

Editorial Page

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War amps getting message across

This fall, The War Amps is sending along a new message with its return address labels. The message, "Take a Look at us Now!", urges Canadians to take a second look at the 68-year-old charity to see how it has grown to meet new challenges and the ever-increasing needs of Canadian amputees.

The Association has initiated more than a dozen new programs over the last ten years to meet these demands.

Programs such as PLAYSAFE, offering accident prevention films and literature as well as Matching Mothers, a program dedicated to bringing families together with amputee children for support and encouragement, are two of the Association's most recent. And the list goes on.

Included with the complimentary return address labels (sent as a special thank-you to donors), is more information on these and other programs. Still, nothing can better illustrate what The War Amps is doing for Canadians than an amputee who has actually been involved in the various programs.

Michael, 13, is a member of The War Amps Child Amputee (CHAMP) Program. In a speech he wrote for a public speaking contest at school, Michael, who was born missing his left leg below the knee, describes the CHAMP Program and what it's like to be a Champ:

"CHAMP helps many amputees across Canada, financially and socially. The CHAMP Program holds five regional seminars every year. There are discussions on social problems, job choices and thoughts and concerns of the parent. These discussions teach the parent and amputee child how to cope with a disability.



"Financially, CHAMP pays for artificial limbs and supplies that provincial governments may not pay for. Where do they get the money? The War Amps send you key tags and address labels. They do not set a specific price; you simply give a donation based on what you feel is right. This money helps them support amputees.

"Champ cannot take away our problems, but they can help us to deal with them. They tell us: 'The aim of our program is to teach amputees to compete, not against other amputees or against other people, but against nature, the ski hill, or against themselves.'"

'Letters to the editor' are very important to the readership and to the community which the newspaper serves.

The letters act as a forum for discussion, a means to inform the public or authorities of a concern, or sometimes they can provide a great topic of conversation over the fence or kitchen table.

They also provide ideas and suggestions for and criticisms about local issues.

They can be funny, angry, sad, or a little of everything. Write one today, sign your name, and help provide a service to all. Write: Box 579, Terrace Bay, Ont. P0T 2W0

Iz ovr Canadean Langwaje owtdated?

What would you do if you picked up your mail one day and opened a letter which began:

"Owr organizasion iz the internasional grupement for the study, the development and the difuzesion ov the Canadean langwaje. Yu ar urjed tu join us eemedeatly."

You'd do the same thing I did - shake your head, rub your eyes, sniff the mug to make sure terrorists haven't been slipping magic mushrooms into your Nescafe - and read on.

And this letter does go on - for one complete and almost indecipherable typewritten page.

It's from a Toronto-based group that calls itself The Internasional Union for the Canadean Langwaje. Their goal is not a modest one - they propose to deposit the language you and I speak on the scrap heap of history.

Why? Because English is archaic, that's why - or, as the newsletter puts it: "eemensely inefisient, owtdated. . . faalur-cawzing and (ironic, this) often repulsiv".

Well, to be fair, the folks at

I.U.C.L. do have a bit of a point. English is confusing, irrational and, at times, astoundingly illogical.

Any language that can find seven different ways to pronounce the virtually unpronounceable suffix "o-u-g-h" (through, thorough, bough, cough, rough, hough and hiccough) is a language that obviously wasn't designed by Swiss watchmakers.

