

The pleasure of writing

For some, writing is their livelihood. They can be, barring receipt of a Booker Prize, a Governor General's Literary or a media writing award, persons of sorrow and acquainted with grief. For others writing is a passion that cannot be denied and, for still others, occupational therapy. Someone said all writers are failed conversationalists.

Not so. Another opined that scribblers cannot think on their feet as do televangelists or some parliamentarians. They, therefore, must do so sitting down with writing materials or a keyboard at hand.

Anon who, with his colleague Ibid, is one of my favourite authors, said, "The beginning of any written piece is easy; what follows is the difficult part".

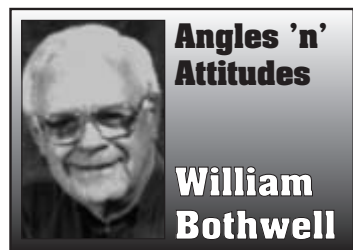
Angles 'n' Attitudes is approaching its twentieth year on this page. Several people a year ask, "How long does it take to put 1000 or so words on paper each week?". Well, - that word is the most frequently used prefix to answering a question - there is never a stopwatch to time the 'word-processing'. This scribe does not first lay out a plan for the finished product as Miss Gertrude Husband taught us to do at Runnymede School. The writing goes with the flow - or flight - of thought. Outdoing the tidal bore on the Petitiociac River at Moncton, one's stream of consciousness can retreat and then reverse itself at varying depths more than twice a day.

In this case, the first application of pencil to foolscap may take an hour, minus the time demanded by incoming telephone calls. Those interruptions are the reason that 700 to 900 and 2000 to 2200 hrs are my preferred daily times for writing unless one has retreated to monastic premises. More commonly, one's writing times are where one finds them. When possible, a weekly columnist tries to keep ten days between conception and the due date.

The first hour of writing should produce a minimum of 400 words in their initial or reconfigured form. That will include time out for checking references in books and on-line. That research is part of the fun and of the pleasure. May Providence bless those who teach each new generation how to

mine the resources of school, civic and other libraries.

Once the full complement of words is on paper it must then be computerised, if that be a word. Then comes its assumption into cyberspace, not always on fiery chariot wheels nor attended by angels, and, finally, its canonisation in print. Publication does not guarantee inerrancy but, face it, what one reads, infallible or not, takes up residence in the mind and, as Leon Bloy said about sin in *The Woman Who Was Poor*, traverses space, transfixes suns



Angles 'n' Attitudes

William Bothwell

and reaches to the outer limits of the universe.

Even what the Greeks called *haireisis* and we have vilified as 'heresy' is not necessarily subversive. The Greek word meant, simply, 'opinion'. Those who hold contrary opinions are not *ipso facto* dangerous or depraved people.

What I think may differ from someone else's 'take' on the matter. Truth, like a diamond, has various facets and different 'lights'. The charge of heresy has usually had a political as well as a philosophical or theological dimension.

It is a challenge to remember that what one types into a computer this morning may be read later today by friends and colleagues throughout around the world. That will include the atrocious paragraphing imposed by the necessity of journalistic spacing and the reproduction of typos that might have been caught by a more careful author or copy editor. Oh well, what one reads here is not going to be published by McClelland & Stewart.

As far as the terror of writer's block is concerned, the great story teller, Guy de Maupassant, counselled us to "just get something black onto something white every day". Somebody added "even if that be only a suicide note". One may even include one of those planet-transfixing literary sins. Hilaire Belloc, G.K Chesterton's contemporary,

wrote, "When I am dead, I hope it may be said / Though his sins were scarlet, what he wrote was read".

Let me see now, what did Belloc write? Whatever it was, the pleasure of communication with one's contemporaries, and their response, is considerable. Even when somebody writes to say what a knave or fool one is and adds to a signature the ostentation of multiple academic degrees, the contest of varying ideas is satisfying. Civilisation really began when we stopped beating one another about the head - or elsewhere - and began writing letters to the editor.

Parliamentary and Congressional adversaries do not usually relate to one another as do the rest of us, nor are many of them the most profound of thinkers. With their well documented difficulty in managing their marriages and personal lives, how could we trust them to govern the nation without active opposition?

