

# Bored of Education

I recently had occasion to read an excellent article in the November 1996 edition of *Reader's Digest*, *Bored By Education*, by Barbara Ramsay Orr.

She posits that we seem to be wasting our time teaching students who just don't seem to care. As a high school teacher, she states that the number of students who want to succeed seem to be outweighed by those who couldn't care less. She further states that the latter is growing and the former shrinking.

While the article raises several interesting issues, it fails miserably when it comes to understanding the reasons why these young people seem to have an overwhelmingly nihilistic view of the world.

Perhaps we should explore ...

At 26-years-old, I stand right on the cusp of the so-called Generation X. You remember us, don't you? We're supposedly the biggest group of slackers and whiners who ever walked the planet. The group who made not caring 'cool.' The group who will never escape the all-encompassing shadow of the Baby Boom Generation.

If you think that my generation was bad; you ain't seen nuthin' yet, folks!

The Echo Generation is hot on the heels of us Gen-Xer's and they are even more miserable than we are, and with good reason, too.

Consider that, for the first time in modern Western history, generations are no longer surpassing the standard of living of previous generations. In fact; we're digressing.

I was lucky: Due to some matured investments and well-paying summer jobs, I graduated from university debt-free. At that point, not so long ago, university education was still reasonable. The whole idea of a recession was only a theory circulated by crackpot economists at Harvard (note to self: whatever else they may be, Harvard economists are never, ever crackpots).

And then the bottom fell out.

Jobs disappeared. People were downsized. Hiring freezes were *de rigueur*. Bank loans came due and there was no money to pay them. Suddenly the high living of the 1980s became an economic hangover of Biblical proportions.

So what do we have now? Even with our supposedly growing economy, the unemployment rate for those 18 to 24-years-old is running close to 20 per cent (and this doesn't include those who have given up the job search).

The cost of a post-secondary education seems to be out of reach for most, and suddenly the whole Gen-X joke of living in your parent's basement doesn't seem quite so funny.

Speaking for my generation, the real irony is that we were constantly being slagged as the generation of layabouts. From where I'm sitting, I see a generation who want nothing more than to work and to know that the old rules still apply.

Instead, I see a generation for whom the rules were changed, but nobody told them what the new rules were. Truth is, we didn't find out until we were already hip deep and sinking fast.

In talking to my friends, it's rare to hear that anyone actually has a full-time job with benefits. Most are hired on contract or through temp agencies. Many, like myself, are just one dental cavity away from financial disaster.

The sad thing is, the same can be said for our parents, most of whom are either at or approaching retirement age.

The idea of winters in Florida and summers in the Muskokas after a lifetime of hard work turned out to be just a pipe dream. Most will be lucky to retire and live above the poverty line.

I don't know which is worse: knowing that your Golden Years were never going to be, or believing that they would be, only to have it snatched away.

