

## Don Morberg



On Sunday I engaged in some cross country falling down. It could not, under even the wildest delusion of grandeur or self-deception be called skiing.

Skiing, I have been led to believe, requires a modicum of forward motion while remaining in an upright position on two sliding pieces of wood. What I was doing resembled that only in the fact that there were two sliding pieces of wood, usually sliding out from under me.

After my tentative introduction to the sport of Nordic skiing and my purchase of the basics required to engage in the activity, I successfully put my skis away in the corner of the basement and prayed that the snow would melt before I was called upon to use them again.

I almost pulled it off. Sunday, as you will recall, saw melting snow and a telephone call from one of my accomplices to come out and enjoy a bowl of chili.

Now Dave makes outstanding chili; but the catch was that I had to dust off my cross-country skis. This chili was to be earned.

Dave is not a bad skier. Sandy, his wife, is a bad skier, who declines to go out unless there is someone around who is worse. Those are hard to come by, but they found one. Old chili-loving me.

So I packed up a few friends, a bottle of imported wine, the appropriate weapons and paraphernalia, and headed off to what was to be a kiss-off winter party.

Dave's house lies amid five rolling acres of trees, which poke you in the eye and pull your poles out of your hands. Through this masochistic maze runs the bare essentials of a cross-country ski circuit, an alleged trail through the snow.

Did you go out in the snow Sunday? All the snow was melting on that day, turning all that nice, fluffy whiteness into a slimy icy monster, which sticks to your clothes and creeps in through every nook and cranny. Melting snow is like mud, like quicksand which reaches up and sucks you down.

Across this vast wasteland of impending frostbite skidded me, second from last in a long line of touring skiers, followed by Sandy.

Each time I was forced to sit down and beat off an attacking tree or pile of snow, Sandy would think that I fell down and would yell out, for everyone in West Beaverly to hear, "Seven!" or whatever the number appropriate to that downfall was.

This became disconcerting after a time. I felt like the man struggling across the desert under the watchful eye of a vulture posted on a cactus. One false move and "Eight."

Because of the gleeful anticipation skiing along behind me, I became more and more nervous. My feet decided that my brain had lost control of the situation and began to act independently, occasionally going off for small jaunts into the woods, or racing each other around opposite sides of a tree.

Complicating all this was the melting snow. The only other time I went cross-country skiing (for some of Dave's spaghetti which is nearly as good as the chili, but you have to wait until 10:30 at night to get it), the snow was powdery and dry. If one fell off the trail, righting oneself was not difficult; believe me, I know.

This time, however, the snow on the trail packed like ice. The snow off the trail stayed like a bucket of mud. If you fell off the trail, the only thing preventing your falling through to China was the frozen ground some three feet below the trail. Then you were stuck there until some escape procedure could be engineered. A four-wheel drive with winch would be desirable.

After the exercise and the chili, I excused myself and headed home, driving through the slush which will be Highway 16. It occurred to me then that there is nothing right about Prince George weather.

If it snows, it snows too much. If it gets cold, it gets too cold. When it melts, it melts too much and too fast.

No doubt when we are blistering through record temperatures this coming summer, we are going to be sitting out on our lawn chairs, sprinkling and cursing the hot weather. It's going to be too hot.

## Guard's penalty justified

OTTAWA (CP) — The federal penitentiary service was justified in suspending a guard who failed to detect two dummies in jail-cell beds while the occupants escaped from the Mission, B.C., medium security institution, a federal tribunal has ruled.

Although the two prisoners were quickly recaptured, guard Fred Campbell was suspended from duty for two days.

Campbell's grievance was dismissed by the Public Service Staff Relations Board in a recent decision written by board member A.W.R. Carrothers.

Campbell's defence included the fact that he "was given no

formal training in detecting dummies; he had attended staff college and two other courses without practical instruction," Carrothers wrote in his ruling.

The board ruled that even if Campbell had no formal training in detecting dummies, the standard bed-check instructions were clear.

"Two conventional tests are to observe the movement of

breathing or otherwise of the inmate and to observe flesh. Where the living unit officer is in doubt it is a practice to kick the cell door to stimulate movement from the inmate and thereby to confirm his presence and well-being."

When Campbell arrived for duty Dec. 31, 1977, he was informed by the guard going off shift that all the cells were locked and the prisoners se-

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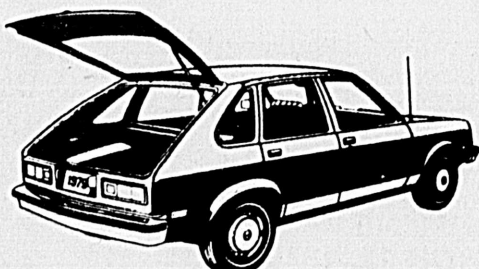
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