

# Entertainment Outlook

## Keep children out of the polling booths



### Weir's View

By Ian Weir  
Thomson News Service

Of course, it goes without saying that both you and I are deeply committed to democratic principles.

Democracy is synonymous with freedom, fairness and equality. It is that ideal system under which any little boy (or girl) can dream of growing up to be defence minister and buying \$15 billion worth of submarines with other people's money.

On the other hand, you and I are also aware that moderation is a cardinal virtue. As such, we know that there are certain situations in which democracy is a bit like horseradish: splendid stuff, but a little goes a fairly long way.

This thought came to mind upon reading about the democratic crusade of a Vancouver journalist named Ian Hunter. Mr. Hunter, bless him, is spearheading a campaign to give children the right to vote.

Apparently, Mr. Hunter's first notion was to lower the voting age to 14. On sober second thought, he decided to revise the voting age right down to zero.

"It's not likely that babies would want to vote," he is quoted as saying, "but that's no reason to deprive them of a constitutional right."

At this point, one is tempted to be

cynical. One is tempted to say: show me an infant who has the right to vote and I'll show you an infant who can damn well change his own nappies at 4 a.m.

Still, Mr. Hunter makes some valid arguments. Children, he observes, are the only identifiable group in Canada without the right to vote. Indeed, he claims, children can be seen as the most disadvantaged people in the country since no one has a lower income or fewer rights than a child.

This is undeniably true. Children have (it must be admitted) fairly few rights. This is what makes them bearable.

In short, Mr. Hunter's views enable us to make three general assumptions about him.

One: Mr. Hunter is an idealist. Two: Mr. Hunter is profoundly committed to equality. Three: Mr. Hunter does not have kids.

There is a technical term for the state in which children are denied an equal say in household decisions. It is called "sanity."

To be sure, there are a few unhappy parents who try to run their homes on a truly democratic basis. These are the parents who never eat anywhere except McDonald's.

But by and large, most parents recognize the virtues of benign despotism.

When (for instance) the dear little ones clamor for The Care Bears when the Expos are playing on another channel, most fathers are wise enough to take a deep breath, count to 10, smile gently and then ask themselves: "What would the Sheriff of Nottingham have done at a time like this?"

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### New Home Video

**WALL STREET (R)** CBS/Fox, \$89.98. Oliver ("Platoon") Stone's glossy, slick melodrama about the

American worship of capitalism brought an Oscar to lead actor Michael Douglas. The lantern-jawed star plays ruthless multimillionaire speculator Gordon Gekko, who takes a young broker (Charlie Sheen) under his slimy wing.

A perverse father figure to this callow kid, Gekko preaches the seductive ethic of greed. Countering Gekko is the Sheen character's natural father (played by Charlie's real dad, Martin) — a union rep and machinist for an

airline company, who stands for the decency of the common man and stresses the value of things that money can't buy.

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Chillingly, however, Mr. Hunter's crusade may be on solid legal ground.

To begin with, the Charter of Rights guarantees the vote for all citizens without a mention of age restrictions. And besides, Mr. Hunter notes, Canada has already extended the vote to the three other groups which were formerly disenfranchised — first women, and then "criminals and lunatics."

Well. Once again, Mr. Hunter's facts are correct. We have indeed ended the discrimination against these three groups. We've enfranchised the women — and we've elected the criminals and

lunatics. But surely this is enough fairness for one century.

Let's be realistic. Children are simply unequipped to weigh complicated political issues.

And worse yet, remember how many children there are in this country. What if those millions of kids got it in their heads to cast a block vote for the candidate of their choice?

Try to imagine waking up the morning after the next election and discovering that our new prime minister is Mr. Dressup.

Now, let me hasten to add that this is not an attack on poor Mr. Dressup. There are undoubtedly many persons who are less fit to govern than he is — and over the years, we've elected most of them.

But there is a sacred principle at stake here. Children have their place and this place is not the polling booth.

Allow children to vote and they're almost certain to elect lousy governments.

And this is a job that should be left to adults.

### Face in the Crowd



Take a close look, you may be a winner. If the face indicated by the arrow is yours, you're the lucky winner of a pair of Georgetown Cinemas courtesy passes. Call us at 877-2201 or 877-8322 or drop in at The Herald, 45 Guelph St., Georgetown, Ont. to claim your prize. If you're not a winner this week, keep on looking. Next week it may be your turn.

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