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Editorials

Museum should be moved

Late last year, C. W. Brillinger presented a report to Whitchurch-Stouffville Council concerning the operation of the historical museum. It is situated on the Vivian Rd. not far from Newmarket.

In spite of its remote location, the museum attracted 2,640 people in 1974 an increase of 150 per cent from the previous year. Three special events account for the increased attendance including — Maple Syrup Festival, Antique Car Show and Strawberry Festival.

Mr. Brillinger pointed out that the problem facing the museum is lack of money for acquiring artifacts in the budget. Funds to keep it going are largely provided by the town.

The total 1974 budget for the museum was \$6,700.

It is good to see that people are discovering the museum but perhaps time has come to find it a more central location. Some location in the centre of Whitchurch-Stouffville would be more suitable, perhaps.

An historical museum is a fitting way to preserve something of our past. Over some difficult obstacles, the one in Bogartown has established itself. It is time that a better site be found, that would enable the museum to serve more people in the whole town of Whitch-Stouffville.

We hope that the museum board and the town council will consider this possibility in 1975.

Watch out for thin ice

The old phrase, "you're skating on thin ice," refers to a philosophical fault in an argument, but when winter comes around, the dangers of thin ice are real indeed.

Every year there are reports of people going through ice on lakes, rivers and ponds in Ontario. All of these mishaps, some resulting in drowning or freezing to death, can be prevented.

It only takes something that does not seem to be very common these days — common sense.

Snowmobiling can be fun, but there are many hidden dangers. Ice thickness on a river is very deceiving. From the top, the ice may look thick and strong, but current below can wear away the ice from beneath. This can happen over a period of time, even in very cold temperatures.

Snow on top of the ice is also deceptive and should be watched very closely. Below may be weak ice that cannot be seen because of the blanket of snow.

Yes winter can be fun. But is worthwhile to take proper precautions. Test ice for strength and stay off patches of ice that are suspicious.

Make this a safe winter of fun.

Poem for valedictory

Go softly now, make sweet thy days,
 Heed not the sighs of fortune's gales,
 Yield not to them the flame of life,
 Leave not behind thy dreams, delights,
 Be still with truth, hope's tender song,
 Be light with joy, the soul's bright crown,
 Go softly now.

But in each man as his worth claims
 Go slowly now.

Be happy now, enjoy thy being
 Drink long life's waters, cool and living
 Embrace thy loves with arms as fire,
 Give thanks for birth, the thought's desire,
 Strive not for feelings, but few denied
 Contentment lies in things well tried,
 Be happy now.

Editor's Note: The poem was composed by Miss Tranmer and was recited as part of her valedictory address at Stouffville Dist. Secondary School.

