

**Terrace Bay  
Schreiber**

# News

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## Anti-crime time

In just a few days, Crime Prevention Week will begin. It is to be held this year from Nov. 2 to 8. The week started a little ahead of time locally, with the recent announcement by the Solicitor General of Canada that one of his annual Crime Prevention Awards is going this year to the Terrace Bay Police Force. Congratulations to them.

But the award should not overshadow the purpose of Crime Prevention Week. Of course, crime prevention should be on everybody's mind throughout the year, but at least this special week gives police in the country a chance to spotlight their own anti-crime programs.

Area residents have a lot to choose from, including the Terrace Bay Block Parent program, Operation Provident, Operation Identification, Bike ID, and also Neighbourhood Watch, now starting up in Terrace Bay. The Schreiber detachment of the OPP also has some of these programs.

Both police forces should receive our support in their quest to prevent crime in the area, and both should also receive our thanks for what they have done already.



## Close To The Edge

By Conrad Felber

It's outrageous! What is outrageous, you ask? Well, a couple of things, starting off with the recent election in British Columbia.

First, this allegorical preface: several weeks ago, on David Letterman's *Late Night* TV talk show, Dave was doing one of his regular lame (yet, paradoxically, still amusing) comedy routines when he turned to musical director Paul Shaffer and said "This is all style, and no substance!"

True, that's a trivial problem for a little comedy "bit" on a TV show. (By the way, in a related outrage, why does the Detroit NBC affiliate we get here insist on broadcasting *Late Night* at one in the morning when everybody else on the continent gets to see it at 12:30 a.m.??!?)

But (to get back on track), when

a politician—a man (or woman) at the peak of power in our land—is also all style and no substance, that's regrettable. No, it's more than that...it's terrible. Thing is, the majority of electors in B.C. recently put back into office a party led by a man, Bill Vander Zalm, who seemed to be proud of his lack of substance and overabundance of so-called "style." I find this absolutely appalling.

You must now be wondering why you should worry about any of this, right? Well, we are not all that far away from a provincial election ourselves, and I just hope we Ontario electors show a little more common sense and plain intelligence compared to those blind fools in B.C. when it comes time for us to put our "X" on the ballot. As for B.C., the people there will soon get what they deserve.

Moving on now, I have a warning. If you should happen to drive to Thunder Bay for some reason, I would suggest that you do not park at any street parking meter. I found that out the hard way.

You see, I went to Thunder Bay last week myself, and parked on the street in front of a meter. Then I got out, plunked in my money to put two hours worth on the thing, and then went off to do my business. Unfortunately, I forgot to take something with me from my car, so I returned just a few minutes later and, lo and behold, there was a "98&7\*%\$ parking ticket stuck to my windshield!!

I could hardly believe my eyes. I checked and re-checked (and even re-re-checked) the meter to make sure I was parked in the right spot (I was) and that there was still time on the

meter (there was). But what could I do? The meter "officer" (more like "police academy rejectee") was nowhere to be seen or found, so I could hardly dispute the ticket, yet I still had to pay the annoying \$3 fine in order to avoid a court appearance.

But then, upon returning to good ol' Terrace Bay (where, thank the Big Guy Upstairs, we don't HAVE any stoopid parking meters), I thought about what had happened. Suddenly the clever conspiracy dawned on me...in Thunder Bay, they give you a parking ticket whether you deserve one or not! It's just a money-making scheme! If you park at an expired meter, then the fine is that much more. Makes sense, eh? If not, how else would you explain the fine that I got? Human error? Nah. Can't be! One final note, and not one of



outrage either...a few of you faithful readers may have noticed that the weekly edition of "Bits and Bites" is not to be found in this issue. That's because its author, Helene Ballard, is currently being treated at McCausland Hospital. We miss her column as much as you all do, so here's a public "Get Well" to her.

So much for my own "bits" and "bites" this week! As Helene might say...cheerio!

## Black N' White

## Encountering the law

"The Law is a hard, queer thing. I do not understand it."

