurting me?" says Eggplant, starting to cry.

"He cries just like Brussels Sprout,"

says Beet. "And when we came, he seemed just as friendly as Potato," says Onion. "Maybe he's not as bad as Mr. Cauliflower says he is," says Potato.

Together everyone covers Eggplant with towels and rubs him dry. By this time, Eggplant has stopped crying. Pleased with all the attention he is getting he starts chatting happily.

"I think I like him," says Tomato. "He's not bad at all," says Radish. "In fact, I like him, too. Boy, was Mr. Cauliflower ever mean when he tried to keep us from being friends with Eggplant. We shouldn't have listened to him."

Together, they all put Eggplant on their shoulders and carry him into the middle of the Garden.

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. It is available for \$4.50 through local bookstores or by sending a cheque money order payable to the Receiver General of Canada to: Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Hull, Quebec, KIA 0S9.

A family guide to this preventive drug education and living skills program contains story résumés, 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".

