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The gentle passions of birding
Binoculars are for the Birds

It's a rare bird that wings into the country without being seen.

When word reached Norman Chesterfield at his farm near Wheatley, Ont., that a housewife somewhere east of Thunder Bay had made what was certain to be among Canada's outstanding bird sightings of the year, there really was only one thing to do: he left home immediately.

He always leaves home whenever a contact calls with news of an unusual bird sighting, for Norman Chesterfield is the leading bird fuffer in this country. If it can be said that an increasing number of Canadians are taking pleasure in the gentle pastime of birding, and the evidence suggests this is so, then it also can be stated that few approach it with Chesterfield's sense of competitiveness.

So he drove the 380 km to Toronto International Airport, flew to Thunder Bay, met the person who had contacted him with the news of the fork-tailed flycatcher, and left by car with him for the woman's house. At that time Chesterfield had a detailed list of hundreds of birds he had sighted in Canada. A rare bird like the fork-tailed flycatcher, which had strayed into northern Ontario from South America, offered a unique opportunity to add to the list.

Rita Taylor, the housewife who spotted the bird, had been having lunch three days earlier when it had caught her eye darting in front of the kitchen window and looking for all the world like an eastern kingbird, except for the long tail feathers that reminded her of calipers.

Taylor isn't a competitive fuffer but she knows her northern birds, having taken notes on about 150 of them during the years. She recognized this one as being something special, even if she didn't know exactly why. She telephoned a knowledgeable friend in Thunder Bay who came quickly,
along with a few other birding enthusiasts. This was how the oddity was identified and how the news eventually got to Chesterfield.

Driving the 75 km from Thunder Bay to Taylor's home near Dorion, Ont., gave Chesterfield plenty of time to discuss the fork-tailed flycatcher. Only one had ever before been seen in Canada, in Nova Scotia several years ago. This one, Taylor had told him earlier in a telephone conversation, probably had "stowed away" on an ocean freighter. Regardless of how the bird came to this country, it had spent four hours on the day of its sighting, hungrily flitting after flies in Taylor's backyard.

But the flycatcher was gone when Chesterfield arrived, and that was that. He spent the afternoon waiting, but the bird did not reappear. The weather had turned cool; the flycatcher undoubtedly was doomed.

Chesterfield talks now about this near miss in the same way a retired hockey star might discuss a key play in the long-ago Stanley Cup series. "I had my most successful trips in 1971," he says. "I rushed out to Regina and saw a whooping crane, a bird I'd never seen before in Canada. But I would have preferred that fork-tailed flycatcher — an extreme rarity. But that's birding. You don't always get the bird you've come to see." Implied in this anecdote about the one that got away is the central point of birding: it has challenges and rewards for anyone who takes to observing the fascinating feathered creatures.

The lure of bird listing predaes recorded history. Sketches of cranes and herons drawn in the Old Stone Age have been found on walls of caves in France and Spain. The ancient Sumerians in Mesopotamia devised a new type of artwork based on birds — doves carved in limestone and copper reliefs of eagles. The Mayas of Central America left impressive carvings of vultures, turkeys, and great horned owls. But the more classical study of birds began with Aristotle who raised this knowledge to the rank of a science, declaring that the detailed study of birds was a worthy occupation for the philosophic mind. He devised a simple classification for the then-known birds, performed dissections, and even studied bird embryos. Ornithology (the formal title given to the science) suffered a setback in the Middle Ages when most science was suspect, and it wasn't revived until the Renaissance.

The first record of birds in Canada was found as early as 1007 in the writings of the Vikings where, in the Saga of Karlsefini, rider ducks were mentioned nesting on Belle Isle, off the shores of Newfoundland. In 1347 John Cabot described black hawks, partridges, and eagles in his journals, and Jacques Cartier, in his voyage of 1534, not only wrote about the abundance of seabirds but gathered many of them for food. However, if these men were the first to chronicle birdlife in Canada, they weren't the last.

Chesterfield has observed and taken detailed notes on more than 4,500 species in many parts of the world, the second highest total among all those who belong to the American Birding Association. Yet Rita Taylor, who travels no farther than two kilometres from her home in search of birds, tops him in at least one unofficial category, having spotted the elusive flycatcher.

Every level of this pastime — from the meticulous list keepers and dedicated scientists to the casual watchers at window feeders — has its pleasures. A child at Pointe-des-Monts, Que., notices a robin for the first time and thinks it wonderful. At Brandon, Man., members of the local Junior Birders build nest boxes for the mountain bluebirds; the bluebird population had been diminishing since the nifties when an influx of starlings invaded their nests. Today the bluebirds are thriving again because of the network of volunteer-built nest boxes, stretching more than 3,800 km through Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. There are more serious observers, too, at places such as Bonaventure Island, off Percé, Que., where ornithologists count the nests of the endangered gannets, spectacular birds with two-metre wingspans.

Nowhere is there such activity in spring, however, as at Point Pelee National Park, the southeastern tip of Canada. The dark reaches so far south into Lake Erie that it is on the same latitude as northern California. The unique location has allowed for the growth of a type of flora that makes it a natural resting-place for migrating birds. To date about 324 species have been identified at Pelee. "No other spot in the interior of the continent can offer the bird lover more action on a good day in May or September," says Roget Tory Peterson, the ornithologist, whose field guides are standard equipment for most birders.

The scope of Pelee's spring spectacle is an accomplished birder can see 100 species in a single day — attracts a birding tour.
incredible range of birds. On a peak day in May, 1977, park officials recorded 2,173 cars and 15,000 human visitors and attendance at more than 6,000. Many to be sure, were neophytes. Yet, the place is performing, and with the addition of the crowds of more-experienced birders eager to help. Walking along the trails and observing the birds in its natural habitat, one is certain to encounter clusters of people hastily raising binoculars to their eyes at the most unexpected times. One who wonders what this is all about, will whisper to a newcomer, "That's a really good bird to identify."

Quickly one learns to listen in on conversations, whatsoever possible, on the point. "Pierre Bertron's out on the trail," I overheard a young American confide to a friend. "He's a famous Canadian writer. I'm thinking of looking for him." But usually the name-naming involves birds.

The fascination with watching birds is growing across the country. Certainly the sale of books and birds has increased. According to Alice White, manager of the Nature Canada book store in Ottawa, sales have more than doubled in the past year. The circulation of the Audubon Society magazine, American Birds, has grown 15 percent since 1971, according to its editor, Robert Arsham. The magazine has created two new Canadian sections, in its reporting on bird species, separating Quebec from a region that once included most of the United States and adding northwest Canada. The Canadian Nature Federation has watched American bird interest in itself struggle following its 1971 beginning.

