

With a little help from my albums

BY DAVID MORLEY

THIS summer I decided to introduce my children to the Beatles. It's not that I'd never tried before, but when my 14-year-old came home saying a really excellent restaurant had been playing a Beatles song he actually liked, the opportunity was too good to pass up.

My son wasn't sure which song it was, but he wanted to hear it again. This was my chance. I hurried to the basement for my albums, and within minutes they were scattered around our living room. My son gave me musical clues and I tried various songs, spinning out our time together by suggesting other tunes he might like to hear. Finally he cottoned on to my ruse and got up to leave.

"Give it a break, Dad," he said. "After all, this music is 30 years old."

I was aghast. Beatles music can't be 30 years old. It sounds as fresh and vibrant as ever to me.

Whenever I hear the Beatles, I think of my big sister. She's four years older than I am and was the ultimate Beatles fan. Her room was covered with pictures of them. She had a Beatles garbage can. Her countless magazines were all essentially devoted to one vital topic: "The Beatles Or The Dave Clark Five — Who's The Greatest?" She saw *A Hard Day's Night* 19 times.

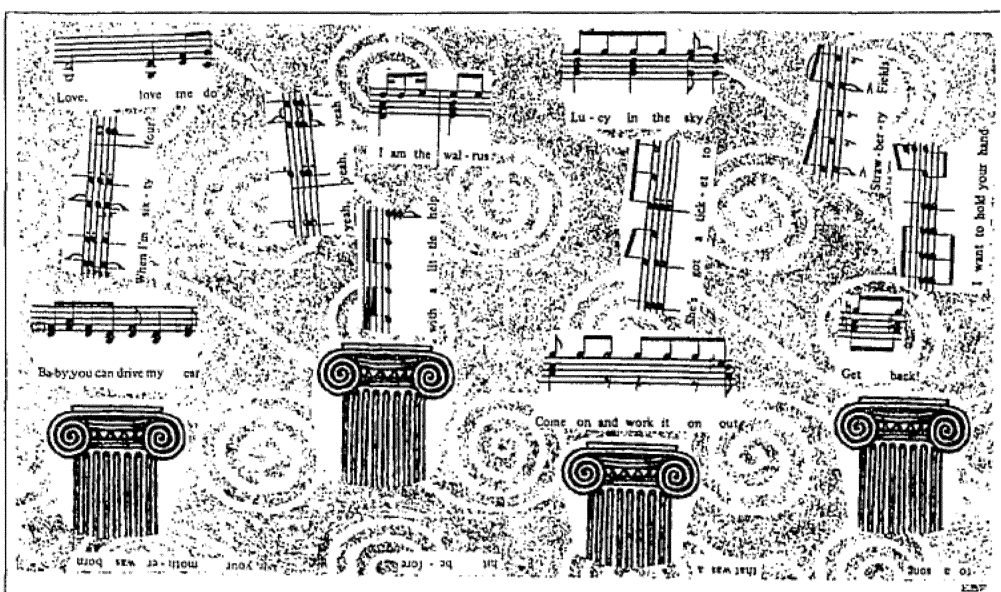
She knew the words to all the songs, of course. She'd sing the words to *Girl* with particular gusto:

*"When she says she's looking good
She acts as if it's understood
She's cool."*

And she was cool, too. In fact, my sister was so cool that she and four friends started a group called the Five Gone because they were so far out. They played, if memory serves, just once in public, but they must have had some latent talent since two of them went on to musical careers: One is a regular on the Toronto jazz circuit and my sister is a classical musician in New York City.

My sister's Beatles were the early Beatles — the four happy mop-tops who sang John and Paul's catchy melodies. Mine were the later Beatles, more serious, more worldly, with George finding his creative voice and John losing his. We overlapped at *Sgt. Pepper's*.

My parents grew to love the Beatles. My sister, a performer of rarefied medieval music, rejoices that her 10-year-old has discovered them. Now I just have to work on my own boys.



ERIC FIELD

The summer *Sgt. Pepper's* came out — which was indeed 30 years ago — we all sang those songs. I saved up to buy it, my first album. At first my parents barely tolerated it on the family record player, but soon they were singing along, too.

My father, usually a reserved man, would dance around the kitchen to *When I'm Sixty-Four*, harrumph and mutter disapprovingly when Ringo sang "I get high with a little help from my friends," and grow wistful listening to the melancholy words of *She's Leaving Home*, the foreshadowing of his own daughter's departure. When John was shot, many years later, my father was as stricken as any member of our generation by this vi-

olent passing of his children's childhood.

Earlier this year, my sister, who has lived for many years amidst the peaceful and rarefied sounds of medieval and Renaissance music, called to say her 10-year-old daughter had discovered the Beatles.

"Their music is so happy," she enthused. "It fills the house with joy."

So I followed up on my son's initial interest. I got tapes to play in the car, and now both my sons show me a kind tolerance as I tap the steering wheel to the fade-in intro to *Eight Days a Week* or sing along with the guitar riff in *I Feel Fine*.

