

# A week among my souvenirs

When was the last time my 'day planner' was so free of engagements as it is this week? This, not late December, must be 'the holidays'. As Louis XVI recorded in his 1789 diary at Versailles on the day the Bastille was stormed in Paris, "Rien".

Nonetheless, this first week of August is a crowded one in history. On 1 August, 1914 Germany declared war on Russia with fateful consequences for both countries. On 2 August, Hannibal of Carthage defeated the Romans at a decisive battle at Cannae in 216 B.C. and on that day in 1704 (old style calendar which was 11 days behind the European calendar) John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, won the Battle of Blenheim against the forces of Louis XIV.

On 4 August 95 years ago Great Britain and its Empire declared war on Germany which had violated the neutrality of Belgium. On 5 August, 1963 the U.S.A., Britain and the U.S.S.R. signed a nuclear test ban treaty but the world remembers which is the only country ever to drop an atomic bomb on another. Did that defeat Japan or was it the previous day's Russian entrance into the war in the Pacific?

And so history goes, written always by those who 'win'. "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow", says Colm Feore as Macbeth at Stratford this year, "creeps in this petty pace from day to day . . . and all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death". Each generation casts the same shadow over "the peace that should always be", as the song says.

What Barbara Tuchman's 1962 book called "The Guns of August" are still in position throughout the world. Pete Seeger asked, "When will they ever learn?" Those who plan wars but do not expect to die in them aver, paradoxically, that we must fight endless wars to ensure endless peace.

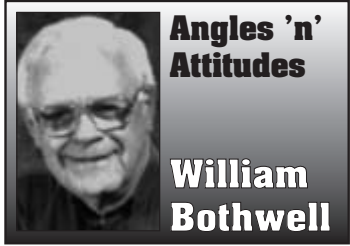
This onetime history teacher has in the course of a lifetime moved from Toronto to New York to Britain, to Montréal to Dufferin County. Too many books, records (both kinds) and other things now fondly remembered have been jettisoned along the way. Much else has been retained among one's souvenirs. .

Some may remember that maudlin old song:

*There's nothing left for me of days that used to be;  
There's just a memory among my souvenirs.  
Some letters tied in blue, a photograph or two.  
I see a rose from you among my souvenirs.*

It gets worse until it ends. 'I find as broken heart among my souvenirs'

Young in spirit as I see myself



**Angles 'n' Attitudes**

**William Bothwell**

but not as those see who think senescence sets in by age 65, those lyrics do make a point because, you see, I do have that box of old letters most of which I am not yet ready to have my children, let alone grandchildren, read, viz. those evidences that "I've had a love of my own". There are 40 or so diaries, the snapshots, the kodachrome slides and the scrapbook.

The latter is an unwieldy volume. I learned 'scrapbooking' from both parents and grandparents.

The oldest volumes contained newspaper cuttings about the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria. Others reported the death of George V, the abdication of Edward VIII and both the coronation and the death of George VI. Newspaper accounts of weddings, my own included, from the days when such events were reported in detail (The bride wore . . . and was attended by . . .) , some of my teen-age columns from the West Toronto Weekly.

There is a sheaf of my school-boy poetry. One is a sonnet from many years before men saw this planet from space. It is entitled "Written on the Humber Bridge". Wordsworth's influence is evident.

*Day's ending nigh! Now all about the span  
The westward flow of thousands from the heart  
Of the great city passes by.*

*They part  
To firesides with homely joys  
their goal.  
Home, peace, - the bulwarks  
of a nation's soul.  
In seas of silent darkness so profound,  
The mirrored lights of Earth in stars abound,  
Each star a jewel set there since time untold..  
But how do they our restless orb behold  
Who in those far-off worlds beyond the sun  
May dwell where ever-drifting planets run?  
See they by unlit hours our troubled plight?  
Are we a wondrous brightness in their sky  
Or darkness midst the heavenly chain of light?*

Lois and I kept files of our children's report cards, art work and notes to us.

There were also the newspapers of the days on which each of them was born.

They were among our souvenirs for many years and then were presented to them when they were older.

Not all of my souvenirs are in books or filing envelopes. Some are framed. Others rest in drawers.

There is a small stone taken from "our river", painted in water colour by a child and inscribed "For you, Grandpa". Or a long-ago Father's Day card with three juvenile signatures on it. Such things are preserved as is a baptismal certificate or as that fragment of Pentelic marble that fell from the frieze of the Parthenon.

