

# opinion

## Farewell Old Bessie!

I may be letting my age slip out when I say that I can clearly remember filling up my gas tank for around five dollars. I'm sure I'm not the only one to reminisce on this matter. That's when gas prices ran around the 24 cents a GALLON mark. Not litre ... Gallon. That's also when you knew what a gallon was, and exactly how much it took to fill your car up.

I now look at the pumps and see 50.2 cents per litre. What's a litre? It means little to me except the fact that it now will cost me in the neighbourhood of about \$23.00 to fill my compact car. That's a big increase from when I first purchased my little gas-saving vehicle. I distinctly remember pumping a total of \$9.00 worth of gasoline into that little wonder, the day that I drove it off the lot.

That folks, was 1980. That is also one heck of an increase! It also used to get about 35 miles to the gallon. I haven't had the time or the patience to figure out how many kilometres it now gets to the litre, nor will I. I really am not curious. Not even mildly curious. I know that it will still cost me the same to fill her up ... it will cost me the same to travel ... no matter what ... so, why bother.

The one thing that does burn me up and burn me to no end, is the fact that gas prices in out-lying communities are MUCH cheaper than they are here in Schreiber and Terrace Bay. I ask you ... why should I have to pay 50 cents plus per litre here, when I can get it for 39.2 cents or cheaper in Nipigon, Dorion, or even Thunder Bay? Why the big difference? We need the break, not them. It's not them who have to travel 2½ hours to Thunder Bay for necessary business, etc. It's not them who can't go anywhere without having to travel quite a distance to do so. People of Thunder Bay can walk ... take a taxi ... take a bus. But what can we do? Hitchhike ... and let some other sucker pay the high price of gasoline?

Much discussion has been given the matter of the price discrimination. Much talk has been carried on in the government, in the homes, even in the coffee shops. But we aren't seeing any results. The men on the hill claim that the reasons for the lower gas prices are due to the overabundance of gas in Ontario. I can then understand why they want to get rid of it. But what I can't understand is the fact that why should some cities and towns benefit from the low prices, and others not. It makes more sense to me, to lower the gas prices in areas where it would be more beneficial to the people. Like Terrace Bay, Marathon, Nakina, etc. But I firmly believe that the government does want to make this great gas deal beneficial. They want us to suffer. They want us to keep spending our hard earned dollars on more gas efficient cars and trucks. After all, the more gas prices rise, the more we the consumer, will be looking at vehicles that are cheaper to run.

Take my car for instance. Back in 1980, 35 miles to the gallon was pretty good. It sure beat my truck that I was forced to drive. In 1981, it was still pretty good, but my neighbour down the road was getting 40 miles to the gallon in her sub-compact car. In 1982, another friend of mine purchased yet another sub-compact that gave her 47 miles to the gallon. Now, in 1983, if you don't get at least 55 miles to the gallon with your vehicle, you just don't rate! You then own a gas-guzzler! Oh God! I'm being told that my car is insufficient. I'm eating up too much gas. And I do indeed hope to remedy that.

I have been looking at sub-compacts. Looking ... that's all! I will not submit myself to scrunching up my body and easing myself into a tiny little car just to save a few dollars. I like leg room. I like headroom. I like my car. I hate the thoughts of getting rid of it. But all good things must come to an end and I must face the facts. I'm going to trade old Bessie in on a newer model. It may mean that I will have pins and needles in my legs from being cramped up, but it's something that one has to do for economy sake.

Anyone out there want to buy a gas-guzzler. She's officially up for sale.

Arthur Black

## They don't make hoaxes like they used to

Quiz time. What do the following famous historical happenings have in common?

Lady Godiva's bare ... ummm ... back ride;

Newton's apple-inspired brain-wave;

Sir Walter Raleigh's "spreading of the cloak" for Queen Elizabeth;

Nero fiddling while Rome burned.

Aside from being world-renowned historical nuggets that we all took-in with our mother's milk, these vignettes share one other common characteristic.

They never happened.

There was a Lady Godiva who lived in Coventry way back at the time of the Norman Conquest. She was married to a royal creep by the name of Leofric, who exacted heavy taxes from his suffering subjects. By all accounts, Lady Godiva was a very nice lady devoted to charitable works, but she never rode naked

through the streets of Coventry. That's a phony legend that grew-up about two centuries after Lady Godiva was in the ground.