Long-time birders are enthusiastic about the number of newcomers who have become committed to a greater degree than they ever have before. The image of the bird watcher as a frill eccentricer has also changed. The real interest is more likely a person, attracted to ornithology for relaxation and exercise. The path from beginning bird watcher to avid birders is deceptive smooth. Consider, for example, Peter Geddes, a young, 20-year-old Montreal draffman, who has seen 500 species in Quebec. "I've been interested in birds for the last nine years. My little boy, when I use to find bird pictures in the Canadian astronomy of Red Rose tea," Geddes says. "I also have a subscription to a European birding magazine," Geddes says. "I often read about the adventures of bird watching in Montreal and go to the Mont St. Hilaire, where there's a public bird watching the bird by McGill University."

It was a marvelous beginning. I could have picked up on some of the congregating bird watching through..." said Geddes. "I met an expert on birding from the Monthly Field Naturalists' Club, says that he had some of his greatest pleasures in bird watching from a bus to the sidewalk beside railway tracks in Toronto. I find myself checking off a new species which I'm not sure if it was a bird on my list, as a train rumbled overhead."

If observing and listing the birds is not enough, special counting days seem to attract a large number of birds to city birding groups across the country. "On a day when we're having a high-count competition, we might see 20 teenagers turn up," says Dr. Roger Fox, president of the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club. "Birding club activities range from the counting and banding of birds to discussions of the recording of bird species. There's a club for almost every group, from the Margaree Nice and Bird Club of the ornithologists du Quebec, to a beginner who claims to have just seen a warbler. But what kind? I've counted 197 headquarters in Ottawa this morning. However, the verbal fencing at the top is considerably less obstructive."

The success of the American Birding Association helps to eliminate the notion that birders have taken in international gatherings. The birding at the Times as James A. Tuck's idea of an amusing Christmas newsletter, sent from his Austin, Tex., home to birding friends, colleague and others. Tuck's vision of the number of species each of them had seen. But the demand for the Christmas birding lists grew during the sixties and seventies, prompting the publishing of the ABA news magazine, Birding, which now has a circulation of 9,500. In each issue there are the standings for single-year sightings and the lifetime lists for Canada, the United States, top birder, Quebec for, in fact, is Michel Geddes, a 20-year-old Montreal draffman, who has seen 500 species in the Canadian province. "I've been interested in birds for the last nine years. My little boy, when I use to find bird pictures in the Canadian astronomy..."

The true score, it turned out, was with Chesterfield 440, and Tull 455. Tull had had more species in a shorter period of time. Chesterfield, on the other hand, was the absolute leader in his score, eventually taking trips to both Canadian coasts again at Christmas and a finish to Birding's growth, which Chesterfield compared to a golf at an early stage of its development ("Both pastimes helped me, but Chesterfield didn't try to keep them hidden, confines Peter Iden, a prominent bird watcher. "People think you would think a Perching Tom. Still, memories die hard of the birders when the birds are known as 'Quixotes among the trees,'" said Geddes. "There is nothing in botany that is more interesting than the taxonomic world of birds."

After all, what passerby could fathom the sight of an intrepid birder shaking a tree in an attempt to stir up a bird on the ground? But one cannot understand the spectacle of a grown man in a forest, playing a portable tape recorder of a rare bird sound in a strange answer, stealing closer to the respiring bird...and finally finding another

respond to the environment and, when some undesirable change in their surroundings takes place, the birds will leave the area."

When first constructed, the CN Tower in Toronto was a killing ground for migrating birds until birders expressed their concern. The birds were crashing into the tower, dragging themselves up before CN officials responded by reducing the frequency of the lights from 60 per second to 20 flashes per minute before cutting their attraction. Across the country there are other examples of birders and birders communicating in the interest of nature: in Alberta, for instance, birders and naturalists convinced the CN railways to hold its plans to build a tower near the nesting area of the whooping cranes in Wood Buffalo National Park. Increased interest also has benefited the science of birding in Canada. "Surely are are a number of these things," says Clive Goodwin, secretary of the Ontario Ornithological Records Committee. "It's also known on another for instance, that a salmon's gull is not a rare bird like Lake Ontario, whereas 15 years ago it was considered very rare. This is because few people at that time had a boat to take a good look at the bird. Now it's a commonplace occurrence."

There are more bird-watching opportunities in the country than ever before, and birders also are looking up to the enthusiasm wherever they travel, making use of the local expertise to find more birds. And, as Norman David, president of the Club des ornithologistes du Quebec, Inc., points out, "Bird watching is bound to grow in popularity as people become more committed to preservation of the natural environment."

"I suspect very few birds get into the country now without being seen," says Thomas Godfrey, author of the standard reference work Birds of Canada and curator emeritus of ornithology at the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa. "Having so many observers in the field has contributed tremendously to our knowledge."

But it's the depth of satisfaction, the science, that draws most people to birding. "I don't find it quite as fun as the other people," said Pierre Bertron, "but I find you yourself interested in all aspects of nature, all forms of life."

"The The Review, Number 4, 1978"
Business doesn't stop at the buck.

So what's the problem?

by Dan Cohen

The most difficult article I've ever written is this one. It's not that business activity isn't valuable to our society; it is, and we'll get to that in a little while. It's just that a great many Canadians today — myself included — have uncomfortable feelings about business and the business community. The basic purpose of business is to serve the needs of society and to serve those needs to its satisfaction. In the past business has discharged this obligation by supplying necessary and desirable goods and services. In the process it has provided jobs and purchasing power and thus, it produced most of the wealth of the nation. In the past this was what we demanded of business. Evidence shows that, on the whole, business did its job surprisingly well. For as long as statistical records have been kept, the total real national income has risen by an average of four or five percent per year. Real disposable income per person has increased almost every year without exception, while work time has steadily declined.

In generating this remarkable economic growth, business activity in Canada has provided increasing employment, rising wages and salaries, employee benefit plans, and expanding career opportunities for the labor force, which is one of the fastest growing in the industrialized world. Perhaps the greatest benefit of business activity has been this: the rising living standard of the average Canadian family has enabled more and more citizens to live their lives as they wish, with fewer constraints imposed on them by economic need.

So what's the problem? The problem is that we have entrusted to business that singularly important job of delivering to us the goods and services we want, and now we're not sure that it is doing its job. We're not even sure whether that's the job we want business to do. We worry that materialism and the quest for profits run counter to our need for clean air and water, for interesting jobs, and community well-being.

