

# Editorial Page

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## Hindsight insights

Where were you on December 13?

I, like many local people, found myself trapped in the midst of what can only be described as a "white-out" on Highway 11/17. Forced to travel to Thunder Bay that day in order to write an exam, I found myself an unwilling participant in a six-hour driving ordeal that left my knees knocking and my nerves frayed. And I was one of the lucky (if foolhardy) ones.

The highway was virtually strewn with abandoned cars, left to collect snow while their owners found more substantial shelter. Still others littered the ditches and snow banks, silent warnings of the fate that awaited unwary travellers.

It was terrifying.

Hours later, after I'd had a chance to gather my wits and to catch a few hours of sleep, a few things occurred to me:

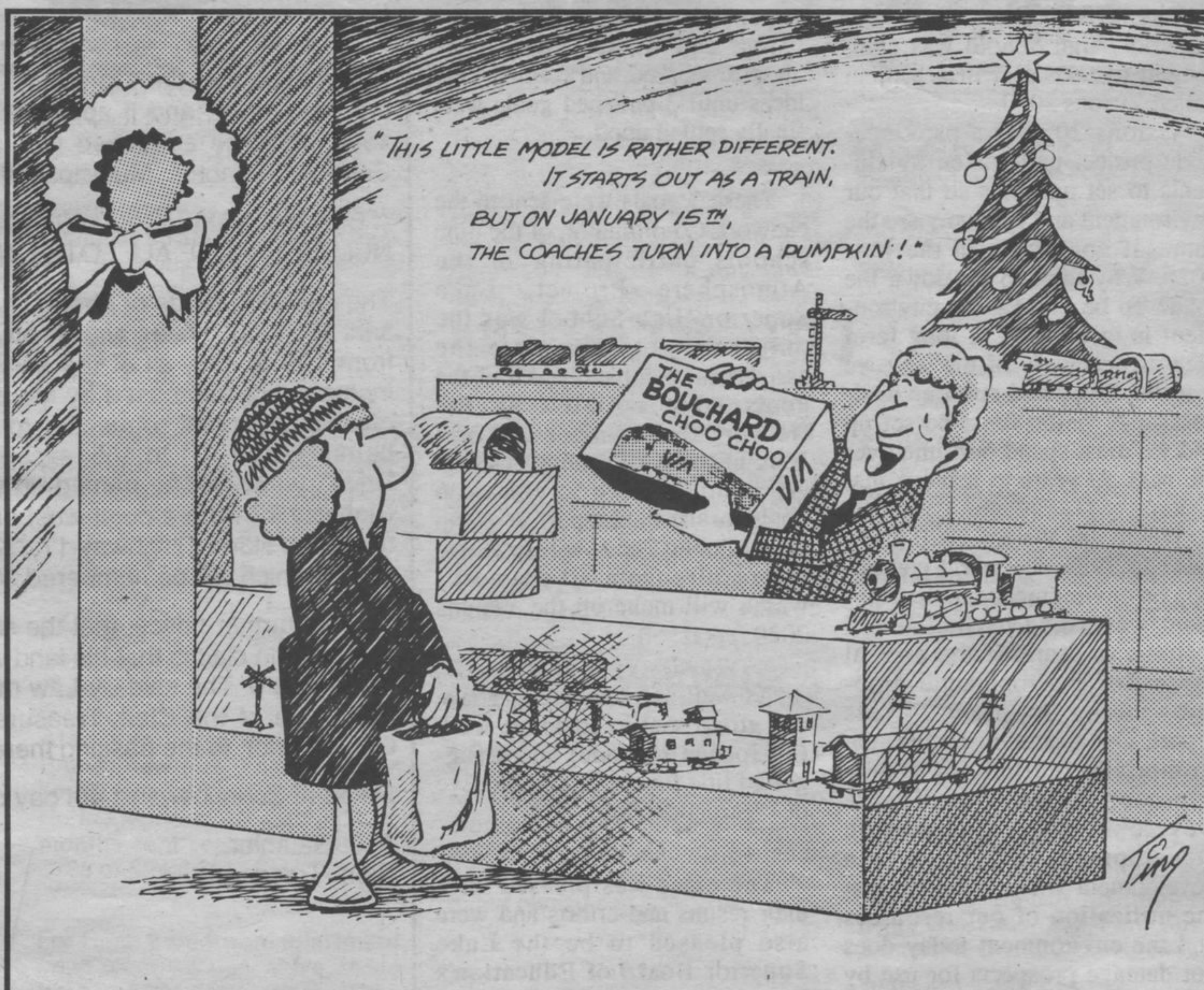
Firstly, I was right about Ontario's Ministry of Transportation when I said, prophetically, it seems, that "It's because our province has such a valuable resource and such capable people working for it that we, in most cases, are able to go about our everyday lives." Two hours spent at the MTO garage in Pearl, watching the snow plows and sanders making their circuits, showed me that.

