

THE CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST
MESSENGER



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IF WINTER COMES

**When forty winters shall besiege thy brow
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
Will be a tattered weed, of small worth held.
Then being asked where all thy beauty lies—
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days—
To say within thine own deep-sunken eyes
Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise.**

Paul's last letter was to one of his dearest friends, Timothy, whom he has left in charge of the church at far-off Ephesus. He tells Timothy that he wants him to come and be with him at Rome. He is to stop at Troas on the way and pick up his books, for Paul is a scholar even to the end. He is to bring the cloak, too, which Paul had left at the house of Carpus in Troas. But this is the only robe that Paul possesses. It is getting cold in Rome, for the summer is waning, and Paul wants his robe to keep him warm. But most of all Paul wants Timothy to bring himself. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me," he writes; and then, just before the close of the letter, he says, "Do thy diligence to come before winter."

Why "before winter"? Because when winter set in, the season for navigation closed in the Mediterranean and it was dangerous for ships to venture out to sea. If Timothy waited until winter, he would then have had to wait until spring; and Paul has a premonition that he will not last out the winter, for he says, "The time of my departure is at hand." We like to think that Timothy did not wait a single day after that letter from Paul reached him at Ephesus, but started at once to Troas, where he picked up Paul's books and the old cloak. He then made his way, by land and sea, to Rome, where he found Paul in prison, remaining with him for the time left until Paul's execution.

*Before winter or never – for, even today in our own lives,
there are some things which will never be done unless they
are done "before winter."*

We may like all the seasons and they all have their beauty – spring, summer, autumn – but how quickly the autumn passes! It is the perfect parable of all that fades; then tomorrow rains will fall, winds will blow, and the trees will be stripped and barren.



Taking the suggestion from this message of Paul in the prison at Rome, we are reminded of how quickly time passes, of how life's seasons also come and go. "Come – before winter" – call it common sense, experience, conscience, Scripture, the Holy Spirit, or merely the souls of just men made perfect!

Twice coming to the sleeping disciples whom he had asked to watch with him in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ awakened them and said with sad surprise, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" When he came the third time and found them sleeping, he looked sadly down upon them and said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." One of those three, James, was the first of the twelve apostles to die for Christ. Another, John, was to suffer imprisonment for the sake of Christ on the isle that is called Patmos. And Peter was to be crucified for his sake. But how they must have regretted those hours when they could not stay awake.

You may say you intend to do this thing, to speak this word of appreciation or amendment, or show this act of kindness; but now the vacant chair, the unlifted book, the empty place will speak to you with a reproach which your heart can hardly endure.

The Reverend Macartney's final paragraph may seem to some to be rather maudlin or melodramatic; however, the season of Lent is usually a time when we are encouraged to give something up. Perhaps a new twist would be to do something a little extra.

**How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use
If thou couldst answer "This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count and make my old excuse",
Proving his beauty by succession thine.
This were to be new made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feelst it cold.****

** Sonnet #2, William Shakespeare,
and freely excerpted from a sermon, "Come Before Winter",
Clarence Macartney, Arch Street Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, 1915 / DLP, Editor

“The wind swept the snow aside, ever faster and thicker, as if it were trying to catch up with something, and Yurii Andreievich stared ahead of him out of the window, as if he were not looking at the snow but were still reading Tonia’s letter and as if what flickered past him were not small dry snow crystals but the spaces between the small black letters, white, white, endless, endless.”

From Doctor Zhivago, Boris Pasternak

Northern Lights

A favourite story I like to tell about my trip to Pangnirtung is about an indigent boy who was adopted by a British Reverend and his wife. Alcohol is verboten in Pangnirtung (and most parts of the Arctic) but guess what house is allowed to have it? If you answered ‘the Reverend’s house’, you are correct.

Needless to say, we adolescents from Montreal, were tickled pink when the boy, (Kim) showed up one night with some wine to keep us warm while we were hanging out. There isn’t much to do there at night with one store, (the Hudson’s Bay Store), and a Movie Hall the size of our Allen Room – well that was about it. One night, we exchange students ended up at the RCMP officer’s house because the one RCMP officer in town happened to be away during the time we were there. Coincidence? Lucky for us, I guess, as he had a house with a flushing toilet and kids who could throw the wildest party! We were young and the sun was still brightly shining past midnight so of course we were not inclined to go to sleep; besides if you haven’t noticed adolescents are nocturnal!

