

## The Rattler's Den



By Rathburn Rattler

Sallied forth to that nice little town to the east Friday and, en route, started wondering why the Department of Highways (here we go again!) ever bothers to post those 45 mph work zone signs on the Queen Elizabeth Way when it patently has no intention of enforcing them.

Indeed, you'd take your life in your hands if you tried to drive at 45 mph all the way from Dixie rd. to the end of construction, about a mile west of the Humber. And you'd risk more lives than your own.

Partly this is just because no one bothers to do anything about people who clip through at 60 (the string of vehicles in which we were trapped zipped by a parked OPP cruiser at that speed, without raising an eyebrow). And partly this is because those 45 mph signs cover a vast stretch of road while the only construction where actual hazards exist is, in fact, in a relatively small area.

If the department sticks those signs up so that its carefree employees can saunter through three lanes of bumper-to-bumper traffic to pick up their lunch pails (as we've seen), it has holes

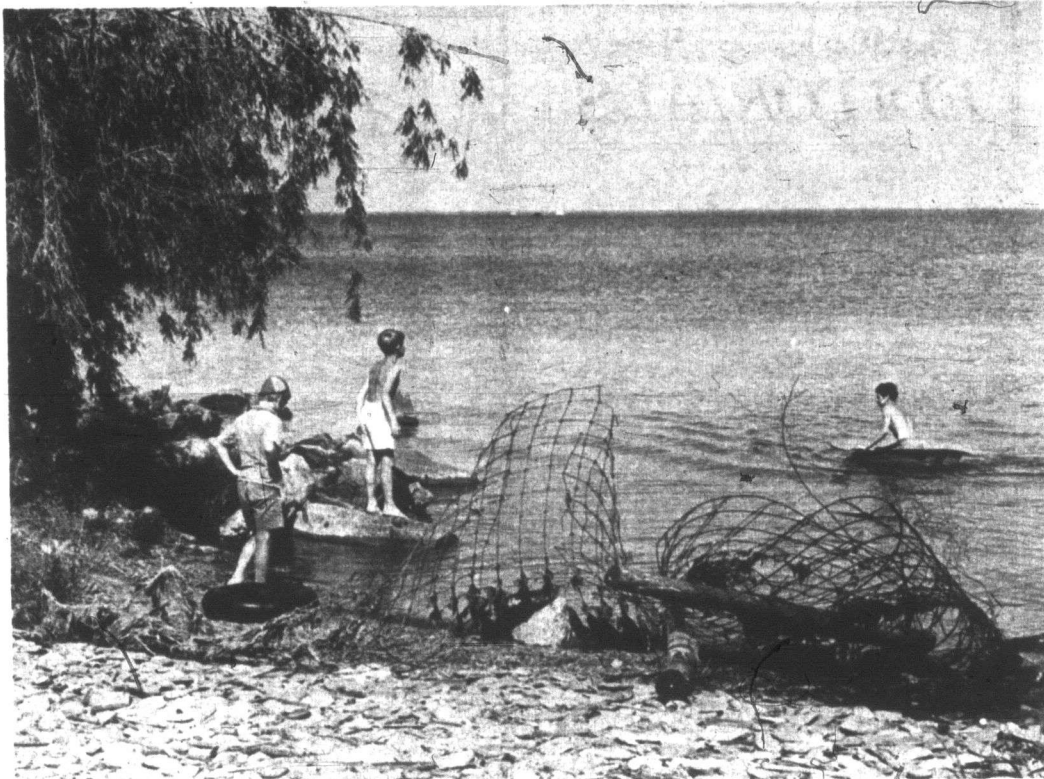
in its collective head. We came upon one such jolly soul the other day, helplessly marooned on the dotted line separating the median and centre lanes while drivers — who couldn't see him until the last second because of the cars ahead — whizzed past on either side. The only miracle was that there wasn't a 50-car pileup.

Yet there surely is no reason at all for the 45-mile zone which stretches all the way from Hwy. 27 to east of Royal York rd. Sure, there's construction on either side, and behind barriers.

And as long as the department posts 45 mph signs in zones where 60 mph is plenty safe, you can bet only a handful of motorists are going to pay them the least attention. We'd be willing to bet that most accidents are caused on that particular stretch by otherwise-good drivers who become infuriated by the snail's pace they must maintain behind drivers travelling at legal speed.

At rush hours, in particular, you're doing well to hit 25 mph to begin with.

We'll buy restricted speeds in danger zones any day. But the so-called danger zone on the QEW is ridiculous.



THOSE LAZY, HAZY DAYS Youngsters at Clarkson's Shoreline Park

Straight from  
the (Soft)  
Shoulder

### Cottage capers

BY FAYE COOPER

We spent the weekend investigating the Ontario cottagers' psyche. Are they turned on and tuned in!

The theories are beautiful. Get away from the smog, dirt and congestion of the city and escape into the quiet, placid serenity of the beautiful lake country of the Haliburton Highlands, there to enjoy swimming, boating, sunning and all those relaxing non-pursuits one can un-hurry to do.