So spoke Poundmaker, a Cree chieftain who scrapped with The Royal North West Mounted Police on the prairies about a century ago -- and lost. Poundmaker got three years in the slammer for his actions, served his time and died a free man -- though somewhat bewildered by his brush with White Man's law.

Well, he's not alone. A lot of people of various pigmentations and political persuasions have been bemused, befuddled and totally buffaloeed by the arcane workings of the legal system. I don't mean to impugn the full majesty of jurisprudence or anything, but...well, let's face it -- the business of making laws has been a hit and miss affair over the years and our lawmakers have pulled some fairly colossal boners in the process.

Dick Hyman knows that better than most mortals. He's a newspaper columnist and magazine writer who has made a career of tracking down and ferreting out what he calls "bonehead

legislation". For twenty-two years he produced a syndicated feature called "It's The Law". Now he's culled the best of the worst and put them together in a book called *The Columbus Chicken Stache*. The book is a compilation of the more asinine laws, regulations, ordinances and rules that are still -- unaccountably -- on the books of one jurisdiction or another. The title of the book is a case in point. It refers to the fact that it is an offense against the Municipal Code of Columbus, Georgia to let a chicken's head dangle within the city limits. Flouters of this particular law face a \$25.00 fine and no doubt, a stern lecture from the judge.

But Columbus has no corner on whacky laws pertaining to animals. In Little Rock, Arkansas, it is forbidden for dogs to bark after 6 p.m., while in California, house cats with itchy paws are subject to trespassing charges if they decide to hop the fence. Meanwhile, Californians of the human variety are committing a misdemeanor if they are caught "detaining homing pigeons".

All of which pales beside the Great Monkey Trial of South Bend, Indiana in which a monkey named George was tried -- and convicted -- of smoking a cigarette in public. The simian felon was fined \$25.00 and court costs.

Not all American wildlife suffers under the yoke of Law. Now you take ducks. They enjoy the portection of a Federal Regulation that makes it illegal for ducks to be shot -- by any U.S. Postmaster.

California is even more legislatively protective of its creatures great and small -- especially small. Did you know that, thanks to a law still on the California books it is technically illegal to set a mousetrap in that state, unless you have a hunting licence?

Stands to reason, I guess -- California is the home of Mickey, Minnie and all those other little cartoon rodents.

For a country that bills itself as "the home of the free" the U.S. certainly has a lot of strange "it is illegal to" laws. If you live in Bwxley, Ohio IT IS ILLEGAL to install slot machines in your outhouse.

If you live in Spokane, Washington IT IS ILLEGAL to sell lollipops.

If you live in Louisiana IT IS ILLEGAL to gargle in public.

If you live in Detroit IT IS ILLEGAL to fall asleep in your own bathtub.

