

Care needed for wildlife

BY DEBORAH QUAILLE
THE COMPASS

The **Rockwood Wildlife Rescue Association** is a new non-profit group working under the guidance of Dr. Clare Maine, whose goal is to administer to the needs of injured, lost or orphaned wildlife. In conjunction with HAVA Heart Wildlife Rescue, run by Karen Bishop, they hope to maintain the balance of nature.

The previous association is no longer providing support in this area, so Dr. Maine has founded a new group which will be fundraising at Rockwood's Pioneer Day, June 12. Please support generously! The group is looking for people young and old to participate with or without their pets. They need individuals to ride the float and others to walk in the parade. Come out for a day of fun and get involved with a great bunch. Drop by the Rockwood Veterinary Clinic and pick up a sponsor form today.

The wildlife rescue group is also desperately in need of people, property and funds. There is shortage of **pet foods, dry cereals, blankets, cages, and other basic care items.** If you are able to foster, overwinter, or have a large property to release raccoons, possums, squirrels, and other animals, please contact the clinic at 519-856-9002.

I recently switched from one of the major banks to a credit union.

The transition was not altogether smooth. The bank couldn't seem to get it right. They tried to take our car loan from my husband's account instead of from my new credit union account, even though I took them a void cheque, in person, and signed a form, as requested, so they'd be sure to take the money from the right account. After much ado, it became clear that the fault lay with the bank, and the credit union was able to provide proof.

But there must be some code of conduct amongst bankers, similar to the physician's Hippocratic Oath, that bankers must make every effort to not admit their mistakes. Maybe they should call it the Bankers' Hypocritical Oath, because if we're to believe the recent deluge of TV commercials, banks are here to simplify our lives, to help us achieve our dreams, to serve us; sometimes, it would appear, to help us have a near-religious experience. Somehow that doesn't translate from the TV screen to reality.

In this my most recent run-in with a bank, I took my complaint to the customer service desk and was passed off to four different people, making my way up the hierarchy. I was not surprised to be dealing with women at the lower end of the hierarchy; nor was I surprised when there was a decided gen-

der switch as I reached the pinnacle. The man at the pinnacle took considerable satisfaction in swinging his computer screen around to show me that all my account information was correct. Even I know that just because something appears in a certain way on a computer screen does not mean it has always appeared that way. They had obviously corrected their mistake and were unwilling to reverse the \$75 in bank charges that were incurred because of their mistake.

I don't mind it, really, when banks make mistakes. As a matter of fact I kind of enjoy it. It's when they won't come down off their high horse long enough to admit it and make good on it that I want to rid my life of banks.

I have to keep reminding myself that banks are not a service industry; they are a profit-making industry. For instance, in order to get that void cheque to them and sign a form in person, I had to take time off work to meet their ridiculously inconvenient banking hours. I got there at 9 am and had to hang around until 9:30 for them to open. They close at 5 pm and are not open on weekends. I work from 9 to 5 and commute out of town. With these kind of hours, they're either trying to drive us all to use automated, telephone or internet banking, or, when a face to face transaction is required, they seem to be trying

to drive us crazy.

My motivation in switching from a bank to a credit union in the first place was more philosophical than anything; and had a lot to do with the writings of Linda McQuaig. Her most recent book, "The Cult of Impotence" has been described by Peter C. Newman as a "an establishment-debunking fire-cracker." All three of her best-selling and highly readable books on economics "attack the rich and powerful and their knack for having their way with the rest of us." Any woman who

Conrad Black thinks should be "horse whipped" (as he suggested on national radio) is my kind of woman.

I am well aware that the stock markets will not react one way or the other to me closing my bank account, withdrawing every penny of my \$358 (all of which, in my hand-to-mouth existence, is spoken for before any interest accumulates). I know that my small action will not rock the foundations of the banking industry; but I feel better, knowing that I have at least begun to "debank" myself.

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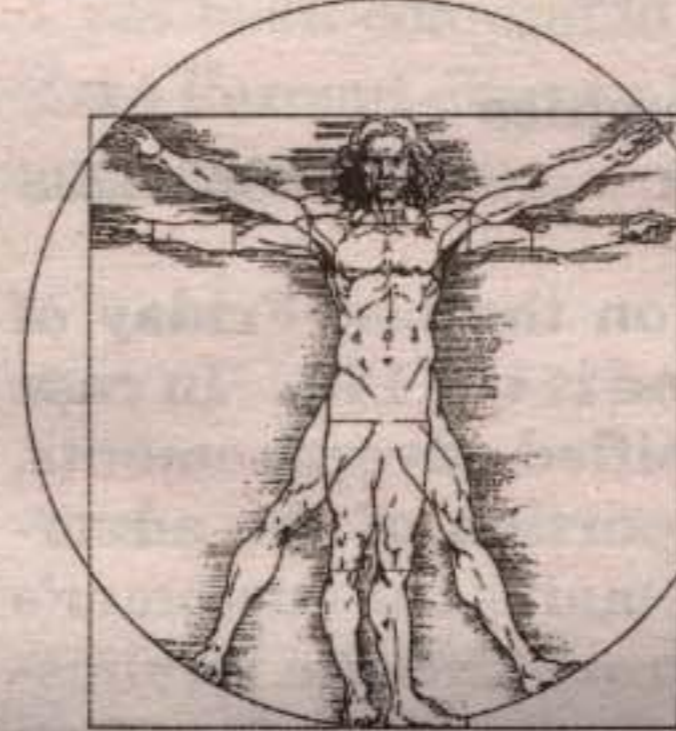
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