The discomfort involved in writing an essay about the value of business activity goes with the times and the territory. Canadians are in the process of reshuffling, in a fundamental way, their institutions and their priorities. Social revolution is all around us. How can we integrate the poor into the "good life" enjoyed by the majority of Canadians? How can we clean up the cities and make them better places to live? How can we find a job for everyone who wants one?

Business is one of the dominant institutions in Canadian society and, when Canadians question their past values and priorities, business is bound to come in for its share of the questioning. Obviously the economic delivery system has a strong impact on the members of society. Just as clearly, what goes on in society has a powerful influence on it.

The value of business activity takes on meaning only in relation to the goals or values our society seeks. Even a generation ago those goals were quite clearly defined. They were related to economic goals almost exclusively, and business was the instrument by which these goals were achieved. Milton Friedman, the Nobel prize-winning economist, believes this still should be the case.
"... there is one and only one social responsibility of business — to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud... Few trends could so thoroughly undermine the very foundations of our free society as the acceptance by corporate officials of a social responsibility other than to make as much money for their stockholders as possible. This is fundamentally a subservient doctrine."

Nevertheless society is beginning to question the consequences of private-business decisions. When, for example, a businessman decides whether or not to produce a new product or service, he is helping to establish the rate of consumer goods available to consumers. When he contemplates purchasing a new plant and equipment, he is helping to determine the rate of economic growth and is influencing the level of employment and prices. When he builds up or reduces inventories, he may be contributing to inflation or accelerating recession.

There is much evidence to suggest that more managers today are not only thinking about their role in society in a way different from their views in the past but are doing something about them. So it is that business finds itself in a number of "catch-22" situations. On the one hand, Canadian business institutions have created a reasonably productive machine for turning out goods and services. Yet, partly because of the ability of the machine to produce goods and services, business is being attacked for being too materialistic and not sufficiently attentive to the social costs it incurs. Many Canadians lean to the view that corporations should be judged not on their productive ability alone but on what they do about such things as air and water pollution, product safety, community well-being, social goals, and the quality of the lives of those who work for a particular company and are affected by it. Others, like Friedman, worry that the ability of business to be efficient in manufacturing goods and services will be hampered if it becomes overly concerned with social activities.

The overlay of these deliberations about what exactly the role of business should be (and, therefore, what its value is to society) has obscured the value that business activity historically has had. As noted earlier the "institution" of business has been accepted by Canadians as a means to use scarce resources to produce, in an efficient way, those goods and services society wants and is willing to pay for. A high and rising standard of living ranks near the top of any widely accepted list of Canadian priorities. The achievement of that goal means a sufficient quantity of goods and services must be made available. In this regard business activity has been crucial. Since the turn of the century, Canadian incomes have risen so substantially that the change has been described as a bloodless income revolution. Fifty years ago only one household in 20 had an income equivalent to $15,000. Now the figure is closer to one in two.

Business has succeeded as well as it has mainly through the workings of the market system. The discipline of making profits (or sustaining losses) is a continual spur to improve goods and services, to reduce costs, and to attract new customers. By earning profits businesses have made important contributions — mainly through taxes — to the financial support of those public and private organizations working to improve the quality of life. By operating efficiently, business has been able to provide people with both the means and the leisure to enjoy a better life.

Some years ago economists tried to measure the contribution of business to the growth of the Gross National Product. Both in Canada and the United States these studies concluded that between one-half and two-thirds of the growth in GNP has been due to improvements in technology and in the organization of the production process. The remainder has been brought about by upgrading the quality of the labor force through education and the quantity of capital available. Business activity, of course, has been instrumental in this process.

Most Canadians spend large portions of their waking hours in some form of economic activity. Besides that, many of our relationships with other people occur in the workshop, the office, and the marketplace. This means that much of the quality of our lives is determined by the physical environment in which economic activity takes place, by the nature of the work we do, and by the opportunities present for self-improvement. Thus, it is important to provide the kind of physical and social environment that will yield pleasure in work, satisfy human relationships, and allow opportunity for human development.

It is clear that business has made it increasingly easy for the majority of workers to meet their basic needs to feed, house, and clothe themselves. Indeed, it is because business has enabled workers to meet these needs so well that it has generated for itself the problem of determining how and to what extent it should meet needs, such as job satisfaction. Despite the accomplishments of the past, the expectations of Canadians have begun to rise faster than our economic and social progress. Attention is now being concentrated on ways to raise the disadvantaged sectors of society to the general level of the majority. Canadians also have become aware of environmental problems, such as air and water pollution, as a by-product of rapid economic development.

Throughout history the unpaid social costs of business activity have been substantial. An example of these costs might be the damage caused to people and property by a processing plant discharging mercury into the water system. However, the costs of an increasingly complex society are not created by business alone. They are a by-product of progress to which many institutions contribute. Among these costs are urbanization, which exacerbates problems of unemployment, poverty, crime, and personal insecurity.

There is no question that the social price for progress has increased to the point where, in many instances, it has become intolerable. On the other hand, the net gains to society up to now are greater than the costs. One basic problem has been that we still don't know how to bill the costs to the responsible parties and, at the same time, protect those who are not responsible.

Some progress has been made. For example, society now shields people from economic disaster not of their own making. If people lose their jobs, society now foots the bill until they get other ones. But not enough has been done about other problems, such as pollution and poverty.

What is clear today is that the value of business activity to the society it serves is different from what it was a generation or two ago. The public wants business to do a lot more toward achieving the goals of a good society than providing the products, the jobs, and the economic growth. It wants business to perform these economic functions with a keen awareness of changing social values. It is difficult to say whether the enormous expansion of business and management schools in North America is a reflection of the younger generation's desire to contribute toward the creation of a different kind of world. What we do know is that after the "on-the-fly" generation of the 1980s, business education in the 1970s is flourishing. Enrollments in the business faculties of universities, such as Western and York in Ontario and McGill in Quebec, have each experienced a 25- to 35-per-cent increase in the past 10 years. The rewriting of the contract between business and society comes about partly because the public believes that business is responsible for creating some of the problems. But partly it's because big business possesses considerable resources and skills, which could be as valuable in solving social problems as they have been in dealing with economic ones. How business responds to these changing expectations will determine its value to the community in the future.