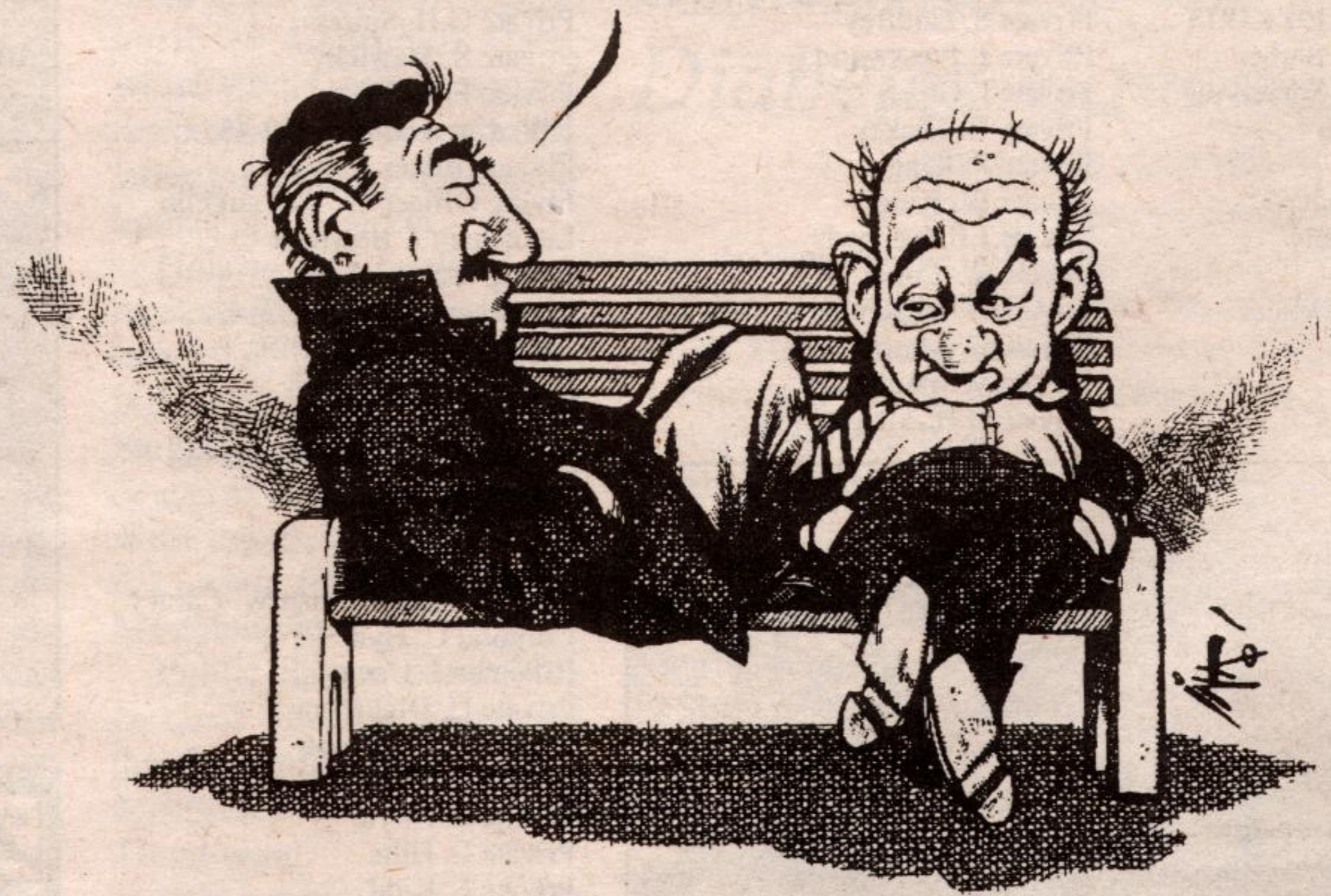
I guess it doesn't really matter — neither is enviable.

## The View From Here

With  
Jamie Harrison



*I've been laid off before... I'm being laid off now... And I'll be laid off again... It's what we in Canada now call the "Circle of Life".*



## Your LETTERS

### 'Fairness' to whom?

To the Editor,  
In response to the letter in your newspaper written by Heather Marchment saying there should be fairness to the two alleged impaired drivers that were involved in the tragic death of John Wilson.

First of all, was it fair that John's life was taken away by an impaired driver? I don't think you understand the meaning of fair!

Drinking and driving is a crime. In my outlook, there is no fairness in crime or stupidity. A school teacher should, in my eyes, be emphasizing crime as wrong. Instead, he has al-

legedly done the opposite.

It was so unfair for the life of this young husband and father-to-be to be taken by an allegedly impaired driver. If you were in this situation, would you still have your "fair" attitude?

I'm sure people in this day and time realize when there is a crime, you are innocent until proven guilty, but in this sad situation, having the amount of alcohol in this impaired driver, there is certainly a lot of anger.

Would you have this attitude if it had been a member of your family? In my opinion, you should not voice yours.

A young, innocent man's life was taken by an allegedly impaired driver, which is a crime in this country. Or do you not think about crime?

Anger, pain and tears are legal. Drinking and driving is not!

*Name withheld by request*

### BR Award winners deserve recognition

To the Editor,  
Being a parent of two Bishop Reding students, I find it refreshing to see articles about events from that school, but in your article on Oct. 30, while mentioning students from Georgetown who had won awards were two very important ones were left out.

The Student of the Year Award was won by Geoffrey Beuparlant and the Ontario English Catholic Teacher's Association Award was

won by his sister, Monica Beuparlant.

These are not little awards, but awards which are won by a lot of hard work and dedication and should not be overlooked.

*Gwen Lambert,  
Glen Williams*

*Editor's Note: Our Bishop Reding correspondent pointed out BR students often get ignored in local news coverage because they go to school out of Georgetown. Regarding the inadvertent exclusion of Geoffrey and Monica Beuparlant, The Gemini regrets the error.*

### Fox Run Committee says 'thank you'

To the Editor,  
My committee and I would like to thank you for your support in the 1996 Terry Fox Run in Georgetown. It was a very successful day,

even with the inclement weather, we had over 90 participants.

We are looking forward to your continued involvement for the 1997 Terry Fox Run, which will be on Sept. 14, 1997.

*Bonnie Covert, Organizer,  
Georgetown Terry Fox Run*

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Letters should be short, concise and to the point.

*The Georgetown Gemini* reserve the right to edit for style,

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All letters must be signed and bear the author's address and telephone number.

Requests for anonymity will be honoured, though letters must still contain identifying information.

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