

Cut the clutter of commercials

Although she will not be numbered among the film immortals, few of us will forget the recently late Bea Arthur, alias Maude Findlay and Dorothy Sbnak. The brassy, opinionated, somewhat vulgar but curiously engaging character whom, however, few would care to include among their closest friends became familiar to us when television, apart from the National, the Agenda and some reruns, was still worth watching.

What businesses and products sponsored her shows? Only Shoppers Drug Mart, back in the 1980s, comes to mind. Ms Arthur was reluctant to have those commercials seen in the U.S.A., at least not far beyond the border over which Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano now claims, without supporting evidence, that it was from a non-vigilant Canada that the 9/11 terrorists entered her altruistic and peace-loving country.

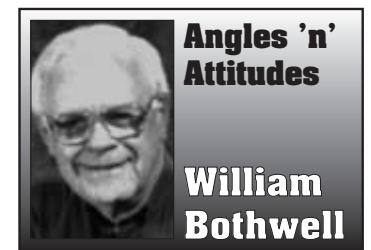
David Bloom, retired chairman of the pharmacy chain, remembers hiring 'Maude' after that sitcom was cancelled in 1978. Instantly recognisable and seldom predictable on camera by those who wrote her scripts, she became for a time Shoppers Drug Mart's tough-talking challenge to independent retail chemists. Other actors have turned to advertising contracts in order to supplement their incomes at the end of their careers. Bea Arthur did so at the height of hers.

Television commercials can be only slightly less annoying than telemarketers. Bloom said that Arthur was the perfect choice of a person to "cut through the advertising clutter" on the TV screen. Like the jumble of junk mail flyers in which some tabloid newspapers get lost, prompting one to consign the whole mess to the blue box forthwith, sales pitches that break unexpectedly into regular programming trigger a negative response.

The action on the screen no longer fades to" this message from our sponsor". The commercials simply intrude and there are usually six or more of them. That insufferable woman who doesn't drive like you do lurches into view before one has had time to reach for the remote volume control to shut her up. The frequent repetition of the same commercial does not impress the message on the mind; it irritates at least this viewer. How many of us rush to switch our auto-

mobile insurance to save "up to \$400 a year"? That's up to \$1.09 a day, not even coffee money.

Why can the CBC not provide Canadian public television free from excessive advertising as it once did? PBS programming from below the border, like the proverbial curate's egg, is good in parts but the new "Buffalo-Toronto" ploy still features shows like "The American (i.e.U.S.) Experience", strictly 'Stateside' news coverage and pictures of Washington's Capitol building, the Grand Canyon and other foreign features



Angles 'n' Attitudes
William Bothwell

with the assurance that "all this belongs to you". It does not. Nor are the frequent 'Britcoms' Canadian content.

To press the point, should the CBC's future not be as a Canadian public broadcaster supplemented by two or three million "member" subscribers who appreciate programming that does not appeal to the lowest common denominator of taste and does not have to compete for advertising? Let that debate begin.

The acceptability of advertising in newspaper and other print media is another matter. Most of us give due attention to the display and want ads that appear in the newspapers we read while ensconced in our favourite chairs or while sipping our morning coffee. Those who have to work on a computer for several hours daily do not foresee the time when they will enjoy reading the news there as well. I, for one, keep both my computer and television set in a basement room, away from the ones in which I live and 'interface' with real people.

By contrast, books, magazines and newspapers read upstairs with family and friends rather than downstairs with the electronic servants, including the washer and dryer. On my living room 'long able', the de-consecrated altar from a 1939-45 RCAF chapel, are current periodicals and papers. I note their advertised goods and regularly order them, but never on-line. I decline to launch my credit card

information into cyberspace.

One has no quarrel with the advertising industry as such. One just wishes that its messages would reach us in less aggressive, non-intrusive, ways. Advertising and the print media have developed together.

The Canadian Encyclopedia says that the first Canadian newspaper advertisement, in the Halifax Gazette in 1752, was for butter.

The first mass circulation advertiser was a probably a magazine ('magasin' = shop) like Eaton's catalogue. It carried neither news nor stories but it reached a cross-country audience and had an extended life in outdoor 'conveniences' where it served another, now almost forgotten, purpose.