But there are limits. A USA friend sent me a recent e-mail that asked, "If Pro-gress means moving forward, what does Con-gress mean?". Some would say that constant attack dog debating means the death of democracy from legislative cardiac arrest.

But apart from politics, religion, philosophy, history, literature, nostalgia, nonsense and all the other things one writes about here, this space is a personal "footprint in the sands of time", as Longfellow put it.

With the diaries one has kept to record for posterity the fact that one was here, I, like Belloc, am intrigued by the thought that what you are reading now may be read, probably on microfiche, by someone in the year 2209. The Metropolitan Toronto borough of Dufferin will then have a population of 250,000.

Someone yet unborn may be moved to research what interested, concerned or amused this and other local writers back in the 21st Century.

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Limericks Contest

As announced here in October, we will publish on December 24 limericks about persons, places or other aspects of life in Dufferin County. See the advertisement on page A4.



From the Global Classroom

Doug Skeates

International Energy Agency, bemoans our lack of progress in developing fossil fuel capacity to meet future energy needs. Drilling of new oil wells has declined. Should I cheer or cry? "Current policies put us on an alarming fossil-energy path". The agency is warning that, unless we accomplish a dramatic revolution in production of low-carbon energy, we will experience severe effects on the world's temperature by the end of the century. Their negative caution is in fact a clue to a potential solution, development of alternative energy technology.

Of even greater significance was a note "Energy conservation in transportation, buildings and industrial processes remains the most practical and cost-effective means of reducing emissions". We are in for hard times undoubtedly but these are two major recommendations for achieving our goal and ones that our representatives to Copenhagen should consider very seriously next month. It can be done, believe it or not, if our government would take the matter seriously and agree to work with other countries in making the world a better place to live.

Your Weekly Chuckle . . .

By KEITH HUNTER

After years of gambling, Maxie finally figured out how to win a small fortune in Las Vegas. He went with a large one.

Dipping Into the Past

Station agent placed at Melville Junction after head-on collision

uted to the railways failure to maintain and agent at the important junction point. The new agent, Mr. Lloyd Wansborough, of Fergus, went on duty on Monday.

The first of a series of four monthly contest concerts, under the auspices of the Epworth League, was held in Shelburne Methodist Church Monday night. A debate, "Resolved that it would be in the interests of Canada to extend the franchise to women," excited a lot of interest. E. G. Button and Gordon Clarke, championed the affirmative and A. Aiken and M. Price, the negative. The affirmative won.

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'Downright dangerous selective political correctness'

Last July, it took U.S. President Barack Obama literally moments to conclude publicly that the arrest of a prominent black Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates - a personal friend of the president - not only showed that Boston police acted "stupidly" but that there was racism involved.

"...what I think we know separate and apart from this incident is that there's a long history in this country of African-Americans and Latinos being stopped by law enforcement disproportionately. That's just a fact."

It may be a fact. But it's not clear that at the time Obama smeared the cops that he was aware that one of the two police officers who were responding to a call from a neighbour worried about somebody breaking in was himself black.

Nor, as it turns out, was there a shred of evidence that the white officer on the scene was motivated by racism. Indeed, seen in the full light of day, the main problem was the initial haughty refusal of the professor to show proper identification when he was asked, quite properly, to do so.

Fast forward to the murderous rampage in Fort Hood by U.S. Army Major Nidal Malik Hasan on Nov. 5, a 39-year-old psychiatrist who killed 13 unarmed people and wounded another 38 at that large Texas military base.

Despite obvious indications that Hasan's attack was a terrorist assault on U.S. soil - the largest one since 9/11 - Obama suddenly lost his bravado about making instant judgements, the one he was only too willing to level against a white Boston cop who had arrested his friend.

Suddenly, Obama declared, "I would caution against jumping to conclusions until we get all the facts."

That's not a bad rule of thumb, only he didn't follow it in the Boston case when he fingered the bad guy as a white Boston cop.

Yet in the Fort Hood slaughter, Obama deliberately chose to ignore certain "facts" which were readily available at the time of the shootings. Obama - and most of the mainstream media - still are refusing to mention the obvious connection that Hasan's radical Islamism played in the shootings.

