



OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Just another unfair tax grab

Many of the services funded by development charges would never see the light of day if local politicians had to face voters and justify why property taxes are going up.

It's true that user fees are a fairer means of funding certain types of government services because all taxpayers are not burdened with having to subsidize specific beneficiaries.

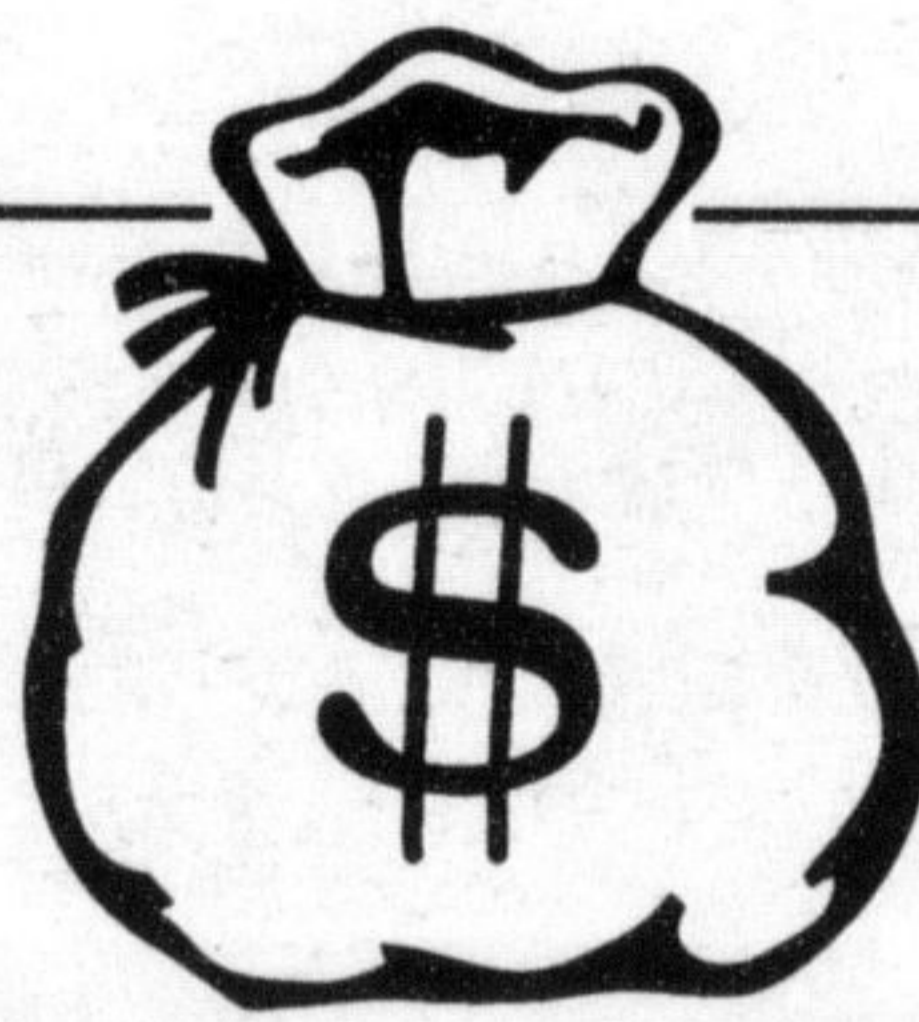
However, the line has to be clearly drawn as to what types of services can be traced to specific beneficiaries. Services which benefit the general community cannot be characterized in this manner and the suggestion that the owners of new properties should pay extra for them is fundamentally wrong.

Building new schools is an ongoing pressure with a growing population, but no government flinches in asking senior homeowners or businesses to fund general education. In other words, it is inconsistent to link new capital school construction to new subdivision homeowners while ignoring the lack of a link to other ratepayers without school age children, who are asked to pay for education funding for the general good of society.

And where is the consistency in asking the owner of a new property to pay for the capital costs of a new police cruiser or firehall, when that same owner will be billed, as will every other property owner in a municipality, to pay for the replacement of an existing firehall used in another part of the municipality?

And what about the inconsistency which exists in the tax treatment of the purchaser of an existing property and that of a new property? A family with two children that purchases an existing home, where the current owners have no children, pays nothing in development charges

Let's
Talk
Taxes



with PAUL PAGNUELO

for new community centres and libraries, even though they may be adding a burden on existing services. That same family purchasing a new home would. Further, why should the existing owners of that property, say a retired couple, be expected to pay development charges for downsizing to a new seniors development in the same community?

Those who equate the use of development charges to the user pay principle are wrong. Development charges are, for the most part, nothing more than a tax grab disguised as a user fee. Development charges are also a backhanded way of committing all property owners to future tax increases to pay for the ongoing operating costs associated with capital expenditures. They're a classic example of taxation without representation.

