

**PAM IN PORTLAND**  
by Pamela Fry

I am getting ready to spend Easter in Toronto - and the thought of Toronto during this most important time of year instantly brings back memories of the Easter Parade. We had only been in Canada for two or three years when we arrived in that city and found a spacious duplex in the west end. Sunnyside, to be exact. It was a very pleasant place to live in those long-ago thirties. We were only a few minutes walk from the beach and the then unpolluted waters of Lake Ontario, where I would swim every day during the summer, and was even taught to dive off the breakwater by a friendly lifeguard. There was also a lively amusement park, with a wonderful merry-go-round, a wild roly-coaster which I adored (the very thought of it makes me shiver today!) and various other attractions. Plus, of course, the boardwalk, where the Easter Parade took place.

The whole point of this parade, which started right after everyone had been to church, was to show off one's Easter finery. There they all were - families, old couples, young couples, everyone, in fact, who could afford a new outfit. I don't remember much about the appearance of the men and the boys - poor things, they have been more or less stuck with their suit-and-tie uniforms ever since the Victorian age and the full blooming of the Industrial Revolution. But the women - and especially the girls - were something else again. What you had to have, if you were going to take part in this splendid procession, was a brand-new outfit. From top to toe. Spring coats were acceptable, but by far the most popular choice was a new suit, with matching or contrasting accessories, including gloves. And, most especially, a hat. Every female in that parade had to have a new hat. Mostly straw, with flowers, and they could range all the way from charming to the absolutely ridiculous.

It was a jolly affair, and there might have also been a couple of bands playing, but I'm not sure. Mainly I remember the parade, with crowds of spectators along the edges of the boardwalk; the admiration created when some really stunning outfit appeared; the stifled giggles as a truly unlikely-looking hat and/or person went by.

Then, of course, there was the Canadian weather, which went its own sweet way, regardless of the occasion. But Canadians have, by necessity, become an obstinate breed. I remember one which occurred during a blinding snowstorm, and there was a very pretty girl all dressed in blue. Unfortunately, she had a blue complexion to match, but she soldiered on nevertheless.

It's funny about clothes, isn't it? In those baddish old days (afterall, we were still plunk

in the middle of the Depression) we still retained a strong sense of occasion. When there was an Occasion to celebrate - the Easter Parade, New Year's Eve, a visit to the theatre, or a high-school graduation - everyone dressed up to the best of their ability. But nowadays, although there are moments of pomp and circumstance, such as meeting the Queen or going to one of those \$500.00 a plate dinners (which I have never attended), the who-cares-less casual style seems to have taken over completely.

Jeans being the operative word. From what I've been reading, jeans are now spreading to Russia and even China and Japan. Designer jeans, of course, but all of them designed to look as old as possible. Old is good. At least, old jeans are good. The younger you are the older your jeans should look. Then, of course, there has also been the fashion amongst the young for buying old, old things from second-hand stores; beaded evening dresses; combat jackets and greatcoats; satin negligés - the list goes on and on.

But jeans, and the wearing of jeans, remains the dominant trend. I remember being in Ottawa a few years back, standing on Bank Street on a sunny day. Counting jeans. Just for my own amusement. I can't remember the exact count, but I do know that in one city block something like two-thirds of the people passing by were wearing jeans. People of every age, sex, and size. Monotonous, to say the least.