Dian Cohen is a Montreal writer and economist.
The pleasures of the paddle. Easy and endless

Alone on the lake

by Dick Brown

Slip along in a canoe on a quiet stretch of water early on a summer morning and you’ll find yourself as close as anyone can get to absolute serenity. You’ll pick up moments and images that you can tuck away in some corner of your mind. I remember the wisps of mist hanging lightly over the Catawqui River, near Kingston, Ont., and just beginning to melt under a warming sun. And I can still hear distant shouts, rolling across the water, from kids playing in a stone farmhouse with a bright red roof. It was years ago, but pictures like those are so perfect and vivid that they can be called back anytime, in dentists’ chairs or traffic jams or just to soothe away the worries of the night. I can still hear the clank of the paddles on the gunwales and see the moss on a big pine that had toppled into the river, the water curling around it and making a pretty sound as the canoe slid past.

The most appealing view of canoeing is from the air. I was flying into Toronto one day, about 25 minutes away from landing, zipping along above a stretch of forest, spotted with lakes. It was the sort of country that grabs the feelings of city people as they soar from one bit of urban clamor to another and leaves them with a painful longing. Below, in one large lake, was a canoe, and it was the only thing, apart from the trees and water, that you could see. The moment was still with me an hour later as our cabdriver shot past an old lady in a small car, and they both leaned on their horns. The canoe, alone on the lake, gives you an idea why there’s such an astonishing jump in the number of canoeists in Canada.

A survey last year by Statistics Canada (which apparently took the government into the boat houses of the nation) revealed that 199,000 Canadian households have canoes. The real surprise is that this was an increase of 58 percent in just three years. Another survey indicated that from 1968 to 1972 production of canoes in Canada jumped from 11,000 per year to 27,000. And it’s still climbing.

Ross Bales is with an organization called Canoe Ontario, and he offers a couple of reasons for the surge in popularity. “It’s part of the rising awareness of the outdoors,” he says. “Part of the growing interest in physical fitness that’s producing so many joggers and cyclists.” Like cycling and jogging, canoeing is great for the noncompetitor. It’s also something you can do without having to round up a lot of other people. In other words, it’s practical and healthy — but it’s also very much more. Especially for canoeists who go on trips. Pierre Trudeau wrote of his love for canoe trips in an essay published several years ago in Jeunesse étudiante catholique and translated into English in the book Wilderness Canada.
There's a timeless tranquility in canoeing that can be enjoyed in the spring...

“What sets a canoeing expedition apart,” he said, "is that it purifies more rapidly and inescapably than any other. Travel 1,000 miles by train and you are a brute; pedal 500 on a bicycle and you remain basically a bourgeois; paddle 100 in a canoe and you are already a child of nature.” Trudeau also talks of the canoeist’s enjoyment of the punishing rigors: “How can you describe the feeling which wells up in the heart and stomach as the canoe finally rides up on the shore of the campsite after a long day of punting your paddle into the rain-swept water? Purely physical is the joy which the fire spreads through the palms of your hands and soles of your feet while you are chatting about the poisonous cold. The pleasurable tor- sor of such a moment is perhaps not too different from what the mystics of the East are seeking.”

What’s really talking about is hitting your head against a brick wall because it’s freezing when you stop, but what’s wrong with that? Nothing can work greater wonders on the taste of a plate of beans or a couple of hours of paddling a canoe by candlelight; and wind. Survive a siege with half a dozen winds and the lumbering sleeping bag is a haven of warmth and comfort, and sleep is deep and instant. In his book The Survival of the Bark Canoe, John McPhee writes: ‘If the human race has one common denominator, it is hatred of head winds...”

And the hardships of one day only heighten the joys of the next. You wake up and find the wind has dropped and the water is dead flat and even when you glide out from shore, the surface is so smooth that there is a marvelous fascination in seeing how the bow slice through it, splitting it neatly and spreading a long, rolling V. The world around you is so still that you hear the drops of water falling from the paddles as you reach forward to dip into the lake with another stroke. Serenity, indeed.

Canoes are special in themselves — masterpieces of craftsmanship and careful balance. The design is so good it’s come down unchanged through hundreds of years. Today some canoes are fiberglass and a few are birchbark, but the basic shape is the same. A young man named Henri Vaillancourt is devoting his life to preserving the bark canoe. Vaillancourt lives in a little cottage near Greenville, and he builds birchbark canoes. He makes them painstakingly, one at a time, using the tools and materials the Indians employed: lash- ing the canoes with the splint roots of spruce and white pine, shunning the use of nails and steel. This is the profession of John McPhee, the writer, visited Vaillancourt’s workshop, and McPhee describes the canoe through which he heard Vaillancourt about the strength of his creations. He coiled his arm,” McPhee writes, “and he spread out the bottom of one of the canoes with a punch that could have damaged a paperback book. He then placed on his feet and weighed a hundred and seventy-five pounds. The bottom of the canoe was unbroken because it had been split from the stem. The body of the white birch was amazing stuff — strong, resilient, and water proof. He said it was, in fact, virtually impossible for the Indian canoe-makers did that was not as good as or better than what could be done with modern tools and materials.”

A fellow named Rick Nash, who was born in the canoe country, told me about a job in Canada, working full-time on restoring canoes at a magnificent canoes-and-campground company. ‘It’s the best collection of this kind of craft in the world. It’s called the Kanawana Interna- tional of Canoes Ltd.,’ he said. ‘It is the largest producer of canoes in North America. I did work on canoe racing and a ration of eight gallons of brandy that was meant to last the entire journey. But there was much work, too: the priest’s blessing on the canoes and a ration of eight gallons of brandy that was meant to last the entire journey. But there was much work, too: the priest’s blessing on the canoes and a ration of eight gallons of brandy that was meant to last the entire journey. But there was much work, too: the priest’s blessing on the canoes and a ration of eight gallons of brandy that was meant to last the entire journey. But there was much work, too: the priest’s blessing on the canoes and a ration of eight gallons of brandy that was meant to last the entire journey. But there was much work, too: the priest’s blessing on the canoes and a ration of eight gallons of brandy that was meant to last the entire journey. But there was much work, too: the priest’s blessing on the canoes and a ration of eight gallons of brandy that was meant to last the entire journey. But there was much work, too: the priest’s blessing on the canoes and a ration of eight gallons of brandy that was meant to last the entire journey. But there was much work, too: the priest’s blessing on the canoes and a ration of eight gallons of brandy that was meant to last the entire journey.

I remember what a really bad trip it was — I was fishing along a coastline, and I had to do it carefully, the way I’d been shown, lacing my paddle across the canoe, and leaning on the center thwart. Marjorie Wilkins Campbell describes the way the traders used to shoot across the lake Winnipeg, which became a kind of race course: “The rival northmen were like wrestlers with their reputa- tion at stake. No time for songs. No time for stories. The excitement, the fun, the enjoyment of the pursuit, the freedom of travel, the excitement of adventure, and the joy of the canoe boatman, which the British were so good at doing, were all at stake. The excitement of travel, the freedom of adventure, and the joy of the canoe boatman, which the British were so good at doing, were all at stake. The excitement of travel, the freedom of adventure, and the joy of the canoe boatman, which the British were so good at doing, were all at stake.

