

# Editorial

## People abuse health system

Last Wednesday's Toronto Star featured a story on the obviously ill health care system in Ontario as it relates to Ontario's health insurance plan.

The headline leading into the story proclaimed 'Patients scapegoats as health bills climb.' As far as I'm concerned, the headline is misleading because when you get down to brass tacks, health costs are soaring because people - either knowingly or unwittingly - are abusing the system.

It all comes down to the fact that when people perceive something is free - as is the perception with OHIP - like lemmings, they will rush to make sure they get in on the bonanza, whether or not they really need what is being offered.

To borrow and individualize a phrase used by the inimitable Bugs Bunny: "What a maroon." OHIP is not free, our provincial and federal taxes go towards paying for this service. But don't tell that to those erstwhile 'sickies' who go rushing to the emergency ward or their doctor every time they stub their toe.

As the Star story reports, one-third of Ontario's total budget, or \$15.3 billion, will be spent on health care this year.

It is also reported that Ontario residents made 102 million billings to OHIP last year. Considering the fact that Ontario has only 9.7 million residents, this represents more than 10 claims for every man, woman and child in the province. Are we really that sick in Ontario?

Brian Birkness, chairperson of the board of the Ontario Hospital Association notes, "You hear it from doctors in emergency wards who say that only 20 per cent of the patients really need to be there. The other 80 per cent, they say, should go to their own doctors because they come in with colds or headaches."

But even then, I ask, why bother going to the doctor because of minor cold symptoms or a headache? These are minor irritations that will go away in time. Surely, people have enough sense to realize this!

But no, off people trundle to the doctor's office if they even think they might be coming down with a virus. What a bunch of wimps.

To be honest, I can't remember the last time I paid a visit to my doctor. I don't even know if he still is my doctor. He will likely have to shoo the moths off my file the next time I visit.

I've been in the hospital once in the last 10 years and that was because I required surgery on a badly-slashed arm. I requested a local anesthetic because I wanted to watch what the doctors were

"As I See It"

by Colin Gibson



doing to my body. It was suggested I stay overnight in case of post-operative complications. I refused, stating I would be more comfortable at home. There were no post-operative complications.

I don't keep any pills at my place because I have a simple philosophy. If you are sick, it's the body's way of telling you something is wrong. Give your body a chance to fight the alien intruders and nine times out of 10, the body will heal itself.

By all means, if a visit to the doctor is warranted, make the trip. But not because of a sniffle or a hang-nail.

Similarly, children have taken on the same behaviour as adults in regards to dependance on our medical system.

The kid complains of a sore stomach or a sore throat. Keep the kid out of school and get him to the doctor. Horse feathers.

As a psychologist recently reported in a study on minor ailments among children, most of them aren't physical at all, but mentally induced.

The child is either suffering from stress at home, or at school, or wants attention. If the child can't get the attention he, or she craves, at home, the child knows the doctor will give the youngster attention.

Kids also see the vast amounts of pills their parents take and are soon hooked on the same merry-go-round.

A pill to get going in the morning; vitamins to keep going during the day; dietary pills before or after meals and a pill to slow down at night. Then, of course, a pill to get to sleep.

These same parents will then lecture their kids on drug and alcohol abuse. Meanwhile the kid is thinking, 'Where do they get off talking about substance abuse when our medicine cabinet is a mini drug store?'

The health care system we have in Ontario is a privilege, not a right, as some people think.

Unless abuses to the system are curbed, we will lose it or have to pay much more for it. And we will have no one to blame but ourselves.

As I see it, anyway.

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## Sexual equality lawsuit

Even as we speak, a heroic blow for sexual equality is being struck in Providence, Rhode Island.

A Grade 10 student named Brian Kleczek has just launched a lawsuit because his school refused to let him play on its all-girl field hockey team.

I read this in the newspaper. Brian Kleczek has decided that barring a boy from field hockey purely on the basis of his sex is rank discrimination, and he refuses to compromise his principles.

Brian has closed his ears to that cowardly inner voice that whispers: "If you want to play hockey, buy some skates."

