

A thousand points of fright

Imprisoned in the passenger seat of a Honda Civic on a two-day drive to Florida last month, I had an opportunity to examine the state of the nation known as America.

President George Bush launched his administration on the course to create a kinder, gentler nation. Many people felt this was pretty silly. According to the Free Trade Agreement he already had a kinder, gentler nation - Canada.

President Bush based this and other more lofty goals on his vision of A Thousand Points Of Light.

Nobody else could see the Thousand Points Of Light and

William J. Thomas

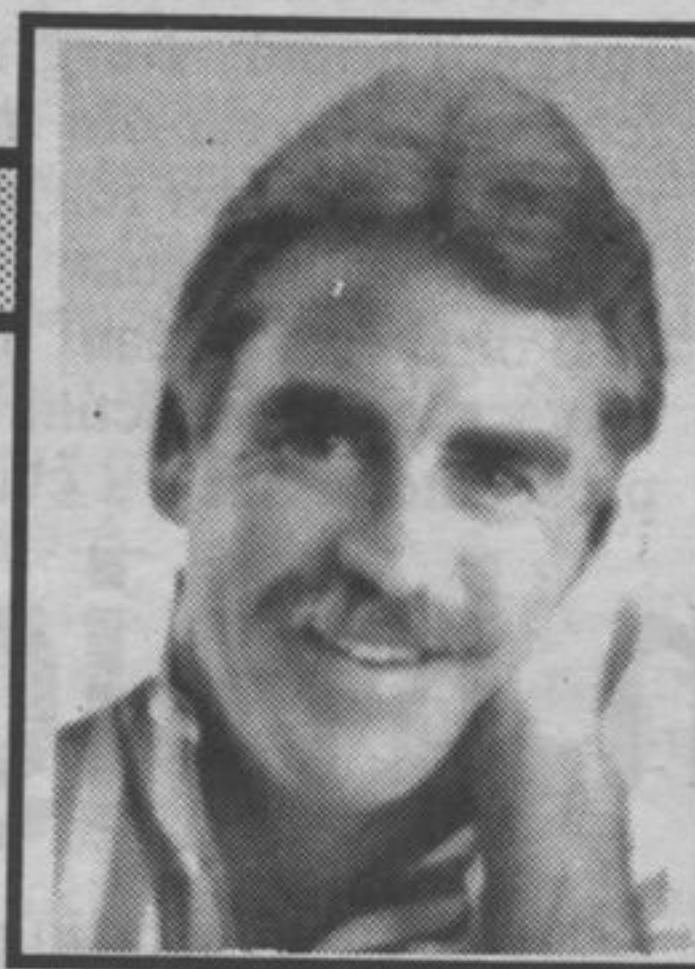
All The World's A Circus

George hasn't been able to explain it. It must be like his own inner, spiritual, life force designed along the lines of America's Stealth bomber. It exists and it's as powerful as hell...it's just that it's invisible. And hard to explain.

There are a lot of things people don't understand about President George Bush like why he refuses to reveal his role in the Iran Contra Scandal or his whereabouts during the eight years of Ronald Reagan's administration.

Myself, I don't understand why the American media is constantly making jokes about Millie Bush, the first family's Springer spaniel when they've got such a more attractive target in George's brother Bucky. Honest, the president's brother's actual, official name is Bucky Bush.

If you think Billy Carter exploited the position of the president's younger, dumber brother to the hilt, imagine this president and his brother throwing horseshoes on the White House lawn in



an ad for Bucky Bush Beer. And the president, with his arm around a glassy-eyed Bucky, says: "Nine of these cold Buckies and I can guarantee you'll be seeing at least a thousand points of light."

"...Srreee sousand," adds Bucky with a belch.

So strapped in my passenger seat for 24 hours I scanned every new newspaper from Buffalo to Panama City, Florida looking for the new and improved America. I found the following:

*Eladio Castillo, 63, was arrested in Raleigh, N.C. after he shot seven pigeons which were beating him to the peanuts being thrown by tourists at the state capitol.

*Christopher Morris of Broward County, Florida plotted to have his ex-wife and daughter killed in order to collect \$35,000 in insurance money. But the plot

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The great plague of stealing

EVERYTHING'S being stolen these days! If it isn't nailed down, glued in place, bolted or chained, or imbedded in concrete, it's being spirited away by thieves of all stripes. Not just yer common-o-garden low, sneaky type who's trying to generate a bit of cash to support his/her drug or drinking habit, but so-called honest, upright, God-fearing ordinary citizens who are plundering public parks and gardens.

Nothing, absolutely nothing is safe these days it seems from these light-fingered characters. One can sort of understand and appreciate the amount of thievery which goes on in our shops and stores because of the almost-irresistible temptation of goods spread out over acres and acres of aisles, but to steal from the public domain is like stealing from your own pocket. After all, it's our taxpayers' money which is paying for all this beautification, so does it make sense for some conscienceless people to sneak out in the middle of some starry night and steal plants, bushes and trees for their own gardens?

Olga Landiak

Life, According to Baba

Could hardly believe it the first time I heard of this heinous practice via an employee of the Thunder Bay Parks and Recreation Department. People were actually stealing the flowers, roots and all, out of the public gardens around the city? Good grief! Just how cheesy can one get? If they are so poor they can't afford the price of a packet of seeds or a box of transplants, then they are not in the garden business, so we have to surmise in best Sherlock Holmes fashion, that these terrible practices are being perpetrated by citizens with land space for a garden, which in turn, connotes a certain amount of income. Even more shame on them!