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Throughout the West, small towns were turning into ghost towns. Some residents were embarrassed to admit where they lived. But with a little financial help and a lot of initiative, prairie people have turned dying towns into bustling communities.

Yeah! Small Towns
They don't die. They revivify

The town was dying. The movie theatre had closed, vacant stores and houses bore faded “For Sale” signs, the main street was a potholed obstacle course. There was even talk of the school closing for lack of students. Garnet Burnstad, a local boy visiting the tiny Alberta village of Ryley for the first time in years, was appalled. He could not understand how a once-vibrant agricultural community could decay so badly that its residents were embarrassed to admit they lived there. More important-ly, Burnstad, a country auctioneer, could not accept the townpeople’s rigid belief that nothing could be done to improve the situation.

Traveling the 64 km to Edmonton, Burnstad went on an open-line radio program. “If anyone wants to raise a family in a pleasant rural setting,” he said, “Ryley’s the place. The town’s filled with empty houses that you can buy dirt cheap.” The next morning Ryley’s main street was thick with traffic. Hundreds of people had descended on the town, among them a motorist from British Columbia who had driven all night through the mountains after hearing the broadcast. Twenty old frame houses were sold that day to newcomers planning to commute to their jobs in Edmonton.

“Our town has come to life again,” says gas-station owner Danny Albrecht. “Word-of-mouth has brought 170 more people here in the past two years. There’s a new hardware store, a car wash, a hotel lounge, and the movie
House has been converted into a community hall that has the best dances in northern Alberta." The method used to spur Riley's transformation may be unique, but the rebirth itself is not. Across the Prairies, concerned individuals and private organizations are working to stop the population drain that has been sapping rural communities of pride, vitality, and revenue since the late 1950s. Renewal projects have kept an estimated 80 Saskatchewan and 50 Manitoba communities from becoming ghost towns. But it is in Alberta where the most impressive results have been achieved. More than 80 small towns have engaged in revitalization programs, ranging from the refurbishing of an entire block of stores to the creation of a downtown mini-park.

The projects share a common philosophy: If a town looks grubby and hard pressed for money, residents are more likely to move to the nearest city. If, however, it's a bright, attractive place, community pride will not only encourage people to stay but will encourage them to shop at home, thus enhancing the local economy.

The catalyst in many Alberta town-improvement schemes is the Devonian Foundation, a Calgary-based charitable organization established by a wealthy oilman who wanted to give something back to the province where he made his fortune. Three years ago the foundation took $7 million from its $50 million trust fund and invested Main Street Alberta, a program that provides face-lifting gifts to rural communities.

"Can you imagine the Prairies without curling clubs, team dances, or harvest suppers?" asks Main Street coordinator J.L. Patterson. "Well, the way the towns were going under, there was a very real possibility that these and other rural traditions would barely exist 10 years down the road."

Patterson said the increasing attraction of urban life has contributed indirectly to Main Street's demise. "For two decades people left farming communities because they could earn more money elsewhere. Now we're reversing the trend. When a town improves its appearance, city dwellers move in and open new businesses. So many of them have told me that the quality of life is preferable to a big pay cheque."

Main Street Alberta regulations specify that a community must supply 50 cents for every $1 the foundation donates. This condition was laid down by Devonian founder Eric Harvie before his death in 1975. Harvie, a lawyer from Orillia, Ont., amassed an estimated $100 million from mineral holdings in, among other areas, the Ledus and Redwater oilfields in Alberta. He was a modest, quiet-living man who believed in helping people who made an effort to help themselves. Main Street Alberta was one of his ways of having a positive influence on the lives of Albertans.

To accomplish Harvie's goal, Patterson travels 32,000 km annually throughout the province, addressing town council meetings, public meetings, and service club luncheons. "Now and then, some fellow stands up and asks why his town should spend money on torpedos when it's got such a swamping budget. When I explain that it will be good for local business, he usually agrees to go along with it."

A homecoming celebration, and not the promise of higher profits, was the incentive that prompted Killam, Alta., to rejuvenate its downtown core. Situated 320 km northeast of Calgary, Killam's main street was marked by telephone poles, dingy storefronts, and a general lack of greenery. Even worse, the vacant lot where the CPR station stood 10 years before had become a repository for old tires, bottles, yellowed newspapers, and other refuse. "We had 5,000 people coming here from all across Canada, and we didn't want them going away thinking how shabby their hometown looked," says baron Gorton Miller.

Miller and a volunteer committee recruited high-school students to transform the CPR lot into a flower-filled, landscaped mini-park. The committee's theory was that if the young people did the labor, they wouldn't wreck the place. It's assessment turned out to be correct. Aided by a $30,000 Devonian grant, the farming community replaced the telephone poles with underground lines and installed modern street lighting. Local merchants painted and restocked stores at their own expense, and on weekends they helped plant strawberries and flowers in a tract of street pollards and in a new downtown park and campground.

"The depth of the community spirit that has come out of all this is amazing," Miller says. "We had 110 floats in our hometown parade that the townsfolk made themselves. I don't think people are ever going to stop talking about how nice Killam looks and how proud they are to be here."

The Killam project spawned what Patterson calls the "ripple effect." Nearby communities applied for grants when they heard that two new restaurants and a motel had located in Killam because it had the veneer of an aggressive, prosperous town. Ten kilometres east, Sedgewick demolished several derelict buildings, remodeled others, and widened its main thoroughfare. A local bank agreed to accept a burn-out garage site in exchange for a rubbish-strewn lot that it owned downtown. With the help of volunteer workers, the lot was converted into a mini-park, containing a waiting pool.

Other communities have spent their Devonian grants differently. In Alberta Beach, the town paid $35,000 of its own money to take over a notorious dance hall frequented by motorcycle gangs and, flattening the building, created a lakeside picnic area. In Westlock, senior citizens pitched in to help dismantle an abandoned railway station. The lumber was sold to buy planters and benches for the main street, where retired farmers gathered. In Galahad the 4-H Club painted the general store, and the council convinced a cafe proprietor that, although he had good food, he was losing potential customers because his premises were an eyesore. And in High River, where a whole block of buildings was torn down, a portion of the historic Merchants' Bank was taken apart, store by store, and reassembled as a wall in a new bank building.