By 1889 newspapers were carrying enough advertising lineage that a Montreal firm began arranging the placing of ads in newspapers right across the continent. One such, the Globe, published in Toronto, began in the mid-19th Century to call itself Canada's national newspaper because it was read by Anglophones in every province. Even though under recent editorship it no longer aspires to the journalistic standards of The Times of either London or New York, The Globe may still be the most readable paper in Canada. Its quality, however, is slipping.

In 1988 newspapers carried 22.7% of national advertising. Television had 16.6% and radio 9.1%. The internet did not yet count. The Canadian Advertising Research Foundation (CARF) carefully guards today's figures. User names and passwords alone can unlock the information.

Garth Drabinsky, not now seen as the soundest of entrepreneurs or advisers, said in 1988 that "advertising is one of the greatest forms of education and enlightenment". John Robert Colombo included that in his anthology of Canadian quotations. One way in which Darth Grabinsky's (the late Peter Gzowski's slip of the tongue) Cineplex venues, with their ear-splitting commercials and film trailers, educated me was by teaching me not to arrive for the feature film until at least 10 minutes after the published show time.

That way one avoids a line-up at the box office, the unwelcome 'messages' that are imposed upon a captive audience and the previewed mayhem of the pictures that are coming soon to a 'theatre' near you.

Dods & McNair Funeral Home, Chapel & Reception Centre








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What would his friend think of him now?

As they say, people who live in tin houses shouldn't toss can openers. Which brings us to the recent epidemic of mammoth Tamil protests in Toronto. For decades, when their terrorist pals were either winning the war in Sri Lanka or holding their own - and practicing some of the vile terrorist tactics they invented, e.g. suicide bombers - there were no visible "human rights" protests in Toronto.

It's only now, with the war lost and their dreams of a separate homeland dashed, that they want the world to think that they are the victims.

The Sri Lankan government isn't exactly a poster child for virtue either. And, as the long, bitter war winds down, many innocent Tamil civilians are dying, both at the hands of the government forces and the Tamil terrorists. Indeed, the Tamils also perfected the tactic of using civilians as human shields and of shooting them in the backs when they tried to flee. Nice.

Canada -Toronto in particular - is home to the largest diaspora of Tamils outside of their home country, and several federal ridings in the east end of the city have huge populations of Tamils.

Which no doubt accounts for the shameful actions Sunday night - after the protesters had closed the busy Gardiner Expressway in downtown Toronto, sending women and children to the forefront of their protest - catching the police completely off guard.

The march ended when a representative from Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff's office promised to take the demonstrators' cause to Ottawa. The Tamils want Canada to impose sanctions against Sri Lanka until the government enters into a ceasefire with the Tamils in the country's north.

Funny how all of this activity by the Toronto Tamil community only began lately, after their war took a dramatic turn for the worst.

Where were the protesters years ago when Tamils were recruiting women and children to act as human suicide bombers, a despicable tactic since adopted by several other terrorist groups? Make no mistake, Canada - and most countries - officially consider the Tamil Tigers as terrorists. Last month, the RCMP filed documents in federal court alleging the Tamil Tigers had raised money in Canada through the World Tamil Movement, an Ontario non-profit organization, to finance weapon purchases. RCMP forensic accounting reports allege that between 2002 and 2006, the World Tamil Movement in Toronto wired almost \$3 million to overseas accounts.

Does any of this matter to Ignatieff? Apparently not,

judging by his willingness to cater to the protesters in the hopes of garnering their votes. For many years, Liberals were shamelessly catering to the Tamils here, even as the radicals coerced moderate Canadian Tamils into funding their homeland war. Former Liberal leaders Jean Chretien, Paul Martin and Stephane Dion apparently had no problems with this, despite the group's record. Enter Ignatieff.

Again, let us not pretend the Sri Lankan government is without fault. It too can be - and often has been - brutal in its treatment of the large Tamil minority there.

But the Tamil Tigers, despite various opportunities for a peaceful resolution, have never really been interested.

