

COMMENT

The ultimate deal & the ultimate humiliation

Let's do something radical: put mirrors in every woman's change room in the country. Make that the world. Let me tell you why:

Trolling the annual summer sidewalk sale in Oakville, I got what my mother calls a good buy: a \$10 dress. And it fit. You have to understand that this is like finding rust on a car in this town — it just doesn't happen. A \$10 dress in tiny Oakville of all places AND it fit. I almost forked over the cash without even trying it on. In fact, it almost gave me the perfect excuse. Such a deal, this dress, that no one would blame me for buying it right then and hang it in the closet forever. There's my \$10 dress, I'd point out proudly.

Why go through the trauma of trying



DIANE HART

it on?

Trying clothes on is pure agony, even at the best of times. Even for those svelte tiny little things with no hips. I am positive they go through the agony like the rest of us schleps. It's not a lot of fun having to parade about in some getup for all to see.

"It's lovely," those sale clerks trill, when even the worst outfit comes out of the change room.

But what the heck. It would take 10 minutes, maybe. Emerging from my mirror-less change room into the store proper, always a risky move at the best of times, I took a hesitant glance at the full sized mirror in the middle of the store. Sigh of relief. It looked okay. Other shoppers concurred, the lovely souls. I believed them.

You know, I absolutely love women at times like these - they're just so decent. It's an unspoken rule: you never say you look like a dog within 10 feet of a woman's change room.

Other shoppers may look you up and down, appraisingly. But, empathetic to the plight of all women doing that most depressing of tasks - trying on clothes - they tend to stay mercifully silent.

As they did that day in Oakville about my \$10 dress.

Sold, I thought to myself. I reached for the second garment, a tiny stretchy micro mini skirt thing.

Now, I have to tell you, mini skirts are not my thing. I suppose they're better than halter tops. Marginally. Sometimes, though, you just have to get with the look of the moment. And, for twelve bucks, I can do mini. I took a deep breath and pulled it on.

Sized large, I never expected it to fit. I'm a middle of the packer when it comes to clothes, not big, not small. In fact, to be honest, I thought I'd have it hanging on my hips. Of course, without a mirror, I couldn't exactly see what the whole thing looked like.

But I could feel. Ye Gods, did it feel tight! These hips were snug. As I squeezed it over my hips, I rumbled about a skinny-obsessed fashion industry, out to make only the Cate Blanchetts of the world look fabulous.

Not fair, not fair, I repeated. I'm not big as a house or anything. Man, was it snug, though. Could I walk????

What the heck was going on? Oh, well, sleek was the style of the day — tight tops, tight skirts: deal with it, Di, this is it.

And maybe, I consoled myself, maybe when I stepped out into the store and gazed at the full-length mirror, I'd look fabulous. I'd be transformed, magically, into a glossy 8 X 10 of Madonna on tour. Smooth and sleek in my new

micro mini skirt.

I was feeling so daring in the change room. Walk with attitude, I told myself. Think Nicole Kidman. Out I went. The owner came over and said, sotto voice: "I hope you know you're wearing a tube top."

Great. A tube top. "Oh," I responded, half-wittedly, wishing only to crawl back into that mirror-less change room. And never come out. It was kind of like the time when I told a friend to take off a dress she'd been trying on: "Take it off", I bullied, "it looks ugly."

She shook her head, wordlessly. And I said louder: "Take it off, it's ugly, it doesn't suit you, blah blah blah."

And then she informed me she'd worn the dress to the shop. It was her own dress, for God's sake.

Oh. At times like these you really do want to earth to just swallow you up.

I quickly rolled the tube top down off my hips and placed it back on the hanger. Red-faced, I emerged from the change room to pay for my \$10 dress and scuttle out of the shop.

I told the tale to a ton of people. My husband practically spit out his coffee; the ladies at the gym laughed; my book club pals, ever loyal, commiserated. "You're telling people that story?????" marveled the receptionist at my hair-dresser's.

Why ever not? If it gets me a mirror in a change room, I'll tell the world.

Provincial government lacking tolerance

To paraphrase that ancient hymn "The Day thou gavest? Lord! He's eaded!"

As one watches, with a sense of déjà vu, the latest recruit to the lengthening ranks of incompetent, and/or vindictive, and/or sleazy right wing leaders, from Diefenbaker through Mulroney to Harris, all backed by Bay Street and all eventual failures, one wonders at those backers' lack of judgement and whether it is, indeed, safe to entrust one's savings to them. After the Stock Market debacles of the last 18 months, many investors would tend to agree.

Letters to the Editor

(Canadian Alliance Stockwell) Day's death throes and the frenetic hype surrounding the no-chance Olympic bid have each taken up so much space that one could be forgiven for missing a couple of "nasties" that our benevolent masters at Queen's Park slipped in during the furor. The feds recently gave an extra \$300 benefit to poor families. The mean-spirited Harris government promptly deducted \$300 from the welfare cheques. Another news item reported

that most of the additional Provincial funding for childcare had been used up in salaries for Harris' cronies and bagmen.

I also noted that, having tried to vote themselves an obscene increase in salary, two of Halton's MPPs raised an uproar about regional homecare, which has had to revise its contract with private homecare providers so that they can pay more and hang on to their front line staff. Our Provincial government, although as corrupt as the defunct Ottoman Empire, obviously lacks its tolerance.

K.J. Hazelden

Learning plan needed

Many professional educators are objecting to measurements of the effectiveness of Ontario's education system, e.g. Halton's Director of Education, "Education director gives failing grade to high school report card", in the Oakville Beaver, April 27.