I see in a scrapbook a four penny London Transport ticket stub that took me from Knightsbridge to the Piccadilly tube station where, it is said, if one could wait long enough everyone in the world would pass by. A 6d pass once admitted me to the tower of the University Church of St Mary in Oxford. A dance programme from a school "Formal" lists the girls who were my partners that evening. We were all about 17.

None of us would recognise another now. Nor are there such things as dance programmes anymore.

In a free week I have the time to look again at all that 'stuff.. Regrets? I have a few.

## Shot-Gun wedding - 20th Century style

It's unfortunate that big families of the nineteenth century have gone out of style. One of the real pleasures of such is the constant stream of surprises that parents encounter. Kids can be fun; as they reach adulthood the fun just magnifies.

Our youngest son Colin chose an unusual international lifestyle path. After graduation from Guelph, he found a teaching position in northern Thailand leaving behind a whole raft of friends. Of course those have established families across southern Ontario, complete with an assortment of children. A sizeable core have kept in touch with Colin over the years.

In Thailand Colin made friends with another teacher in the school. Yuka, was from Japan and spoke no English while Colin knew no Japanese. Both were learning Thai as they taught their respective subjects. It's amazing that they were able to develop a relationship, communicating only in a strange foreign language.

Colin on return to Canada along with his newfound partner found a position in the banking system in Toronto while Yuka decided on a new career path in languages. She moved to Montreal to learn French while teaching Japanese making many more new friends in the process. Eventually Colin responded to an ad for a teaching position in English as a second language in Tokyo, both returning to Yuka's home territory.

Despite cautious encouragement from both families, neither felt marriage suited their lifestyles.

A few years later they came to Canada for a Christmas vacation in Loretto where they enjoyed the

company of the families of Colin's siblings. Back in Japan they asked each other - "Why not?"

When they returned to their respective careers they investigated wedding arrangements. They found a traditional Japanese wedding would cost them over \$30,000. It would also cost a similar sum for Colin's extended family and friends in Canada to attend such an affair. The alternative was a trip downtown to sign a register. A 10 minute event culminated with a baseball game and a party at a restaurant in Yokahama china town.

Apparently this didn't suffice for the Taniguchi family. On Yuka and Colin's next visit to the family home in southern Japan Colin and Yuka were 'kidnapped' by her two brothers, blindfolded and taken for a drive. They ended up at a marriage chapel, Japanese style.

The facility was complete with hair dresser, a range of styles of wedding dresses, a florist, etc. Colin was ushered in to the barbershop, then fitted with a tuxedo. As part of the conspiracy the family had contacted the couple's Japanese friends to attend the surprise event. And a great time was had by all especially the 'newly re-weds'. The Canadian families were equally delighted to learn of the happy occasion via e-mail the following week.

An interesting sideline to the story was a new development in Colin's career plans. A history of special education for learning disabilities in his earlier years had left his future in limbo. A university education certainly appeared unlikely but after five years in Guelph Colin found himself in a post graduate correspondence course ending with a Master's

his return from England, on September 16.

### 100 YEARS AGO Thursday, August 5, 1909

As a result of the Temperance meeting held in Shelburne Town Hall Friday evening of last week, the next few months will see a Local Option campaign in full swing in Shelburne. The speaker of the evening, Rev. Ben Spence, of Toronto, said there would probably be 120 or more municipalities in line by January in the campaign to abolish the bar, and it was not strange therefore, that something should be done in Shelburne.

The Stayner Sun reports that a black bear was seen at Oakview on Sunday by several campers. It is believed that the same animal was seen by others in the bush near Stayner, and two of them were seen last week near Van Vlack.

The Superior Portland Cement Co., of Orangeville, is running at capacity and cannot get enough ahead to fill all the orders that are coming



**From the Global Classroom**

**Doug Skeates**

degree and a promising career teaching teachers in new techniques in English as a second language in Japanese universities.

That won't be the end of it. A celebration for educational successes as well as a Canadian wedding reception is planned for Loretto this year. Plans are well underway to welcome families and friends from across the Pacific Ocean as well as a vast array of relatives and friends from Toronto, Guelph, etc. At last count our front yard reception in Loretto appears to be reaching well over 100 people and promises to be a joyful international occasion.

Not all 'shot-gun' weddings have a happy ending. This 20th century Japanese innovation is one with real meaning for Colin and Yuka as well as both sets of parents and their families and friends in Canada and Japan. We are living in the world of 'Honda'.

This has become a very small world and this new family relationship is one more example of the two sides of the world coming into even closer contact.