We did enjoy daily ‘adventures’ which were far removed from our experiences in “the South”. On one occasion, com-

ing back from a long day’s trip to cross the Arctic Circle, I still remember being overcome by gas fumes from the ski-doo which was pulling us on our sleds. Luckily someone noticed. I came to, finding myself standing in the Arctic air no longer wearing the Parka someone lent me. I guess they figured this was the best way to restore me to consciousness. It worked!!



At the time I visited Pangnirtung, the airstrip divided the village in two. Hence, for example, when you wanted to get to the other side of the village to go to school, you had to check before you crossed the runway. “Checking” meant looking in the direction from which planes would arrive, only from the south, not quite the same as the “rules for crossing the street” learned by most elementary kids nowadays. That is something you tend not to forget! Speaking of aircraft, I was sure we were all going to die when we climbed

aboard the “air transport” which took us from Frobisher Bay to Pangnirtung. Forget seatbelts and masks in case of emergency – no flight attendant or complimentary snacks. Sitting room only, if you could call it that! We sat on our “seats” (the luggage we had brought) and watched the pilot pull the throttle to coax his flying machine into flight.

I fell in love with the people and the north so much, I went the next summer to see the capital of the NWT, Yellowknife. I was not disappointed. Mr. Jack Bauer the teacher who brought us to Pangnirtung, passed away three years ago. I did run into Mr. Bauer at Christian Emmanuel school where he had become Principal, when I helped a teacher friend with her music concert. After Jack and I reconnected, I found out that his daughter-in-law was Heather Cameron, the Reverend Alan Cameron’s daughter. Heather and I had met previously at a soccer match because grandpa Cameron was watching his grandson, Caleb, play against my son, Andreas. Now that’s a God-incidence. Do any of you remember Rev. Alan? I loved to hear him preach to us at Saint John the Baptist Church.

In closing, I hope you had as much fun reading my “winter story” as I did reliving it.

Angela Romberg-Deslauriers

Book, Bake and Craft Sale

The Women’s Guild will hold a “Book, Bake and Craft Sale” on Saturday, April 6, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Books donated for the sale can be left on the stage – **only from Wednesday, April 3.**

Books are needed – paperbacks, hardcovers, magazines, CDs, DVDs! Do you have a book or two which you have read and would like to pass on to another reader? A CD or DVD to share?

There will be spring decorations and craft items for sale as well as baking which can be brought in early April 6th or during the day on Friday, 5th.

No National Geographics, encyclopedias or text books PLEASE!!

Vicar's Vignette

A Lenten Riddle

When I was a young boy my grandmother would tell me riddles. I must admit that I didn't understand many of them at the time, and I remember even fewer still. But the few I did remember, I now tell them to my own grandchildren. And they seem to get a kick out of them.

Two come to mind:

*Two brothers we were, two burdens we bear, although we are heavily pressed. It is true what they say, we are full all the day, and empty when we go to rest. **

*What gets bigger the more you take away from it? ***

A simple definition of the word riddle is "something that has a surprising or amusing answer, or something that is a mystery, difficult to understand."

Canadian singer songwriter Steve Bell sings a song called, The Riddle (Long, Long, Journey), whose following lyrics describe in part the mystery of the Christian life:

*"I'm on my way on a long, long journey
And I don't know where the road ends
I'm on my way on a long, long journey
Surprises await me around the bend*

*Take my hand and walk beside me
The road is long and brief the rest
Take my hand and walk beside me
The answer to this riddle is a quest*

The riddle says:

Finding leads to losing

Losing lets you find

Living leads to dying

But life leaves death behind

Losing leads to finding

That's all that I can say

No one will find life any other way."

Jesus said, "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. (Luke 9:24).

"The Lenten season reminds us that to live the Christian life and realize its true blessings begins when we surrender our self to God, losing who we once were in order to become who we now are; people to whom Jesus means everything." This makes no sense to those whose greatest desire is to satisfy his or her "self-life." But to the one who strives to imitate Christ, although tough to do, it makes perfect sense and in so doing there is great reward.

The riddle says: Finding leads to losing, losing lets you find, living leads to dying, but life leaves death behind.