While 54 towns have used Main Street Alberta funding, at least 26 others launched renewal projects before the Devonian Foundation came into being. Service clubs sponsored teleciffication campaigns in behalf of rebuilding, trees were repaired, trees planted, stop signs blasted or painted, and roads widened or paved. Annual rodeos, agricultural fairs, and bonsai shows — activities that had somehow dwindled and vanished during the years — were resurrected with great zeal. So were community picnics, sewing bees, and the idea of bringing experts from the city to teach night classes in everything from upholstery to auto mechanics.

The most imaginative programs were born in two towns with large ethnic populations, Vegreville and St. Paul. Vegreville is a predominantly Ukrainian town located near the border of Alberta and Saskatchewan. It has always been a place where people of different cultures have come together to share their traditions. The town has a rich history dating back to the late 19th century when Ukrainian immigrants settled there. Today, Vegreville is known for its vibrant Ukrainian culture, which is celebrated through various festivals and events throughout the year. The town is home to several Ukrainian churches, cultural centers, and museums, which attract visitors from all over the world. Vegreville is a place where people of different backgrounds come together to celebrate their shared heritage and create a welcoming community. The town has a strong sense of community and pride, which is reflected in its many festivals and events. Vegreville is a place where people of all ages can come together to enjoy cultural events, food, dance, and music. The town has a vibrant arts and culture scene, with a number of galleries and museums showcasing local and international art. Vegreville is a place where people can come to explore history, culture, and art.
town 86 km east of Edmonton. It was on a downward slide when mayor Virgil Moshansky persuaded his councillors that it might become an attractive tourist town. By replacing its drab, concrete structure with a modern administration building, Moshansky believed the town could show outsiders that it had faith in its future. While seeking federal and provincial loans to finance the construction, Moshansky learned there were plenty of government grants that his town was eligible to collect.

“Many small towns die because their mayors don’t know such grants exist,” says Moshansky, now a provincial judge. “It isn’t their fault. For some reason or other, rural communities are usually left to develop alone.”

Under Moshansky’s guidance, Vegreville secured federal and provincial grants to build a provincial building, a senior citizens’ recreation centre, and a small airstrip. Investors liked the town’s attitude and numerous businesses opened, including a cooperative, a lumber supply yard, a furniture company, and a bakery. Weed-covered lots that sold for $600 five years ago now contain $100,000 houses; the population has grown by 300 in the past year alone.

A major factor in Vegreville’s success has been the hiring of Garnett Burstmad, the man responsible for Ryley’s overnight change, as its municipal administrator. His objective is to entice people and investment to the town, without having it develop into a bedroom community for Edmonton. “We want people to feel they are part of the town, not just here to sleep,” he says. “A town cannot grow properly unless its residents shop locally and participate in local activities.”

Burstmad said many dying Prairie towns inadvertently accelerate their decline by being too critical of municipal swimming pools. “When they see their town is sinking, they panic and reach for a status symbol. But a swimming pool loses money in the summer, and it’s closed all winter. I’ve heard of towns going bankrupt while still owing money on their pools.”

To heighten community spirit, Vegreville erected a giant metallic Ukrainian Easter egg — the largest structure of its kind — in a local park in 1975. University of Utah computer scientist Ronald Resch worked for a year to

figure out the egg’s unusual mathematical dimensions. Bearing a Ukrainian motif, the 7.5-m by 5.4-m egg was financed by Volunteers and local donations. “Everybody in town chipped in money, even if it was only 50 cents,” says Moshansky. “The egg honors our early pioneers, but it also stands as a symbol of our community pride today.”

Like Vegreville and its egg, St. Paul has initiated projects that are unmatched anywhere in Canada. For a Centennial Year tribute the French-speaking community, 216 km northeast of Edmonton, built a large concrete pad for flying saucers and, tongue-in-cheek, invited any passing Martians to drop by for coffee and doughnuts.

People of all ages came forward with suggestions when a town committee said it wanted to do something special in conjunction with the 1976 Habitat Forum on world housing in Vancouver. Habitat T-shirts, medallions, buttons, posters, and placemats proliferated and a mainstreet bakery sold United Nations cupcakes. The town also obtained a $6,000 grant to send Les Miuscos, a choir comprised of teenagers and adults, to the housing conference, where it performed a Habitat song composed by a choir member. One hundred St. Paulites paid their own way to go along for the trip — taking a half-scale model of a typical barn on the back of a truck.

“We were very pleased at the community’s local participation in Habitat,” says lawyer John Lagasse. “And yet we felt we should go even farther than we originally planned. So we told the conference organizers that if some delegates wanted to see what a Canadian farming community was like, we’d welcome their presence.” Twelve delegates, primarily from African, Caribbean, and Asian countries, came to St. Paul for a weekend. “In the 1920s the CNR was delaying putting tracks into our town; so people went out and did it themselves,” farmer Real Tremblay says. “That’s the kind of town this was until the 1960s. Then everybody seemed to be talking about quitting farming and moving to the city. Nowadays, if you stop anybody on the main street, they’ll tell you they wouldn’t dream of being anywhere else.”

Rekindling an appreciation for its historical roots has played a vital role in St. Paul’s resurgence. High-school students are taught voyageur songs, old timers’ track andVIDEO 1/20/97

people — former residents, tourists, new citizens — have remarked at the attractiveness of our community and the desirability of living here,” says Ralene Chevaux of Killam. And Lorine French of Sedgewick stated that the town’s new park is so appealing it is used as a background for wedding portraits. “It’s a dream come true,” French said, “and Devonian is a house hold word in our town now!”

For Patterson, the letters are an integral part of the satisfaction he gains from his job. He is a retired civil servant and receives no salary; only expenses, from the foundation. “I’m doing this because I truly believe our rural way of life must be preserved. The will to survive exists in every community. What we’re doing is similar to starting a reliable old tractor that’s been idle for years. You may have trouble firing it up, but once it’s going it will run smoothly on its own.”

Vegreville constructed the world’s largest Ukrainian Easter egg in a local park to boost community spirit and honor its pioneers.

The Review, Number 4, 1978
In June of 1913, an engineer named Sidney Ellis and his four assistants pushed a nine-metre scow from shore at the settlement of Athabasca Landing, and floated off with a current taking them into the virtually untracked regions of north-central Alberta. Ellis' employer, the federal government, had assigned him to investigate the bitumen deposits that cropped out along the Athabasca River. The government hoped his investigation would shed some scientific light on the vast, tarry deposits that had been the subject of reports and speculation since the days of the explorer Peter Pond.