Here's a guy who we learn shouted "Allahu Akbar" ("God is great," the jihadist battle cry) while he was shooting people. A guy who recently used what was supposed to be a medical meeting at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center to deliver what

Washington journalist Charles Krauthammer described as "an hour-long disquisition on what he called the Koranic view of military service, jihad and war ... (including) an allegedly authoritative elaboration of the punishments visited upon nonbelievers - consignment to hell, decapitation, having hot oil poured down your throat."

There are numerous similar incidents to demonstrate clearly just how radical and anti-American Hasan is, but the army, fearing a backlash if they took action against a Muslim, instead promoted him.

Obama is not alone in jumping through hoops to avoid the obvious. Most of the mainstream media - especially the New York Times and the major U.S.-based news magazines - have not only refused to report the obvious but have scolded the few who do.

Joe Klein, in Time, for example, wrote of the odious attempts by Jewish extremists ... to argue that the massacre ... was somehow a direct consequence of his Islamic beliefs.

Imagine thinking that a guy who shouted "Allahu Akbar" as he mows down innocent, unarmed people, a guy who has 'SOA' (soldier of allah) printed on his business cards, might just possibly have motives connected to his Islamic beliefs. Do you really have to be a 'Jewish extremist' to draw that conclusion.

But then, this misplaced and downright dangerous selective political correctness is nothing new. As Krauthammer pointed out, the New York Times published a front-page headline after the first (1993) World Trade Center attack about the arrest of Mohammed Salameh declaring, 'Jersey City Man Is Charged in Bombing of Trade Center.'

Do you think if a radical fundamentalist Christian from Jersey City blew up an abortion clinic the headline would be, 'Jersey City Man Is Charged in Abortion Clinic Bombing.' Not bloody likely.

Indeed, The New York Times and their ilk in the liberal media - no doubt joined by Obama - would be the first to condemn not only the specific act, but the entire anti-abortion movement. And there certainly would be no shying away from the Christian fundamentalist aspect of it.

Yet when a Muslim officer deliberately kills and wounds dozens of innocent U.S. citizens right on U.S. soil while shouting the jihadist battle cry - the same cry used by suicide bombers and others - we dare not mention the religious aspect.

Or, as Obama cautions, best not avoid "jumping to conclusions..." How pathetic.

Image of a caring government might help

Premier Dalton McGuinty must be wondering how he can recover from his breathtaking plunge in the polls, but he has a few things going for him.

The Liberal premier has fallen from seeming assured of a third successive election victory in 2011 to being in danger of losing government, mainly because he failed to prevent insiders living high on taxpayers' money while running up an unprecedented deficit this year of \$24.7 billion.

He needs to switch voters' attention to other issues, and this will not be easy.

The abuse of public funds was so clear that McGuinty would be wasting time trying to convince voters that he was not ultimately responsible, and the best he can hope for is that those who remember it will believe his new controls will prevent it happening again.

He also will get a break, because all parties when in government permitted such abuse, although on a lesser scale, and many voters have concluded this is what all politicians do.

McGuinty needs to continue insisting that he is not responsible for the economic recession, which has some truth, because it is happening all over North America.

The big issue will be what he has done to prevent it worsening, and with luck he soon may be able to point to some examples of where the province's investments have saved jobs.

One issue with which McGuinty has to come to grips is reducing the cost of the of the public service and not merely promising to review all its spending and consider forcing civil servants to take days off without pay, as New Democrat premier Bob Rae did in the 1990s.

The Liberal premier also may be able win back some ground. He has had friendly relations with public sector unions, because he caved in to pay raises for them that were generous on the eve of a recession.

The unions owe McGuinty, and he would score a coup if he could persuade them to give back something substantial. Although it is a long shot, they might do this, knowing the alternative would be an extreme-right

Progressive Conservative government that would not even leave them with tea breaks.

The premier can promote himself also by reminding the public of former Conservative premier Mike Harris, who refused to speak to unions and cut many public service jobs. But McGuinty barely needs to do this, because Harris keeps returning to public view with his support of the new, far-right Conservative leader, Tim Hudak, and comments, as well as many letters in newspapers warning against him.

McGuinty has been accused of dithering when issues are contentious, but he could counter this by pointing to his actions that include refusing to fund more faith-based schools, which offends many non-Christians, and launching full-day kindergarten, despite warnings it is too expensive.