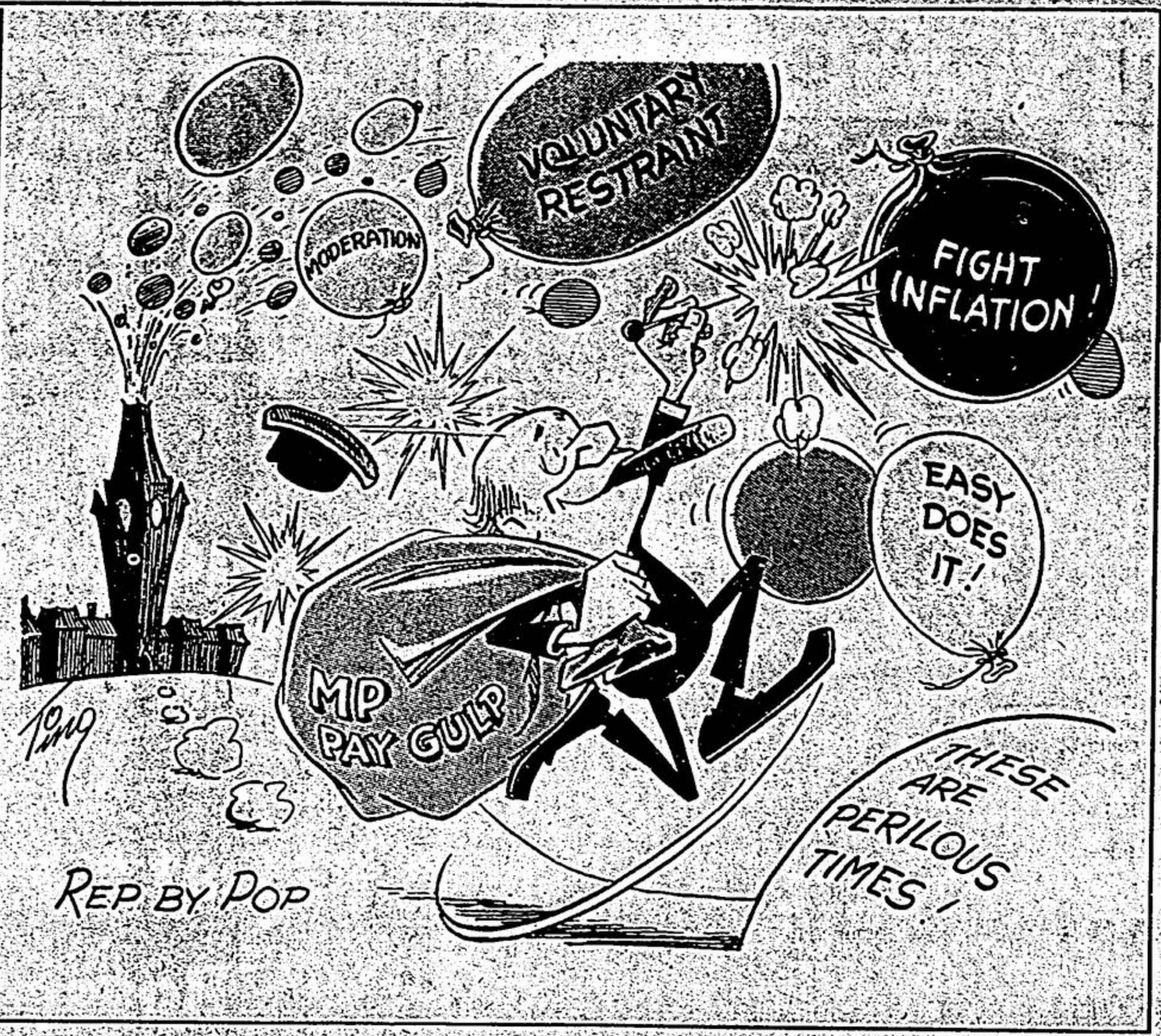
— By Sharon Tranmer



Winter's eerie Wonderland

Winter is a time of magic. The snow covers the ground in many wonderful ways that transform ordinary objects into sculptured works of art. This reflected in the eerie beauty of weeds and bushes that look stately and beautiful after a snowfall.

John Montgomery



REP BY POP SUGAR AND SPICE

Clean-up results not startling

By BILL SMILEY



This is the time of the year for 'out with the old, in with the new.' I honestly did try to do this. But it was hopeless. I got bogged down, right up to the navel, in my first attempt to get rid of the old.

I decided, as my year-end project, to clean up my writing desk. This may sound simple, a mere 15 minutes of sorting and tidying. But you are not acquainted with my writing desk.

Perhaps you remember the myth about Hercules cleaning out the Augean stables. They were filled with cattle, hadn't been cleaned in decades and there was a veritable mountain of 'you-know-what.' A formidable task. He did it without even using a pitchfork. He diverted the flow of two rivers through the stables, and lo! they were cleansed.

That was child's play compared to cleaning off my desk and also I am no Hercules.

On each side of my typewriter sits a teetering stack of papers that reaches approximately to my head, when I am sitting at my machine. Huddled between them, like a sparrow between two huge tomcats, squats the typewriter.

Occasionally one of the piles, like a glacier, slides majestically to the floor. My wife picks up the mess, and muttering under her breath, jams it back on the desk. She's forbidden to disturb anything there, or even to dust it. That's the main reason the piles are two feet high. I do allow her to dust the front of the desk, where the drawers are.

Trouble is, she's so annoyed she piles the stuff back in any old order. This causes a problem when I decide to clear the desk at year's end.

I pick up the first letter. It is from a farmer's complimenting me on my stand for the beef farmer. It is dated 1962. That suggests that the last time I cleaned my desk was in 1961.

It also poses questions. What was my stand on the beef farmer in 1962? I'll bet it was a little sweeter than my attitude toward sirloin steak prices today. Was the letter ever answered? Who knows? So I put it in the stack labelled Who Knows. This turns out to be the biggest of the many piles I lay out on the floor.

The other piles bear such esoteric labels as: To Be Dealt With — Sometime; Needs Further Study; Look Into This; Silly Old Cranks; To Be Answered; Definitely In The New Year; Complimentary; Over The Hill; and so on. The second largest stack is called Miscellaneous because I don't know where else to put these items.

Under the last item go such things as: a passport application form; a bill from the Strand Palace, London, England; a Christmas card from my insurance agent; a test for Grade 11; an offer to do the Smiley family tree for only \$3.00 (must have been a small family); and a reminder that I am due at veteran's hospital for a chest X-ray (which I forgot all about).

I have a very definite way of handling these piles. Miscellaneous I put back on the desk. Over The Hill, which contains anything more than six years old, goes into the wastebasket, as does Silly Old Cranks, a very slim stack of letters from ridiculous people who don't agree with me.

Needs Further Study goes back on the desk, right on top of Miscellaneous. Look Into This goes back on the desk on top of Needs Further Study. Next on the growing pile on the desk goes To Be Dealt With — Sometime.

Then I lift the whole pile and slide underneath it, right at the bottom, if you'll pardon the expression, To Be Answered Definitely In The New Year.

And then, carefully and delicately, I place

on top of the pile the stack labelled Complimentary. This contains the letters I have received from those splendid, intelligent people who admire my wife or kids or column.

