

# Terrace Bay Schreiber News

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## Editorial

### CP off the tracks

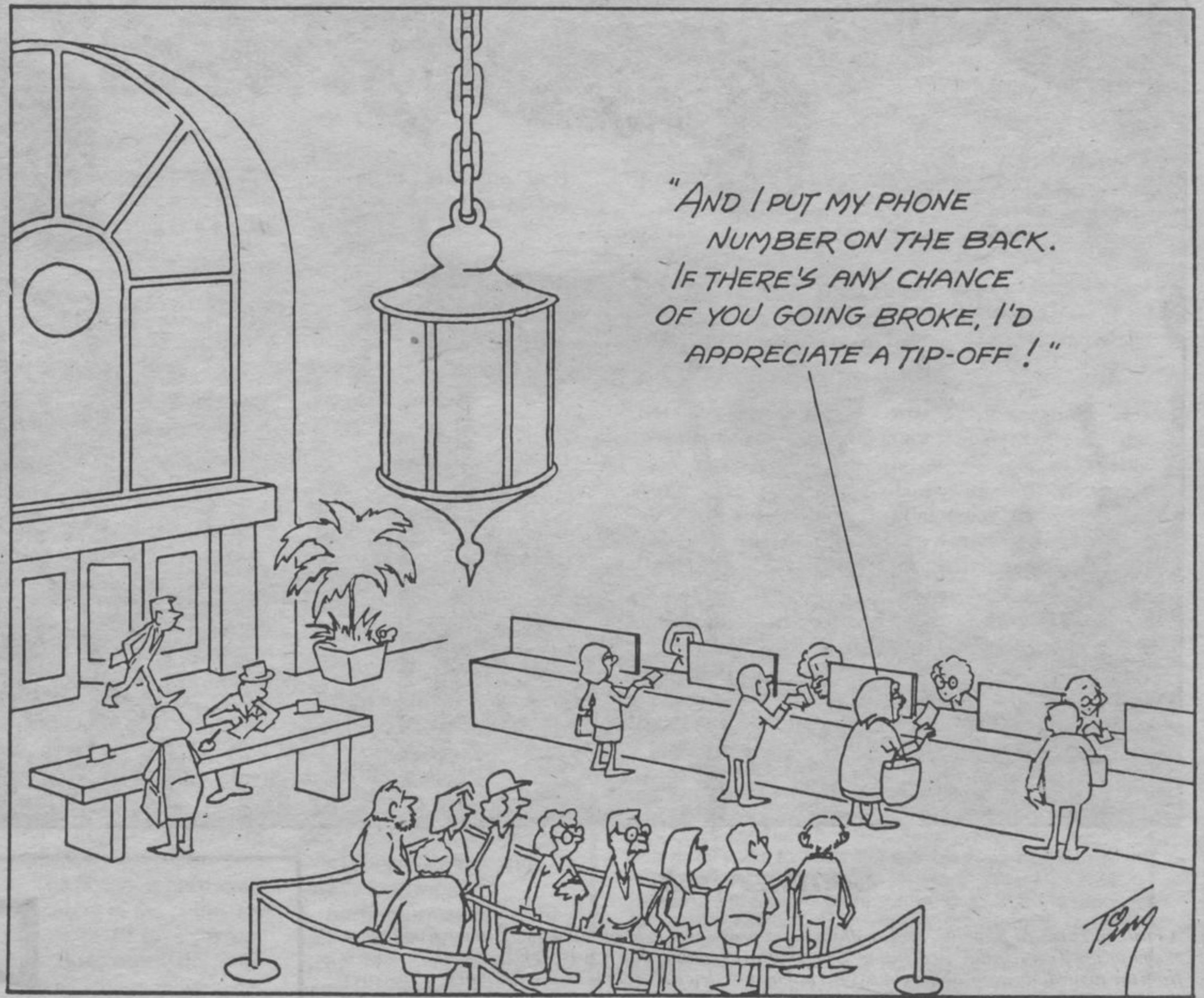
Let's face it — most of the time politicians don't seem to know what they are talking about. But, incredible though it may seem, one local legislator does have a good idea and we should all pay attention to him, especially Canadian Pacific Rail.

Cochrane-Superior Member of Parliament Keith Penner, who represents the Terrace Bay-Schreiber area in the House of Commons has repeatedly asked CP Rail to reconsider their decision to cancel rail passes for some CP pensioners.

Late last year CP decided to replace the free passes with a health care package. Penner has pointed out that the package is fine for some pensioners but it is more or less superfluous for those living in Ontario.

It may be true that some pensioners prefer the health package, but there are at least 50 in the Schreiber area who would rather have their passes back, as that is how many pensioners in that town signed a recent petition.

CP seems to feel that their decision was the right one. For the majority that may be true, but what about those few here and there who are now left out? Wouldn't it be possible to offer these pensioners a choice between the health care package and the rail passes? Here's hoping that CP at least considers this suggestion in the near future.



## Conrad Felber

Hello, everyone. Glad to see you could make it. Sorry I wasn't with you last week, but you know how these things happen. Anyway, I have some good news for you (or bad news, depending on how you take it). I'm here to stay! Yes, I have decided to stay on as editor of this here newspaper, at least for a year or two.

I am looking forward to meeting more of you readers over the next few months, and I hope to make this publication something to really look forward to, each and every week.

All of that aside, I would like to get to this week's column. Some of you may still be wondering what makes me tick. Well, to help you form some sort of opinion on yours truly, I've decided to run some of my

favourite quotations, as collecting famous (and not-so-famous) quotes is a hobby of mine. I would just like to add that I didn't select these passages at random. I happen to agree with all 19. Got that? Good. Let's begin.