Probably dreamed up by some 13th century PR type as a tourist promotion.

Fiction Two: Newton and the apple.

When you think about it, saying that Sir Isaac Newton discovered the Laws of Gravity as a result of being conked on the cranium by an apple, is like saying Werner von Braun discovered the secret of space travel by watching houseflies. In all of his writing, Newton never hinted, suggested, implied or referred to the apocryphal "apple incident". Nor do most of his biographers. One of Newton's admirers — a German astronomer named Karl Friederich Gauss explains the hoax thusly:

"Undoubtedly, there came to Newton some stupid inportunate

man, who asked him how he hit upon his famous discovery. Newton, wanting to get rid of the man, told him that an apple fell on his nose; and this made the matter quite clear to the man, and he went away satisfied."

And told the world, Herr Gauss neglects to mention.

Fiction C: Sir Walter Raleigh, the mud puddle and Queen Elizabeth. Never happened. The incident, wherein Sir Walt supposedly spread his cloak over a puddle so that Queen Elizabeth could keep her royal in-steps unbesmirched, was probably invented by historian Thomas Fuller, a scribbler known for his Harold Robbins approach to historical fact. The old cloak story got another boost from Sir Walter Scott, who immortalized the tale in his romance, *Kenilworth*.

And finally ... the one about Nero and his musical solo while Rome burned.

Well, this one's half true. Rome did burn while the maniacal Nero was emperor. Trouble with the story is, Nero was out of town at the time. He was staying at his country villa in Antium, about 30 miles away.

There's one other fact that makes it tough for Nero to have been sawing away at sonatas while the city went up in flames.

No fiddles. In Nero's time the violin was still 1500 years away from being invented.

You're probably wondering what brought on this hoax reverie. I'm not sure. Maybe the fact that hoaxes are in the news. The Amway scam for instance — in which North America's squeaky-cleanest corporation has admitted to trying to defraud our province out of sundry millions of dollars in taxes.

Or maybe it was the story out of Washington last week. You hear that one? About General Dyna-

mics? GD is a major industrial corporation. One of its juiciest customers is the U.S. Air Force. A few months ago the Air Force asked General Dynamics if they could supply a fairly run-of-the-mill cutting tool. Can do, said General Dynamics. Price tag: \$1.158.

Unfortunately for General Dynamics, Air Force expenditures require Senate approval. Senate investigators thought eleven-hundred odd bucks was a bit steep for a can opener so they called an outside contractor. Who had the same gizmo in a catalogue for \$5.

Amway and General Dynamics — culprits in two relatively minor 20th century scams. That's what got me looking-up hoaxes.

Doesn't prove much I guess. Aside from the fact that they don't make hoaxes the way they used to.

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EDITOR AND MANAGER ..... Karen E. Park  
ADVERTISING MANAGER ..... Diane Matson  
RECEPTIONIST ..... Sharon Mark  
PRODUCTION MANAGER ..... Mary Melo



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## anchor

"The tongue, being in a wet place, is apt to slip when going fast." By our words we can both build a person or destroy a character. In James Chapter 3 it gives us wise counsel that horses may be controlled and directed by the bits we place in their mouths, and ships also, be they small or large, are governed by a small helm or rudder. The tongue is a small member of our bodies but controlling it can be a lifetime's task. How easily that sharp retort, that snide remark, that unkind comment rolls off the tongue, to say nothing of the cursing and swearing and taking the Lord's name in vain. But that same tongue can whisper sweet words of encouragement, of love, of hope and promise. The fountain does not send fresh water and salt water together or a fig tree bear olives, or an olive tree bear figs.

How then can we overcome this small but vital member of our bodies. The answer is clear. As a small bit controls a horse or a helm a ship, so it is in the mind of the person to gain control. A light-hearted comment: "Please ensure brain is engaged before opening mouth." Surely that says it all. Heavenly wisdom is pure, peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocrisy. So let us endeavour to speak the good work or speak not at all.

Peter Monks,  
President, Terrace Bay Branch  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

