

Hitch-hiker blues: the heat of the summer

by Kevin Gillese

A black asphalt highway is always — and I mean always — the hottest spot in summer. No amount of talking can convince a hitch-hiker it's not, what with the glare and reflected sunlight, the hot blasts of air wafting in from surrounding fields, the dry, gritty gravel being tossed into unsuspecting faces and radiant heat burning through the soles of suffering feet.

Be that as it may, there's nothing quite like travelling the

Canadian highway for a summer (or any part thereof). When you hit the road, you're free; nobody's going to tell you where to go, how many miles to travel in a day, what stops to make or which sights to see. It's entirely your own show, without the convenience of a purchased travel tour, but certainly the cheapest mode of travel ever and one tailored to individual desires.

Hitch-hiking is particularly free in Canada. In places like

Europe and the States, it is usually illegal to hitch-hike on any major freeway. This necessitates legal hitching on small, hard-to-stop-on freeway entrances and exits. In Canada, it's perfectly legal to hitch-hike on the two major freeways (the trans-Canada and Alaska highways) and there are only two hundred and fifty miles of freeways where hitch-hiking is taboo. (the #401 routes outside Toronto and Vancouver).

Even then it's not very hard to get away with hitching the #401, as cops rarely cruise the freeways, if at all. (Of course, that's been my own experience. Others may have been less lucky than I.)

Each year in Canada the federal government sets up a system of temporary youth hostels along the Alaska and trans-Canada routes. A bunk for the night, also a light supper and breakfast is provided for one dollar a night. Although hostels do exist along highways in Europe, they are generally more costly to stay in. Meals are extras and the hostels are usually located a fair bit off the highway.

For hitchers who like to travel early in the morning, this can cause quite a hassle when trying to reach the road before buses start to run or without having discovered the proper bus connections to get out to the road.

In Canada, highways usually begin within the city limits, (i.e. Stony Plain Road in the West End is actually the beginning of Highway 16 West and the cities in Canada are generally small and/or compact.) This is a blessing for hitch-hikers; in Europe or the States you can walk, thumb or ride the bus many miles from city centres to get to the road junctions where you are allowed to hitch-hike legally.

You may be called a 'parasite of society' when you're on the road. You may even have trouble living up to this allegation (it's difficult unless the drivers cooperate and pick you up). But you'll see something of Canada, even if only our tarry asphalt and the exhaust fumes of vacationing families; you will enjoy the solitude and the opportunity for unstructured travel.

And when you're standing on the hot, dusty highway, you can find solace in the fact that there are beer parlours and taverns in every small town in this great country of ours, just waiting to extend hospitality to a weary traveller from the road.

News goes to the dogs

SAN FRANCISCO (ZNS-CUP) - As proof positive that the world has indeed gone to the dogs, *Editor and Publisher* magazine reports that an unidentified California newspaper caused "record headaches" among subscribers when it ran a meat advertisement using bacon-scented ink.

Dozens of canines reportedly grabbed the papers from people's front steps and ripped them to shreds.



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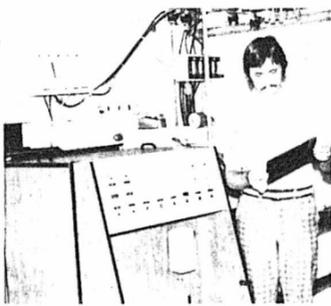
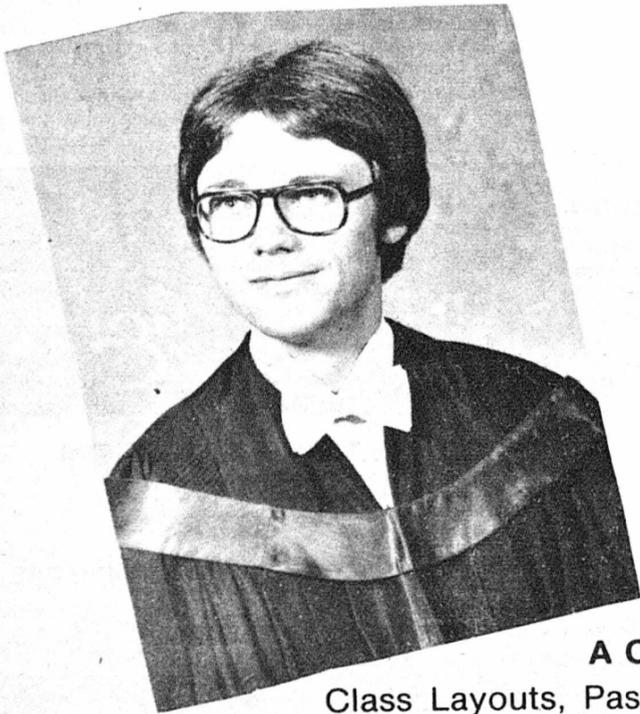
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