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**Bill's  
Bulletin  
Board**

By Bill Rea

Like many people who like to watch movies, I believe Casablanca was the best one ever made.

Those of you who agree with me, will of course be familiar with these words; "You must remember this. A kiss is just a kiss."

But for me, a case could be made for a slight change to the lyrics — ala, "A kiss is just a kiss, unless it knocks your teeth out."

Now before any of you get the idea that my wife finally came to her senses and gave me that richly deserved sock in the chops, I had better explain. In this case, the explanation goes all the way back to late September and early October.

Being the soft, sentimental slob that I am, I retain a fondness for all the little things that brought a smile to my face when I was a kid, like candy bars, seedless grapes and watching my brother get punished by my parents.

Halloween is another of those memories from my younger days that still brings a little glow to my heart. Since my wife and I moved into our house about seven years ago, I have taken great pains to make sure we have a good assortment of candy for the trick-and-treaters who come to our door. Initially, my preparations were a little

mystifying to Beth, although I think that was understandable. She grew up on a farm, so her shelling-out activities would have been limited to a couple of neighbours. Accordingly, not many ghosts or goblins would have come to her door. I, on the other hand, pretended to grow up in a quiet, but well populated area of Toronto. That meant I had several blocks for my friends and I to explore Halloween night.

So Beth may have thought I was overdoing it a bit in the early years, when it came to the treats we accumulated to hand out, but I was eventually able to convince her to my way of thinking (at least, I think I did).

One of the problems with this annual ritual is it's pretty hard to guess how many kids might come to our door. One year, we were ready with treat bags for 75 and ran out of treats in less than an hour. The next year, we doubled the number and welcomed 35 kids. The real problems was we bought so much candy, we decided to economize and buy, for want of a better term, "cheap stuff." Big mistake, because guess who has to eat whatever's left over? How many sub-standard imitations of Gummy Bears can one man stand?

Thus we resolved that in

future, we would buy only quality treats, in deference to the two people who would have to consume the bulk of the residue.

We always have little chocolate bars to put in the bags. In recent years, we've added little boxes of raisins, and assorted other goodies. One thing I always look for are those molasses

"Kisses." You've probably seen them. They come wrapped in Halloween-decorated paper. I've never been a big fan of these candies myself, but they are something of a tradition of the occasion. Besides, my father thought they were the greatest, and used to help himself from the left-over bowl when I was a kid.

So it's sort of out of deference to my old man that I try to make sure each bag we prepare has some of these kisses.

There are some years when they are easier to find than others, but this last Halloween I was able to find an ample supply. Actually, it was more than ample, because we had a healthy number of bags left over when we shut down the operations for the night.

The left-overs were dumped into a large bowl, which was parked on the kitchen table. Since that night, Beth and I have been dipping into it, as our moods of level of peckishness dictated.

The chocolate bars went very fast (thanks largely to Beth), the raisins went fairly quickly (thanks largely to me) and the rest of the goodies have been moving slowly but surely.

Which brings us to last Wednesday, which owing to a number of factors, is not going to be a day I recall fondly in my declining

years. But the day did eventually end, and this tired old guy finally arrived home to a light supper, followed by an evening of working on the household books at the kitchen table. I regret to report that inconvenient distractions, such as work, have caused me to slide a bit when it comes to keeping up with certain domestic duties, but my stress level kept me pumped enough that I still had some energy to make a dent in the pile of paper on the kitchen table.

So I set down to work for an hour or so. And there was the aforementioned bowl of candy within convenient reach. I figured I had earned a bit of a treat, so I tried one of the Kisses. Rather satisfying it was, so I had another. This was proving to be a real pick-me-up, so I had another.

As I was contently chewing on this confection, while working away with pen and calculator, I got the feeling there was something else in my mouth that shouldn't be there. I immediately thought there was something foreign in the candy, so I quickly ran to the nearest convenient receptacle and spit it out, taking care that Beth didn't see what I was doing (deco- rum must always take some priority).

It took a couple of seconds of flicking my tongue around my mouth to realize what the real problem was, and I let out a groan that Beth couldn't help but hear. She asked what the trouble was.

"I think I just broke a tooth on this (blankety-blank) candy," with frustration in my voice.

You did realize there was some point in starting

this column with references to As Time Goes By, didn't you?

In fact, I had knocked out a great big filling from a tooth that's seen a lot of the dentist's attention over the last several years. It was going to see more.

Now unlike a lot of people (my late father springs readily to mind), I have never had any particular problem with going to the dentist. Indeed, as a kid, going to the dentist was an excuse to get out of school early, and in later years, it was an excuse to get in to work late that even quieted my workaholic tendencies. My father, who could have stared down King Kong if he had the opportunity, was a different sort. A picturesque description of one's last trip to the dentist would have put him out for the count.

That's not to say I was looking forward to the trip, which I was fortunate enough to be able to arrange for the very next day. My dentist is a very nice lady, but I knew she was going to holler at me for my stupidity, as I deserved. She did too, albeit in the nicest possible way. And while the dentist doesn't scare me, like most people, I'm not fond of having my teeth drilled, even if it does get me out of work.

The upshot was the dentist was not too sure what to do about the tooth. I have to report back in a couple of weeks.

And on the advice of both my dentist and wife, I am giving up Kisses for life, at least the molasses kind. As for the other kinds of kisses, those details are for other types of publications.

**Editorial**

**Will Rob Ramage's example finally get the message out?**

There are no winners, or no cause for satisfaction over what happened last week to former Toronto Maple Leaf Captain Rob Ramage.

He was sentenced to four years in prison and prohibited from driving for five years in connection with a traffic accident that claimed the life of former NHL star Keith Magnuson and seriously injured a Woodbridge woman.

York Regional Police reported Ramage was convicted of impaired driving causing death, impaired driving causing bodily

harm, dangerous driving causing death, dangerous driving causing bodily harm and driving with more than the legal limit of alcohol in his system.

While we wouldn't wish what Ramage must be going through on our worst enemy, there are certain realities here. If he did what he has been convicted of (and in fairness to the man, it looks like the issue is going to be appealed), then he is clearly the author of his own misfortune. He did something that common sense should have told him not to do.

Published reports stated the Magnuson family appealed for leniency, and that is highly laudable of them. Laudable too were the number of high-profile people who issued letters and made statements on his behalf.

As well, there are probably a lot of people out there who believe the sentence handed Ramage was too harsh, considering he was a first offender who has led an otherwise exemplary life. Some might argue he was used as an example because of his notoriety as a hockey star.

Well, he could have gotten around all of that easily, if he just hadn't put himself behind the wheel.

He elected to take the chance, and that included facing whatever the judicial system, in its wisdom, decided to hand back.

The result is his to deal with.

It is a result that is nothing to gloat over. A former hockey star is dead, and the life of another former star has been seriously, if not permanently impacted.

If there is a silver lining to this very dark cloud, maybe there's some hope

that people who are not quite as celebrated as a Rob Ramage might think twice before getting behind the wheel after having too many.

With all the notoriety that impaired driving has received over the last several years, we are mystified that such a message needs to be repeated again, but here it is.

Is it possible that this case might discourage just one potential impaired driver to stay off the road?

That might bring some real meaning to this incident.