Their only requests are that I turn it off when we stop at red lights so they are

not seen or heard in a car playing the Beatles, and that my wife and I not constantly sing *Something*. In return, they try to teach me their music, so I find myself listening to *Our Lady Peace* and *Smashing Pumpkins*.

Although my own parents were finally captivated by the Beatles, I fear my children will never hear the magic as I do. But maybe I'm too quick to give up hope. The other day I heard my 14-year-old talking to a friend. "I don't like the Beatles," he said, "but I do respect them."

High praise indeed, I thought, for music we were listening to 30 years ago.

David Morley lives in Toronto.

Against the grain

Some birthdays today:

• **Charles Atlas** (1893-1972). Angelo Siciliano was a 97-pound weakling when a life guard at Coney Island kicked sand in his face and stole his girlfriend. He became a physical culturist and advertised his home-study program: "You Too Can Have a Body Like Mine."

• **Emily Post** (1872-1960). She wrote *Etiquette* (1922), which became the U.S. guide to manners and social behaviour. "Ideal conversation must be an exchange of thought, and not, as many of those who worry most about their shortcomings believe, an eloquent exhibition of wit or oratory."

Treasuring roaches

• Stephen Tobe and colleagues at the University of Toronto are studying ways to disrupt the reproduction of cockroaches. However, the professor is not an antiroach zealot. "It's never a wise goal to attempt to wipe out a species," he says. Some roaches are "quite beautiful, with pleasant colours and designs on their body surface. And they're good for the environment because they're basically walking garbage cans eating just about everything, so they're important to the food chain."

• Recently, Spanish marijuana growers in Madrid staged their first-ever contest to choose the best cannabis crop, but judges — who had to smoke 10 different samples — were in no condition to pick a winner.

Sources: U of T press release, Reuters.

Dark versus light

Recent news about chocolate:

• Among connoisseurs, dark chocolate is growing in popularity, reports USA Today. "The chocolate consumer has matured and wants a more sophisticated taste," says Lisbeth Echeandria, editor of Confectioner magazine. Marcia Polchat, a scientist at the Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia, adds: "Taste and



SOCIAL STUDIES

A DAILY MISCELLANY OF INFORMATION
BY MICHAEL KESTERTON

smell become less sensitive as we get older. ... A sensitivity to sweet tends to be maintained, but the sensitivity declines quite a bit." By boosting the cocoa content, manufacturers are making it easier for boomers' weak taste buds to get their chocolate hit.

• "The European Parliament erupted in angry recriminations today [Oct. 23] after voting on an issue that has split Western Europe for more than two decades: the Two Chocolates Policy," writes Edmund Andrews in *The New York Times*. "The vote left Britain, Ireland and Denmark seething with rage, while the Belgians and French quietly gloated. The Germans, after siding with the French, were rumoured to be wavering and thinking of defecting to the other side." France and Belgium are among eight countries that require chocolate to be made exclusively with cocoa butter; seven others, led by Britain and Ireland, allow companies to mix in substitute vegetable fats. There is also the vexing question of the amount of milk allowable in milk chocolate; Irish and British manufacturers may have to relabel their product "milk chocolate with high milk content" or even "household chocolate," a derogatory phrase.

Ask a journalist

• How can I comfortably give half my income to charity? Giving away a substantial part of raises and bonuses is the best way to start, says Sam Arthur of Delaware. For more than two decades, the chemist and his wife have been building their charitable donations — to \$40,000 (U.S.), about half Mr. Arthur's pre-tax income — and they are also saving 6 per cent of income for retirement. "It [is] easier to start when you don't have anything," he told *The Associated Press*. "You get into a lifestyle, and it

perpetuates itself. You grow into it." However, money is tight and the couple have had squabbles with their two teen-agers.

• Who was the first parachutist to shout 'Geronimo!' while bailing out? U.S. army sergeant Aubrey Eberhardt, who had seen the movie *Geronimo* the night before. In May and June, 1940, when Nazi paratroopers jumped into the Netherlands and Crete, military authorities realized that this was going to be a useful tactic, but they had yet to work out the details for themselves.

Le cravat, c'est moi

Kenneth Feld, the sole owner of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus and one of the 400 richest people in the United States, doesn't like to wear the same tie twice in a year, says *Forbes* magazine. He explains: "A necktie is an expression of how I am feeling that day." Mr. Feld has 500 ties.

Trends in horses

• **Small:** The miniature horse of Britain, a creature no more than 34 inches high at the shoulder, can be kept in a back garden. The market for the little animals is booming, reports *The Independent*. However, their survival has been at risk on a number of occasions. "Henry VIII, in particular, ordered that all mature horses under a certain height should be slaughtered and buried. He was apparently anxious to breed a new race of super-quine for battle that would leave the enemy as also-rans."

• **Large:** The shire horse is the mam-

moth animal descended from the medieval Great Horses of England, which carried knights and their hundreds of pounds of armour into battle. There are only 7,000 left in the world.

Sources: news services.