This was shown dramatically on July 29, 1999, when Tiger terrorists assassinated moderate Tamil politician Neelan Tiruchelvam, who died when a female suicide bomber riding a moped blew up his car.

Tiruchelvam was a champion of Tamil self-determination and justice, but he wanted to reach these goals by negotiating, not by killing. He was a parliamentarian in Sri Lanka, critical of both the government and the Tigers - but instead of embracing his efforts, the terrorist Tigers vilified him as a traitor, and assassinated him.

Tiruchelvam also taught human rights at Harvard University. One of his colleagues there was Michael Ignatieff.

As Jonathan Kay reported in the National Post last week, Ignatieff was outraged when the Tigers assassinated his friend, making it abundantly clear what he thought of them in a subsequent speech to the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression awards dinner in Toronto.

Calling Tiruchelvam was "a man whose memory I revere," Ignatieff added: "When the word got out that I was going to give a lecture in Colombo in his honor, I began to get very extraordinary bits of Tamil literature, mailed to me with a Canadian postmark. And the sum and substance of these newsletters was basically to say that Neelan, my good friend, got what he deserved. This was a man who spent his entire life seeking peace and reconciliation on that bloody and tragic island. And it shocked me deeply to discover that the people who wished and rejoiced in his death were fellow citizens (of Canada) ... Don't think it doesn't put a chill down our spine when you get mysterious little missives like that."

What would his "friend" Tiruchelvam think of him now that he's willing to be the Tiger's apologist in Parliament?

Tamils latest in series protesting wars abroad

Many who live in Ontario feel they owe their loyalty to countries thousands of miles away and they need to put Canada first.

In the most recent example, thousands of ethnic Tamils blocked Toronto's main downtown street for five days, causing huge inconvenience, to focus attention on civil war in Sri Lanka, and 15 were arrested.

They had a right to protest and express valid concerns, particularly that relatives and friends were in danger in the last stages of a losing, bloody rebellion in which human rights have been violated by both sides. Ontarians often are apathetic toward abuses of human rights abroad and they should protest more, not less. The legislature has set up a procedure to protest against abuses of rights abroad, but rarely uses it.

The inconveniences the demonstrators caused also were minor compared to the sufferings on the battleground itself.

But they could have demonstrated at other locations and caused fewer disruptions, and some of the 200,000 ethnic Tamils in the Toronto area have indicated they will continue to protest and are well organized, so this protest is not over yet.

Ontario now has a tradition of disputes that originated abroad being pursued here in which some residents have shown they feel allegiance to other countries and not all involve the province's recent influx of immigrants.

Some prominent, long-established members of Ontario's Jewish community, well known for being active Liberals, switched their support to the federal Conservatives under Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2006 solely on the ground he was more supportive of Israel in its long-running dispute with Palestinians than the federal Liberals.

The defectors, including Heather Reisman, a member of the federal Liberals' executive committee and chair of a key group that recommended policy, and her husband, Gerry Schwartz, a confidante of former Liberal prime minister Jean Chretien, paid for a newspaper advertisement praising Harper for "standing by" Israel in its attack on Hezbollah in

Lebanon.

Reisman said she had been a Liberal all her life, but Harper's stauncher backing of Israel had persuaded her to switch her vote from the Liberals, who were only slightly less avid in defending Israel, but had proposed a ceasefire.

Schwartz said Harper had shown an "unequivocal support of Israel's right to defend itself against terrorism," and other Liberals wrote to Toronto papers saying that they were switching their votes for the same reason.

Arguments are fierce on both sides of this issue, but when Canadians switch from one party to another solely because it is more supportive of a foreign country, and disregard the huge range of issues, mainly domestic, on which voters normally choose, it raises questions about how committed they are to Canadian concerns.

When Yugoslavia disintegrated, Ontarians of Serbian and Croatian origin traded blows outside the legislature and some in both groups went back to fight for what they still called "our homeland," which prompts concerns about how attached they are to the country in which live.

A gasoline bomb was thrown at a consulate and police seized arms meant for Croatia at an airport. Croats wrote "the only good Serb is a dead Serb" and an MPP lost his seat after saying he would never live next door to a Serb.

