

Posties - I'm with you guys

I am absolutely outraged.

Apparently the column I wrote two weeks ago about trying to find a buyer for Canada Post has been misunderstood by certain postal workers as being critical of the manner in which they fulfill their duties as loyal civil servants.

This negative feedback has gotten back to me in the form of hostile letters, angry phone calls and at the post office where my brother-in-law works, a dead rat was placed in his lunch pail which was then welded shut. The rat had his hair styled exactly like mine and a pen was glued to his front right paw. This is a despicable act of cruel and inhumane proportions - I mean where the hell is he going to find another

William J. Thomas

All The World's A Circus

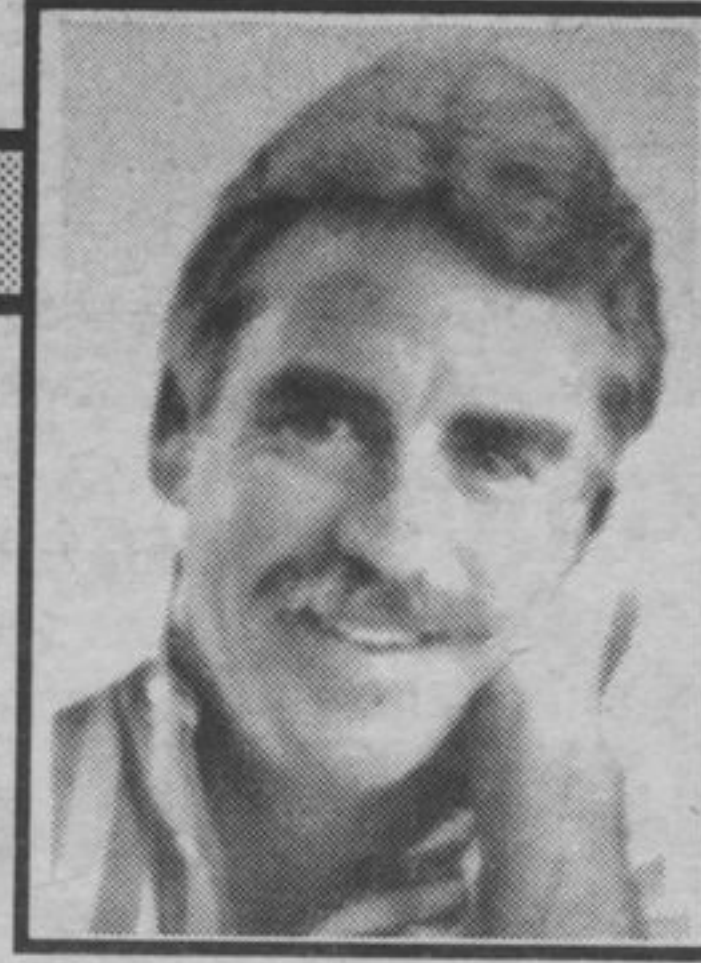
lunch pail with Opie, Andy and Aunt Bea on the front and Barney fiddling with the latch?

It wasn't you guys I was making fun of when I tried to pass you off as an albino elephant and sell you to the San Diego Zoo. I was merely trying to point out the danger involved when a zookeeper buys over the phone, without an opportunity to examine both ends of the animal.

I like you guys. Some of my best friends are posties and many of them are graduates from that college where they teach you how to twist balloons into the shape of

French poodles for entertainment purposes.

I stick up for you guys....like the time you got hold of that set of commemorative coins that were mailed from Toronto to the wine museum in Jordan Station, Ontario, Canada and you sent them to Amman, Jordan in the Mideast, Africa, The Dark Continent. I said as long as Canadians didn't use the proper postal codes, mistakes like this were bound to happen. Okay, so some smart guy proved the postal code was correct - damn it - I tried, didn't I?



And that last time you guys went on strike (or was it the fourth to the last time after the wildcat walkout?) when I suggested all Canadians buy a year's supply of Lotsa Licks doggie treats and train German Shepherds to deliver the mail. I

wasn't making fun of you guys, I was making fun of German Shepherds for gawdsakes. And I apologized to, didn't I? (How was I to know that the guy who trains the Littlest Hobo would threaten to sue me for slander?)

I am totally supportive of posties as career-minded patriots. You are, as I have stated publicly, steadfastly and with pride, pursuing the ultimate Canadian dream which is to do a decent day's work for the public and still manage to be in the hotel by two or two-thirty each day. What could be more Canadian?

You don't beat seal pups to death and you don't get us into "turban controversies" although personally I don't think turbans

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What's left that isn't a hazard?

Yeah, what IS left? Just got whacked on the head with the latest scary report. My toothbrush is out to get me! Truly! you, too.

Seems the good old researchers have once more popped up out of their rabbit warrens of laboratories to scare the beejeebers out of us with their latest findings in the Health-and-Happiness-Forever field.

Way back there in the dim past of my Senior memory, it was fluoridation in the drinking water, and the hoo-haw for and against it which went on in all municipalities across the land. If you were 'fer', you were a concerned citizen. If you were 'agin', you were accused of condemning your kids to a lifetime of rotting teeth falling out of their little pointed heads. Than, whaddya know, but just the other day in this scary present, comes word from you-know-who to tell us that flouride

Olga Landiak

Life, According to Baba

is NOW the cause of some bone cancer!

Then we got jumped on about meats and all their horrible cholesterol-making fat, and how bad that was for our health. On the other hand, we also get told the body requires a certain amount of the 'evil' stuff to keep functioning properly, so fat is okay after all. In moderation, of course.

