

Editorial Page

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General Manager.....Paul Marcon
 Editor.....David Chmara
 Admin. Asst.....Gayle Fournier
 Production Asst....Carmen Dinner

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Taking small town driving for granted

Having driven over 3,000 km over the past few weeks I discovered a couple of things.

First of all, I realized I'd been driving around the towns of Terrace Bay and Schreiber without really appreciating one of the benefits of small town life - the lack of traffic.

In these parts you'll find no rush hours with cars lined up bumper to bumper and crawling along in first gear, no half-an-hour trips just to drive to work or to go shopping. Not even a traffic light anywhere in sight (unless you want to get picky and count the flashing red light on the corner of Scotia and Winnipeg in Schreiber).

Until you get back into the city for a while, you tend to forget the miniscule amount of traffic around here. But once you return, your appreciation for it returns.

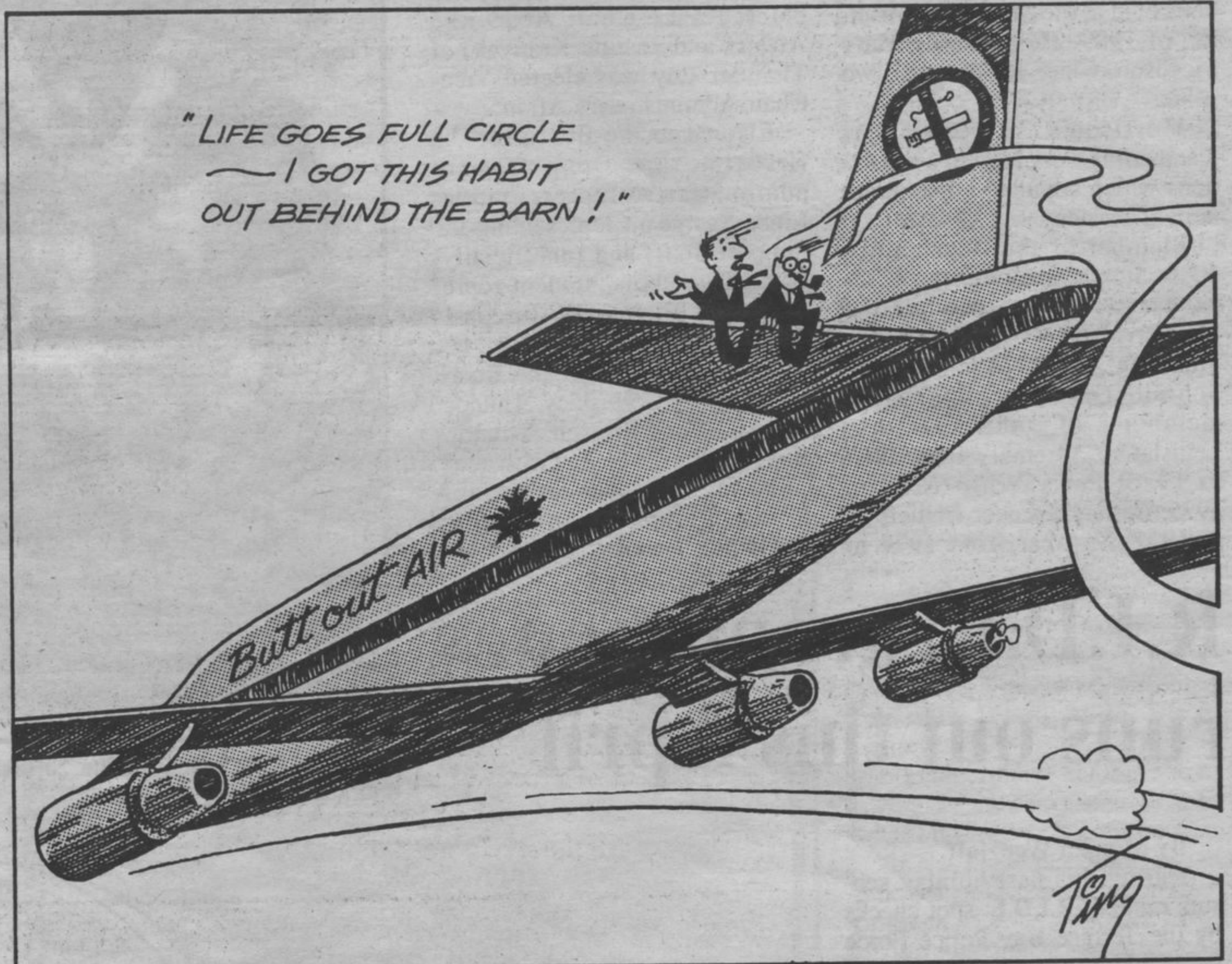
Then there was the highway driving. Your lucky if the day you decide to travel there's not a snow storm, icy roads, fog, or something else to make driving conditions haphazard.