He has set his jaw defiantly when that voice whispers: "Skirts, Brian. Field hockey players wear those silly little skirts. And knee socks."

No, Brian is going to U.S. federal court to fight for the principle that is the right of every red-blooded American boy to play field hockey with the girls.

Pray for Brian. Actually, it comes as no surprise that such a lawsuit has finally been filed. We've been warned for quite some time that this would be the inevitable response to all those lawsuits launched by girls who want to play on the high school football team.

Fair's fair, after all. If Muffin wants to play middle linebacker, you can't deny Spike his chance to be captain of the junior girls' volleyball team.

The more I thought about Brian's lawsuit, in fact, the more I began to wish someone had done this 20 years ago.

The cruel fact is that my own youthful athletic career was blighted by the narrow-minded authorities. I might have been a star, except they made me play

Weir's World  
by Ian Weir  
Thomson News Service



against boys my own age. I have a few accomplishments to my credit. But no one has ever denied that I remain unchallenged as the worst quarterback ever to play for John Peterson Junior Secondary School.

In the two years I played quarterback, we didn't win any championships. Or any games. The first year, we scored 12 points.

My only real moment of glory came the rainy night I invented the famous fake-fumble play. Let me add that this is, tragically, a true story.

The ball was slippery, you see. Thus I set up to pass, cocked my arm with professional aplomb, and dropped it.

I promptly got out of the way. But our fullback - who lacked my finely-honed survival instincts - dove on it. Several opponents pro-

mptly dove on him, and were penalized 15 yards for piling on.

This became our most effective play, so we used it regularly. To the boundless delight of our fullback.

Anyway, reading about Brian's lawsuit made me think wistfully about his different things might have been had I been allowed to play girls' field hockey instead. Then I remembered: I've seen girls play field hockey.

A British sportswriter once observed that rugby is a beastly game played by gentlemen, soccer is a gentlemanly game played by beasts, and American football is a beastly game played by beasts.

And women's field hockey is a game played by women.

I'll stop short of using field hockey as proof positive that girls are just naturally more violent and aggressive than boys.

Let's just say that every women's field hockey game I've ever seen featuring the sort of wild-eyed, stick-swinging, shin-splintering savagery that would send William (The Refrigerator) Perry fleeing to the Chess Club.

As such, I've changed my mind about Brian Kleczek's lawsuit. Stick to football, Brian. Or rugby. Or full-contact karate.

Being a boy, you're much too sensitive for field hockey.

## Write us a letter!

The Herald wants to hear from you. If you have an opinion you want to express or a comment to make, send us a letter or drop by the office. Our address is 45 Guelph Street, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 3Z6.

All letters must be signed. Please include your address and telephone number for verification.

The Herald reserves the right to edit letters due to space limitations.

## Poets' Corner

**NATURALLY LONELY**  
Rolling hills of yellow  
and green  
Wondrous visions by man  
unseen  
Moss covered boulders  
Dark decaying trees  
Fall is approaching  
As leaves blow in the breeze  
Reminders of man no longer  
exist  
As urban sprawl no longer  
persists  
Thoughts so serene, your soul  
is content  
The fury of life a distant event  
And as you travel through your  
natural home  
Feelings of emptiness  
As you're left all alone.  
by Steve Sheppard, Acton.

ain't gonna make it  
working 9 to 5  
just to stay alive  
got no fins  
for the swim in the sea  
got no wings to fly  
but I'm gettin' high  
Oh I'm so high  
no time for bad  
well it's time to run  
nowhere to hide  
all I got left  
is a prayer and bottle of wine  
and I'm feelin' fine  
got no fins  
for the swim in the sea  
got no wings to fly  
but I'm gettin' high  
Oh I'm so high  
got no fins  
for the swim in the sea  
there ain't no wings to fly  
for me  
but that makes me on time  
cause I'm gettin' high.  
by Wayne MacEachern,  
Acton.

**HIGH ON LIFE**  
My, my oh my  
gonna ride so high  
well I got one life  
and it's mine to live