

# The POWDER MAGAZINE

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ELSA, YUKON TERRITORY

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## THE SINGING PLUMBER

Bet you didn't know Elsa has an all-star choir? Well, we do, according to Fulvio Roberti, our Plumbing Shop Foreman, Fire Marshall, and choir-charter-member.

Now Elsa's choir isn't exactly your average church-meetin' variety, but what its members lack in technical merit, they make up for in enthusiasm — providing they have sufficient "incentive". Which may explain why the choir's concerts are invariably held at one or the other of the Curling Rink, Beer Parlour, a Rec. Hall Dance, or the Lions' Den. And when one of these impromptu weekend affairs takes place the people are treated to wondrous renditions of such choir favorites as Santa Lucia, Oh Tannenbalm (which usually comes out as something akin to Oh Tan Yer Bum) etc.

Though choir membership is somewhat irregular, Fulvio says the mainstays of the group are "all-stars" Lino Battaja, John Holzapfel, Konnie Berg (of Konnie's love of song we are already familiar), Sigi Strebakowski, and Bill Bennett. Over the years it has been these fellas who have livened-up many an otherwise-dull Saturday evening, filling the silence with song, or at least with something pretty close to it.

Choir-member Fulvio began singing as a youngster in Pesaro, Italy, as a member of the local church choir. But singing wasn't his only past-time. He was also an apprentice studying plumbing at Pesaro's technical school.

After three-years training he joined the navy as an Engineer. Then on March 14, 1954, Fulvio

landed in Canada, having decided to make it his home.

On a September day in 1956 Fulvio was working on the construction of a building in downtown Toronto, when he noticed in a newspaper that United Keno Hill Mines required men to work in the Yukon. That very afternoon he visited U.K.H.M.'s office in Toronto and was hired.

He was sent to Calumet camp and spent one month on the bull-gang before joining the plumbing shop.

"Calumet was a big camp then, with 350 men, only a few married people, and very few cars — gad, a car was SOMETHING," Fulvio says.

"There was lotsa haywires, fighting; my first week in Calumet I moved in and out of every bunk-house in camp trying to find one that was quiet. I like singing but with fifteen guys in one room doing it — it's a bit much."

Fulvio remained at Calumet until it closed in 1967. One of his favorite stories about the place concern the now unused Tramline that brought the ore from Calumet down to the Elsa Mill.

"The Tramline used to have an anchor point at No Cash where a friend of mine worked on nightshift making sure the cars coming down and going up were okay. But my friend liked beer and working night-shift, which was the only time the Beer Parlour was open, he couldn't get any. So he used to phone me up in Calumet, to get me to buy him a case and send it down to him on the Tramline. But almost every time I did, he missed it, and had to

phone Elsa to have the boys send it back up to him. Then he send me some money up on the Tramline from No Cash to Calumet. It was ridiculous!"

Not only is Fulvio a plumber by avocation, he's developed into a Mr. Fix It — a person appreciated by many who have discovered that getting something repaired in the relative isolation of the North is no easy matter.

Fulvio has been called upon to fix propane stoves, oil furnaces, fridges, washing machines, etc.

"One evening a lady phoned me to come fix her TV, but unfortunately I wasn't able to make it work, but another time a lady asked me to fix her sewing machine, about which I knew nothing, but by some strange piece of luck, I did. I have been asked to repair things in Keno

(Cont. on page 3)



FULVIO ROBERTI  
... Mr. Fix-It



# The Bunkhouse Blues

Just received a letter from Personnel,  
Says my behaviour aint been swell;  
Been makin' too much noise,  
An' annoyin' the boys —  
And — what's more,  
M' room's an EYESORE!

“There's been a report,  
That you're a weirdo, of some sort —  
Been stealing toilet-paper rolls.”  
(For what purpose — God knows!)  
Would I kindly quit,  
So the fellas can . . . !

“No pets allowed, the rules show;  
Consequently, yours has got to go.”  
(Neighbour's bin bitchin'  
That his nose is a-itchin' —)  
My friend, I'm sunk —  
Want to buy my SKUNK!?