Yes, I know they should be thrown out. But surely you wouldn't deny a chap a little ointment for his ego, any more than you would begrudge an old lady a seat in the chimney corner, where the fire can warm her.

The piles beside the typewriter are now only a foot and a half high, and it has taken a day and a half to sort them. This may not seem like progress to you, but Rome wasn't built in a day, as some idiot once remarked.

One good thing came out of this year's sorting. I remembered that I had received a letter from Barry Broadfoot, author of Ten Lost Years, a compelling book about the depression. I'd written a column about it.

No, I couldn't find his letter. It must have wandered into the Miscellaneous or somewhere. But the memory of his letter made me remember that I'd had at least ten letters from all over the country, and the States, asking where a copy might be obtained. No, I couldn't find these letters either.

But the memory of them reminded me of what Barry Broadfoot wrote in his letter. He's writing another book called The Pioneer Years, and he wondered if I would ask in my column for the names of oldtimers who were spry and interesting, so that he could interview them.

So there you are, everybody. Send the names of spry, interesting oldtimers, of either sex, to Barry Broadfoot, care of Doubleday Publishers, 105 Bond St., Toronto, Ont. M5B 1Y3. And the same people will be happy to provide you with a copy of Ten Lost Years.

There. My first good deed of 1975. And that's going to cost you, Brother Broadfoot. Crown Royal will do.

VIEWPOINT

Confessions of a chronic procrastinator

By JOHN MONTGOMERY

It is now about three o'clock in the morning (I'm not sure of the exact time as I didn't get around to winding my watch today) and I am just getting down to writing this column which was due at the printers several hours ago.

I have absolutely no excuse, except my own procrastination, for not having the column done because I have known about it for three weeks and my boss, otherwise known as the Editor, hasn't been particularly reticent about reminding me.

Unfortunately, this is the story of my life. No matter how sincere my intentions or how much advance warning I have that I will have to have something done I still end up frantically scrambling at the last moment to complete it.

I always seem to end up standing in a lineup at the dry cleaners waiting for my suit, 15 minutes before I'm supposed to be at a wedding. This was true for my own wedding as well.

A perennial joke among my friends, a sarcastic lot, is that I have never seen the opening credits to a movie.

For the first two weeks after learning I had the column to do I never even considered doing it. Then during the last week I sat down at my desk at home several times to write it but being a master of procrastination I successfully avoided accomplishing anything until now.

The first time I started I decided it was impossible to work amid the cluttered chaos of my desk and I spent about an hour aimlessly shuffling old newspapers and unpaid bills from one side of my desk to the other before conceding defeat. Once this monumental task was completed I felt I deserved a break so I settled in front of the television with a cup of coffee. As it happened I became engrossed in an hour and a half special on the six life of the aardvark (disgusting little creatures) which ordinarily I wouldn't bother with but for some reason that night I found the program utterly fascinating. Needless to say by the time that was over I felt I had put in a pretty good evening's work and, well satisfied, I went off to bed.

A couple of nights later I had another go at it. This time I decided there would be no nonsense so I sat right down, laid out all my pens, tested them by doodling and sharpened all my pencils. Looking back this seems to have been a rather irrational move as I type everything.

I took a piece of typing paper and inserted it in the typewriter and without a moments hesitation I tapped out the word COLUMN at the top of the page.

Pleased but exhausted from this effort, I squandered the next half hour staring listlessly at the keyboard and chain-smoking. Right then I decided I couldn't wait another moment to phone my old college buddy Charlie Dunn. Well I gave old Charlie a call and we passed quite a bit of time chit-chatting. I was surprised to learn he now has a wife and two kids but then a lot can happen in three years.

By the time we finished talking it was about time to call it a night. I was getting a little uneasy and I resolved to get it done on the next attempt.

Well, I didn't get it done on the next attempt. I had gotten as far as trying to outstare the keyboard when my brother-in-law phoned to say he had tickets to a basketball game and would I like to go? If there is one sport I truly detest it is basketball but it seemed kind of foolish to waste the tickets, especially since they were end reds.

Those are the circumstances which brought me to the by-now all-too-familiar position I now find myself in. That is, feverishly working away at three o'clock in the morning.

The sophisticated time wasting methods I have outlined were certainly not an accidental occurrence but in fact have been honed to a fine edge of perfection over a period of many years. They are in fact the very methods that to a great degree were responsible for my less than magnificent scholastic record.

Of course I'm not isolated in my affliction. A couple of years ago I read about a Procrastination Club. According to the article they arranged a trip to the New York World's Fair, the year after it was held. As soon as I heard that I knew this was the club for me, and I immediately wrote a letter asking how I could join. Unfortunately I never got around to mailing it.

I've always had a real feeling of kinship toward Paw Kettle in the Maw and Paw Kettle movies. Somebody's foot would go crashing through the front porch step or they would sit down in a chair, which would disintegrate into kindling, dumping them unceremoniously on the floor. Paw would unconcernedly comment "Gonna hafta fix that sometime Maw." Truly, a man after my own heart.