Same thing with sugar, coffee, tea, eggs, bread, potatoes, etc. All BAD, BAD, BAD; Today, that is. Tomorrow we'll be told, well, maybe they aren't all that bad and maybe, yes, we do need a certain amount of whatever little goodies they contain in the way of minerals, carbohydrates, vita-

mins and various other such nutrients. In moderation, of course.

As for all that lovely so-called 'junk' food out there in the market place, let's face it. One person's 'junk', is another person's delight. So, why can't we leave each other alone to go to a gastronomic hell in our own sweet or salty way? In moderation of course.

For every boogey-man statistic that gets thrown at us by one bunch of scientific 'rabbits', sure enough, if you wait long enough, another bunch will pop out of their lab holes, to dispute the findings of the first lot and tell you to go ahead, be our guest, feast away!

Now it's our toothbrushes.



They're out to get us via all those nasty germs lurking on them in between the thrice-a-day scrubbing. We're re-infecting ourselves with our own nastinesses! Oh, horrors! What to do, what to do? Buy a zillion brushes, and chuck out the nasty old ones after once-a-use! That's what the so-called 'experts' say.

Oh, shoosh. I don't know about you, but just about now,

I've given up on all these earnest scientific types. Maybe they have to justify their existence by coming up with a scary-statistic-of-the-month, but, personally, I'm going to take my chances with my own choice of 'poisons'.

Figure as long as I don't over-indulge in ANYTHING, nothing should get a foothold and knock me off before my God-allotted time. Preoccupation with what one is stuffing in the old gob and into the ole stomach, can be as addictive as smoking, drinking and drug-taking. Statistics are for the birds when they get to the silly point, and this Goldie Oldie has just about had enough. If those scientific statistical bods want something to really worry about, let it be those killing nuts behind the wheels of the cars and trucks out there on our highways.

Now, THOSE statistics really do scare me.

Canada's forgotten injured

Every 12 seconds in Canada, someone suffers an injury causing loss of time from work. Spinal chords, backs, legs, arms, eyes, or ears are hurt in sudden, one-time accidents. About 10 per cent of those injuries are permanent and disabling. The cost to the Canadian economy is a staggering \$14 BILLION a year. But with all the clamouring about Meech Lake, east coast fish stocks, and western alienation, those who are hurt on the job are not on anyone's version of the national agenda.

A group in Thunder Bay is trying valiantly to buck that trend. The Thunder Bay Injured Workers Support Group is leading the effort to organize a national conference in Ottawa, June 12-15. That's only days before the final Meech Lake deadline, so the group has a tough challenge trying to capture someone's attention.

The June conference will be the first national gathering of injured workers' groups ever held in this country. Organizing the conference has been a monumental task. Injured workers' groups are isolated, poorly funded if at all, and not organized into provincial networks anywhere except Ontario.



NORTHERN INSIGHTS

by Larry Sanders

Yet the Thunder Bay group has worked diligently for the last year, sending out mailing after mailing to trade union contacts, church groups, and known organizations, to pull together a national conference of groups like themselves. It looks like they'll pull it off. 200 delegates have agreed to attend, to hear Canada's leading experts on compensation and the human rights of the disabled. They've even managed to get some advice from overseas, where compensation systems are more humane, by getting a West German Cabinet Minister and an Australian compensation plan administrator to come to the conference, at their own expense. The theme for the conference is "The Re-Employment of Injured Workers", since that's the main goal of injured workers - to be assisted to return to the workforce.

Outside of all the statistics and political lobbying, there's a human face to all this. Eugene Lafrancois from Thunder Bay is one of those tragedies. he's only 31. Canada's inhuman system of treating the injured like criminals, challenging every claim they make, seems to want to discard him, rather than help him return to work. The system has turned Eugene into a bitter, frustrated person.

As a treaty Indian, Eugene was unique. He had experience working on aboriginal rights and constitutional matters for ametis organization for several years. He decided to improve his usefulness to his people by going to university. To pay his way through university and support his family, he got a job as a tree cutter in the summer. He successfully completed one year of class-

es, then went back for his second summer in the bush.

That's when his life was changed forever. In June of 1985, a tree fell on his knee, injuring him seriously. The knee required several operations. For THREE YEARS, Eugene's doctors held out hope that they could repair the knee enough to allow him to return to work in the bush. During that three years, Eugene experienced the inhumanity and bureaucracy known as "worker's compensation". In Ontario, it's call the Worker's Compensation Board, or WCB.

The system was so backlogged, it took the WCB three months to get Eugene his first cheque, even though his claim was not in dispute. To make ends meet during that three months, Eugene was told "it's simple to get welfare-get it." But getting welfare is not easy. It's also

degrading, for someone with a lot of pride like Eugene. He got the welfare, but was told, as all claimants are, that when his WCB cheque came, he would have to pay welfare back!

Meanwhile, the WCB system ground on. Eugene was first classified for what is known as "total temporary disability". Under this classification, Eugene might have risked going back to university at his own expense, but if WCB found out what he was doing, they would have cut his monthly cheque by 35 per cent. Eugene did not want to risk that. After more hassles with the WCB system, he was reclassified for "rehabilitation" classification, all that materialized was a two day course on how to write a resume - something Eugene already knew how to do.

WCB officials suggested Eugene should think about becoming a counselor, because of his combination of partial university training and work experience. That sounded fine, but was not practical. Counselling jobs, like what the WCB suggested, require a degree in social work. Yet WCB would not pay Eugene's tuition fees and other expenses to

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