What does one have to do to protect one's gardens from thievery these days? Chain down the trees, put flower boxes behind bars, and chicken fencing over all the rest? Don't laugh. That's

exactly what is happening in a certain American city which sparked a news item on the idiot box. The stealing of valuable trees has become so endemic there that, next to chaining them to steel stakes, some owners are even contemplating putting alarm systems in them. I kid you not. I saw and heard this with my own ears and eyes!

Have also read and heard of extensive rustling which goes on in those parts of the country where herds of cattle abound, and where characters waltz up in the night with a truck, shoot off a couple of nice, fat cows, stash them away, and then sell off the butchered parts. Pigs, sheep and goats suffer the same fate.

Even cactii. Cactii? ??? Oh, you bet. There's even a flourishing trade in these rustled prickly plants to those people wanting a bit of exotica for their gardens and willing to become accom-



plishes in stolen trade so they can be the first on the block to have one.

Once upon a time, a trapper could leave his log cabin unlocked and full of supplies and not worry about having anything stolen. Anybody in need of dire help, could come in, help themselves, and either leave monies to pay for grub consumed and replenish the split wood used, or else a note promising to bring fresh supplies the next time around. Try that now-a-days and you'll find yourself stripped clean and lucky if your cabin isn't burnt down in the process.

What has the world come to when you can't trust your fellow man (or woman) NOT to steal the goods and chattels for which you have laboured so long and hard even when it's under lock and key and burglar alarms in your private domain, when he/she is also out there in the public domain stealing from your taxpayers' pocket as well. Are we going to be reduced to REAL Concrete Town and Cities with nary a flower, shrub or tree in sight because there's no use in planting the stuff one day, only to have it stolen the very next? Pity.

We all know of the vandalism of public property which has always been a scourge and a blight, but now we have this common thievery of growing things to contend with as well. It's a very sad reflection on the kind of society which exists today. Somewhere along the line in our pell-mell rush to embrace a free-living style, we've lost track of a very vital thing - respect for the goods of others, as well as those in the public domain.

Too bad. Very, very too bad.

Development versus progress

When I was young, the first television show I got to watch regularly, on a snowy black and white screen, was Ed Sullivan. Every Sunday night, slump-shouldered Ed, a New York booking agent transformed by television into a household name, would welcome us to his "REE-LEE BIG SHOE." I don't remember the juggling acts or dancing dogs, but I can remember the commercials. An actor named Ronald Reagan would tell us about General Electric, and all the good things the company was inventing for us. One slogan dominated - "At General Electric, PROGRESS is our most important product."

That slogan symbolized North American corporate philosophy through the 50s and 60s. That philosophy is still with us, but it's losing some of the unquestioning public loyalty it used to enjoy, because of awareness of the environmental crisis. "Progress" drove the development of the St. Lawrence Seaway, opened pulp mills and mines, gave birth to former Canadian Prime Minister Diefenbaker's "Roads to



NORTHERN INSIGHTS

by Larry Sanders



Resources" program to open up northern Canada, and bred two generations of business school graduates. "Progress" meant an unbroken cycle of jobs and prosperity. General Electric engineers invented a new kitchen gadget. Ronald Reagan would market it, and we'd all buy it. Another factory would have to open to manufacture the gadget, to meet our demand. The profits from that plant were re-invested in more research to invent another gadget - and we'd all get jobs, gadgets, and prosperity.

Northern Ontario came late into the "Progress" cycle, like we do with so many historical trends. We didn't get really serious about trying to diversify the northern economy until the late 1970s,

when mines started to close. The "mild recession" that struck the rest of North America by the early 80s has been diagnosed by economists as a "cold". For northern Ontario, it became a nearly fatal case of pneumonia. When the southern car and steel plants opened again by the late 1980s, the mines that had closed in Atikokan and Ear Falls remained closed. The pulp and paper mills that had scaled back during the lean and hungry times remained slim and tough, and didn't return to their old levels of employment. Bush work, like the underground mining work that remained, was automated, and needed fewer people.

During the recovery period, northern Ontario communities

went out of their way to hire economic development officers. The credo of these officers was out of date from the first day they opened offices, and hooked up their answering machines. They adopted Ronald Reagan and General Electric's view of "Progress", just when it was starting to fade in relevance and importance. All through the 80s northern towns sought jobs, jobs, jobs. Any job. Self-employment in small business was encouraged, even if the resource sector - the base those service sector businesses depended on, was shrinking.

We went through bitter public debates in the 80s over the idea of carving more "parks" out of the wilderness. Later, people

employed by Kimberly Clark in Terrace Bay screamed when Premier Peterson threatened to force the company to clean up its toxic discharges into Lake Superior. We sent delegations and messages to the south that made our position very clear - if a choice had to be made between jobs and the environment, northerners want jobs.

Now we're approaching the dawn of a new decade. One faithful reader pointed out in a letter that I was wrong in an earlier column to say the new decade has already started. He's right. Officially, the new decade will not start until on second after midnight, January first, 1991. Whenever the decade officially starts, it's definitely a new era. Scientists such as William Fyfe, the Dean of Science at the University of Western Ontario warn us time and time again that the planet cannot take any more unfettered bursts of "Progress". Global warming, caused by our constant emissions, will eventually transform everything from North Bay to the Alberta border

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