

TOCKING HEADS



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George Bowering

ALBERTA SERIES #2
above/ground press

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With thanks to

San Francisco Chronicle
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Toronto Star
Niagara This Week
Welland Tribune
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Victoria Times Colonist

Red West Shifting to Blue

Communist Montana,
Socialist Wyoming,
are losing happiness quickly.

This is so sad, they say,
the nobility is moving in,
lords all over cow country.

**Parents Furious After Schools
are Forced to Cut teachers**

Blood on the classroom floor
is bad education, says mom,
poor pedagogy, adds dad.

How is this any better
than Goth kids
shooting up the school cafeteria?

**School
Cuts to
go Ahead**

The school board
isn't about to listen
to furious parents.

The knives come out
tomorrow. The teachers, one hopes,
have a good hospital plan.

**Tories Plan
to Protect
Same-Sex
Opponents**

If you're planning
to oppose your woman
and you're a guy

you're on your own.
Let the Liberals
look after you.

Matches Made in Heaven

In the other place
everyone has a light,
and they're smoking all the time.

The question I have is:
who's working in the match
factories up there?

And do they have
fair labour practices in Paradise?

**Trio Marches down the Niagara River to the
Beat of their own Drum**

I hope they hang on
tight, and I hope that drum
is big enough for three.

In any trio
two of them will be same-sex
drummers. I hope

they're on friendly terms,
because the Tories
can't do anything about the Falls.

**U.S. Diplomat says
Passports won't Hurt**

They will come with
blunt edges. There'll be no
blood on the customs house floor.

You'll be allowed
to carry them on board
past watchful security agents.

**Gilliland
Captures
First Pole**

The pole was
immobile and standing
straight up at the time.

David Gilliland stood
with his arms around it,
breathing normally.

Two Paralyzed after Drinking Recalled Toxic Carrot Juice

It didn't taste funny at all,
said one victim, but I do remember
how flavorful it was.

I seem to see in my mind's eye
an unnatural orange hue,
put in his unfortunate partner.

**Axe may Fall on
Outdoor Centres**

It has been hanging
by the merest thread,
or so it seems,

reports an apprehensive
park board member
on his way indoors.

The Secret Behind he who Will End Secret Deals

It has certainly been a secret
to I, who will wait
for the plain truth to emerge.

Us need to know
what our government is
doing for we.

**Car Air
Purifier Smells
Like Heaven**

Presumably one's automobile
will be filled
with the scent of matches,

no matter the claims by
Platonists that the supernatural
doesn't appeal to the human senses at all.

Nightclub Owner Charged After Blood Mopped Up

Mickey Podheretz told this reporter that the group of schoolteachers was dripping blood when they entered the premises.

Those were school cuts.
said the burly Podheretz,
not anything that happened
in my place.

I run a clean club here.
I don't know why they're
charging I.

Pilfering Patrons a Problem for Restaurants

We don't want to tie them to their chairs,
said restaurateur Malvolio Podborski,
but if people keep stealing our customers

I don't know what else to do.
It's especially irksome when they lift them
just before they pay their checks.

Teacher Remembered Different Ways

Educator Mervin Podnarchuck, who recently bled to death, was famous around John Oliver Secondary School for recalling streets no-one else knew about.

Though his students might ride to school along Broadway or Kingsway, their mentor regaled them with tales of his adventures on Straitway, recommended by St, Paul, and Beggarsway, a route used during his childhood in Minneapolis.

Far-away places, with strange-sounding names, he would sing, and his charges would hum along with him.

Tories Pushed Over Leaky Condos

First I was puzzled
by these buildings
lying on their sides
athwart the street.

When told of the Conservative action
I immediately wondered
why they would think
that would improve anything.

**Known Sex Offender Arrested and
Charged with Sexual Assault
on Transit Bus**

As long as he restricted his attacks
to human beings of either sex
the authorities would only
keep tabs on him.

But when he targetted
the public conveyances
even they had to sing,
it was such an unnatural thing.

Mountie Probed in Sex Assault Case

A taste, said the presiding magistrate,
of your own medicine.

