

# Choices computer provides career assistance

By STEPHEN FROST  
Herald Staff Writer

If you happen to be graduating from high school this year and are undecided about your future, or if you are unhappy with your present job, then perhaps Sheridan College can help you with Choices.

Sheridan College in Oakville has an "interactive computerized career information system" called Choices. In simple terms, people curious or who are unhappy with their present job, can ask a computer for information and guidance which may help them choose a career. There are counsellors available to help during the process.

At the tender age of 26, I decided it might be a good idea to find out what it is that I might do best. Of course I was taking the chance that I might not have any great hidden talents for any job but it was a chance I was prepared to take. With this in mind I decided to

use the services of the Choices program.

Counsellors at Sheridan told me that we have to stop asking children, "What are you going to be when you grow up?" Instead we should be asking, "Where do you want to start?"

A person in today's fast-paced society has the potential to have up to five careers in one lifetime.

In selecting a career however, there is a great amount of planning involved. A mixture of planning and opportunity will eventually lead to success in the field a person has decided to pursue as long as he applies himself. That is part of what Choices is involved with.

Choices lists a total of 1,115 jobs in its memory banks with detailed information about each one. The idea of the system is not to pigeon-hole you, but to suggest what you might be capable of, given the information you feed into it.

The system basically gives one a good point to start from.

The system itself originated in Ottawa and has four computer terminals across Ontario. It was created by the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission to assist people in making career decisions. And by golly it really works.

## WRONG OCCUPATION

For instance it told me I was in the wrong line of work, something my editor tells me all the time, and suggested some alternatives. Actually it's not that simple, it doesn't really tell you that you're in the wrong occupation.

What I had to do was fill out a "travel guide", and this information, fed into the computer, enables it to give me an itinerary, as it were, for job seeking.

The information covers thirteen areas and takes approximately an hour to

complete. All the areas may not be needed by the computer to assist you.

The areas include interest factors, aptitude factors, temperament factors, education level, environmental conditions, future outlook, earnings, hours of work, physical demands, physical activities, inside-outside considerations, occupational fields and training requirements.

Once I had filled in the relevant information, I proceeded to the terminal to use the computer. The computer took an instant dislike to me and eventually showed it by breaking down and refusing to accept any more of my information. Fortunately we were able to persuade it to continue.

There are four ways to approach the computer for information on jobs: exploring occupations, getting specific information on them, comparing up to three occupations and finding related occupations. I chose to explore and then ask for specific information.

**FLATTERING**  
When I started, the computer assumed I was capable of performing all 1,115 jobs on its banks. Very flattering. However, as you feed information into it, there is a certain process of elimination that goes on.

For instance, there is an aptitude section which I chose to feed into the computer that helps narrow the jobs down somewhat. These range from

verbal and numerical aptitude to form perception and hand-eye co-ordination. If you've done an aptitude test then you can use the results from those. I hadn't done one, so you simply rate yourself either in the top ten per cent, the top third or in varying degrees below that. I gave myself a one in form perception and hand-eye co-ordination, but only a three in finger dexterity (I'm a terrible typist). This cut the jobs down to 955.

Next on my list of priorities was interests. The computer gives you ten interest areas to choose from and asks you to pick out the ones you like and also the ones you dislike. These range from doing detailed and organized work to scientific work to creative and abstract work.

I chose creative and abstract work as a must. I'm sure some of my readers might agree that I can be rather abstract. That choice was, in the words of the attractive girl helping me, "a real killer". That one selection alone resulted in 693 jobs being rejected as suitable for me.

**ROTATING SHIFTS**  
When I got around to work periods, I rejected rotating shifts as it tends to cut into my leisure time. I told the

computer that I wouldn't want to stoop, kneel, crouch, crawl or run. You can afford to be picky when you know the computer isn't going to hire you. I also told the computer that I would like a job that entails working partly inside and partly outside.

All this narrowed the field down to a grand total of seven jobs, some interesting, some well above my capabilities.

The computer printout read, "I think, considering what you've told me so far, occupations like the following might meet your needs: recreation director, recreation leader, photographer, technical producer, art director, light technician and social director."

I probably would have received a different and more accurate readout if I had fed all the information on my "travel guide" into the computer but as it was, the results were very interesting. One question asks you how much education you have and how much more you would be prepared to take. If I had put that into the computer it would have realized, for instance, that I didn't have the necessary education for the recreation jobs and that I was not prepared to take any more.

They would have been eliminated.

**IDEAL**  
This is why such a system as Choices is ideal for students who wish to continue their education after high school but are unsure which direction to take. Wanting to learn how to do a certain job is a big plus in their favor as the computer will suggest the job, whether it be a boilermaker or psychologist, and tell you specifically how much time is involved in acquiring the knowledge to pursue that career.

The computer also tells you what the job outlook is like in all of Canada's provinces, and other specifics such as what you can expect to earn, working hours and much more.

I wish I had had something like this available to me when I left high school that could have provided me with some clues as to what I was capable of doing. As it was, I went to the University of Guelph with some fuzzy notion about studying psychology and ended up studying English, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Had I gone to Choices I might have gone to Sheridan and become a reporter.