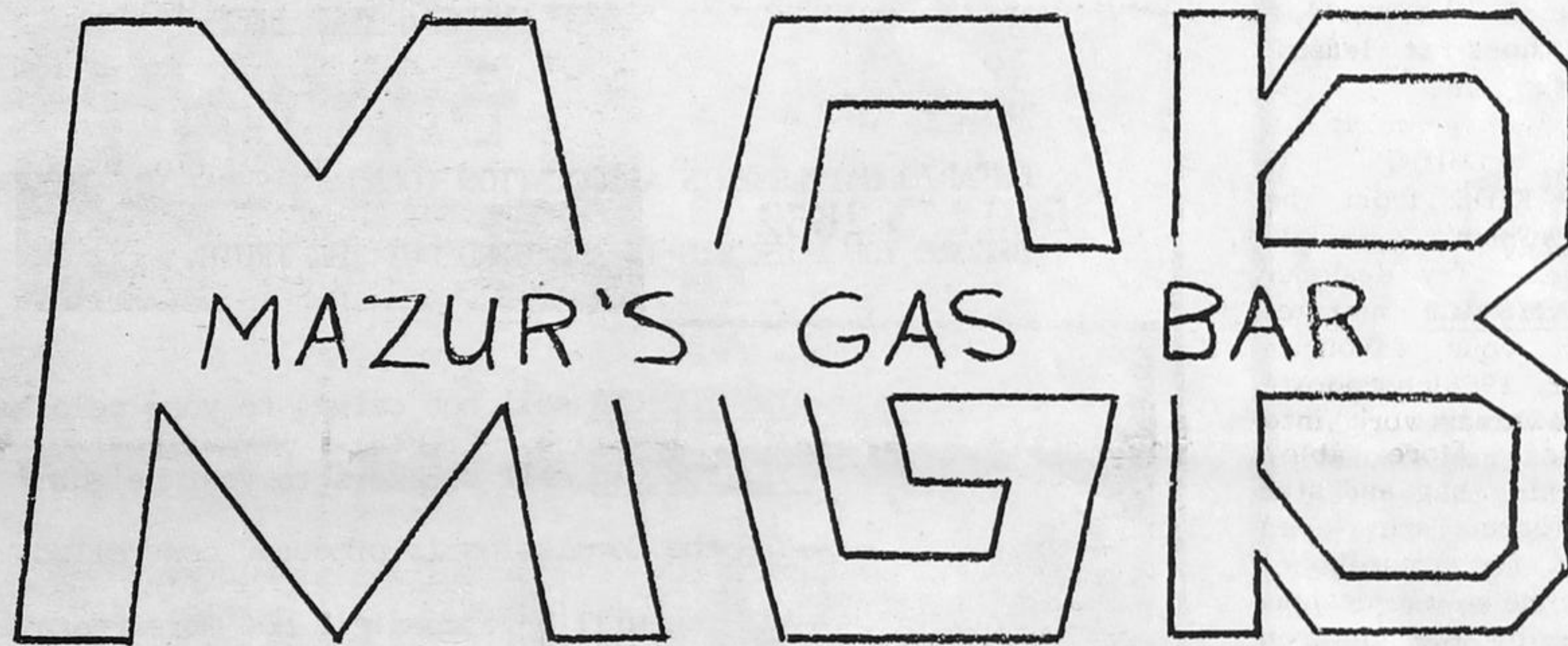
On the other hand, there are many things I like about today's fashions. Skirts, for example, can be anywhere from ankle-length to mini, depending upon your age and your choice. Minis were still going strong when I returned to Canada from England in 1966, and there were some very strange sights to be seen. For example, a tall, handsome lady walking into a restaurant, Beautifully styled hair, an attractive floral print dress, pearls. Very conservative and dignified. Except, as all of her came into view, the dress stopped at mid-thigh. Embarrassing. But not nearly so startling as another lady, who looked

as though she was well into her eighties, wearing shocking-pink hot pants. Oh dear.

Of course, when I was growing up during the thirties and forties, everyone tried to look like their favourite movie star. Plucked eyebrows, à la Marlene Dietrich. Of course, I plucked mine and they never have grown back properly. Also curls. Just about everybody was supposed to have shoulder-length curls. For straight-haired people like myself this meant hours of pure agony under a ton of heavy metal curlers. Not to forget the awful smell of ammonia.

