



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

Cancellation

Every once in a while I get to thinking: I sure would like to skip — for just one week — writing this column. I think: What I'd really like to do is call the editor and say, "You write it."

Well, he beat me to it last week. Actually, he didn't want to write my column. But since he had rejected the one I had written, he was forced to tear himself away from his old stack of Pogo comic books and quickly pen something to meet the deadline.

And he didn't do a bad job. For an editor, that is.

I guess I shouldn't be too upset. It's only the second time in eight years he has rejected me. The first time was about five years ago. In that column I had suggested it was time for all the Christians in Vero Beach to liven things up by bringing tambourines to church. The editor seemed to think that might cause a march on the newspaper office Monday morning by a bunch of angry preachers, priests and organists. I countered that if the editor was really doing his job he'd run the column but quickly call the

music stores and suggest they run big ads in the same issue advertising tambourines.

But freedom of the press, I discovered, ends with the editor's nose. And since he wasn't prepared to have it smashed by some angry choir director, the column didn't run.

But last week was something different. I had written a rip-snorting piece about one of the local politicians (I'll let you, dear reader, guess who I was about to expose). And, rather than face the consequences if my evaluations were wrong, the fearless editor volunteered to replace my masterpiece with his.

He did a pretty good job, considering he has a journalism degree.

To those who don't understand some of the horseplay that occasionally transpires between the editor and myself, I need to say we really are good friends. That was made obvious in last week's substitute column — in a twisted way. Remember that simile where he compared himself with Edgar Bergen and me with the immortal

Charlie McCarthy? Well, Bergen is gone — but Charlie lives on. And if the editor were really the ogre he makes himself out to be, he would have likened me to Mortimer Snerd, who, I understand, did not make it to the Smithsonian.

And, of course, in a Freudian way, he left me just enough room to come back at him. As the magnificent Charlie used to say to the stodgy Bergen: "If you're so great, how come your lips keep moving when I'm doing the talking."

Therefore, it is obvious that if the editor didn't love me he wouldn't give me a chance to keep on writing this column.

On the other hand, maybe the thought of thousands of fans canceling their subscriptions if I really were retired to the Smithsonian, as he suggested, has something to do with it.

Whatever the case, I'm glad to be a part of the Press-Journal family — even if I don't get invited to the editorial room "happy hour" celebrations. They're afraid, you see, that I might bring my tambourine.