

# Opinion

## Sunday shopping good, ruling a step backwards

In an unanimous ruling Wednesday, the Ontario Court of Appeal upheld the provinces' Retail Business Holidays Act which requires most stores to close on Sundays and official holidays.

This ruling will have a major impact on Ontario's way of life. For nine months, shoppers have enjoyed the freedom to choose the day that's most convenient for them to shop. For nine months, large retailers in the midst of a recession, have made profits they would not have realized. For nine months, small retailers have worked longer hours and few days off and for nine months, some retail workers have worked a day, they traditionally had off.

Now I could be wishy washy and say I sympathize with all sides of the Sunday shopping debate, but frankly, I don't. I support Sunday shopping. I believe it is the future of the retail business and, an economic necessity.

One the major arguments against Sunday shopping, is that it hurts the family unit. Yet on Sundays, while wandering the shopping areas, I've seen more families together than I have any other day. Many families I know personally like to make a day of it. Before they said, family members had gone their separate ways on Sunday. Now shopping Sundays to these families means church in the morning, and then as a family, going to the shopping mall, leisurely shopping, mom and dad laughing with the kids in the arcade, enjoying an ice cream cone together, watching a matinee movie and maybe dinner out. It was a cheap outing and one that satisfied all age groups in the family unit.

To the single parent, Sunday shopping was a blessing in disguise. It gave them that extra day of grace when they knew they could shop.

People, and families, had begun to enjoy their weekends again.

My own shopping habits definitely changed in the last nine months: now I shop. Before I made a list on Friday night, and Saturday morning I followed that list and never deviated. During the weekday evenings, I am busy with clubs and I don't want to squeeze in shopping then, and hating the crowds on Saturdays, I never browsed and I never bought any extras.

With Sunday shopping I began to spend time wandering through the less crowded stores I normally did not venture into and I took time discussing products with sales clerks. In the last nine months, I made purchases that I would not have made if there was no Sunday shopping. I bought all

### OPINION

By CYNTHIA GAMBLE

my new clothes on a Sunday. I bought all my books on a Sunday (have you ever tried to browse a book store on Saturday?) and I've even made a few major purchases that I would have waited on for a day off during the week or would not have bought at all.

Some stores I normally patronized decided not to open Sunday. That didn't upset me because I respected their right not to open. More importantly they did not lose my business. They were the stores I liked and I wasn't going to change just because they weren't open. But shopping there on Saturdays became easier because I knew I didn't have to rush to finish all my other errands on that day as well.

My habits obviously will revert back to what they were, albeit less contented. The loss to me is convenience and enjoyment. The loss to the retailers will be the money I now will not be spending. To the workers, well, it'll be naive to think there will not lay-offs. I'm sure the ruling Thursday meant an automatic pink slip to quite a few retail workers. A vice-president for the Bay and Simpsons said Friday the decision results in the reduction of hours for 2,470 Bay, Simpson and Zellers workers.

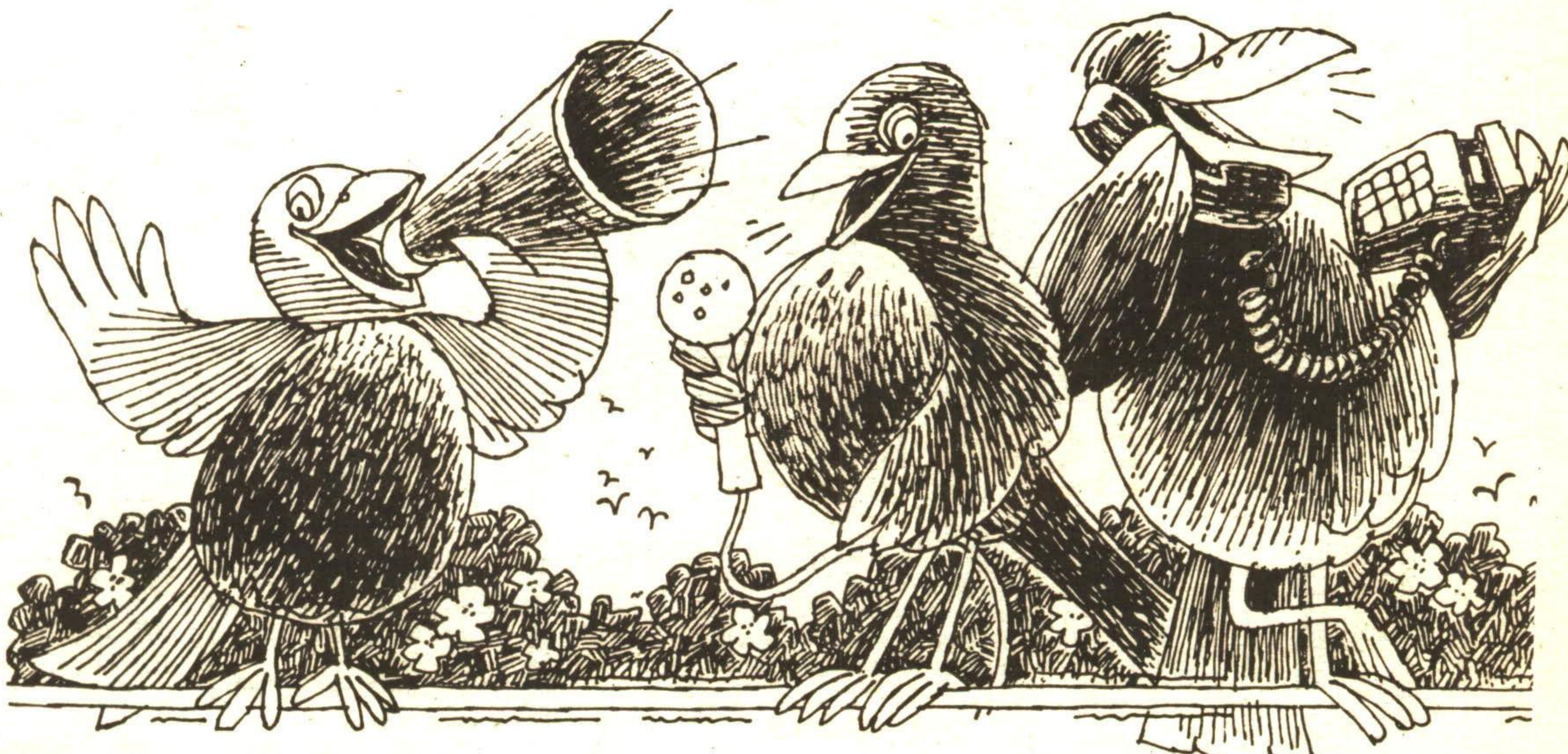
I'm sure those retail workers are thinking now: a job is a job, even if it was on Sunday. Yes, a job is a job. The job and employers should dictate the hours, not the employee. Yes, there should be safeguards if employees feel harassed, but I believe retail workers should reset their thinking: because if the stores aren't open, they don't make money and if they don't make money, there will not be jobs for them anyway.

