

Editorial Page

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Have a worry free and clean spring

The recent warm weather which we experienced last Easter Weekend seems to leave no doubt that spring has actually, and finally arrived.

After a month of snow melting a few inches here, and then another few inches falling immediately afterwards - which kept the snow level at basically the same height - the snow is finally starting to disappear.

Soon it will be summer and golf and baseball fanatics alike will be able to enjoy the great outdoors.

But until then, there are some precautions which should be taken.

Specifically, children playing around or on frozen water. For some reason, it seems youngsters are drawn to these areas which pose a danger.

The warm weather and melting snow should give parents cause for concern. Every year across Ontario and Canada, children invariably play on ice, and invariably, several fall through and die.

So parents, warn your children of the dangers involved in playing on frozen water. Surely there are other areas to have fun without being exposed to such a serious risk.

Something else which people can do to protect their loved ones is to wash them. Obviously I'm not talking about children - I'm talking about the lovers of cars.

With the abundance of salt embedded in our roads and highways, it can pose a serious threat to the bodies of cars.

During winter months, salt on a car may look terrible but poses little danger as long as it is dry. But once the warm weather hits that salt, watch out. It will start eating the metal away faster than your children polished off their Easter bunnies.

This may involve several washes every week. Although many of today's cars are made with galvanized steel and are not supposed to rust for five years or more, why take a chance with such an expensive possession. Just because you don't see any rust doesn't mean it's not there doing damage.

It usually starts underneath the paint, where you can't see it, and works its way out. So by the time you do see rust, it may be too late.

So for a safer and happier spring, keep your children away from frozen waters, and keep the salt off your car.



Letters to the Editor are always welcome. Please address your letter to:

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In order that we may verify authorship, please include your name and phone number.

Feel free to use this forum to express comments, appreciation, inform, criticize, or debate issues on anything of public interest.



Reviving a not-so-dead language

You can consider this column an ummmm. . . apologia, I suppose.

That's because a few weeks ago I was nattering away about something or other in this space and mentioned in passing that Latin was "after all, a dead language".

The obituary was premature.

Since then I have learned about the work of Abbot Carlo Egger and Lamberto Pigni. Abbot Egger lives and works in the Vatican while Signor Pigni toils in a tiny office in the Adriatic city of Recanati, but they share a common goal: to keep the classical language of Latin alive and breathing.

Even more than that -- they're doing their level best to Latinize the 20th century.

Abbot Egger heads up the Vatican's Latinitas Foundation. One of the chores he performs in that capacity is to read newspapers and render current events into the language of Cicero.