Yours in Christ,



Thoughts On Ash Wednesday and Lent

Once a year, Ash Wednesday and the wider Lenten fast provide the collective opportunity to notice, confess and address our willful opposition to love. They confront two particular deaths that every age (particularly our age) is at pains to deny – sin and mortality. Each year at this time, many churches offer a service where the penitent worshipper symbolically receives the cross of ash upon his or her brow.

So much of our cultural energy is spent on an outright denial of our human frailty, be it through anti-aging creams, pharmaceuticals to extend our sexual vitality, apps to butter up our photos, or other behaviours or misbehaviours that distract us from the inevitability of life's end. So, the gift on offer at this time is that of humility. We do not choose our birth or our death, for we are indeed dust, like the ashes spread. Ultimately, these things are in God's hands, and Ash Wednesday encourages us to join our voice to that of Jesus' humble resignation on the cross: "Into your hands I commend my spirit." Oddly, there is a beautiful relief in letting go of what is not ours to command. In exchange, we gain a trust in the One whose word creates and recreates eternally.

Imagine the creative energy and resources that would explode out of a society that quits trying to not die, and instead gives itself to the mutual fullness of life while it is in our hands.

We need not fret about death, but rather may live in the fullness of the wellspring of life, which is our ultimate destiny. We have the hope of resurrection.

Another death needs to be confronted. This death is revealed by the unpopular word 'sin.' Our resistance to the limits imposed by obligations to others reveals that we cherish our personal freedom more than the joyful experience of mutual self-giving. Sin is the most bewildering malady, as it keeps us from the life for which we are destined and for which we long. In short, sin separates us from whatever and whomever we should be connected to.

Like a super-virus, sin infects and destroys everything with which it comes in contact. The created world is beautiful and precious. Yet sin has profoundly contaminated our environment, our communities, our politics, economics, social and religious institutions, and the most delicate and foundational aspects of human experience – neighbourhoods and families.

In response to God's gift, our faith encourages us to defy the culture of sin and death by participating with Christ in a counter-narrative of self-giving love, countering the narrative of sinful isolation as we share our bread and offer shelter to the homeless in as many individual ways as far as we are able.

*From a blog published by Steve Bell, March 2019
DLP, Editor*



Lorne+



* / **
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Cabane à sucre – à la StJtheB

We didn't have a wagon ride or maple candy from syrup poured on the snow, but everything else seemed to be in place. While our fillings can thank the lack of maple candy, for everything else we need to thank a large team of cooks, shoppers, slicers, flippers, servers and dishwashers who produced an outstanding meal on Shrove Tuesday for close to one hundred parishioners, friends and their families. How do these competent caterers manage to do it? Tasty hot food, served on time and in abundance, must have satisfied the appetites of all who participated, young or old. FAT Tuesday, indeed! Only one complaint was overheard – the red wine, served in small decanters on the tables, was on the sweet side!



Well, you have to learn sometime!





For the Uninitiated.

Historically, sugar shacks are a product of Native American and European ingenuity. French explorer and colonist Pierre Boucher described observing indigenous peoples making maple sugar in his “l’histoire veritable et naturelle des mœurs et productions du pays de la Nouvelle-France, vulgairement dite le Canada” (1664).

Maple sugar fabrication became a tradition introduced to New France by settlers of Swiss and French Norman origin throughout the 17th century. Their purpose was the production of syrup for trade or sale, and for personal use during the cold months of winter. After the British conquest of 1763, the tradition carried along to the provinces of Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia but remained a primarily

family-related tradition in Quebec where a small but important splinter movement can still be found in the village of Pointe Claire.

Today many sugar shacks are commercially operated and also offer reception halls and outdoor activities open to the general public during certain months. Many of these activities include sleigh-riding, tours of the grounds, leaf-raking and eating traditional foods made in-house, often in front of customers. The reception halls cater to large groups offering dishes complemented by maple syrup. These dishes include ham, bacon, sausages, baked beans, scrambled eggs, pork rinds and pancakes. There are also specialties like homemade pickles, home-made bread, followed by desserts such as sugar pie, apple crumble and maple taffy on the snow.