I also realized that it's true--people do stick together during times of difficulty. Just ask Jan, Cheryl, Maggie, Peggie, Bruce, and Boyd, my co-travellers during the storm. We might have been in separate vehicles, but we were together in spirit, bumper-to-bumper as we chugged along at 10 km per hour, stopping every now and then for coffee or to wipe each other's windshields. Couldn't have made it without you, guys.

Lastly, I learned a profound truth--nothing... repeat... nothing is so vitally important that it's worth risking your life for, not exams or appointments, Christmas shopping or an evening out at the Auditorium.

Next time it storms like that, I'll stay home with my dog.

Susan MacDonald



### ~ ~ Letters to the editor ~ ~

#### PEW POWER

It would make my day if all worshippers were involved when changes in the liturgy are planned.

Here are two stories about change in worship. The freshly-ordained Protestant minister comes to the small rural church and one of his first acts is to remove the flower vases from the communion table. He doesn't understand why two families, identified as "pillars", pull

back support.

Another example: an ecumenical peace action group feels moved to celebrate the Eucharist together as a sign of their common witness and unity. The local bishop, however, says, "Go slow." The frustration of the group is palpable.

Common to both of these stories about change in worship is the theme of power. Who decides the

way people worship? The definition of "liturgy", as any first year theology student will know, is "the work of the people."

Good worship does not just mean assigning people a sentence to read or calling out the the hymn number they are to sing. Full participation in the liturgy requires that all worshippers have a hand in shaping worship.

Reverend Harry Oussoren

# Only in Canada, you say?

Canadians, say our American friends, are too polite to argue. Let us be honest. We are not too polite; no one can be too polite. But we may be too lazy or too timid.

Vincent Massey

Canadians must be every politician's wet dream. We're so law-abiding! So placid and cowl-like and terrified of rocking the canoe.

Take Free Trade.

If you add up the votes in the last election a majority of us actually voted against Free Trade.

But we're getting it anyway. And no Canuck this side of wilderness rabble rousers like Mel Hurtig and Rick Salutin are uttering a bleat of protest.

Take the Gouge and Screw Tax.

Big business hates it. Little business hates it. Farmers and factory workers, fishermen and football players hate it.

As a matter of fact, nobody this side of the working crew on Michael Wilson's pirate galleon has a good word to say about the GST.

But come January, we'll all be meekly lining up and shelling out.

It's the Canadian way.

There's a wide swatch of bovine fatalism woven deeply into the Canadian soul.

We save our great displays of passion for battlefields and hockey rinks (not that there's much difference).

Otherwise it's tug the forelock, yes sir, no ma'am.

Canadians are pathologically deferential and relentlessly guilty about making the slightest imposition--we say 'Sorry' when somebody steps on our toes.