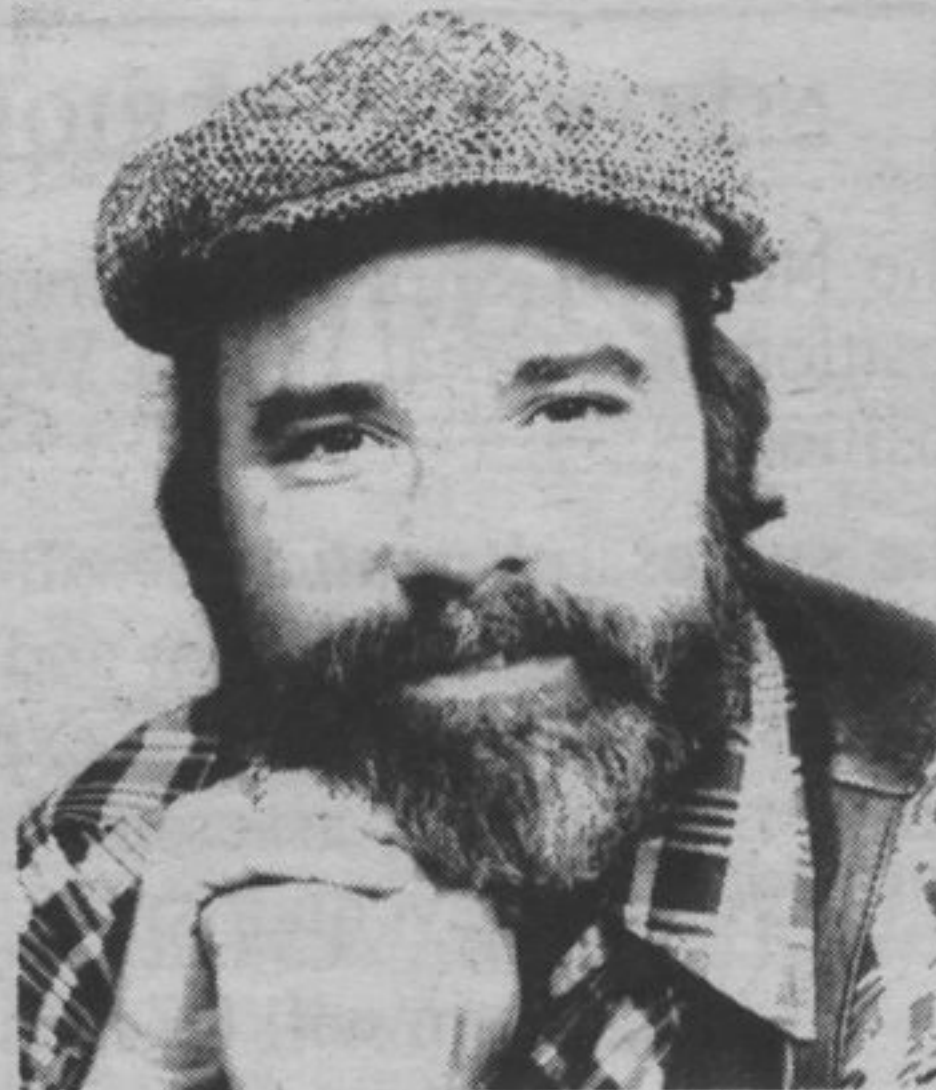
I mean, *really* current events. Remember the war in the Falklands? When Abbot Egger writes about that, it's "Bellum in Insulis Falclandicis". You thought Ben Johnson got tripped up by steroids? Nope, it was "usus agonisticus medicamenti stupefactivi".

Abbot Egger can get downright contemporary when he works at it. He's figured out what Nero would have said if he wanted to wager a few sesterces on his favourite horse in the third race at the Coliseum Racetrack. He'd have summoned his "relator pignore certantium".

That's Latin for "bookie".

It's fascinating to speculate on just what Nero or any other ancient Roman would make of Abbot Egger's news roundups. What would they think of the 20th century fashion craze for "bracae lintaeae caeruleae" -- which is to say "blue jeans"? How could they possibly comprehend "autocinetum pyrobolo dolose instructum" --

car bomb"? And you can only wonder how they would ever get a handle on "capacissima aeronavis Coreae Meridianae missilibus percussa ac praecepta deiecta" -- which is what Abbot



Arthur Black

Egger types into his word processor when he's describing the Soviet downing of that South Korean airliner.

At least that's what he types when his word processor hasn't

been neutered by a "fluoris electrici abruptio" -- a power blackout.

But it doesn't really matter how ancient Romans would react to the Abbot's work because he's not doing it for them. He's doing it for us. Abbot Egger is trying to convince you and I that not only is Latin not dead, it's alive and more than capable of handling anything the 20th century can throw at it.

That's why he's publishing the first volume of his Italian-Latin lexicon next month. "It is proof," says Abbot Egger, "that Latin can be used even today to discuss everything."

Lamberto Pigni agrees. He's hard at work describing 20th century experience in Latin terms as well. . . although in a slightly different context.

Signor Pigni has already turned out several tomes. Let's see now, there's *Snupius* and *Carolus Brunus* and of course *Michael Musculus*.

Or as we know them, Snoopy,

Charlie Brown and Mickey Mouse.

Lamberto Pigni publishes comic strips in Latin. "We do this to make the language loved," says Pigni simply.

Well, some folks love Latin I guess, though I've met a lot more who loathed it -- particularly high school students at the "sum, esse, phooey" stage of mastering the tongue. But love it or hate it, the one thing you can't do with Latin is ignore it. It's everywhere.

Suppose you journeyed by bus from Regina to Philadelphia via London, to enjoy a duo of minor celebrities with major egos debate the pros and cons of civic propaganda versus media innuendo in an arena, stadium or auditorium at 7 a.m. in a Saturday in August.

There are 47 words in that sentence. Twenty-one of them are pure Latin; almost all the others come from Latin roots.

Latin dead? that's some display of (ahem) rigor mortis.