Wikipedia



Birthday Girl

Taking a break from duties in the kitchen, Lynda, our Administrative Assistant, was presented with a cake to mark her 70th birthday. Doing the honours is her sister, Donna, well-known gourmet, fashionista and general agitator from the Women’s Guild. Many happy returns, Lynda; we know retirement is nearing but what will we do without you?!

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Of Ice and Men

It was Wednesday, 30th of January, 2019. The day before had brought a mixture of snow and icy rain so the streets were a mess, not to say dangerous. Today it was much colder with more ice and I decided we couldn't wait any longer for new boots. It wasn't that we didn't have boots, it was just that they were a bit worn down and the salt and snow could penetrate. So off we went at 10 a.m. to one of our regular stores, Mondou. We'd barely entered the store when surrounded by so many tempting smells I raced forward to the shelves along the aisle. Of course I know what a leash is but I forgot that my mother was attached to it. The next thing I know, her boots fly past me, her body's in the air and she hits the ground with an ear piercing scream. I hear sobs and throaty calls for help until the store's assistants arrive but they don't seem to be able to do anything. I'm reminded that I often hear my mother saying that she needs to lose a couple of pounds but that doesn't seem to be the problem. She just can't move.

While they wait for an ambulance to arrive, I hear the assistants say that I won't be able to stay with them, so who should they call. No names come to mind! Then I hear a teary voice say, "Could you call The Church of Saint John the Baptist? Perhaps someone might be available." Within minutes, while she is being loaded onto the stretcher, my uncle Brent, who used to be a neighbour, arrives and I'm off for a visit with Bella, to have a walk and enjoy lunch.

That was just the start of the day. With pain from nose to tail, the woman on the stretcher was taken to hospital, MRI-ed



from top to bottom and put on a gurney. The pain level throughout the body was horrendous, only to sprout to a higher level when she was raised and then lowered onto a bedpan and the pan split apart! Hmm, maybe she *should* lose a couple of pounds . . .

Only later in the afternoon did a completely unexpected surprise occur. She opened her eyes and there was the Rev. Lorne Eason. Although never wanting to be seen looking like something the cat dragged in, she felt happily comforted and extremely grateful that, after his long day at work, he was able to visit; but that wasn't all. At 9.30 p.m. he returned to drive her home, only to find the neighbourhood without power. Luckily, a couple of battery powered candles were found before waving Lorne an unbelievably grateful goodbye. Still fully dressed, she stumbled upstairs and we fell into bed.

Now, I thought that was the end of the story - but forward to Sunday, 3rd of February, and after spending four days in her nightshirt, she decided to go to church. As there was too much snow on the car to even attempt a clean-up she decided to walk the two blocks. She crept into the back pew behind the sides-people and hunkered down as the service started. Unable to sing but listening to the music and the choir, emotions ran high and overflowed when combined with the words of the hymns and the readings. The atmosphere of comfort and caring, was overwhelming as the Church of Saint John the Baptist brought a previously unappreciated warmth and belonging.

On the other hand, I'm still waiting for the boots!

Milton

Of Sun and Sand

In February, Margaret and I were apparently lucky enough to escape the worst two weeks of winter; I am tempted to add "so far" - but that would be cruel! We visited Perdido Key where my son's in-laws live. This barrier island, near Pensacola in the Florida panhandle a few miles from the Alabama border, is a spit of land with the usual collection of tall condo building crowding the shore.

I have to admit that, on this third visit, we imagined that there would not be a lot of new perspectives to contemplate. On the other hand, we had the happy prospect of meeting Robin and Katie, and, of course, Wren, the voluble young lady whom some of you may have met during her baptismal service at StJtheB last December. One thing was immediately apparent, her voice had not lost any 'sonority' during the intervening weeks! Katie's sister and her three young daughters - aged one, six and eight respectively - were also on hand for part of the time.

I am always being blamed for living my vacations vicariously, spending too much time on holiday with a camera in my hand. On this occasion, however, I was not looking terribly hard for "inspiration"; indeed, I admit to feeling that there was not a lot to inspire, an opinion which I suspect is unfair! Having grown up 'by the sea', waves always intrigue me so, on any occasion when I get close to them, a few will make "cameo" appearances in my "vicarious vacation". On a different tack (sorry!), inspiration also came from a coffee break at a 'diner'. Oddly, we came across this quintessential American institution by accident one day but were never able to



(Continued on Page 6)

(Of Sun and Sand, cont.)

find it again; perhaps, they only haul it out one day per week! Still, it remains in our memories at least, a real ‘flash from the past’, both in design, menu and musical ambiance. Only a few shots taken in Pensacola proper survived my editing, although there are interesting heritage areas in a downtown which is being tastefully restored. Beyond the immediate downtown area, much of the city is prone to urban ‘blight’, as seems to be the case in many American towns. A lot of the *quasi-rural* areas were ramshackle and rundown.