Hah! Who are those cottagers trying to kid? There's such a divergence between theory and fact that it's unbelievable anyone can ever reconcile the two or rationalize himself, around to the point where they even vaguely resemble one another.

The weekend began inauspiciously with a 3½-hour trip consuming some 5½ hours of prime time. Never mind why — you wouldn't believe it

anyway. We were invited by some new acquaintances who doubtless had the purest of motives (and for which we are

grateful, of course), to round out a group consisting of six adults and six children. Our host mentioned in passing that he would like my husband to

do a little hammering on the roof, but other than that there would be lots of time to enjoy every-

thing.

From the moment, a half hour after our arrival, when one of our number nose-dived off the roof on to the rocks below (he slipped on freshly rained-on new lumber) and passed out cold, the weekend was one long hilarity of continual din, fighting children, thunder and lightning storms, and drop-ins by gay groups of neighboring natives.

These last came and stayed and stayed and stayed and went and came back and stayed and stayed and ate and drank and stayed etc. etc. until the whole weekend became a blur of trying to keep one's eyes open against natural fatigue (who wouldn't be tired after two smashing night's sleeps of three hours each?).

The crowning caper was provided by the friend of a friend of a friend who came with — well, never mind. He had too much to drink, and his thoughtful keeper (a little worse for wear himself) put him to bed in the troupe's boat. You can imagine the panic, two hours later, when they couldn't find him. After a frantic half hour he was located nestled in the bow, so far up under the deck and so peacefully asleep that nobody could rouse him.

The chastened group set off, and we went to bed. We found out the next morning they had got lost in the warm fog of the lake, run out of gas, and drifted three hours till dawn before they were helped in to shore. This is FUN?

They must think it is. They keep going back for more while the cottage country socks it to 'em, socks it to 'em . . .

## SUGAR and SPICE by Bill Smiley

## Ah, that silver lining

### AH, THAT SILVER LINING

If your family is anything like mine, you must sometimes put your head down on your arms and weep, quietly and bitterly.

We go through periods of passivity and morbidity to the point where mass suicide seems the only sane solution.

And with the perversity of life, suddenly the clouds break, the sun comes out, the rainbow appears, there's a pot of gold at its base and God is once again back in His heaven, instead of hanging around the pool-hall.

We've just been through one of these cycles, and I reckon that just about one more will finish me off.

It began about ten weeks ago. For the fifth time in the last couple of years, Hugh, the wandering boy, took off to make a new start and his fortune. This

time it was to be in the mines of northern Quebec. A week later we received a card from the flesh-pots of Montreal, urging us to write and saying he had a job at Expo Jr. We all wrote. Silence. Nothing. For weeks and weeks. Momma worried. I didn't.

At about the same time my wife got sick and couldn't write her university exams. Had a small operation, came home and lay around the house, driving me mad.

Kim, of course, had to get into the act and come down with mono-nucleosis. She was forbidden to study. Would she fail her year?

Your humble servant, as usual, had nothing wrong with him except a rotten family. However, he just put his nose to the wheel and his shoulder to the grindstone and kept on running in circles. He's used to it.

Things got steadily black-

er. Hugh maintained silence. His mother learned she had to have a big operation and spent a month chewing her fingernails right up to the wrists as she waited for the hospital to call, the ghastly operation, and the news that she had cancer. Kim got surlier and surlier from being cooped up.

Did my best. Wrote Hugh a strong letter. Talked to my wife for endless hours about hysterectomies, ovaries, uteruses, malignant fibroids and such delicacies. Tried to humor Kim into eating and sleeping.

Then everything started to pop at once. The hospital called and the old lady went off to her doom. For three days I sweated out the operation and at the same time Kim's promotion from Grade 12, which lay in the hands of the gods, her teachers.

Finally, the dam broke.

All in one day we hit the crisis. Hugh phoned from Quebec City, to learn that his Mum was likely breathing her last. Kim was granted her year at school. And that night, a shaky old lady of about 90 called from the hospital to tell me that she was alive, though not exactly kicking.

During the next week, the tide rose and the old family ship, which had been high and dry on the bleak beach amid the rotting weeds, began to float again.

Hugh phoned his mother in hospital, and she was so glad to hear from him that she forgot to give him hell for not writing. The missus came home from hospital with an all-clear, a beautiful scar and feeling remarkably perky. Kim recovered her health with amazing speed.

So, as it stands now, Hugh has a job as a waiter

in Quebec City, is happy and has stopped smoking and biting his nails. My wife is overwhelmed by the flowers and cards from friends. Didn't think she had many. And she's feeling great, on the whole. Kim is riding on a cloud because her brother has invited her to visit him in Quebec City, and she's going all the way by herself, with no parents to ruin everything.

All of this is rather uninteresting, but it is written as inspirational material for those thousands of gallant men across the country who are about ready to burst into tears.

Don't let it get you down, Jack. Behind every dark cloud there is a darker one. Just keep that in mind and you'll be amazed at how you feel when the sun suddenly comes out.

If you can live so long.