At least, pleaded the policeman's councillor,
clear the courtroom.

As to the public conveyances, said the Crown,
one is discouraged
from entering by the rear door.

Why Woman was Left in Hospital Hallway to be Probed

It can now be revealed
that a network of circumstances
led to the unusual location.

All of our probing rooms
were in use that afternoon,
said head nurse Michelle Pordnicki,

and the patient insisted
that the probe be performed
as early as possible.

Besides which, our probational students
were of such numbers
that only the hallway would accommodate them.

Rumsfield's Leadership "Inspired by God"

U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfield,
according to General Peter Pace,
chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,
swears that God told him
to kill as many of those people
 with unchristian names
 or none at all
 as fast as you can.

You know what they did in Baghdad
many years ago? They invented
reading and writing.

The president and the deity
and the defense secretary?
They know that if people get to
reading and writing,
 it's game over.

Arrival of New Treatments have Hurt Firm

Many junior partners has left for other jobs.
The Chief Executive Officer are in tears.
Stocks is down. Confidence are gone.
A weeks of strong measure are indicated.
Communication are of prime importances
 until we gets this sorted out,
 but till then, we has to
 stop the bleeding, say
 company spokesman Morris Podnarski.

Following the Oyster Trail in Tofino

Those migrating mollusks,
heavy with a summer's ocean floor grazing,
light out for open seas
 every year about this time.

Oyster-lovers in the know
catch sight of that worn path in the sand
and, aw shucks, it's like taking candy
 in a barrel.

Seven Group Helps Iron out Glitches in Digital Production

After untold aeons of five digits per hand and foot,
a bold experiment in finger production

prepares humankind for the complex future.

A dispute remains regarding the usefulness
of two additional toes,

and another about the necessity of
seven fingers for such simple tasks as ironing.

Religious Leaders Descend on Parliament Hill

Lay persons climbing the same hill
were astonished to see priests and imams,
TV evangelists and rabbis, zen roshi
and Dene medicine men

floating downward in a kind of reverse Ascension,
or being lowered from helicopters,
and one sky pilot hanging from his parachute.

Well, said an atheist halfway up the Hill,
it's better than axes falling on outdoor centres.

17-Year-Old Turns Himself Into Police

One has to applaud
such a nifty bit of legerdemain
at such a tender age.

But really? He
must look old and cynical
for his years.

Every Woman Counts, Governor-General Says

Hear that?: One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven, eight, nine, ten male premiers
in this country.

Hear that?: One female prime minister in
one hundred and thirty-three years.

Hear that?: Knit two, purl one, knit
two, purl one

Pregnant Cross Sightseeing on Granville Island

Now I've seen everything,
said Milo Padzinsky of Everett, Washington.

I mean the alpha and the omega
right here in the marketplace.

There is no word on when
we might expect the Blessed Event.

Thomson Learning to be Sold

It's hard to get the knack of it,
said Ontario's most famous painter.

When some stranger says name your price,
I always say Vincent.

He's a great collector, I replied,
but you'd better get back to your selling class.

Gender-Bending Deer Surprises Hunter

Castlegar resident Ernie Poderoff is no stranger to interspecies sex.

Occasionally he will even woo a male ruminant. But he likes to insist on being the aggressor.

So he was shocked last Saturday morning to be on the receiving end of a forest probe.

I'm bamber, not bambee, he told the *Sun*.

I Knew it was Wrong: Teacher

John Oliver Secondary School English instructor Murphy Pagnano recently defended himself against a charge of uttering dozens of dangling modifiers in his classroom.

Seeming to fall from the sky, he averred,
I could not escape the misplaced participle.

Salmon Pivotal in Defining Future of B.C. Native Relations

In a modern twist
on the old spin-the-bottle game,
British Columbia first nations
and Provincial fisheries officials
found a new use
for smoked sockeye this weekend.

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In 2006 George Bowering wrote twelve longish poems designed to be chapbooks. *Tocking Heads* was written in October.

In late 2007 his novel *Burning Water* was republished by New Star Books.

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