Possibly as an adjunct to this, there does seem to be an emphasis on encourag-

ing the arts, especially among young people; it is likely that Katie is one product of this urban policy, honing her skills at the Pensacola Little Theatre - across the street from the Museum of Art – before moving to New York City and a MFA degree in



theatre direction from The New School for Drama in Manhattan.

Wren, meanwhile, cannot quite come to grips with all of this drama! DLP



Winter Greetings from Charlottetown!

Thinking of you and hoping that you and yours are managing to meet all the challenges that winter in Canada seems to present.

PEI residents are digging out from twenty centimeters of fresh snow that closed schools yesterday (even before the snow began to fall) and virtually everything else by mid-morning. However, now that the sunshine is more powerful (even when daytime temperatures are still around the freezing point), sidewalks and roadways were bare and dry when I walked home from work this evening; a wonderful improvement after weeks of icy conditions. For those who still aren't convinced that spring must be just around the corner, I sincerely hope that you have a winter getaway in the works !

The first weekday of Study Week at UPEI coincided with Islander Day (Family Day elsewhere) and concluded on February 24th, but school-age students are impatiently awaiting their spring Break that only starts on March 16th. So, needless to say, air travel this month is almost completely impossible to book and if you do manage to find something appealing, it comes at a pretty price.

But both Bruce and have performances coming up at the end of this month, and we are really looking forward to participating. PEI musicians, at every level of competence, truly revel in their music-making, which makes rehearsals and concerts thoroughly enjoyable. I also replaced a vacationing church musician last month and, without a doubt, it was wonderful to be able to resume a schedule of regular practice-time.

I hope to be back in Montreal sometime in April, especially with Easter three weeks later than last year. However, I will also need to check in on my Mom who is still living alone in London, Ontario with little or no assistance, despite the protestations of her doctor and other health professionals.

Barbara

First Snow

This was the first year that our grandchildren from the UK were to spend Christmas with us in Canada. They had never seen lots of snow! The first snowfall which came in November had already melted but we were hopeful for a white Christmas. They arrived a few days before Christmas. We took them to a pantomime of Snow White, their first professional hockey game with the Laval Rockets, and hosted several family parties with their cousins and extended family. The whole family came to the Children's Pageant on Christmas Eve.

We were thrilled to see how quickly they adapted to their new (second hand) skates at the local outdoor rink - the boy trying for speed and the girl wanting to twirl. After Christmas, their parents took them downhill skiing in the Townships. Within hours, they were riding up the chair lift just as soon as they were able to “make a pizza point” with their rental skis.



On the day of their departure back to the UK, a new cover of sticky “snowball” snow finally covered the grass. Before leaving for the airport, we had just enough time to make four snow”men”, two smaller ones representing them and two larger ones representing us. Their Dad took a quick photo of the four of us standing behind our snow people. Since then, we have slowly watched the snow people disappear and finally completely buried by our big February blast. Just the other day, via Skype, we showed the surprised grandkids the spot where their now buried snowmen still stand. The photo of the four of us with our snowmen hangs on our wall and the happy memory helps us cope with this endless winter.

Lucy Hunt

Crossword Clues

Cryptic clues have an asterisk (*)