Three months later, after crossing hundreds of kilometres of fly-infested bush and muskeg, Ellis was back on the river. In fact, he was in the river, at times up to his waist, harnessed to one of the lines stretched taut by the nine tons of equipment and samples that had to be towed back upstream. The men he hired to help with the towing had decided, after more than a week of dragging the scow along the rocky shoreline in a steady rain, that there were better ways to earn $45. Luckily for Ellis, they reconsidered, and the oily cargo eventually made its way to Ottawa.

This was the first of many trips Ellis would make to the Athabasca oil sands during a long career. Through his efforts and the dedication of men like Dr. Karl Clark of the Research Council of Alberta, a store of information about the oil sands was gradually accumulated. Others came later — scientists, adventurers, entrepreneurs — drawn by the huge potential of the sands, fascinated by the challenges of putting them to some commercial use.

The awesome size and extent of the
oil-sand deposits of Alberta and Sas-
katchewan are now reasonably well
defined. Set out on a map of western Can-
ada, they show as a yellowish area.
Islands dispersed across the northern
Prairie. Yet these “islands”—more
black登录不了精彩内容。
Opera is something to sing about!

by Jack Baltes

Opera is a living, breathing part of our cultural history. It's a way of preserving our heritage and connecting with our past. The performances of great operas are a testament to the enduring power of music and drama.

The Marriage of Figaro is a timeless tale of love, passion, and misunderstandings. It was composed by Mozart and features a cast of characters that are as relatable today as they were in the 18th century.

La Traviata is a classic tale of love and sacrifice. It's a story of a woman who sacrifices her own happiness for the sake of her beloved. The music is simply breathtaking and the story is one that resonates with audiences of all ages.

These are just a few examples of the many operas that have stood the test of time. They are not just entertaining, but also educational, as they teach us about the history and culture of our world.

So, the next time you have the opportunity to attend an opera performance, don't miss it. You'll be treated to a truly unforgettable experience.
quality the COC as the country’s leading exponent of grand opera on tour, but there are other, smaller companies which give frequent perfor-

cant is the Algoma Festival. In 1977 this group — mere six singers, one conductor and a minimum of one piano — contrived to put on a viable bus driver — chucked up 4 000 km to offer Canadian audiences in far-flung places, from Verdun’s Aida to Moncton’s The Telephone. The company worked in high school gyms, church halls and community centres, it journeyed from eastern Ontario to the far North, and it could produce, not only good music, but a new phenomenon — it brought the joys and mysteries of opera to Yellowknife.

Quite a feat, but perhaps “Canadian television,” says Bill MacVicar, who is a regular editorial contributor on music and entertainment with the Ontario Educational Communications Authority, “seems suddenly to have awoken to opera’s allure.” The Ottawa-raised company of the Canadian Opera Company, three operas during its 1977-78 season: Rigoletto, Thaïs and Winter's Tales, in live and complete telecasts from the Metropolitan Opera House in New York and from Toronto. The COC’s first venture into an irregular five to six hours of national network time on three consecutive Sunday afternoons in the fall of 1977 was well-received. The company launched its first operas: The Magic Flute, Madame Butterfly, and Macbeth. Indeed, the COC’s move into television is commissioning new works for future showing in prime time. All of this has not only increased the COC’s subscriber base, but also the public’s interest in opera. “Opera,” he says, “is a business at its biggest and most exciting in 10 years.” What better subject for television?

Opera in jazz time. Canadian com-

posers have been working to make their works to constitute a distinctive Cana-

nician operatic literature. And yet there are signs all around us of activity among our composers. "Opera in Canada," says Raymond Pannell, a Canadian composer and opera director, "is becoming a seasonal ceremony of echoes." Last year, for instance, the Guelph Spring Festival staged Nedkold Island, a new opera based on the legends of the West Coast Indians, with music by Derek Heap and ibisibotto by Norman Newton. Harry Somers’s new operatic work, The Death of Enkidu, received its premiere late last fall, and Murray Schafer followed in January with a new opera. Then there’s Lady In The Night, a short opera that sets its influence in, of all unlikely musical sources, jazz. It’s the brainchild of Norman

"Opera has always been music for the people. It shouldn’t be arts-crafty."

Robert C. Reginald

ISSUES

The Review, Number 4, 1978

half weeks. Chalk up a triumph for the Mansouri style.

But last year’s spectacular perfor-

dances were only a prelude. Mansouri revived Mozart’s Marriage of Figaro, which hadn’t been performed in Canada for 24 years, and opened the 1978-79 season with it at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, the COC’s first permanent home. Figaro was followed by Verdi’s La Traviata, directed by the acclaimed Italian soprano Grazzia Schiatti, who was making her Canadian début. In the fall Mansouri is presenting another premiere, the first production of Tchaikovsky’s Joan of Arc, which was recently translated into a new English version.

However, director’s real and a continent-wide trend don’t explain entirely the glow of Canada’s love affair with opera. There are certainly more operas to choose from in Canada now. And there are many more opera fans than ever before. Canada has a number of opera groups and opera festivals, and a number of opera companies. And, of course, there are a number of opera films, and, perhaps, ballet. Clearly, many Canadian companies have come up to the funding during the past decade or so to mount appealingly lavish productions. That’s where money’s necessarily directed in. But the drive to larger and more spectacular opera has been bogged down in spitting drives. That’s money’s curse. "You can’t tell me anything new about money difficulties," says Rod Anderson, president of the COC. "Just look at us. About two years ago we had to put on a rescue campaign to cover our back debts, $800 000 of them." Anderson probably understands the intricate equations of money and opera better than anyone on the opera scene, since he is a partner in Clarkson Gordon and Co., one of the country’s leading firms of chartered accountants. He’s also a man in his early forties with a handsome dash to him and an amiable pince-nez who com-

poses his own Margaret tunes. Anderson is typical of the sort of businessman who has labored long and faithfully to keep opera afloat in Canada.

"Inflation," he says, pinpointing the problem, "has hit the arts earlier and harder than the rest of the country. I’m not talking simply about perfor-

ners’ fees but about items of which the public couldn’t be aware. The enormous cost of scenery, for example, and stagehands’ salaries. Toronto’s stagehand union gets a higher wage for its members than any similar group in North America. My guess, the expense, the work." And the errant voice wasn’t Turner, Madison. "My new agent got me to change my hair," she explains. "I’ve always dyed it brown — it was too much trouble to grow it to its natural light brown. Okay, but I first had to cut it short, which I absolutely hate. They’re always doing something — especially traumatic to most people, but for someone like me in the public eye — it’s worse."

