

opinion



Minor Hockey "Hot-Seat"

by LYNNE BADGER

It is 2 p.m. Friday and Karen does not have an opinion for the "Opinion Column". Yes folks, it's true. *Karen does not have an opinion!*

Enter the Editorial Assistant always ready for a challenge (and wanting to keep the job) who will attempt to substitute. After considerable thought and skimming through the local news, I did find one issue on which I would like to comment. I am concerned about the Terrace Bay and Schreiber Minor Hockey Associations' problem with the North Shore Minor Hockey League.

It seems that the Manitowadge and Marathon associations have taken advantage of the absence of the local associations to change a rule that could have a devastating effect on hockey in the area. Previously in the Pee Wee and Atom divisions (the little guys) each line played 2 or 3 minutes then the buzzer went and the next line went out for their 2 or 3 minutes. This has been the practice here and also in Thunder Bay for as long as I have been watching my brothers play (one of whom just reached the age of eligibility to play "Oldtimer".)

Every player at this early development stage plays the same amount of time regardless of his ability with the time limit rule in effect. If he (or she) started late or just requires more time to accomplish physical skills, he is given a chance to improve and not forced to sit on the sidelines and watch his friends who have for some reason mastered the skills more quickly.

Without the rule, the kids will learn very quickly that winning is "all important" and personal feelings do not matter. At 7 years of age he will become aware of his inadequacies and maybe he will not try another sport for fear of disappointment. That is a little young to find out that competition is the number one thing in the world and that he has to keep up or be left out.

It is not necessary to disillusion children at such an early age or even cause them to think that they are superstars because they get more playing time. If they have talent they will continue to play hockey at the other levels. If they do not they will drop out on their own or practise until they are good enough.

It is my hope that the North Shore Minor Hockey League will reconsider their actions and the far-reaching effects it will have on the little hockey players. I do not believe for a minute that Terrace Bay and Schreiber parents will take this sitting down. The executives, convenors, coaches and referees are trying to teach physical skills, team play and good sportsmanship in an atmosphere of enjoyment and from what I have seen they have been very successful.

Don't blow it North Shore Minor Hockey League.

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poet's corner

"JANUARY"

Through January's blinding snow
with frosty breath I puff and blow,
plodding wearily, while children cheerily
roll in it, play in it, loving it dearly!

Make a fort or slide on sleds
covered all over from feet to heads
they bring back a time so long ago
when I too used to love the snow.

Now I'm older, blood is thin
cold makes me shiver, I'll stay in
peeking through my window pane
waiting for the Spring again.

Now in years, my dears, it's getting late
I'm off to Florida, the Sunshine State,
where snow birds gather all winter long
and life is just one happy song!

Author Unknown

Arthur Black

Whimpering about winter



I know it doesn't do a lick of good to talk about it. Only makes it worse. Best thing you can do is change the subject. Talk about something else entirely. Chat about the pitfalls of running a pineapple plantation, say ... or the most effective leg-holds when wrestling pit-alligators.

Talking about anything beats talking about ... about ... you know. The thing that we're all thinking about.
Winter.

There. I said it and I'm glad I said it. Because so far it has been the crummiest, bushwhackingest, earlobe-numbing and toe-tangling winter in many a year.

Ontario either. Down in Florida, oranges were falling off the trees and shattering like light-bulbs last month. Prince Edward Island got all but blown-out into the middle of the North Atlantic.

And we won't even know how badly folks out on the prairies had it until things thaw out in April or May.

For most North Americans it was the coldest Christmas and New Years holiday in living memory. Snowfall and low temperature records have been falling like frozen flies all over the map. And the worst of it is ... it's not over yet! Winter, I mean. We still have the months of February and March to get through.

And there are no more treacherous months on the Julian calendar.

Well, okay, if I'm going to talk about winter, the least I can do is bring good news. And I've got some. It comes from Kenneth Hare. He's a chap who has just completed an extensive weather study for the federal and the Ontario governments.

According to the Hare Report, we frost-bitten Canucks won't have to put up with this nonsense forever. Relief - a.k.a. warm winter weather - is definitely, incontestably and absolutely on the way.

Mister Hare says: "We're going to see fewer and fewer winters like this one, and more like last year."

Ah yes ... remember last year's winter? Practically tropical compared to what we've been through this year.

Mister Hare says, eventually, the mean temperature right across Canada is going to rise about 5 degrees Celsius. That doesn't sound like much ... but in fact it's more than enough to radically alter weather patterns and growing seasons all over the North American continent.

So how about that? According to an expert - a man who should know - things are warming up around here!

That's the good news.

The ... less-good news is that most of us, hunkered around this copy of this newspaper, won't

live to see it.

Mister Hare reckons that this warming trend will be a *fait accompli* by approximately the year 2050.

Or, sixty-six years from now.

I don't know what that means for you, but it means that I'll be 106 years old before I can go out looking for my Christmas tree dressed in Bermuda shorts.

Aw heck ... I can't leave you stranded in mid-winter with a depressing statistic like that.

Here's a pick-me-up for you: The Vernal Equinox begins on March 21st.

Or, counting from February the first ... exactly 1200 hours.

Vernal Equinox? That's the first day of Spring.

Hang on folks. We can make it.