And don't forget those transports. Racing along like a bat from you know where. The current situation is bad enough with these lumbering monoliths crawling up the hills and streaking back down them.

With the endorsement of new truck length standards by Ontario Transportation Minister William Wrye, these trucks will increase in length by up to seven metres (23 feet). Highways will become more congested as passing these trucks safely will be harder to do, and they will be going even slower up hills and, in all probability, faster downhill.

Wrye believes because of the new truck length standards, the number of trucks on the road will decrease with the result being lower emission levels and greater fuel economy.

Don't ask me how he reaches this conclusion. Sure, there may be a few less trucks on the road because of the greater hauling capacity they'll have. But, those trucks on the road will have their engines working harder because of this extra load - the result being an increase in emission levels and



poorer fuel economy.

At any rate, hopefully the truckers will become more conscious of other drivers on the road. Safety and courtesy have to be the top priorities of these drivers. Any car that hits a 78 metre (253 foot) truck is going to come out a loser. Meanwhile, the truck driver often escapes with barely a scratch.

And, in the name of safety, the government must increase the number of passing lanes in Northern Ontario. Maybe all MPPs should be forced to drive along highway 17 during the winter. The speed with which these passing lanes would be constructed would be truly amazing.

The News welcomes your letter to the editor. Use this space as your forum to comment on any issue of common interest. Address letters to:

Terrace Bay/Schreiber News
 Box 579
 Terrace Bay, Ont.
 P0T 2W0

Please sign your letter and include your phone number.

A place, by any other name

A small item in the back half of the third section of my newspaper informs me that Burma isn't Burma anymore. Henceforth, whenever I have reason to refer to that nation in Asia, I am to call it "Myanmar".

I have two questions to direct at this topic:

(a) What the hell was wrong with a nice simple name like Burma?

(b) Why do we keep doing this to ourselves--renaming perfectly well-named things, I mean?

I grew up with eminently memorable names like Ceylon and Rhodesia. Gone, all gone. Now it's Sri Lanka and Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Well, I can understand why black Africans would be anxious to unshackle themselves from Cecil Rhodes and the white colonial past that name personifies--but what about other changes? Why did we have to swap the crisp 'Peking' for 'Beijing', or the elegant 'Canton' for a wretched abomination like

'Guangdong'? The argument is that the new spellings more closely conform to the original Chinese.