### Your Weekly Chuckle . . .

By KEITH HUNTER  
The flight attendant asked the passenger, "Would you like a meal?"  
"Yes," she replied. "What are my choices?"  
"Yes or no."

### Dipping Into the Past

## Lake west of Shelburne viewed as a source of improved fire protection



in. As many as four carloads are shipped in 24 hours.

Several Orangeville citizens have spoken seriously of taking up the matter of the lake question and making a first-class pleasure resort in Orangeville. About 45 years ago the project of making a lake near the exhibition grounds was earnestly taken up by a number of progressive citizens, but due to the opposition of some the scheme was abandoned.

A northbound freight train came to grief at Crombies Monday. A broken brake beam caught in a switch, tore up several lengths of rails, and landed seven cars in the ditch in a

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## Time to ban ALL public sector strikes

Former British army general Walter Walker put it best way back in 1981 when he said, "Britain has invented a new missile. It's called the civil servant - it doesn't work and it can't be fired."

A bit harsh? Perhaps. But it was brought to mind at the conclusion of two lengthy, costly and smelly civil service strikes, one in Windsor, settled a little while back, and one in Toronto, settled late last week.

There was a time, not that long ago, when taking a job in the public "service" actually meant being hired first and foremost to "serve" the taxpaying. Despite the bravado of pro-union Toronto Mayor David Miller - and much of the city's NDP councillors - the two striking unions ended up getting everything they wanted.

Or, as the old country song went, the unions got the gold mine; the taxpayers got the shaft.

At a time when Toronto in particular, and Ontario in general, were among the hardest hit areas in the country during the ongoing recession, the public service unions had absolutely no qualms about using their power to hold the country's biggest city to ransom in their insatiable desire to feather their own cozy nests.

At a time when private sector unions - witness the auto unions - faced reality and accepted large cutbacks in pay and benefits in order to preserve as many jobs as possible, the public service unions in Toronto went full-speed ahead in demanding not only pay hikes - which they got - but in keeping their gold-plated sick pay plan, which allows employs to bank up to 18 sick days a year and receive up to six months pay for them upon retirement.

Few, if any, private sector employees enjoy such a perk. And Miller had vowed to put an end to it on the grounds that - in his own words - the city just can't afford such luxuries any more.

Well, guess what? A funny thing happened during nearly six weeks of striking - with Miller and his fellow travelers doing everything they could to facilitate the union - and the mayor even had the gall to announce that the controversial sick pay banking system was history.

In fact, all the deal does is assure that new employees won't get it. But all those 30,000 striking workers will get it as long as they are on the

public payroll.

Your correspondent has always believed - and the Windsor and Toronto strikes reinforce the believe - that public servants should not be allowed to strike, period.

It's one thing for private sector unions to strike. It's one legitimate weapon they have to use against their employers.

But the difference between private and public is that when private sector unions strike the public a) has not been paying their wages and b) - is not being held to ransom and c) - has other alternatives to get the service involved.

If, let's say, Ford goes on strike and their cars aren't available, well then, you can buy a Chrysler or a Honda.

But if the city goes on strike, you can't hire a garbage collector or grass cutter or bureaucrat to provide the service you pay taxes to enjoy. It's a monopoly situation. And it shouldn't be legal. What's more, because it's a monopoly, and because public servants know it is virtually impossible to be fired - and they don't have to worry about being competitive or their "company" going broke - most publicly-supplied services are less efficient than private services.

Not all. But most. In Etobicoke, for example, a part of Toronto, they do have private garbage collection. Their employees earn less and are more efficient, saving taxpayers there an estimated 20 percent compared to the rest of Toronto which is dependent upon the public garbage collectors.

Yet during the strike, Miller and his pals consistently looked the other way as striking union thugs interfered with Toronto citizens at designated garbage dump spots, while at the same time sending bylaw officers out to charge people who got frustrated by the forced wait times or were idling their car while waiting in the line to pass the union-imposed pickets.

Public servants always go on about how much they care about their public - whether it's teachers going on strike, or nurses, or garbage collectors, you name it - but when it comes down to it, they don't hesitate to use their monopoly powers to hold their public to ransom until their demands are met.

It's time we smartened up and banned ALL public sector strikes.

## 'Nanny state' laws aren't doing the job

Premier Dalton McGuinty's main claim to fame is bringing in legislation to protect people, but often it has proven to be as much use as a leaky umbrella.

The Liberal premier has brought in more laws that are supposed to protect than any previous premier. This writer has covered the legislature since 1963 and no premier since then has brought in more and previous governments were nowhere near as preoccupied with protecting.

