

Editorial

The Halton Hills HERALD

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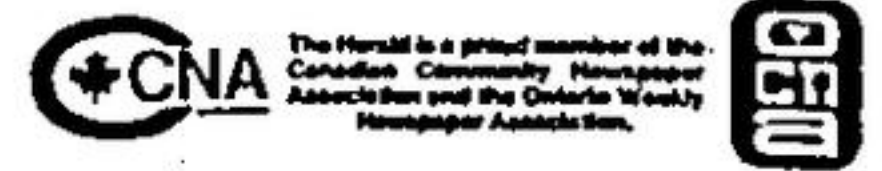
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People need help

That we are in a recession, is a given. It took former federal Finance Minister Michael Wilson so long to say the dreaded "R" word in public that some suspected he was suffering from a speech impediment.

Not so, say some of my erstwhile friends who consider themselves experts in health-related problems as they pertain to politicians. Brain warp, they say, sets in as soon as the neophyte politician escapes from the real world into the hallowed halls of the respective parliaments and legislatures that dit and dot our land.

Apparently, it has something to do with either the air conditioning or the clones who clomp around mouthing the same party line over and over - ad nauseum - while vainly searching for lost memos or secretaries. According to press reports on the Mohammed Mashat fiasco (the Iraqi envoy who fast-tracked his way through the immigration process) the search for lost secretaries takes precedence over lost memos.

Be that as it may, a recession, or severe economic downturn, does indeed take its toll on an individual's health.

It is a confusing time for the ordinary working man, the factory laborer, the construction worker who had been content to put in his hours, without complaint, so his, or her, family can have food on the table and a decent place to live.

For the most part, politics means nothing to these people - the backbone of the country - until suddenly the mat of security is yanked from under their feet with the news their service is no longer required and they don't have a job.

It is a traumatic experience to be told you are no longer wanted, especially for someone with familial responsibilities.

Pride suffers the first injury, then others follow.

Researchers at Ontario's Addiction Research Foundation have estimated that almost two-thirds of people left unemployed by a recession maintain or increase their consumption of alcohol and many increase their use of other drugs as well.

The use of these sometimes addictive emotional crutches, became a means of relieving anx-

"As I See It"

by
Colin Gibson



ety caused by the economic recession.

The ARF report concludes, "We cannot blame the unemployed for not having a job when we haven't got jobs for them."

The report suggests that business and policy makers (read governments) know economic and business cycles change and should plan for economic strain so that it causes as little damage as possible to displaced workers.

All well and good; one might add, but hasn't the horse already left the barn?

Our 'Made in Canada' recession can be rightfully laid at the feet of the federal government, because of the bungling economic policies emanating from the finance ministry.

It should also be noted, however, as it has been in various reports, that Canadian workers on the whole are overpaid and under-productive.

Surely some sort of compromise can be worked out between labor and government where a certain percentage of the monies collected from union dues (and matched up by government) could be put aside to set-up a centralized counselling service bureau, with personnel available - either through a telephone network or on-location visits - to help out companies and individuals affected by a recession deal with the situation on both a personal and professional level.

The economy is a mess, but it will eventually straighten itself out.

It is people who are suffering right now, from problems related to the economic downturn and they need immediate help.

As I see it, anyway.

RECENT REFUGEES FROM ECONOMIC REPRESSION



Dealing with "the Real Man"

I'd actually been having quite a good day until I picked up the newspaper and read about the latest scientific revelation.

Apparently, a neurological study has just determined that men's brains deteriorate more rapidly with age than women's do.

Well, one hates to overreact. But it's things like this that make you realize how much damage science does in the world.

Instead of doing something useful, this reprehensible group of researchers has actually conducted a study aimed at reinforcing a certain lamentable theory, already much too prevalent in female circles.

Which is that men are born stupid, and go straight downhill from there.

The study leaves a host of unanswered questions, of course. Just for starters, nobody seems to know just why the male brain deteriorates more rapidly.

Possibly men are vulnerable to a sort of cerebral plaque, and what we're witnessing is the tragedy of inadequate mental flossing.

But my own suspicion is that male mental decay is a symptom of a more general problem - a problem which society must find some way to come to grips with.

Clearly, men's brains are being worn down by the sheer difficulty of being male.

It goes without saying that it's getting harder and harder to be a man. This is why more and more guys are getting involved in the Men's Movement, and going off on weekend retreats to find The Real Man Deep Inside Each One Of Us.

As far as I know, the rationale for such retreats is that men should get together to talk openly and sensitively, and to share all of their deepest fears and inadequacies - apart from the nagging fear that only a pack of weenies would do this in the first place.

Weir's
World
by
Ian Weir
Thomson News
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It was so much simpler in the old days, when a guy could simply say to himself: "I fear I am losing touch with the Real Man Deep Inside. So I shall go buy some new power tools."

Still, dealing with The Real Man Deep Inside isn't the biggest problem. For most guys, the true brain-cell killer is dealing with The Real Woman Sitting Across The Table.

This is not (good heavens) to imply that women are by nature difficult. It's just that an awful lot of women of the 1990s have developed a certain way of looking at a guy - especially when there's just one of him and several of them.

Way back in the mists of time, it's conceivable that a man occasionally got looked upon as a Brave Provider. Today, he increasingly gets looked upon as Exhibit A: The Representative of The Male Species, Lord Help Him.

I had a particularly grueling experience with this last weekend, when The Love of My Life hosted one of those in-home women's clothing parties.

Naturally, a guy knows what to do on such occasions. He finds a quiet pub with sports on the big screen and a wise bartender who will remind him not even to dream of going home until all the women have left.

I returned home too soon. There was a sudden dead silence, apart from the Bob Dylan song on the stereo. Twelve flinty female eyes focussed upon me, and the designated spokesperson began the conversation by demanding: "Why do men write love songs when they don't have a clue what love is in the first place?"

I could feel the brain-cells deteriorating as I flailed about for an answer.

"Well," I ventured feebly, "I guess we just have to get those songs out there so we can be told what's wrong with them."

There was a dreadful silence. "Ah," said the designated spokesperson. "Typically male response. Why DO men have to try to avoid the issue?"

This is the point at which I conceived a desperate desire to take refuge in the hardware section at Canadian Tire.

Hardware sections can be boring. But they never make your head hurt.

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

Pinegrove "A Community"
Memories of School Days

The snow blew around the house
A wild sort of day
Not fit outdoors for man or beast
At home was the place to stay

And as we sat there by the fire
So comfortable and warm
We spent the hour reminiscing
And forgot about the storm

Tom's thoughts went back to his school days
A smile crept across his face
As he recalled the one roomed school house
And the events there that took place

Miss Peacock was the teacher
She was small but mighty firm
And when we got her dander up
She could make our ears burn

In spring she taught us gardening
It was cared for by all
And when the vegetables were ripe
We learned to can them in the fall

On cold days like this with much ado
She taught the girls how to make a stew

You never saw such a happier bunch
As the boys eating such a lovely hot lunch

We played hockey out in the yard
Using tree limbs and a puck so hard
With a mighty swing that hockey puck flew
Smashed through the window
Crash into the stew

The girls all screamed
What a hullabaloo
And out the door
Miss Peacock flew

We boys stood frozen with surprise
And a look of fear was in our eyes

"For that window you'll all have to pay
And I hope you realize "there's no stew today."

Lille Given

Hold Up
There once was a guy named Kevin
Who held up a seven-eleven
He made lots of money
Now that wasn't funny
And now he won't be going to heaven.

Kevin Kamminga
Acton