These efforts to measure a crucially important enterprise are not born of false economy or political dogma. They are the result of decades of dissatisfaction with the system. I tutored one Grade 11 graduate whose initial reading speed was three words per minute. At the end of the third word, he had forgotten the first. He was illiterate out of Grade 11. He is not alone.

We hear that schools vary so widely in socio-economic, immigrant, and other demographics in which they are immersed that comparisons are foolish. Such objections miss several important points:

1. The Ministry's Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), which administers the tests, warns against ranking and comparison, and many local professionals echo this prohibition. But their policy has been contradicted by Mr. Harris, who recently said, "The government will require that school boards set targets for improving student achievement and that plans be established to help low-performing schools and school boards." So we have the spectacle of the education system, including important parts of the government itself, being dragged kicking, biting, and screaming into ranking, comparison, and the setting of specific objectives.

2. Thus some schools do better than others, and we are forced to compare. The question arises: What does a high ranking school do that can help the low ranking one? Further, the low performer will be found to have transferable strengths too.

3. What program will raise the scores next year and next? The EQAO demands an improvement plan from each school district. Most such plans that I have read are, unfortunately, long lists of motherhood busy-works that will keep lots of education professionals expensively occupied, but without specific, numeric, measurable results. An example of a respectable objective, missing from most plans, is: "Raise average reading score by X% within two years." As the old saying goes, if you have no objective, any route will get you there. And, one might add, will cost you plenty.

Criticism has been leveled at the EQAO's, Fraser Institute's, and others' measurements. But it is commonplace to observe that, if one cannot successfully challenge the results of a test, (s)he will attack the test itself. So we have, supposedly, students who don't care, elitist testing, bad data, poor marking, and so forth. It is very human to throw out the 80% good because of 20% bad. So let us recall an old dictum: Whatever you measure will improve. If the measurement itself needs improvement, let's get to it. But let's not throw out the baby with the bath water.

Real or, in many cases, imaginary problems in the testing must not lead to complacency, inaction, or defensiveness. The public awaits results-oriented improvement programs and the better test scores that will result in the oncoming years. Please, no more illiterate Grade 11 grads.

Frank Gue
Education Chair, Taxpayers
Coalition Halton Inc.

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**NOTICE OF SURPLUS AND EXCHANGE
PART OF LOT 20, CONCESSION 1, S.D.S.
BEING PART 7 ON LAN 20R-13852**

TAKE NOTICE THAT:

- The Council for the Corporation of the Town of Oakville at its meeting of July 9, 2001, declared certain lands surplus. These lands are described as follows: Part of Lot 20, Concession 1, S.D.S., Town of Oakville, Regional Municipality of Halton, being Part 7 on Plan 20R-13852
- This notice is in compliance with the town's By-law 1995-71.
- Copies of Plan 1118 showing the lands to be sold are available for inspection at the office of the Manager, Realty Services at the address shown below, by appointment by calling 905-845-6601, extension 3022 during normal business hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.).

Maynard Millman, ACCI, P.App., Manager, Realty Services
Legal Department, The Corporation of the Town of Oakville
1225 Trafalgar Road, Oakville, Ontario L6J 5A6

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF OAKVILLE
By-law 2001-157

Closure of Part of Fourth Line to vehicular traffic only

TAKE NOTICE THAT:

- The Council of the Corporation of the Town of Oakville proposes to pass a by-law pursuant to Section 297 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter M.45 in order to close and stop up to vehicular traffic only, part of Fourth Line, Town of Oakville, Regional Municipality of Halton, being part of Lot 21, Concession 2, North of Dundas Street, being described as Part 2 on Plan 20R-14160.
- Pursuant to Section 300 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter M.45, before passing this by-law, Council or a Committee thereof, will hear in person or by his counsel, solicitor or agent, any person who claims that his lands will be prejudicially affected by this by-law, provided that such person makes application in writing to the undersigned on or before August 27, 2001 at 4:30 p.m. this matter will be heard at the Council meeting of September 4, 2001 commencing at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Town Hall, 1225 Trafalgar Road, Oakville.
- A copy of the Plan for the subject lands is available for inspection at the Clerk's Department, at the address shown below, during normal business hours.

Clerk's Department
The Corporation of the Town of Oakville, 1225 Trafalgar Road
Oakville, Ontario L6J 5A6

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Oakville Town Council invites you to volunteer your skills to assist it in its decision-making. Every year, Council appoints citizens of Oakville to various committees, boards and authorities that make decisions on issues affecting Oakville. If you apply, you could be selected to share your ideas on matters like heritage buildings, public facilities, or community services.

It is Town policy that a citizen can only serve on one committee at a time. If you apply and are accepted to serve on a second committee, you must resign from the committee you are currently serving on.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?
All Oakville residents are invited to get involved. To reflect the diverse nature of the Town's population, we encourage men, women, people with disabilities, native peoples, and racial and ethnic minorities to participate.

HOW TO APPLY
Anyone interested in applying, other than incumbents, must do the following:
Fill out an application form and return it to the Town Clerk's Department, Oakville Municipal Offices, 1225 Trafalgar Road, Oakville, by 4:30 p.m. Friday, July 27, 2001.

SELECTION PROCESS
Town Council will appoint qualified candidates for the positions based on the recommendations of the Administrative Services Committee. All appointments are for a term expiring December 31, 2003 unless otherwise stated.

REMEMBER
Only RESIDENTS of the Town of Oakville are eligible.

QUESTIONS?
For more information, call Diana Lecinski @ 845-6601, ext. 3136, or e-mail at dlecinski@town.oakville.on.ca. Receipt of applications will be acknowledged after the appointment process has been completed, at which time each applicant will be notified by mail.

Advisory Board, Committee or Authority	Number of Vacancies	Meeting Schedule
Taxicab Review Committee	1	As required

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