Most of McGuinty's laws to protect have worthwhile aims and are fairly effective, examples including a ban on smoking in enclosed public places, requiring safer car seats for children and forcing schools to remove junk foods from vending machines.

But few days pass without some reminder that legislation the province has to protect is falling short of its aim.

Since 2006 Ontario has had legislation that is supposed to accredit and monitor private career colleges, which train thousands for jobs.

Students in them particularly risk being cheated, because most are young and many are immigrants and less informed on laws than the average resident. More also are using the colleges, because of the economic recession.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, which is responsible for keeping watch on such schools, warned one supposedly training heating technicians that it was required to register more than two years ago, but when it failed to comply did nothing to shut it down.

The province even paid for some students to train at the school and did nothing while instructors were not paid and creditors lined up at its doors, and now it has closed, leaving students unable to continue their studies.

They also cannot get their money back from a plan the province has set up to compensate students when a school fails, because the province had not registered it.

Ombudsman André Marin called the province's protection in this case "an unmitigated disaster," but it would be risky to bet this will not happen again.

One indication is that the ministry of children and

youth services licenses, although this does not seem to provide much protection for anyone, agencies that help Ontarians adopt children abroad.

Would-be parents who are not as rich as Madonna have been paying as much as \$40,000 to get a child from one so-called non-profit agency.

This agency has become bankrupt, leaving its owner's expensive home and cars and scores of Ontarians it was supposedly helping, some of whom had given it down payments of \$25,000 and been left without either their money or the children.

The ministry has said does not run such agencies, but "assumes they follow the law," which knowing human nature sounds optimistic, and after several weeks has managed to get a dozen children here to join parents.

But a government that licenses organizations to perform such services affecting lives should surely keep a closer watch on how they do it.

Earlier this year, a company that sold vacation packages went bankrupt and left thousands of travelers stranded because an industry watchdog the province set up had failed to require it to put more money in its working capital fund to pay its bills, as the guidelines require, or cease selling.

The province should hang its head because it has provided an Ontario Building Code that is essential for health and safety, but passes responsibility for enforcing it to municipalities and, when they refuse, recommends those who object take them to court.

Successive governments have been swamped with complaints for nearly a decade that door-to-door peddlers use high pressure and misrepresentation to sell hydro and natural gas contracts and eventually imposed restrictions on them, but rarely lay charges.

More complaints are being received this year than ever - 2,126 in the first quarter and the latest from a mother whose 11-year-old daughter was badgered into signing a contract by a seller who knocked on their door while the mother was in the backyard.

McGuinty has brought in more legislation to protect residents than any previous premier, but a lot of it is not accomplishing the task.

### 125 YEARS AGO

Thursday, August 7, 1884

Shelburne Council has taken an initial step toward securing protection from fire - that is, to ascertain if an adequate supply of water can be procured by way of mains from the lake on the Town Line West. When a survey is completed the practicability or otherwise will be understood and ratepayers would be in a better position to consider the ways and means for affording the much-needed more protection from fire than they have at present. That there is great need of protection of some kind all will readily admit, and it is to be hoped that after a fair hearing of the various schemes which are almost certain to be promulgated, some practical and efficient one will be adopted as soon as possible.

The Orangeville Gazette has suspended publication.

At a meeting of the Toronto Reform Association Friday evening last, it was decided to give Hon. Oliver Mowat a monster reception on

### 50 YEARS AGO

Wednesday, August 5, 1909

The Ontario Department of Public Welfare has released a report on the proposed sites in Orangeville and Shelburne of the proposed Dufferin County home for the aged.

About 2,000 chairs will be placed in Shelburne Arena Thursday night for the 9th Annual Canadian Open Old Time Fiddlers' Contest, scheduled to get under way at 7 p.m. Friday.

### 25 YEARS AGO

Wednesday, August 8, 1984

Orangeville is one step away from a new and much-needed elementary separate school. The town's Planning Advisory Committee has recommended that Town Council approve an application for a zoning change permitting construction of the school in an area 180 feet west of the Blind Line at Greenlaw Street.

Fiddle fans are swarming to Shelburne for the 34th annual Canadian Open Championship Fiddlers' Contest.

### 75 YEARS AGO

Wednesday, August 9, 1934

The weather was very kindly indeed on Monday for an open-air celebration, and the annual "big day" at Horning's Mills Community Park proved most enjoyable. With an afternoon program of sports and evening program of entertainment and dancing there was every inducement for people of the district to come out and enjoy themselves and a goodly number took advantage of the opportunity, many former residents of "the Hollow" also coming up from Toronto for the occasion.