Safety is a big part of Red Cross Youth programs. Last year thousands of Canadian children learned the safe way to ride a bike, to babysit, and what to do in emergencies at home and at school.

## Obituary

### Former Acton veterinarian practised for 46 years

**Herald Special**  
Long-time area veterinarian Dr. Benjamin Douglas Young died at his home at R.R.1, Campbellville on March 14. He was 81.

Dr. Young was born on a farm near Mansonville, Quebec, and received his public school education there and his high schooling in Huntington. He joined the Royal Canadian Engineers in 1917 and served overseas with his regiment.

After his discharge he worked on the family farm for a few years and entered the Ontario Veterinary College at Guelph in 1928. He established his veterinary practice in Campbellville in January, 1932, just before his graduation from the college. He retired in 1978.

Dr. Young was a member of Acton branch 197, of the Royal Canadian Legion and looked after the poppy fund campaign in Nassagaweya for many

years. He was past master of St. John's Masonic Lodge No. 27, of Mansonville, Quebec, and also a member of Campbell Masonic Lodge, No. 603 in Campbellville. He served as trustee for S.S.No. 3, Nassagaweya and was one of the original members of the area school board when one was formed in the township. He served as a councillor and deputy reeve for Nassagaweya township. He also served on Ebenezer cemetery board.

He is survived by his wife, Merle, son Dr. Clifford Young of Campbellville, and daughter Carol Woznicki of Glendale, Arizona. He also leaves seven grandchildren, one great grandchild and a sister, Mabel Young of Longueuil, Quebec. He was predeceased by brothers Francis and John, and sisters, May George and Nella Miller.  
Funeral services were con-

ducted from Shoemaker Funeral Home, Acton at 1:30 p.m. March 17 with interment following in Ebenezer cemetery.

## Association meets

The Brampton-Georgetown Liberal Association will hold its annual meeting March 28 at Carl's Catering, 65 Queen Street, Brampton beginning with a pot luck supper at 6:30 p.m. Guest speaker will be the Hon. Herb Gray.

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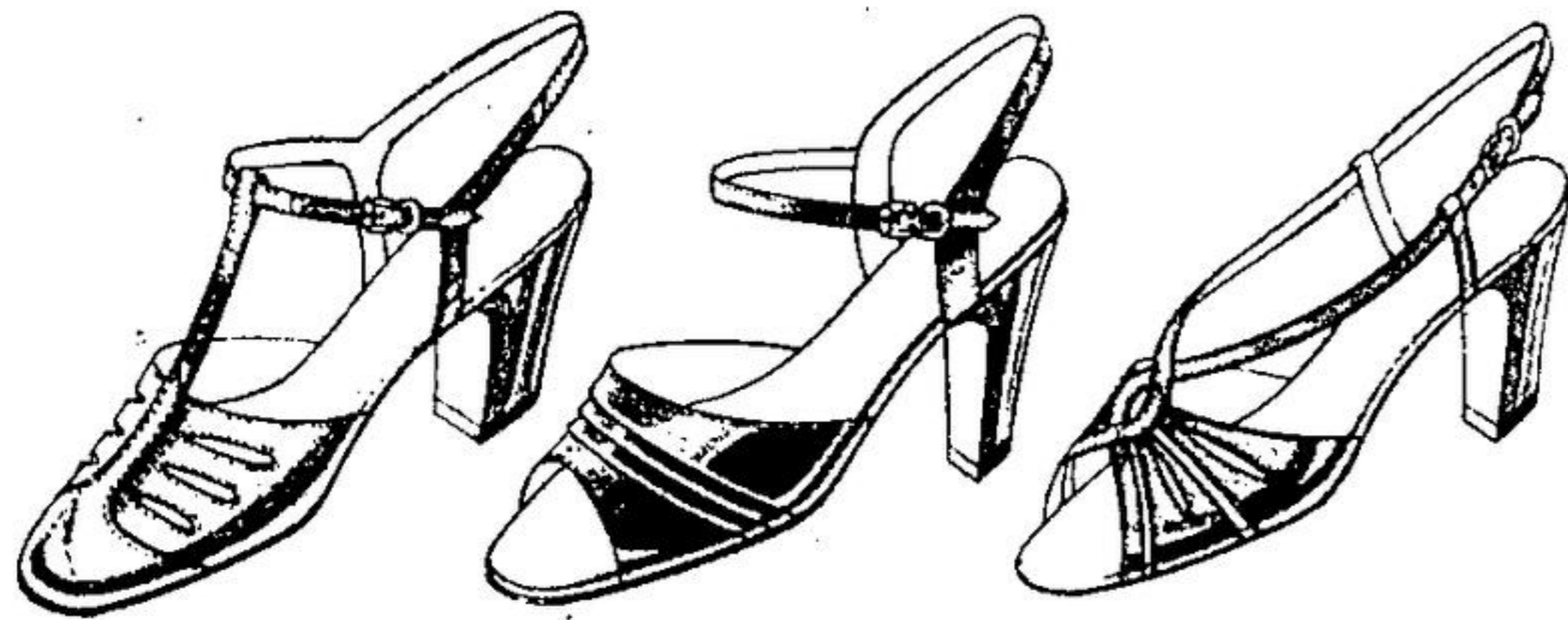
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