News for apiarists

The Complete Beekeeper, a home-study course from the University of Guelph, received a silver medal last month in Belgium at Apimondia 97, a swarming organized by the international Federation of Beekeepers. The course was written by environmental biology professor Cynthia Scott-Dupree.

Animal abuse

A study by the Humane Society of the United States found that almost three in 10 animal abusers also hurt people, most often their children or spouses. Nine of 10 people who commit cruelty to animals are males, it found.

Breast cancer

• A test for prostate cancer is being adapted for use as the first screening test for breast cancer that does not require an X-ray, reports *The Times* of London. Trials will begin in May on 100 women known to be at high risk from the disease. "The new method has been made possible by the discovery that fluid in the nipple is identical to the specific antigen found in the prostate (PSA), which gives an early warning of cancer." The discovery was made by a prostate-cancer specialist, Ros Eeles of the Institute for Cancer Research in London. "This means we have a way of screening women who are too young for a mammograph to be effective," she said.

Thoughts du jour

• "The attributes of a great lady may still be found in the four S's: Sincerity, Simplicity, Sympathy, Serenity." — Emily Post.

• "A gentleman takes as much trouble to discover what is right as the lesser man take to discover what will pay." — Confucius.

Lives Lived

BETTY RATZ KING HEARN

Economist, economic historian, librarian, archivist, sheep farmer, weaver and community development exemplar. Born on May 13, 1907, in Elmira, Ont.; died of heart failure on March 25, 1997, in Bridgetown, N.S., aged 89.

BETTY Ratz's surgeon father died when she was a small girl and she was raised by her mother, in a family that had more than its share of strong-willed, intellectual women. As a recent star graduate from the University of Toronto in 1929, she was hired to work on the Bank of Nova Scotia's new *Monthly Review*, writing speeches, and providing various research services.

Since the turn of the century, when the bank's top officers moved from Halifax to Toronto, it had grown enormously but was still a conservative organization whose executives had mostly "entered the service" in their teens in small towns in the Maritimes. In this setting, Ms. Ratz stuck out, and not just for being young, female, very engaging, well educated and ferociously intelligent.

At one Christmas party, Betty's colleagues were amazed to watch her imitate her boss's starchy mannerisms with a song-and-dance skit performed (clothed) in the bathtub, waving his cane all the while. Their amazement turned to horror when the boss came into the office through a door Betty couldn't see from the bathroom and the performance continued. One colleague recollected her "choice of expletives and general disregard for inhibitions," saying that "Betty Ratz opened a whole new chapter in my hitherto sheltered existence."

Betty's starting salary was high for a woman; the bank got its money's worth. After a year, her boss (he of the bathtub skit) commented, "This girl is absolutely reliable and self-reliant." Two years later she was "quite invaluable ... equal to any problem that is thrust upon her and learning all the time." Over the years, she wrote more than forty *Monthly Reviews*, mainly consisting of research pieces of 5,000 words or more, on subjects as varied as the South Sea Bubble, the extent and nature of unemployment in Canada, the economic consequences of Santa Claus, merchant shipping in wartime, the economics of the can opener, establishing a bank in the 1830s — pieces that mostly read very well to this day.

After a few years, Betty returned temporarily to the University of Toronto, for a spell of teaching social science and graduate work, including a study under Harold Innis (whom she greatly admired) on seasonality in the Canadian economy. In the bank, she did some of the first seasonal adjustments in Canada, pioneering this tool for assessing current business trends on the bank's only mechanical calculator, located just outside the general manager's office.

John King, her first husband, was a youth organizer for the CCF and had fought in Spain with the Mackenzie-Papineau brigade.

Betty kept her marriage, in 1939, a secret since, under a policy that was very common, a woman's marriage occasioned her resignation. A younger cousin recalls that the secrecy "just added to Betty's mystique." Betty told the bank about her marriage later on, when John was enlisting with the RCAF (he was to die in a bomber crash in India in 1944) and when the war was leading the bank to rethink its policy.

In the early 1950s, Betty established a proper economics library for the bank; later she set up their archive.

Betty retired in 1967 before a new pension plan began to provide women employees with earned entitlements to regular pensions. Until then (as in many organizations) women were eligible only for a discretionary "retirement allowance." While Betty's allowance's level increased well in line with inflation, the difference in treatment sometimes grated.

For Betty and her second husband Jack Hearn, whom she married in 1953, retirement was to a farm overlooking the Bay of Fundy where they raised sheep, at one time 1,500 of them. (Betty said perhaps she should've been a vet.) She had suffered from respiratory problems in Toronto, and the air was better for her health. With her spinning, dyeing and weaving, she became a major figure in the emerging local handicraft scene, winning many prizes. Jack, who'd had a long career as a branch banker and could surprise acquaintances with his knowledge of Shakespeare's more obscure plays, flourished in retirement, growing his white hair long and working on copper-enamel jewelry.

Colleagues remember Betty as a professional. Visitors to her Nova Scotia farm remember her as informed, lively and opinionated. Friends and relatives remember her loyalty and warmth.

Perrin Lewis

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Betty Ratz in mid-1980s.