ACROSS

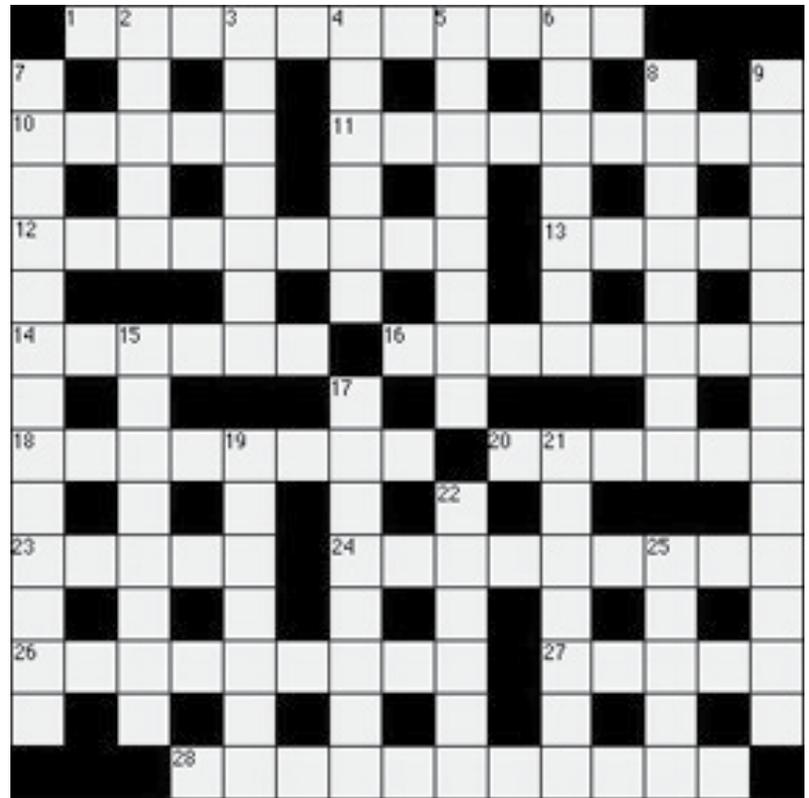
1. Image destroyers in Early Greek Church (11)
10. Eight playing at Musical Chairs ? (5)
11. * Prophet laying guns at sea (9)
12. * Account of short arrival in country (9)
13. * Green veggie seen at Montreal's sidewalks (5)
14. * Catch the lady behind (6)
16. Result of 21 Down (8)
18. * Rat roped a Dinosaur ! (8)
20. All graduates together (6)
23. * Some separated (5)
24. Citrus seed (6,3)
26. Always inexperienced, but fresh (9)
27. * Dance – leave on beat (5)
28. * Dean grasped a tool for digging (6,5)

DOWN

2. Puss with the Queen to prepare a meal (5)
3. * The E.T. train brings garden fertilizer (7)
4. * Egyptian Church cited in Mtl. Cop ticket (6)
5. Nebuchadnezzar didn't like him or his friends (8)
6. * Stumble on oil slick on Mediterranean coast (7)
7. * Forenoon Plea (7,6)
8. * Miss one cot through stolidity (8)

From the archives

Mark and Betty's Crossword



Contributed by Mark and Betty Levesley, September 2005

9. * Ruin the country with cop -- clear words (13)
15. * Young person uses tee on the range (8)
17. Plant diet -- mad cows in Western U.S. ? (4-4)
19. Popular B.W.I. island for snowbirds (7)
21. * Smokers do it to shine forth (5,2)
22. * Sounds like Anglican Church's big gun (6)
25. * North Dakota tart longed for (5)

Brexit – a Medical Assessment

As the United Kingdom haggles towards a Brexit deal with Europe, physicians have been unable to reach a consensus on whether Brexit should take place at all?

The Allergists were in favor of scratching it, but the Dermatologists advised not to make any rash moves. The Gastro-enterologists had sort of a gut feeling about it, but the Neurologists thought the Brexiteers had a lot of nerve. Meanwhile, Obstetricians felt certain everyone was laboring under a misconception, while the Ophthalmologists considered the idea shortsighted. Pathologists yelled, "Over my dead body!" while the Pediatricians countered, "Oh, grow up!" The Psychiatrists thought the



whole idea was madness, while the Radiologists could see right through it.

Surgeons decided to wash their hands of the whole affair and the Internists claimed it would indeed be a bitter pill to swallow. The Plastic Surgeons considered that this proposal would "put a whole new face on the matter." The Podiatrists thought it was a step forward, but the Urologists felt that a whole lot of water had yet to pass under the bridge. Anesthesiologists thought

the whole idea was a gas, but those lofty Cardiologists didn't have the heart to say no. In the end, the Proctologists won out, leaving the entire decision up to the *you-know-whats* in Whitehall!

With thanks to Joyce Farthing