"My trade is to say what I think." (Voltaire)

"Be uncomfortable; be sand, not oil, in the machinery of the world." (Gunter Eich)

"To be nobody-but-myself — in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else — means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight, and never stop fighting." (E.E. Cummings)

"We have a natural right to make use of our pens ... at our peril, risk

and hazard." (Voltaire)

"Possunt quia posse videntur (They can because they think they can)." (Virgil)

"Men are but children of a larger growth." (John Dryden)

"You see before you a child who never grew up." (Harlan Ellison)

"I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork." (Peter De Vries)

"(A writer) is engaged in the long process of putting his whole life on paper. He is on a journey and he is reporting in: 'This is where I think I am and this is what this place looks like today.'" (Irwin Shaw)

"It vaguely bothers me to be dismissed as insignificant. I think of myself as writing in metaphor, (but

I suppose it bothers me to be dismissed as an inconsequential, amusing little fellow who affects a curmudgeonly air." (Andy Rooney)

"The personal essay ... is most assuredly a valid literary form." (J. Michael Straczynski, *Writers Digest Magazine*)

"It is not best that we should all think alike; it is difference of opinion which makes horse races." (Mark Twain)

"To be begin with ... tall people get me very cranky. Because of their insecurity at their yeti-like monstrosity, they have long engaged in a dire conspiracy to inconvenience those of us who are normal height, that is, five foot five or under." (Harlan Ellison)



"I thought I could — make a difference." (Cerebus)

"All he'd wanted were the same answers the rest of us want: Where do I come from? Where am I going? How long have I got?" (Harrison Ford in *Blade Runner*)

"I wonder where that fish did go?" (Monty Python, *The Meaning of Life*)

"And we all know just how painful that can be." (David Letterman)

"So, like, g'day." (The McKenzie Brothers)

## Arthur Black

### A "ghost town" that fought and won

One of the saddest aspects of Canadian life is our ghost towns.

You see them all over the country — in the Yukon, on the prairies, in the Maritimes, and all across Northern Ontario.

They all look like variations on the same blues theme — abandoned, swaybacked buildings with no glass in the windows, and doors off their hinges. Grey wood and mouldering bricks. Weeds taking over everywhere.

Every ghost town I've ever seen suffered from a curse that killed it in the end. They were all one-industry towns. Some sprang up because of a gold field nearby; others were built around iron or asbestos or copper deposits.

A lot of ghost towns owed their existence to a rich timber stand. But in every case, when the ore played out or the trees got too scrawny to cut, it was the kiss of death for the community. Soon, some of the merchants would feature "going out of

business" specials. Then, hand-lettered "for sale" signs would sprout on a lot of front lawns.

One ghost town coming up. Well, what's a town supposed to do when the main payroll breaks camp in search of greener pastures? It's pretty well got to die, doesn't it?

Not if Chemainus is any indication. Chemainus is a tiny logging town on the east coast of Vancouver Island. Correction: was a tiny logging town. The main reason 4,000 people called Chemainus home was the MacMillan Bloedel sawmill that had operated there for the better part of the 20th century. In the late seventies, officials announced the plant would be closing. When the sawmill shut down, one out of every three workers in Chemainus would be drawing pogy.

In any other town, that would be about the right time to put your house on the market and start checking the Help Wanted column in out-of-town newspapers — but they do things dif-

ferently in Chemainus. The town took a vote, and decided not to die. The council voted instead to spend a quarter of a million dollars on downtown revitalization. But how do you revitalize the core of a logging town that's just had its guts ripped out? With imagination. What they did was transform Chemainus into the largest outdoor art gallery in the country.

They commissioned artists from across the province to come to Chemainus and paint murals — huge ones — on the sides of buildings in the downtown area. Not just any murals. They had to be strictly historical, depicting scenes from the town's past. One that decorates the side of a coffee shop is called *Steam Donkey At Work*. It shows a logging operation as it was done a hundred years ago.

Another mural depicts a Cowichan chief standing on a hill watching an 18th century ship drop anchor in Chemainus harbor.

Still another giant painting shows the interior of a long-vanished Chemainus general store. The artists worked from photographs to be sure they got the details right.

In all, 16 murals now brighten the formerly drab downtown area of Chemainus. There are other changes, too — new sidewalks and lots of flowerboxes and rustic, wood-carved signs abound.

Did it work? Did out of towners come to see the logging town that wouldn't lie down and die?

Only 175,000 of them over the past three years. The story of Chemainus caught the public's fancy. Tourists from as far away as California and New Mexico have flocked to the town, toting their cameras — and more significantly, their wallets. The cash infusion has spawned new businesses. Chemainus now has a Victorian mall, ice cream stands, a tea room, a pedicab service and four art galleries.

The murals have put Chemainus on the map — and not just a map of

British Columbia. At an international competition in New York two years ago, Chemainus walked away with an award for Best Downtown Revitalization.

Chemainus isn't sitting on its laurels... or its murals. Last summer town craftsmen built and launched a 92-foot Brigantine called *The Spirit of Chemainus*. Next summer she'll ply a route between Chemainus and the Expo site in Vancouver, plugging tourism — and Chemainus.

MacMillan Bloedel contributed a final twist of ironic economics. Right in the middle of the town's tourism boom, the company re-opened a scaled-down version of the Chemainus sawmill... the one that caused the town's transformation in the first place.

Chemainus could have sneered, but instead, they showed class. And why not? It meant another 100 jobs, for one thing.

And besides, as they'd learned, it never hurts to have an extra industry in town.