Sikhs have fought here with swords and daggers over events in the country they came from. A dispute over who had the right to call an area "Macedonia" brought 10,000 Ontarians of Greek ancestry on Toronto streets and police have to separate supporters of Israel and Palestine whenever they march.

Three Ontarians of Irish origin were convicted of attempting to smuggle guns to help dissidents in that country and 1,500 Muslims marched in Toronto demanding author Salman Rushdie should be murdered for allegedly insulting their religion.

Those who come to live in Canada and find much safer, peaceful homes here should leave quarrels that further divide in the countries where they started.

Development vs. Exploitation

Quoting Yogi Bera, "It's deja vu all over again". As noted in a Globe and Mail article, "Land: Africa's last great treasure", this modern trend justifies the headline in the Globe, "The New Colonialism! Are we experiencing a modern form of exploitation or a breath of fresh air meeting society's direst needs?"

Colonization is considered a bad word. To go back a few generations the western world acquired great wealth while exploiting third world resources. South America was stripped of gold. European capitalists got rich mining and selling a tremendous value in South African diamonds. Of course the industrial revolution evolved on the basis of oil from the middle east.

From this aspect, Canada could be considered part of the third world (or in the north even the fourth!). Our proximity to the United States has also made us part of the first world. Most Canadians live close to the southern border hence guaranteeing access to American markets where we also supply resources. Our crown lands are owned by Canadians but we started the ball rolling when it comes to foreign controlled resource development.

Many large Canadian companies are subsidiaries of American firms. Much of the produce from our land is largely controlled south of the border but of course it doesn't matter since northern Canada is out of sight, out of mind to most of us.

Considerable publicity went into the provincial program "Lands for Life" a few years ago. This was a Queens Park decision making process which allocated unlicensed crown land to either industry or environmental reserves. (Most of Ontario's northern crown

forests were already committed to industrial purposes by Queens Park parliamentarians in the south.) Industry is committed to supply timber or pulp to American controlled companies. Similarly large tracts of forest lands in Alberta have been given over to Japanese exploitation.

Canada has led the way into the new era, committing land to foreign industrial development. This modern acquisition of food and energy lands is well reported by the Globe and Mail article. Certainly the world is struggling to supply food for 6 billion people and counting, and becoming aware that the end of fossil fuels for industry, heating and transportation is in sight.

One alternative is rehabilitation of the world's marginal lands to meet these needs. With the spectre of global warming especially, there is an obvious need for alternatives to fossil fuels.

Unfortunately the majority of waste lands coincides with living space for the poorest people on the planet ripe for exploitation, particularly in Africa.

The article reports on a strong movement to get control of African Land. The biggest move is acquisition of land for agricultural development. Lonrho Corporation of Britain has about 25,000 hectares for potential rice production in Angola. Janet, a company in Saudi Arabia has secured 10,000 hectares in Egypt for barley, wheat and livestock feed. India has invested four billion dollars for agricultural production in Ethiopia while the government of Dubai, in conjunction with East Africa agribusiness, secured 5,000 hectares there for tea production. Qatar has leased 20,000 hectares in Kenya for fruit and vegetable production. The list goes on and on



From the Global Classroom
Doug Skeates

involving Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia.

The energy crisis is a similar story with development of land in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2.8 million hectares) for biofuels. Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zaire are other sources of resource lands being sought. The big proportion of these acquisitions is for planting of Jatropha, an oil-nut producing tree.

This promises to be a major source of oil supply supporting the transportation industry as well as production of electricity. It also has considerable potential for poverty alleviation for small landowners as well as energy for national self-sufficiency.

Foreign investment is a valuable tool for creation of prosperity if directed towards grassroots people and as a basis for national development policy. It can also be a powerful means of creating wealth for foreigners controlling land, hence the capability of earning money. Buying or leasing of land by foreign investors restricts the ability of poor people or nations to become self sufficient, hence an effective means of exploitation.

Your Weekly Chuckle . . .

By KEITH HUNTER

"Why are the letters 'B' and 'Y' so important?"

"I don't know. Why?"

"Because we couldn't get 'by' without them."