Rather than spend unproductive time creating innovative new tax schemes to suck even more out of taxpayers disposable incomes, municipal governments should be directing their energies towards reducing local tax burdens by providing cost-effective and efficient services to their citizens, thus making their communities an attractive place in which to live, work and invest.

Coping when your teenager is taking drugs

Many parents are shocked when they find out their teenager is abusing drugs. It happens in the best of families, rich or poor, white or black, single-parent or two-parent households.

Kids experiment with alcohol and drugs for many different reasons — because of peer pressure, to relax, or just for kicks. They may also try drinking because mom or dad drinks. Once a child does try alcohol or drugs, other factors will immediately come into play to determine whether they continue to use that drug.

If a teenager has fun, he will do it more often. If friends are doing it with him, he is likely to do it again. If it relaxes him when he is upset about an exam or his girlfriend broke up with him, he will use it again.

Kids can abuse alcohol or drugs without even knowing it. They may at first drink only at parties, then drink when they're alone, then use it to relax, and so on. Each new function of drug-taking is added gradually — no one is addicted when they start.

So, you find out your child has been taking drugs. How you react is very important. If you are holier than thou — lecturing your child on



Psychology
in the '90s

with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

the evils of drink, berating him, demanding that he stop — you risk alienating your child or worse, turning him into an abuser who also lies about it.

The first thing a parent has to understand about alcohol and drug abuse is that it is usually accompanied by another problem. Rarely is drug abuse the only issue. About 70 per cent of all people who seek treatment for substance abuse have an additional psychological problem above and beyond the substance abuse. In most cases, the treatment of substance abuse is virtually doomed to fail unless the other problems are dealt with too.

Looking Back ...



Last week we goofed, in citing this photo as a group of ladies who shared a 4-H award. In reality, they are: Employees at the Milton branch of the Toronto-Dominion Bank holding a \$10,000 cheque from a Wintario draw in February, 1979. Standing (from the left) are Judy Thring, Randy Bowsher, Millie Lowe, Eleanor Swanson, and Joani Timbers with Debbie Bradley seated. They, along with Rosemary Harris, Kathy McDonald, Wayne McDonald, and Frances Bates, shared the prize.

Rental cleaner than my own

Ah, a weekend at the cottage. Relaxing? Nope.

It was not one of those put-your-feet-up-and-bask-in-the-sun occasions. I had a mission — get the rental cottage ready for the summer guests.

Although I have developed a strong aversion to housework over the years, I found myself in a domestic corner. As usual, I was totally unprepared to scoot up to the cottage late Friday afternoon with hubby. He flew home from work and within 15 minutes was on his way. That guy is disgusting.

Did he plan the meals for the weekend, pack the groceries, make arrangements for the cats to be fed? No.

Meanwhile I had another concern. The 13-year-old had invited three of her friends over for Friday night, with our 19-year-old in charge, so to speak. She had expected me to be well gone by the time she and her crowd invaded the house. And I had not expected to see her flanked by five friends. The tittering females barely noticed my departure for the two-hour drive at 7 p.m.

Of course, it made no sense to charge into housework that late at night, so instead, I curled up with a romance. But there was no avoiding



On the
Homefront

with ESTHER CALDWELL

work Saturday morning. Hubby had already set up the scaffolding when we three others dragged ourselves outdoors. The males donned old clothes and proceeded to brighten up the cottage with a fresh coat of satin. I was relegated to the kitchen. Was this sex-role stereotyping or did I overreact?

The 'boys' completed their outdoor job in one day, while it took me two to work my way through the inside of the cottage. I decided that I would do a thorough job, not one of those weekly once-throughs we do every Saturday during the summer.

I vacuumed, cleaned light fixtures, scrubbed the toilet bowl, laundered the curtains, and mopped the floors. But gosh, I ran out of weekend, so hubby still has a list of jobs to do, not the least of which is window washing. I also left him those tasks related to plumbing, electricity, carpentry, and motor mechanics, in this case, the tune-up of the rental boat motor.

Saturday afternoon, our two teens finally arrived. Our daughter begged off chores because she had to study for exams, while the 19 year old was put to work spreading gravel on the drive-ways and adding a protective coating to our big boat before it was launched. No sooner was the boat in the water than that same big guy was standing at the end of the dock, slalom ski in his hand. Man's work is never done.

Before I re-entered the rental cottage on Sunday, I spent most of the morning doing the mailing for the 150 members of our cottage association. I dragged our international friend into that paperwork until hubby called upon him to help carry a secondhand, non-functioning dryer into the cottage. When hubby wasn't working his way through the chores, he stood by the dryer, puzzling over how to repair it. Sunday night, he finally discovered the answer — a faulty door switch. And to think that our friends had thrown out this machine for a new one.

Collectively we achieved our goal. The rental cottage is (almost) ready and most definitely cleaner than either our home or cottage ever is.