

# NFL pools? Puleeeeze!!!

Lately I've had a new boss at the Independent & Free Press. His name is John McGhie, and he's traded places with Robin Incoe for a couple of months, as Robin handles the same editor's duties at the Brampton Guardian office, our sister publication.

The official line for the switch is for the two editors to try out a few new ideas at their respective newspapers, and to experience a change of readership and staff.

That's the official line.

But I think I know the real reason.

It's to punish me for criticizing soccer.

You see for years, Robin's been obsessed with soccer — a game I find hard to accept.

But John has an even more annoying obsession. It's called the NFL.

Football is not my game. Never was, although I'll admit it's not all that bad to photograph a good high school game from time to time, just to capture the action on film. (And last year my wife did win a free cell phone at an Argo's game.)

For me that's as good as it gets — a free phone.

But to sit and watch it for hours on end?

Notta chance. Yessir, *yawn*, it would be the best sedative money couldn't buy.

But John's hooked. And even a little pushy about it. In fact, he's downright bloody obnoxious about a game that features a bunch of overgrown guys jumping on top of each other in the middle of a football field.

For many years now, John has run the weekly NFL pool at both the Georgetown and Brampton papers, collecting up all the employees' money and awarding the winner a small pittance at the end of the week.

I don't 'do' pools. 'Specially football pools.

Last year I did help out a former summer student who decided to take part in John's pool after he spent the summer in our office. He returned for his final year at Carleton University in Ottawa, and emailed me his picks every week, which I forwarded to John in Brampton, by way of our interoffice file server.

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Ted Brown

But that was last year. And I was only the messenger. Since then, I've washed my hands of the filthy habit.

And even though I avoid having anything to do with John's pool, I'm continually reminded of its existence, every Friday afternoon, late in the day, when I venture near the office fax machine.

It's nothing short of an avalanche of paper, as the weekly NFL picks file through the fax machine, running the paper tray dangerously close to that empty mark.

I would hazard to guess that the profit margin of this newspaper could be jeopardized by the amount of paper that goes through that machine.

But it seems I'm in the minority. The rest of the world at both The Guardian and Independent are gung-ho to take part. Our publisher regularly complains that he's moved to the bottom of the standings although he made his selections based on all the stats available to the modern world, while a couple of grandmothers on staff make their equally successful picks based on which team has the "nicest name."

I'm sorry, but they're all fanatics, out of control, paying large sums of money to Mr. McGhie, for the honor of losing every week.

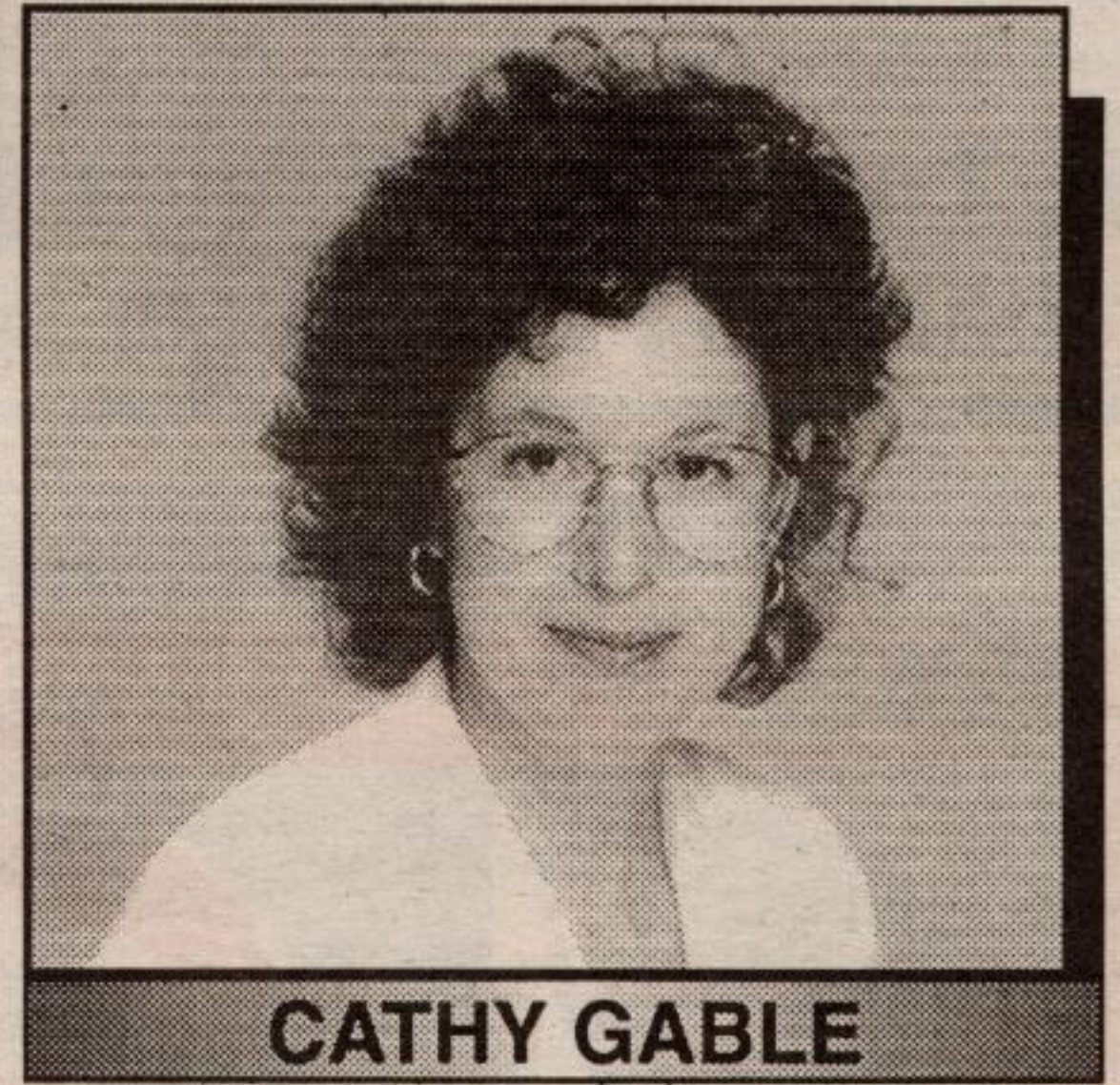
It baffles me. Why anyone would want to waste their hard-earned money on such a folly.