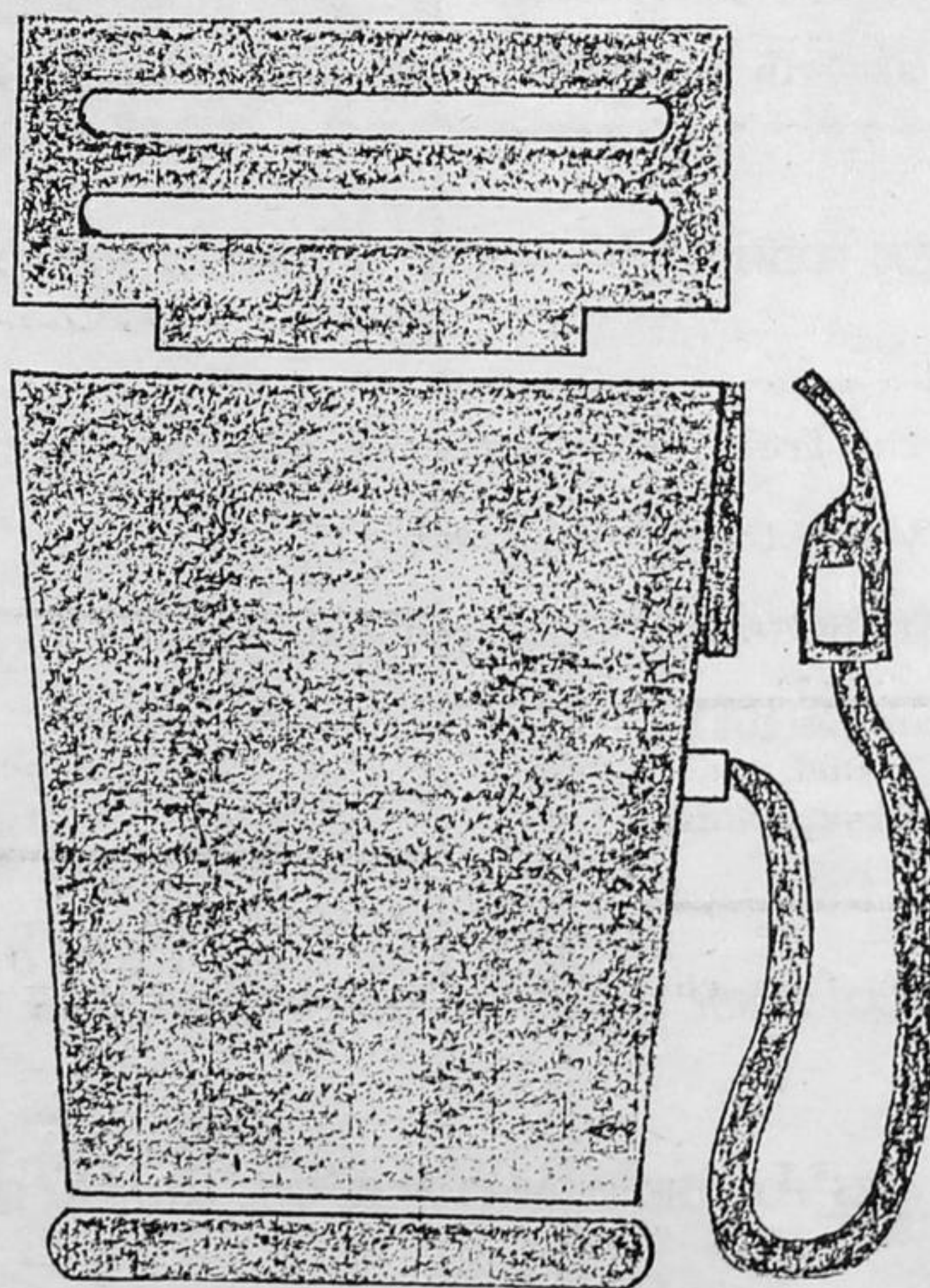
There was also the fortunately brief "Veronica Lake Look." For those of you who remember, she was a lovely blonde who wore her hair longish, straightish, and combed naughtily over one eye. She kept being teamed with Alan Ladd, and the whole bit of tossing back her hair from that partially concealed eye was considered very sexy. Except by this time the war had arrived, and a number

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