

# Editorial

## These are the good old days

One truly wonders if there ever really was such a time, era, decade, often warmly referred to as 'the good old days'.

No mere maudlin meandering this, but a combination of thoughts, conversations and opinions perused over the Victoria Day long weekend.

Granted, the three-day reprieve from the working world (enjoyed by most people) couldn't really be termed 'balmy days in May', weather-wise, but as the political prisoner rotting in chains in a Ugandan prison might exclaim, "It sure beats hanging around here."

Anyway, getting back to the topic at hand.

"Ha!", snorted the crusty conversationalist peering malevolently through the blue cloud of pipe tobacco smoke. "I'll tell you what the good old days were. It was when men were men and women weren't!"

"Pardon?", I queried.

"You know damn well what I mean, don't give me that dumb look. When men were allowed to go out and earn a decent wage to take care of the family and the women stayed home, looked after the kids, cooked the meals and cleaned the house. Everyone knew what their role was. We don't have that anymore and that's why there's so many problems."

Taken at face value, this statement might grate on some, seem outrageous to others and be rejected out of hand by the vast majority as the mere ramblings of an old man.

However, there is a core of truth to the outburst.

"The good old days, eh?", pondered another acquaintance. "Well, I can't go that far back, but I seem to remember my father was able to get a pack of cigarettes for around 50 cents and gas was about the same too - by the gallon. As a kid, I also seemed to have a lot more freedom. Things weren't as organized and we made our own fun. Camped out in the bush, played scrub baseball, street hockey, went fishing when we wanted to. Hell, I can remember when you used to be able to get 10 black balls for a penny. Are you allowed to say that nowadays. I don't think black balls are around anymore. If they were, we'd probably have to call them balls of color."

"I don't know if you can ever really define the good old days," offered a university friend of mine. As you know, memories tend to take on a rosier hue with the passing years. What might have seemed bad at the time, in retrospect, now doesn't seem so bad, and the good times now seem to have been even better. It seems, though, there were a lot more free thinkers around in our time."

So what, pray tell, were the good old days. Or better - horror of horrors - will the Mulroney years be looked back fondly by future generations as the good old days?

Were the Trudeau years that good? Depends on which side of the political fence you sit.

What about the '60's and the hippies, the Vietnam war, the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the Cuban missile crisis? The '50's, with the Korean War and the Suez crisis?

To many, strange as it may seem, the war years of the '40's and the ensuing years of that decade were the definitive good old days when everyone - at least those on the winning side - pulled together for the good of the whole.

Then there were the dirty '30's, which brings us back to the present, in a deja vu sense, and a time of real economic hardship.

The good old days might best be termed the quintessential mind warp, because of dissatisfaction with the present.

Be that as it may, but you only get one kick at the can and better realize that your own good old days are happening right now - whether we admit it, or not.

Colin Gibson

## Halton Hills THIS WEEK

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## The People's Corner

### Libertarians forsake phone booth

To the Editor,

I enjoyed a good laugh from your description of a Libertarian Party of Canada convention. In fact, a lot of Libertarians also enjoyed it because copies were passed around at our national leadership convention held in Toronto this past weekend.

Unfortunately, we couldn't find a phone booth of suitable size to accommodate attendees and were forced to rent facilities from the Holiday Inn. But it's a great idea for cutting costs - as long as Bell Canada doesn't mind.

Calling us a populist or special-interest party is off the mark, however. Our party follows a fixed set of principles that offer no special advantages, deals or favors to anyone. They protect the rights of each individual in society, something government at all levels has failed to do.

This makes us unique compared to other parties whose "policies" are driven by special interests or opinion polls and change from year to year. Our principles have not changed in the 20 years since the party was founded. But other parties have been adopting some of them as their "policies" continually fail.

Numerous books and thousands of papers have been published dealing with the application of these principles. The enclosed list of the most popular books will show you we are not what you claim. I recommend "The Libertarian Idea" by prof. Jan Narveson of the University of Waterloo.

Now here comes the truth: We couldn't use a phone booth for this convention because Narveson was a keynote speaker and there was no room to fit him and the video equipment in the booth for taping.

We'll send you a copy of the tape when it's ready and are confi-

### P.O.W.E.R. sale a great success

To the Editor

As the backs are just about returned to normal and the heat lincement has been put away for another year, the P.O.W.E.R. executive would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who have made this year's garage sale a success.

