

Terrace Bay
Schreiber

News

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The eleventh hour

By David Carswell

As I sit here facing yet another deadline, I go through my weekly ritual of attempting to concoct some great words of wisdom to be included in this week's editorial. As usual, the closer to deadline I get, the bigger the blank I draw.

As I look down at an empty piece of paper and my hands hover above the ominous keys of my trusty electric typewriter, a multitude of topics flash through my mind; the coming election (no, it's too early and I'm still not well enough informed); the weather (no, basically everyone in the area has been here longer than me and they are, if not used to, at least able to put up with the local weather); the new mine opening in Schreiber (no, too newsy, I'll run a regular story on that); Christmas (no, I already did that one)... well, you get the idea.

So I just sit and think. And think. And think. Why is it that I go through this every week? Why should it be so difficult to write a simple weekly opinion? Why am I bothering you with these questions? Somewhere out there in the real world, outside of the walls of my grey and white office lies a story to be told.

So, I just sit and think. There are times I wish that I had Helene Ballard's sense of the appropriate, or Arthur Black's sense of humour or even his sense of direction. But, alas I only have my trusty typewriter and my overused and dog-eared dictionary and an occasional flash of semi-brilliance that seems to come to me from parts unknown after ingesting much too much coffee (black and strong, as most of the waitresses in Terrace Bay could tell you).

So I just sit and think. All the while, writing and re-writing different stories in my head, while answering a phone that never seems to stop ringing. (If Mr. Bell were alive today, would I have some nasty words for him!) Someday, maybe someone will explain to me how a person, like me, who studied radio and television broadcasting in college, ended up with such an avid interest in spending countless hours, sitting at a typewriter, trying to come up with copy for a newspaper. Maybe if I had spent more time at my studies, rather than spending every spare minute running the student newspaper, I might be competing with the likes of Jim Fawcett and Wendy Watson. Oh well, I don't think it would be quite the same if I didn't have to face deadlines every week. Come to think of it, I kind of enjoy the challenge of it, even if I can't seem to come up with a topic for this week's editorial.

So, I just sit and think. Well maybe I'll just write down whatever comes to mind, and start worrying about next week. Until then, I'll just sit and think.



Editor's Quote Book

Heaven is blessed with perfect rest but the blessing of earth is toil.

Henry Van Dyke

Arthur Black

Revere Failure, Book Suggests



The subject for discussion today is failure, as exemplified in hoary old axioms like: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again"; and "Winners never quit, while quitters never win"; also "Defeat Does Not Rest Lightly On These Shoulders."

That final quote is taken from the dressing room wall of the Toronto Maple Leafs, who last season, in a hockey league of 21 teams, managed to finish 21st.

Which reminds us that all bromides should be taken with a grain of salt.

My favourite observation concerning failure comes from a wag by the name of Bill Vaughan, who expresses his philosophy thusly: "In the game of life it's a good idea to have a few early losses, which relieves you of the pressure of trying to maintain an undefeated season."

My sentiments exactly. The strain of being perfect all the time is just too damned hard on a body -- which explains why most of us learn to abandon all hope of a No-Hitter in the very early innings of Life.

The problem with failure is that it...

Toronto Maple Leafs. You put together a string of six or eight screw-ups in a row and you get to thinking that maybe this is the way the rest of your life is going to go -- a drunken meander from disaster to disaster.

Is that the way you've been feeling about yourself of late? Well take heart. Doctor Black has just the nostrum for that kind of negative thinking. It's an antitoxin in the form of a paperback called *The Book of Failures*. As the editor Stephen Pile explains in the preface: "Success is overrated. Everyone craves it despite daily proof that man's real genius lies in quite the opposite direction. Incompetence is what we are good at -- it is the quality that marks us off from animals and we should learn to revere it."

Well, 'revere', I dunno... but this book will at least help you to laugh at mankind's uncanny knack of botching everything he turns his thumbs to. The book will also make you feel lots better about your own mundane foulups. You will learn that in the crap game called Life you are a fringe player at best. Lots of folks have

messed up 'way worse than you.

Take the World's Noisiest Burglar for instance. He was a Frenchman who, in 1933, attempted to rob the home of a Parisian antique dealer. The burglar (who gets full marks for flair) attempted the job while dressed in a suit of fifteenth century armour. Awakened by an ominous clanking, the homeowner espied a suit of armour ascending his stairs. He pushed it over, dropped a chest of drawers across the recumbent figure and summoned the gendarmes. The police were...curious. "Why the suit of armour?" they asked the suit of armour. A thin voice from deep inside explained "I thought it would frighten him."

It didn't. What's more, the weight of the chest of drawers put a serious crimp in the breastplate so that the burglar had to spend another 24 hours inside, during which time he had to be fed through the visor.

From suits of armour to chariots of tin: did you have trouble passing your driver's test? Then take comfort from the sad tale of Miriam Hargrave of Wakefield, Yorkshire. Mrs.

Hargrave is the not-so-proud holder of the World Record for Driving Test Failures. Between 1962 and 1970, Mrs. Hargrave took two hundred and twelve individual driving lessons. During that period she also tried her Driver's Test. Thirty-nine times. On the third of August, 1970, Mrs. Hargrave tried for the 40th time and -- to the dismay of fellow motorists and the delight of Wakefield Body Shop owners -- passed.

One final story, also in the automotive vein. We all know too well that winter is on the way and we all know even better that some frigid morning this winter we are going to struggle out to our car, fumble the key into the door lock and....

Nothing. The key is not going to budge. Frozen lock.

Well, things could be worse. Ask Peter Rowlands, the World's Least Successful Car Lock Defroster. One winter morning back in 1979 Mister Rowlands, who lives in Lancaster, England, found himself faced with a frozen car door lock. Since they don't sell much lock de-icer in Lancaster, Mister Rowlands was thrown on his

own resources. He decided that he would blow some warm air into the lock with his mouth.

We all know what happened to Mister Rowlands.

The next passer-by saw a man kneeling inexplicably in the snow beside a car, seemingly...kissing...the door lock.

"Are you alright?" inquired the passer-by.

"Alra? Igmmllptk vrok nngyrk!" explained Mister Rowlands. The passer-by fled.

Luckily, Mister Rowland's predicament only lasted about 20 minutes. By that time his hot breath had warmed the lock sufficiently to free his lips.

All I can say is Peter Rowlands is fortunate he didn't try that trick on a northern Ontario winter morning.

He would have been necking with that car door 'til April.

The Book of Failures compiled by Stephen Pile, published by E.P. Dutton, \$4.95..