125 YEARS AGO

Thursday, May 13, 1909

- In a general order issued by Manager Van Horne on the 1st inst., the Ontario & Quebec, Toronto, Grey & Bruce, and Credit Valley railways will henceforth be managed as part of the C.P.R. The old names of these railways will disappear, and they will now all be known as the Ontario Division of the C.P.R.

- Old sidewalks in Shelburne are being torn up and grading being done under the superintendency of the road commissioner. New ones will be laid as soon as possible.

100 YEARS AGO

Thursday, May 13, 1909

- Former Mono reeve Richard Allen drove into Orangeville last Wednesday afternoon and put his horse and rig in the Dufferin House shed. In less than an hour afterwards Mr. Allen went to get his horse but both horse and buggy had disappeared. A track led out of the rear entrance to the yard, and it is thought

the person who took the outfit drove that way in order to escape detection. Police officials of all neighbouring towns have been notified.

- A deliberate attempt was made to wreck the southbound Grand Trunk train between Collingwood and Stayner on May 1. The fiend had arranged the ties placed on the track so as to do the greatest damage had the train struck them. However, the obstructions were noticed and the engineer managed to stop the train before reaching the barricade. A tramp was found in the woods not far away from the place and he was arrested and sent to Barrie jail.

- Robert Phoenix of Mulmur met with a heavy loss on Thursday last by having his residence destroyed by fire. The fire started in the back kitchen at about 2 a.m. and the cause is quite a mystery, there having been no fire there since last fall. Mr. Phoenix and family luckily escaped but had very little time to save much of the furniture. The fire placed Mr. Phoenix in a very awkward position

Dipping Into the Past

CPR ditched historic TG&B and Credit Valley railway names

as he can get no nearby house into which to move. He purchased another farm near the homestead last fall but that house will not be vacant until sometime in June. The premises were insured with the Dufferin Farmers' Mutual Fire Insurance Company.

75 YEARS AGO

Wednesday, May 17, 1934

- A convention at Alliston last Wednesday resulted in James Edward Jamieson being selected as Conservative candidate in the June 19 provincial election for the new riding of Dufferin-Simcoe. Mr. Jamieson has represented South Simcoe in the



last five Legislature sessions. Others nominated included Mayor T. S. Parkinson and Dr. G. H. Campbell of Orangeville.

- Famous Hollywood star Mary Pickford journeyed last weekend to Mulmur Lake with a party of fishing enthusiasts that included Gregory Clark, the well-known Toronto Star feature writer.

50 YEARS AGO

Wednesday, May 13, 1959

- After drilling at various locations for more than a year to locate a well that would improve Orangeville's water supply, one has been

located west of town that tests show will produce 144,000 gallons a day.

- Friday morning of last week, members of the Dufferin Central Fair Board met at the fairgrounds in Shelburne and planted 300 red pine trees around the north and east sides of the race track.

- Centre Dufferin District High School Cadet Corps will hold its annual inspection on May 22nd, and for the first time in several years will also hold a street parade Wednesday of next week.

- Returning officers have been announced for the provincial election of Thursday, June 11. They include John Gillan of Arthur for the riding of Wellington-Dufferin and H. F. Steele of Creemore for Dufferin-Simcoe riding.

- Shelburne's new well, located just behind the old Hydro substation on Main Street East, has a flow of 230 gallons per minute that will materially improve both consumers' supplies and an emergency reserve for fire protection.

25 YEARS AGO

Wednesday, May 16, 1984

- The Ontario Municipal Board has upheld a decision by Orangeville council against allowing a site on West Broadway adjacent to a residential neighbourhood to be used for a car dealership.

- A plan submitted to the Orangeville Planning Advisory Committee calls for the former J. C. Adams building on Mill Street to be converted into 50 apartments.

- Almost three months after 120 workers walked off the job at the Canada Wire and Cable plant, members of local 1285 of the United Auto Workers Union have voted to accept a management offer made after two days' mediation.

- Dufferin County Council has been told a \$3.2 million expansion of the county courthouse is likely to go to tender in October and take about a year to complete.

- Alton residents are skeptical about a proposal to redevelop failing downtown core properties.