We want to thank the businesses who supported our efforts with their donations. We want to thank Georgetown Terminal Warehouse for their storage space and manpower, without which our sale would not have been possible. We want to thank the many volunteers who gave of their time and labor to make this event possible. Thanks go specifically to Susan Coxe, Lois Fraser and Mary Grossman. Their tremendous efforts made this year's sale financially rewarding and fulfilling. The many hours of volunteer time were appreciated.

In events like this, we can see the true spirit of community shining through.

For the P.O.W.E.R. Executive  
P. Hynds  
Acton

dent you will agree the phone booth would have been a bit cramped this time around.

Keep up the good work. We can all use a laugh these days.

Hilliard Cox,  
Leader, Libertarian Party of  
Canada,  
Caledon

Editor's note: We thank Mr. Cox for the reading list and his upbeat and humorous letter, taking us to task for an editorial comment - we hope this sort of give and take becomes politically contagious. Mr. Cox succeeds Stan Tyminski, who left the party to run for the presidency of Poland.

## Economics or madness?

By John Sommer

Economics: Greek *oikonomi* k o s - household management.

I was trained as a farmer. We came to Canada in 1954 hoping to find a farm here. At that time, Ontario had plenty of beautiful farms.

The family farm, this most sensible of all Canadian institutions of the past, still existed. Everywhere one went in southern Ontario, healthy families made their living on 150 acres of land. Few had more. One hundred and fifty acres was the right amount for a family to make a living from and to be independent.

The family farm was the very fountainhead of our democracy. Nobody called these farms an "industry" in those days. A farm was about living things and biological processes, whereas the materials of industry are not alive and the processes are mechanical.

In those days, farming meant you used all your waking hours to care for your animals and your fields. They, in turn, provided you with everything you needed, plus a surplus you could sell for cash.

We arrived just in time to witness the tail-end of this wholesome way of life. But by 1961 our taste for farming had evaporated, because the pressures of the market forced the North American farmer increasingly to adopt farming methods that were in opposition to good, long-range farming.

Few farmers still care for their farms, as the majority of farmers once did. They cannot afford it anymore. I always thought the price of food cheap in this country, and I still do.

In other countries and in other times people paid more to feed themselves, compared to their earnings. Many of our prepared, ready-to-be-eaten food stuffs are expensive, but that is hardly the fault of the farmer since he does not benefit from prepared food. A food processing industry is pushing prepared foodstuffs under the guise of "saving work". The truth is, the consumer does not want to spend money on food, he or she lusts after a thousand things of doubtful value instead. This constant push for cheaper food forces the farmer to cut corners. Instead of weeding with a hoe, he uses poisons; instead of returning the manure his animals produce to his fields, he uses artificial fertilizer; instead of using machines moderately, he is forced to buy heavy, complicated and seldom-used machinery that is costing him a mint. The capital needed

## Ideas & the Arts

for all this is enormous.

Today, all farmers are at the mercy of their bankers. Most farmers I know are disgusted with their lives. They hate to imprison their laying hens in wire cages and to shut them up in windowless buildings. They know that it is wrong to use a good field merely as a feed lot, thereby poisoning the soil with an overabundance of manure for years to come. They would rather not keep their pigs in crowded pens on strawless metal floors. They know that it is immoral to crowd and harass animals in order to squeeze the last possible penny out of the poor, defenseless creatures. And yet, what can they do about it?

They are at the receiving end of our thoughtlessness. Like everything else in our thoughtlessness. Like everything else in our system, the farms get bigger. Some farmers hope in vain that what doesn't work on a small farm might work on a big one. In the next century, most farmland will be owned by a few great landowners or corporations, who will be using their farms as tax write-offs.

"Free Trade" applied to farming means that we destroy our own food base in order to buy cheap food from foreign countries, countries that starve their own people to have something to sell. One day Canada will be totally dependent on food imports. This is terrible household management and no way to balance one's budget. Our own food production should save us the money we need for imports of another kind.

North American "agribusiness" is fantastically productive. It is also very, very expensive in a way we prefer not to mention. The results of North American farming methods are loss of soil, loss of farms and farmers, soil and water pollution, the decay of communities, and the slow destruction of the local food supply. It is an absurdity that fewer and fewer people can find work where they are needed most, namely on farms (because the farmers can't pay them), whereas in the cities we have millions who are unemployed or living on welfare.

Economics? It doesn't deserve that name. I call it madness.

John Sommer has been the director of Art Gallery Sol, located at 45 Charles St. in Georgetown, since 1962.