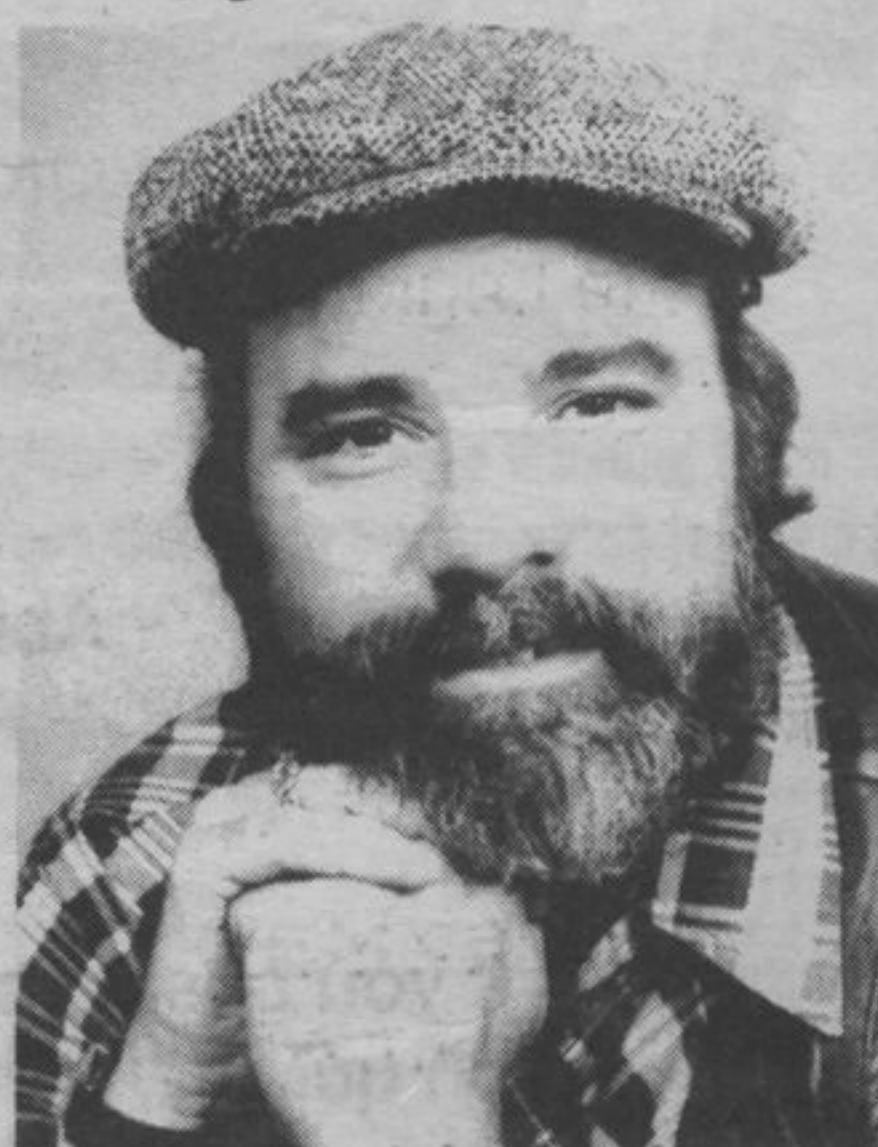
The I.U.C.L.ers propose a number of improvements to the language - the junking of all silent letters for one thing. Thus, "thumb" becomes "thum" and "doubt" would be written as "dowt".

They also suggest elimination of the letter "Q", claiming that we can do quite - sorry, that should be "kwite" - nicely without it.

Which would lead, I suppose, to sentences like: "How kwaint to see the Kween kewing up to buy a hi-kwality kwilt from Kwebec Sity."

But the Internasional Union for the Canadean Langwaje isn't content to merely tinker with a few letters. They have nothing less

than a major linguistic overhaul in mind. They're calling for the removal of all conjugational endings, which would give us phrases like "He see", "She go", "The dog bark".



Arthur Black

Also, they figure we'll need a "necessity" verb to replace all those clumsy and convoluted English "should-ought-need" words.

The I.U.C.L.'s solution? A

brand new verb - "tu must". In the new Canadean Langwaje, "She had to study" would be translated "She had musted tu study".

Confusing? You ain't seen nothin' yet. The folks at I.U.C.L. are convinced that, as they put it, "Victory iz inevitabel in this lingwistic endeavor" and they urge you, me and everybody else with a tongue in their head, to start speaking the new "Canadean Langwaje". . . "wich iz eezy tu lern and tu uze becawz ov its rijid roots".

Well, as someone who, in his formative years was compelled to crawl through a labyrinthine maze of intransitive verbs, subjunctive clauses and dangling gerunds without ever figuring out what the hell half of it meant, I have to confess I feel a sneaky attraction to the idea of a stripped down, streamlined, sensible version of English.

Imagine never having to wonder if I've put the right number of "c"s and "r"s in "occurred". Just fancy never having to worry about why the words "I", "aye", "ay" and "eye" all have precisely the same

pronunciation.

The I.U.C.L.'s ideas make solid common sense, I guess, but you know what? I'd miss that ramshackle, teetering tower of babble we call English. I love its unpredictability. I delight in its slatternly habit of going for a roll in the hay with any tongue or slang or jargon that comes along. Our English isn't "English" - it's Saxon/Norse/Norman/French/Latin/Greek and just about every other language you care to name. That's how we picked up half our words!

Tobacco? A Caribbean word. Schooner? Dutch. Chocolate? That's Aztec. Ketchup is Chinese and alcohol is Arabic.

English is like a giant Velcro hairball that just rolls along, picking up words like lint. Words such as - well, "Velcro" - something that didn't exist in any language 20 years ago.

So, to the folks at I.U.C.L., I guess it's thanks, but no thanks. Not interested in the new Canadean Langwaje. I'm quite fond of the old one.

But, hey, just the same. . . Gud luk, eh?