McGuinty also has one topic on which he can clearly differentiate himself from the Conservatives and this is that he has brought in far more laws to protect residents than any other premier in history. These include banning smoking in workplaces, enclosed public places and cars in which children are passengers, which will save many lives.

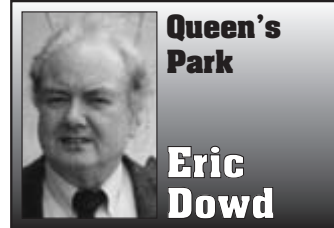
McGuinty made Ontario the first province to ban pit bulls and ordered elementary schools to remove junk foods such as potato chips and pop from vending machines and replace them with healthier snacks.

His government has also required bars and liquor stores to post signs warning pregnant women that alcohol can cause birth defects.

Students using school buses and infants in car seats are safer because of laws McGuinty brought in, and his latest bans drivers using hand-held cell phones except in emergencies.

McGuinty has never collected them in a package and said this is what his party has done that protects people, because he is worried the Conservatives, who opposed many, will accuse him of interfering in people's lives and creating a nanny state.

But the Liberal premier could fight an election on the theme his party cares for people, and there might be a lot of grateful votes out there for him.



Queen's Park

Eric Dowd

125 YEARS AGO

Thursday, November 20, 1884

Dufferin County Council, meeting in the council chamber of Shelburne Town Hall on Tuesday, passed a motion that the Committee on Roads and Bridges "be instructed to consider and to report upon the advisability of supplementing a grant of \$40, made by the County Council of Simcoe at the last meeting thereof, to assist in building a bridge over Pine River on Town Line, between Mulmur and Toronto."

Prior to his departure for India recently, Lord Dufferin was tendered a banquet in Belfast, Ireland, and in replying to the toast of his health referred to Canada: "Least of all can I forget that memorable night when, on the eve of my departure for Canada, this splendid chamber was filled with friends who had assembled together to bid me God's speed, and to assure me that, in the opinion of those who had known me best and longest, the honour then conferred upon me by Her Majesty was not considered mis-

placed or undeserved. That occasion ushered in the brightest and happiest period of my life, a period passed in one of the fairest regions in the Empire, among a people animated by the most generous instincts, shadowed by all the noblest gifts and qualities which distinguish the British race, and to whom I owe a debt of gratitude and affection whose welcome burden I shall carry to the grave."

100 YEARS AGO

Thursday, November 18, 1909

The first shot of the second stage of the Local Option campaign in Shelburne was fired Tuesday night. Although the weather throughout the day and evening was beastly, nearly 200 people turned out to hear the speakers in the Town Hall. Another public meeting will be held there Tuesday evening of next week.

The CPR has placed a station agent at Melville Junction. The head-on collision which occurred near the station a few weeks ago was attrib-



rear of the Dufferin Light & Power Co.'s building. Bellerby Bros. have the contract.

75 YEARS AGO

Wednesday, November 22, 1934

Two-thirds of the townships in Ontario's rural power districts have passed bylaws accepting the proposal of the Hydro Electric Power Commission that contracts with rural power customers will be on the basis of five years instead of 20 years as heretofore.

There being one jury case, but no criminal actions on the list, Mr. Justice Hope was presented with the traditional pair of white kid gloves on arriving in Orangeville on Tuesday, to preside at the Dufferin Fall Assizes. Members of the Grand Jury had been notified that their services would not be required.

Many folks in Dufferin are travelling after dark in horse-drawn vehicles without carrying a plainly visible light, according to Traffic Officer Kirk, who says several complaints

have been made in this regard. The law definitely requires all vehicles to carry lights after dark.

50 YEARS AGO

Wednesday, November 18, 1959

The Board of Shelburne District Hospital has announced that it intends to present plans for a new hospital to the November session of Dufferin County Council. Shelburne Council has already offered a site for the hospital in Berwick Park.

25 YEARS AGO

Wednesday, November 21, 1884

After a day of hearing legal arguments, a Young Offenders' Court judge has ordered the courtroom cleared for the initial appearance of the young person accused of murdering Daniel Babineau, 11, and his sister Monique, 9.

For the first time in more than a decade, Handel's choral masterpiece The Messiah will be performed locally, at Orangeville's Westminster United Church on December 1 and 2.