Are these experiences, the changing hair and the darkening dress, discouraging to you, or do you consider yourself unusually buoyant and plainly ambitious young woman — discouraging, that is, to that continuing career in opera? "Here’s something curious that I went through," she answers. "Last fall Julian Green interviewed me on television and, I think, a special, and I learned a pop song for it, Killing Me Softly. Well, that song was so easy to sit down and hold my back my voice, that I felt tempted to go further with the pop thing. I mean, popular singers can earn so much money for doing relatively little compared with opera singers who must study so long and so diligently for much smaller fees. But I knew I could never change. There are so many other rewards in opera; the beautiful music, the simple feeling of being able to let your voice go." As she talks, she pauses and thought.

"You know," she said, at last, "there are so many good songs on their way up in opera in Canada. Everyone is getting so much better, better at acting, better at singing. It’s a great and exciting time to be singing in opera in this country."

If only Emma Albani of Chambly were with us to hear the news.
A friend, who is a physician and a very ethical man, was talking recently about the temptations to lie that he faces almost every day. “You can imagine some of them,” he said. “Should I tell the patient the truth when I believe, in medical terms, that telling the truth will do harm? Should I tell the truth to every patient, every time, even when I’m convinced the patient doesn’t really want the truth? After all, the first obligation of the physician is to help the sick and, in a good number of cases, telling a lie can be helpful, while telling the plain, unvarnished truth can be devastating. The problem is that lying can become an easy way out, a safe routine to avoid the problem of being the bearer of bad tidings. When that happens I’m telling a lie not for the patient’s sake but for my own. I wish sometimes that there was a code to follow, but I don’t think there is.”

Most of us, I expect, will sympathize with the dilemma of the medical doctor, for it not only perplexes but — because it arises in such urgent circumstances — pleads for some sure and simple solution. That kind of solution, of course, is not within reach and, even if it were, there is no guarantee it would be universally accepted. Still, the concern of the doctor is important, in fact, praiseworthy in that it reveals of itself a principle that will never be at home with evasions, no matter how plausible they seem.

Throughout North America just now, there is a new interest on the part of philosophers and psychologists in the subject of lying, brought about by their belief that we not only lie a good deal but that, unlike my medical friend, we have come to terms with casual lying and have made it a part of our lives, personally and professionally. Jerald Jellison, an American social psychologist, has applied a tape measure to our string of lying and has come up with the interesting estimation that in his country the average citizen tells about 200 lies every day. He is referring to what we have come to call white lies, by which we excuse our own shortcomings (“Sorry I’m late, I got held up in traffic”), seek to win easy favor with others (“I’ve been a long-time admirer of your work”), or simply avoid something that doesn’t appeal (“Sorry, Harry, I have to do my hair”).

But even these exceptions, which many of us regard as harmless, have a cost, in that those who use them soon come to believe that others use them and that there is, therefore, hardly anyone telling the truth anymore. From that assumption it is a small step to today’s widespread suspicion that not just individuals but institutions — government, business, media — have been lying to the people and continue to do so.

Earlier this year Sissela Bok, a philosopher who teaches ethics at Harvard Medical School, brought out a book called Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life in which she reviews the ideas of history’s major thinkers (Augustine, Kant, Montaigne, and others) on whether lying is ever acceptable, and then goes on to offer her own opinion that, aside from unique circumstances, we should tell the truth, plain and simple.

Those rare circumstances in which lying is permissible, she suggests, are those where human life is at stake and only a lie will deflect imminent death. She illustrates her point with a telling example: the captain of a ship transporting Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany is stopped by a patrol vessel and asked if he has any Jews on board. If he tells the truth, he is innocent people at the mercy of wrongdoers. “I have to agree,” she writes, “that there are at least some circumstances which warrant a lie.”

However, Bok’s real purpose is to convince us that casual lying — between doctors and patients, lawyers and clients, husbands and wives — has more than ethical aspects. It has practical consequences. “Individuals,” she claims, “have to consider the long-range effects of lying on human communities.” As an example, she points to the common practice of giving people inflated recommendations or rating their performances more generously than is called for. It is the classic white lie, in that it appears not merely harmless but benevolent to give extra praise to a former student or to offer an extravagant opinion of a loyal employee. Bok opposes this not because she is niggardly or because she is fanatically moralistic but because of its effect on other people. “The practice obviously injures those who do not benefit from this kind of assistance,” she writes, “and it injures them in a haphazard and inequitable way. Two applicants for work who are equally capable may be quite differently rated through no fault of their own.”

The more flagrant examples of lying often take place in situations of high competition or public crisis, where deceptive methods can be excused and in some cases condoned as admirable, wise, or even heroic. This is sometimes the case in the business I happen to know best, journalism. Is it ever right for a reporter to lie, either by misrepresented himself, his purposes, or the conditions surrounding his interview? In other words, is it ever right for him, in order to get information, to pretend that he is not a reporter, to claim he is calling for reasons other than his true ones, or to say that comments given him will be kept off the record when, in fact, he intends to use them if they turn out to be useful? It may be impossible to say that this kind of deception is wrong, always and absolutely. Journalists who specialize in exposing wrongdoing maintain, understandably, that they are serving the public interest and that, like police officers, they must use deceptive methods. Perhaps. But I agree with Sissela Bok that there is not enough recognition by some journalists of the moral dilemma of what they are doing and the implications of their deceptions.

She deals in a new and useful way with the performance of the journalists who led in uncovering the Watergate scandal. In pursuing the facts, she points out, the two key journalists came to tell more than one lie; a whole pattern of deception arose in which they misrepresented themselves, extracted information by lying, and sometimes used their newspaper to print questionable material in the hope that such methods might lead to a more sensational revelation. “It can be argued,” Bok says, “that in order for this exposure to be possible, deception was needed; but what is more troubling in the book All the President’s Men is the absence of any acknowledgment of a moral dilemma … No one weighed the reasons for and against doing so. There was no reported effort to search for honest alternatives, to distinguish among different forms and degrees of deception, or to consider whether some circumstances warranted it more than others.”

This is not a universal attitude among journalists. But it is broad enough to lead many people to conclude that many of them are both opportunistic and predatory. “The impression gained by the reading public,” says Bok, “is that such standards are taken for granted among journalists. The results, therefore, can be severe, both in terms of risks to the personal professional standards of those involved, the public view of the profession, and to many within it or about to enter it.”

Each of these concerns, however, comes down finally to individuals and their ethical choices, whether they are journalists or lawyers or, like my friend mentioned earlier, medical doctors. No one of us is strictly honest all the time. But if we were all liars all of the time, our institutions would be in a very bad way. And so would our own lives. For when lying becomes a way of life, it not only poisons personal relationships that depend on trust but harms the most intimate relationship of all, the trust one holds for oneself.