Although my shopping habits will probably revert back to what they were, not everyone's will. Buffalo retailers are ecstatic over the news knowing more Canadians used to shopping on Sunday will just go over the States.

The purpose of this law was to give retail workers a common pause day. Well okay let's give them that common pause day. Let's say the first Sunday of every month be named Family Day. All stores — convenience, video, large stores, small stores, tourist stores — will be closed.

Is that realistic? I don't know. But to me it makes far more sense than Ontario, surrounded by provinces and states with Sunday shopping, closing its stores every Sunday of every month.

## CAN WE TALK?...SPRING!



## What's a little sleep, anyway?

Our house was invaded over the weekend.

No not your average invasion, with armored troops and artillery like we have seen recently in the Middle East. No, our house was invaded by a far stronger force; the sleeper.

Sleepovers are nothing new at the Brown household. We have endured many over the years, when oldest daughter decided she was having a few friends over. But lately they seem to be a little harder to take. (I hope it's nothing to do with my age.)

Anyway, we were invaded with three additional female types, all 10-year-olds. They landed at 6 p.m., Friday night, and were still there Saturday morning for breakfast. (Maybe I should say as breakfast guests; the other denotes they were breakfast, or something like that.)

I could say there were benefits to having these guests. After all, I got to eat supper with my wife at the dining room table, instead of in the kitchen. And I don't think the fact there wasn't any room at the kitchen table had anything to do with it at all.

Of course, I didn't get a chance to watch TV, Friday night; the kids commandeered the set with two movies to watch. And it was too noisy to read with a steady flow of young ladies running from the living room to the den to the bathroom to the kitchen and back again.

So I finally settled for a short visit to my parents. After all, my wife had arranged the sleepover with daughter Maggie, so she could handle it herself. The visit only took about 45 minutes, but when I returned, the kids having a pillow fight in the living room and my wife was watching their movies.

Of course, all the potato chips were gone, except for the extra hot

barbecue ones that take the first layer of skin off your tongue. (As I recall, they were the ones the kids wanted...) And the only pop left was the flat diet stuff with no taste to it at all.

So the evening progressed and I did manage to watch the late, late news, to see how the rest of the world was faring. The little ladies were staying in the living room, with the lights off, then on, then off and so on...

### A TED BIT

By TED BROWN



It was time to turn in, so wife and I headed up the stairs to the quiet murmur of little voices downstairs. It was soooo sweet, those little girls chatting, joking, exchanging their little secrets....

I have often wondered what it is about parents going upstairs that automatically turns up the volume level in the child's speech by at least 75 decibels. These kids could execute commands for a platoon of soldiers on the drill field with the volume of their voices.

The Better Half quietly, but firmly, mentioned to Maggie the noise level was going through the roof and would wake our youngest. That had the desired effect for at least 10 minutes. But as the evening and early morning dragged on, the voices became more subdued, and eventually, I think sometime after 2 a.m., they stopped completely.

"Ah ha!" I thought, "they've finally given in and gone to sleep. They'll be out for the count until

late morning."

Silly me.

I should know by now; a kid's capacity for sleep dwindles proportionately with the addition of friends. Of course I know, I was a kid myself, once.

The little sweethearts were back at it at the ripe old hour of 6:30, and ready for anything we could throw at them. They ran all over the house, and were ready for their breakfast.

I should tell you, Maggie has never eaten breakfast at 7 a.m. in her life before, and the only time she is even mildly interested in rising at that hour is Christmas morning and possibly on the odd occasion, Easter Sunday morning.

But she was leading the gang like a little trooper, and wife had to get breakfast on the table for the little ones. I could understand their being hungry; they had worked hard all night making noise.

To top it off, we discovered the toaster was broken. So breakfast consisted of cheese dreams in the oven.

But we fed them and packed up their sleeping bags and were ready to go by mid-morning.

Maggie and I delivered the young ladies to their homes, who by now were starting to look a tad wasted. "Serves them right" I thought quietly to myself, "they should have slept last night."

And I'm quite sure they all went to bed in decent time Saturday night. I know Maggie did, and strangely, without too much protest.

But kids will be kids, and parents will be parents. It's funny how they all start to seem the same after a while.

But I know one thing's sure; I would have never done anything like that when I was a kid, not me; no way.

Halton Hills

# WEEKEND

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