“You're growing a plant on your table,  
To identify it, we weren't able.  
We burned a bit — to test,  
And liked the smoke the best,  
But we would hope  
That it weren't DOPE!”

“And as to the red-head,  
We found under your bed;  
You shared the wealth,  
Ruined the bull-cook's health —  
Can't have no social disease,  
So get rid of her — PLEASE!”

Now, I want to make clear  
To all you folks round here —  
It's untrue I've been a pest of late,  
A bunkhouse louse, now I aint,  
And I should know —  
I was kicked out of camp — SIX MONTHS AGO!

—Anonymous





**RUFF CUSTOMER.** When "Spike" Hammond was patrolling behind the Apartments recently he discovered a bear a-scroungin' in the garbage cans. Indignant at this intrusion, Spike quickly subdued the greedy bear then hauled his prize home to show Mistress Shelly, Secretary at Main Office!



**NEW CUBS.** The 1st Keno Hill Cub Pack recently invested six new members. They are: top, L-R; Martin Keller, Buddy Rich, Damien Roberti — bottom, L-R; Tom Sherwin, Gerald Watson, Oliver Weg.

**THE SINGING PLUMBER (Cont. from p 1.)**

and Mayo, and once I fixed a freezer in Pelly.

But back in 1959 Fulvio met a nurse in Mayo and fell in love. He must have, he says, because every day after work for the next four years, even when it was 50 below, he'd travel to Mayo and back just to visit her. In 1963 Fulvio married the nurse and they now have three children: Manuella, 12; Lorenzo, 10; and Damien, 7½.

"In the north parents still have control of their children," Fulvio says. "They're not competing against the influence of big schools and other things of the city."

"Maybe education opportunities aren't as broad in the north, but I know kids who were born here, went to school here, went to university outside, and have done great — one is a mining engineer, another youngster from Mayo now teaches at U.B.C."

"Parents up here can't depend entirely on the teachers to educate their children. My wife is currently teaching our children Russian as a second language, for instance."

"Bringing up children in the North is very good providing you

take them outside so they can see what it's like. My boys are fascinated by long trains, big bridges and jet planes."

"In 1974 I quit U.K.H.M. to try the outside. I had a job I liked, but I hated the crazy pressure of the city and I was back here in two months."

"I like the Yukon, the tranquility, the scenery, the fishing, the people."

"I get a chuckle out of people who come here sometimes and find it as hard to get used to our realities as I did to get used to those of the city. For instance, one day I was working with a fella down at the school trying to disconnect a frozen pipe — it was brutally cold out. The fella dropped a coupling bolt and removed his mitts to find it in the snow — he found it alright — frozen to the end of his finger!"

Another reality newcomers to our area have to cope with, other than the sometimes-awesome cold, is Fulvio and his fellow crooners, but that shouldn't be too difficult — the easiest way to do it — is simply to buy them a round, sit down and join them in the next chorus!



**WISE OWL AWARDS.** Twice in the same week last fall Husky Miner's-Helper, Peter Grant, was saved from eye injury by wearing his Safety Glasses. In both instances Peter was breaking rock when chips struck and shattered his glasses. He is shown above receiving Two Wise Owl awards from Safety Supervisor, Rudi Franke.



## CURLING FINK

When it comes to sports competition, some people will do anything to win. And the allegedly sedate game of curling is no exception. We're sure most of you have met the following — RINK FINK! . . .

He's the one who drops a "clank" in the hack just before your Skip has to make a crucial shot.

When you're sipping a Coke before the game, he's the one who spikes it with Aspirin.

He's the one who is so dumb he figgers "take-out-weight" is a line-up at Kentucky Fried.

Whenever his team makes a good shot, he's the one who kisses the MacDonald Lady — one the mouth!

He's the one whose arithmetic is so bad the only way he can keep score is on his pocket calculator.