Not me. You won't see me wasting my money on John's NFL pool. It's just not responsible.

Besides, if I did, where would I get the money for my occasional 6/49 tickets?

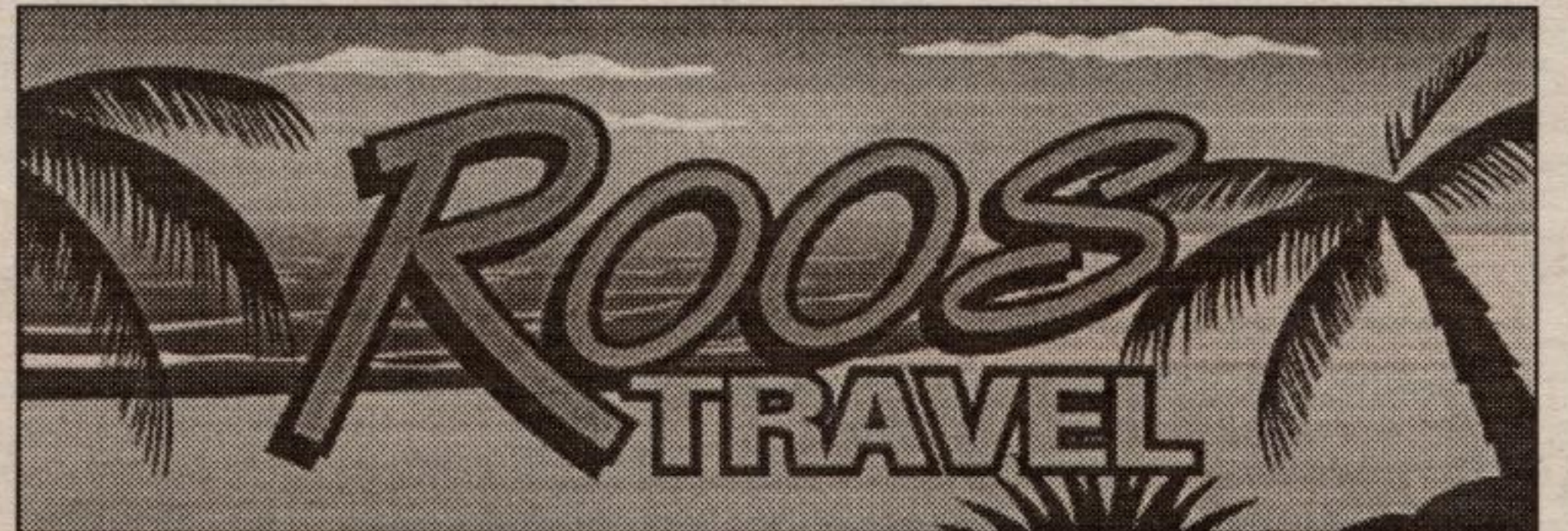
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CATHY GABLE

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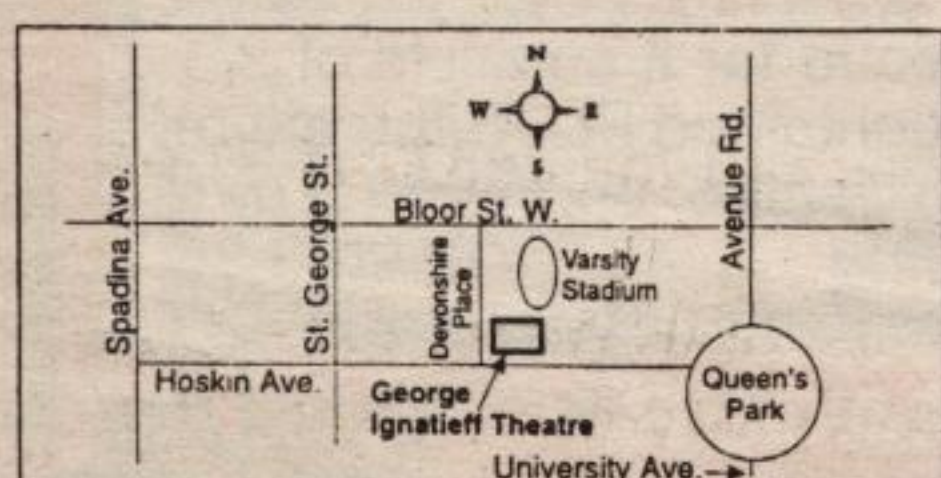
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