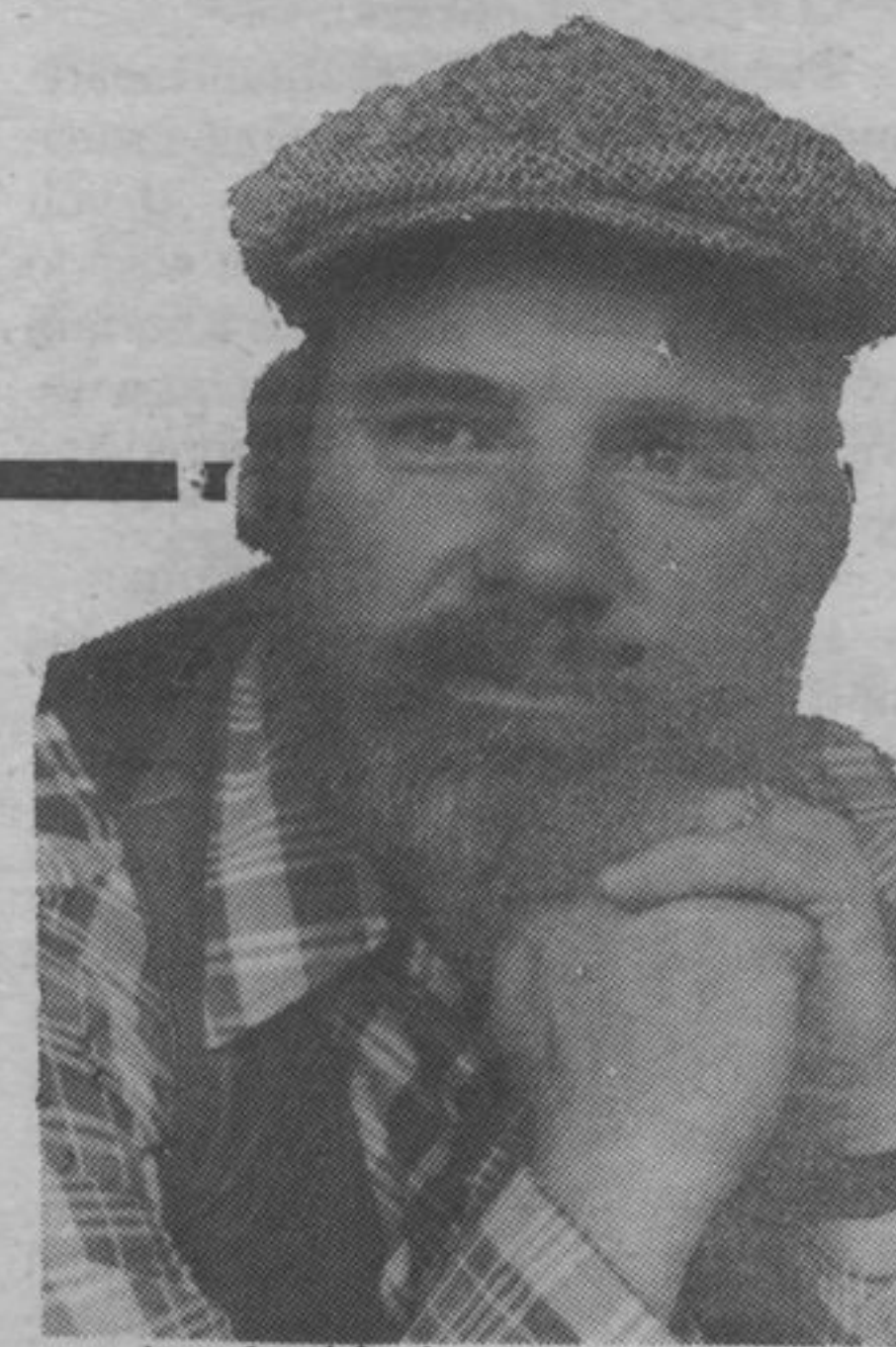
If you live in West Virginia IT IS ILLEGAL to sneeze on a train.

There is also a category of what I would call "Mindbender" legislation -- this for instance, from Kansas: "When two trains approach each other at a crossing, both shall come to a full stop and neither shall start up again until the other has gone."

Well, if Casey Jones had done that, he never would have had his problem...

By the way, if you're feeling all smug and superior about the stupid laws Americans still have on their books -- don't. We're just getting to the Canadian section, where you will discover:

- that in Vancouver no one may operate a tricycle at speeds in excess of ten miles per hour.
- that all bicycle riders in Edmonton



must signal with the arm before making a turn -- though said riders must keep both hands on the handlebars at all times.

- that under an anti-noise bylaw, Ottawa forbids bees to buzz within city limits.

- that it is against the law to operate camels on the roads of British Columbia.

There is a character in the Dickens novel *Oliver Twist* named Mister Bumble, who -- like the rest of us -- finds himself blindsided one day by the workings of the law. Mister Bumble picks himself up, slaps hit hat against his pantleg and sniffs: "...the law is a ass, a idiot."

Mister Bumble was pompous and foolish and henpecked and no hell at grammar...but when it came to understanding Law, I think even Poundmaker would admit the man spoke with an unforked tongue.