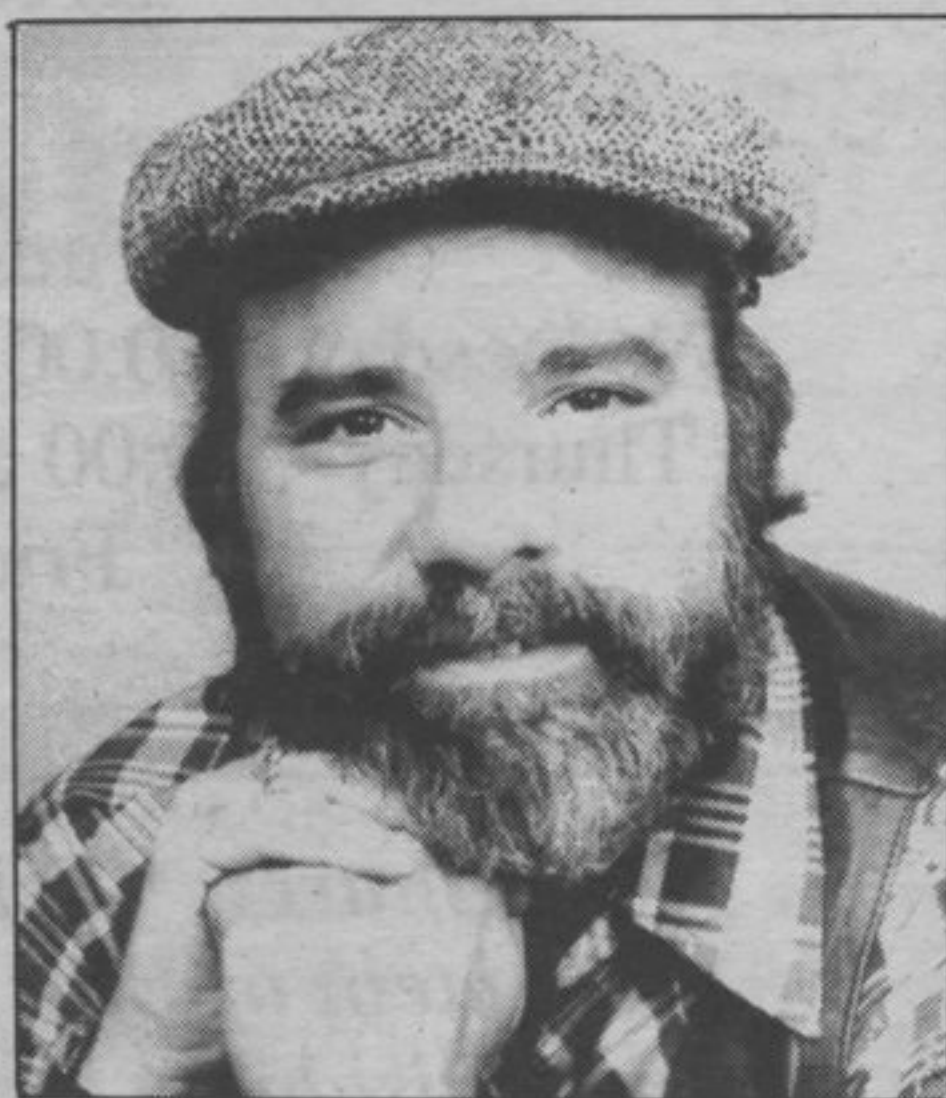
We know a great deal about the bland Canadian character but we know nothing compared to what we'll know when the results of the survey are in.

You haven't heard about the

survey?

Hoo boy--this is pure Canadiana.

Next month, agents of Statistics Canada are going to start knocking on the doors of some 50,000 Canadian households.



### Arthur Black

Object of the mission: to determine our state of health. It's called the Health Status Survey and it's exhaustive.

It asks questions about exercise schedules, use of prescription medicine, smoking habits, driving routines,

dental hygiene and spousal relations.

That's a general outline of the Health Status Survey.

Want to hear some of the specific questions you'll face if you turn out to be one of the lucky 50,000 householders?

The Stats Can surveyor on the doorstep will be asking how old you were when you lost your virginity.

They'll want to know how many sexual partners you dallied with in 1989 and whether you used birth control.

They'll expect you to confess if you've ever been arrested, driven while drunk or taken illegal drugs.

They'd like you to tell them if you've ever tried to commit suicide.

Oh, and they'll be asking whether you always, usually, sometimes, seldom, rarely or never eat peanut butter.

All this--and much much more--will 50,000 Canadian householders be expected to divulge on their doorsteps to

some stranger they've never seen before.

"We have to have the information so we know how healthy we are today so that we can plan our programs for the future" Ontario Health Minister Elinor (Big Nurse) Caplan explains sweetly and reasonably.

It could only happen in Canada, folks.

If you asked a Briton questions like that he would close the door firmly in your impertinent face.

An American would tell you to go to hell.

An Australian? I don't even want to think what an Australian would do but it would probably be obscene and involve uncomfortable relocation of the Stats Can clipboard.

But this is Canada, eh? We'll do as we're told.

Fill in the blanks. Sign on the dotted line.

Only in Canada you say? Pity.