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No questions about it, winter is definitely here

In tropical climates the question might be, "Hot enough for ya?" In Toronto it could be, "Enough traffic for ya?" Or, in colder weather zones the question would probably be, "Cold enough for ya?"

But recently, the local question has to be, "Enough snow for ya?"

The answer has to be positive. With snow banks looming in height at seven feet or more, some people are saying they've never seen so much snow fall in such a short period of time.

A substantial number of people are hiring front end loaders to plow their driveways. And no wonder. When the wind and snowfall can drop a good two to three feet of snow overnight, and snowbanks are so high you can't throw the snow over them, there's not much else you can do.

People with snowblowers are even being challenged by the size of the snowbanks and stores can't keep enough shovels in stock.

Mother nature is definitely flexing her muscles.

I wonder, does the town council have a plan to link the town together with a series of tunnels chipped through the snow. It may eventually come to that.

On a more serious note, all the snow certainly makes driving conditions more hazardous. When the front of your car is on the roadway before you can see if there's any traffic coming in either direction, it's best to drive slowly.

In an attempt to start moving, cars spin their tires and this creates extremely slick ice, especially at intersections, where cars are stopped and then have to move. The resulting road conditions make it like stopping your car on a hockey rink. So remember to brake early and always expect ice, that way you'll be ready for it if there is some.

Shovelling snow is extremely strenuous. If you don't have a snowblower, or know someone who does, and are facing up to the task of manually moving snow off your driveway, take it easy. Don't feel you have to do it all at once. Maybe start by clearing a small path for your car, and at a later point, widen the driveway. Your heart will thank you for it.



What's the difference between a snorer and a chain saw?

Okay, 'fess up now -- do you snore?

Naw, me neither - although I'll bet, like me, you're saddled with a companion who insists to the edge of hysteria that sharing a mattress with you is like bedding down with a working chain saw.

It's an odd phenomenon. My own mother swore I snored. So did my brothers and sisters. Now Lynne takes up the same pathetic litaney. I'll be lying there in a sound, delicious sleep when suddenly my ribs are rattled by an elbow that would put Gordie Howe to shame.

"Turn over!" she'll growl. "You're snoring!"

No accounting for delusion, I guess.

Funny thing, snoring -- funny I mean, to those of us who have never suffered from it. Doctors explain somewhat grandly that it is caused by the vibration of the soft part of the palate, the roof of the mouth and the arch that sweeps down from this behind

the tonsils. when a snorer turns on his back, takes a mighty breath and unconsciously put these elements together, he creates a wind instrument that can shiver your timbers, rattle your windows and has caused many a baggy-eyed spouse to ponder the upside of divorce proceedings.