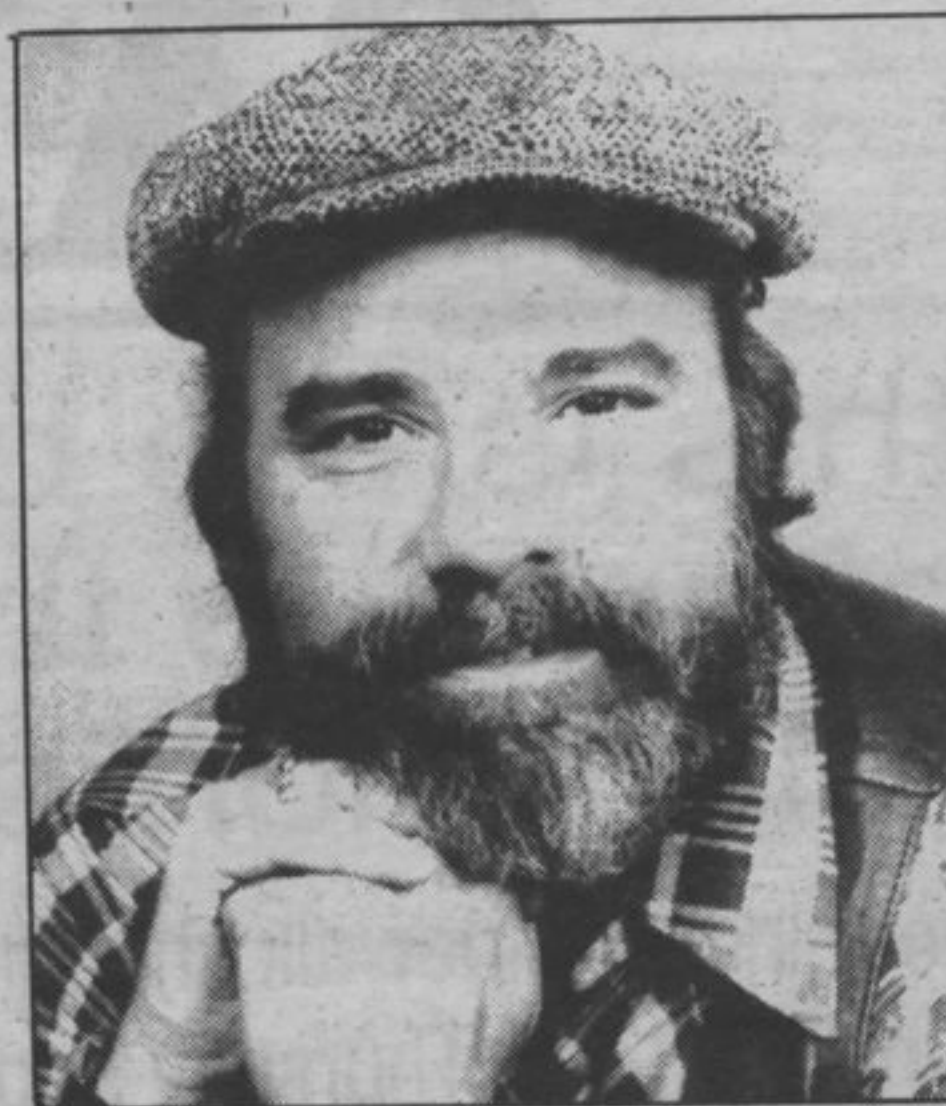
Oh yeah? Then I guess any day now we'll stop talking about 'Germany' and refer to it as 'Deutschland'? And no more talk about the 'Japanese'--we'll call them the 'Nihonjin'? And of course everyone will cheer when we scrap 'South Korea' and speak of that country as the natives do--Dae Han Min Guk?

The Russians, I suppose, could always teach us a thing or two about new names for old places.

They're past masters at revising textbooks, plazas, regions, even entire cities (remember Stalingrad?) according to which former leaders have been declared out of favour, unmasked as Enemies of the People or simply declared non-persons.

Not that we have to go all that far afield to witness mankind's depressing penchant for redubbing things just when we're getting ac-

customed to them. We're pretty good at reclassifying landmarks right here in the Great White North. Remember Frobisher Bay? Gone. It's Iqaluit now. One of the great thoroughfares in downtown Montreal isn't around anymore



Arthur Black

either. Dorchester Boulevard est disparu. It's now Boulevard Rene Levesque.

Just as well. Under Premier Bourassa's Nazoid Language Law those verboten English language street signs would have had to come down

anyway.

And back during the war years, pro-British patriots in this country succumbed to a frenzy of jingoism and struck an entire city right off the Ontario map. Berlin was banished, to be replaced by Kitchener.

Did it work? Did banishing the Germanic 'Berlin' in favour of the ever-so-English 'Kitchener' turn the town into a little piece of Old Blighty?

Oh sure, no question. If you don't believe me, drop into Kitchener during their annual fall English festival.

You know--the one called Oktoberfest?

We don't even know for sure where our own name comes from--Canada, I mean.

Some historians say it derives from an Iroquoian word "Kanatta" meaning "collec-tion of huts".

Others say it's a corruption of what Spanish and Portuguese sailors thought of the treeless and inhospitable Labrador coast-line they could see from their fishing boats--

"Aqui nada"--which translates "Nothing here".

Could have been worse. Back in the middle of the last century when our founding fathers were trying to pack this country into a snowball called Confederation, they had long and heated Meech-Lake-style debates over what to call the place.

"Mesopelagia" one genius wanted to call it. Another one argued in favour of Niagarentia. Someone else thought Albonia had a nice ring to it.

We got "Canada" instead, thank God--but don't think that the name changers and title fiddlers are dead.

Why, just recently Toronto City Council outlawed the term "manhole covers". From now on it's nice, neutery, non-sexist "mainten-ance cover" in Hogt--oops, make that Hog-Sowtown. I can hardly wait for the Winnipeg City Council to join in the spirit of things and announce the new name of their province--Personitoba.