When he goes to make a shot, he's the one who invariably sticks up a finger to test the wind — in an indoor arena?

And when you split the crotch of your pants, guess who's the first to notice!

And when you have trouble with traction, he's the one who rubs the soles of your shoes with Crazy Glue.

Fortunately, he's the one who always wins the Crying Towel!

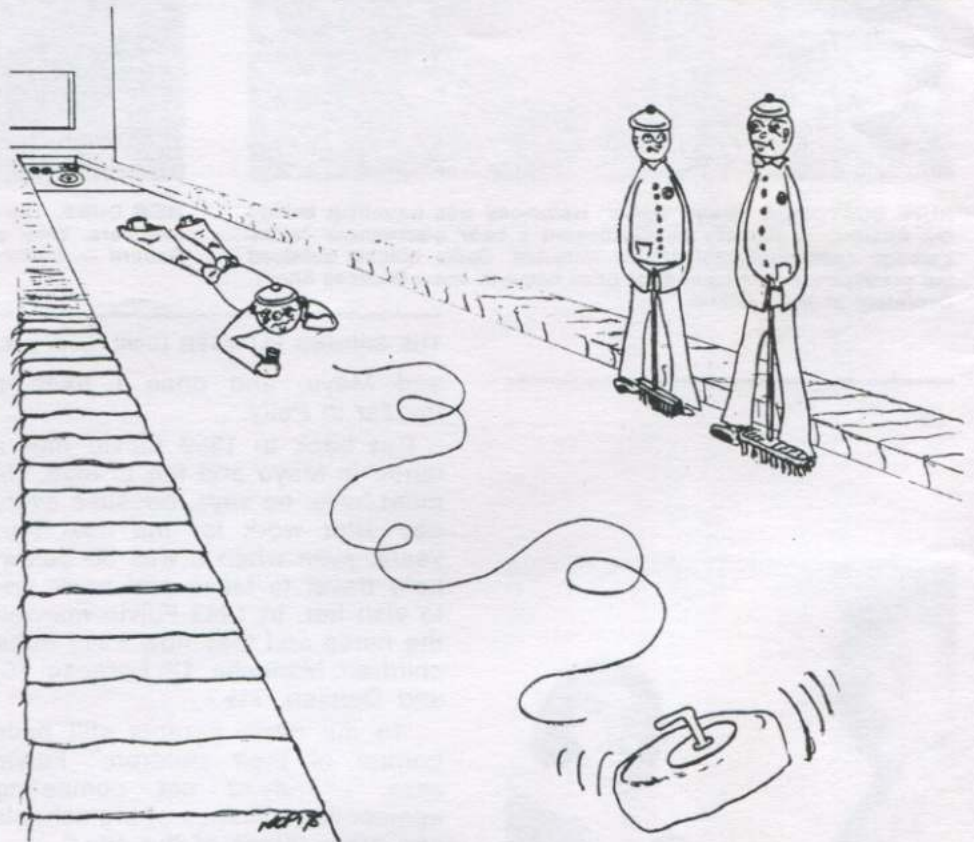
## CRAZY

There may be some truth to the rumour that people who live in the North are just a bit off their Rockers — for instance:

The other day we were coming out of the Market when we spied Mike Karkotka jumping up-and-down like some sort of Trampoline Freak on the trunk of his car. We enquired if Mike was trying to close the trunk — "Are you kiddin'," came the huffed reply, "I'm tryin' to OPEN the damn thing!"

A year or so ago Terry Levicki

took his wife Betty to Saturday night Bingo at the Rec. Hall. Betty played each game, but Terry sat back keeping track of the numbers that were called, and with what frequency, then just before the \$75 Jackpot game he quickly pored over stacks of Bingo Cards and bought **fifteen** of them—based on his calculations one of them had to be the winner. Well, a Levicki won the jackpot alright, but it was wife Betty, playing with the same card she'd used all night! Terry's comments we will not record for posterity!!



"HOW THE HELL DO WE SWEEP THAT?"

## The POWDER MAGAZINE

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