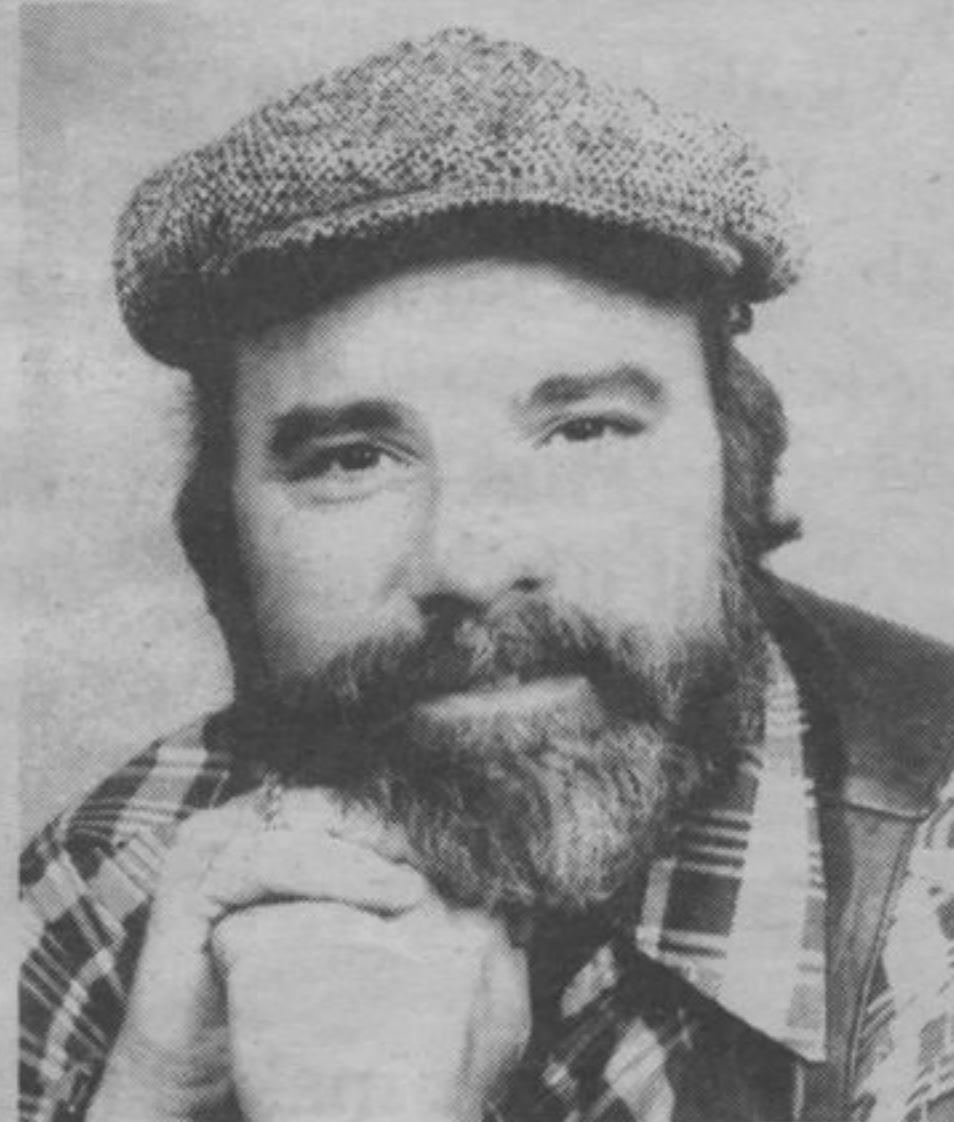
My medical dictionary says that snore can reach 69 decibels, which puts it just a shade under the noise made by a pneumatic drill.

My newspaper on the other hand, tells me that it's time to invest in a new medical dictionary. Mine's out of date.

It doesn't know about Mark Hebbard.

Mark's a chap that lives and works and sleeps in a cosy suburb of Richmond, British Columbia. He's surrounded by neighbours who enjoy two out of three of the aforementioned pastimes. They live and work there, but they don't sleep -- not when Mark Hebbard's sawing

logs. that's because Mark snores. Loudly. Louder in fact, than anyone else in the world. Hebbard is a senior systems analyst when he's awake. When he's asleep, he's the terror of his



Arthur Black

community. He snores so loud that neighbours have called the police. He snores so loud that he could have (but so far hasn't) been arrested for breaking the city noise by-law. He snores so

loud that his wife not only can't sleep in the same room with him -- she can't sleep in the same house.

Okay. So just how loud does Mark Hebbard snore?

Well, the Canadian Hearing Foundation sent Mark to the University of British Columbia to find out. Doctors and scientists wired him up, put a decibel meter over his head and turned out the lights.

Once he dropped off, Hebbard came in at constant noise level of 85 decibels, with several peaks of 90 decibels.

That's five decibels over the maximum permissible noise level under Vancouver law, and only a few decibels below a Black and Decker power saw, a Toro lawn mower at open throttle, or a Heavy Metal rock band in full scream.

Mrs. Hebbard says that she has suffered partial hearing loss. "You can imagine what a motorcycle blowing in your ear for 15 years would do," says her

husband. that doesn't surprise me. What does is the fact that there still is a Mrs. Hebbard. Some of Mark's ex-fishing buddies are less loyal. They still remember an overnight salmon fishing trip they took with Mark. Mark warned them of his condition and asked to be bunked with the heaviest snorers on the trip. "I got two of the heaviest snorers," he recalls, "but they couldn't sleep through my snoring. They had to sleep when they were out on the boat fishing."

The good news is, Mark may get asked to go fishing next year. He's just come through an operation that should correct his condition and give Mrs. Hebbard her first decent night's sleep in a decade and a half.

It gives you and me something, too -- something to say the next time you-know-who jabs us in the ribs for "allegedly" snoring. Just ask her how she'd like to spend a night in the sack with Mark Hebbard.