

# Opinion

## And now for the heavy stuff

For all of you out there in Newspaperland; my public, fans of my zippy, lighthearted, unconventional style of amusing yet never trendy banter, this column is a slap in the face.

Why? Because this column is about HEAVY STUFF.

Like death, taxes, Oka, Meech Lake ("Hey! You can't say that in a family newspaper"), Iraq, the Ontario NDP (everywhere else they're just a cuddly non-threatening bunch of half-wits), health care and education, to name but a few topics. Heavy stuff has its place, even among the lighthearted.

In fact heavy stuff is a fertile ground for humour. (Notice that's humour with a 'u', The Globe and Mail has decided that it can spare the extra expense for ink and space to please a bunch of irrational complainers. What this has to do with *The Champion* I don't know.)

Picture a handful of people sitting around a social gathering laughing. Are they a control group of mental patients planted to test our psychological reactions? Or are they just having a good time?

And what are they so amused by? Perhaps they've gone off on a tangent to some story, building more and more ridiculous layers of amusing "what ifs" and laughing until it hurts. Or maybe one of them spilled mustard down his front, had a slippery chicken wing rocket across the table into someone's drink and then split his pants trying to retrieve it.

That's standard fun and frivolity. A more politically oriented group might be snickering about 'drawing a line in the sand' or giving the Canadian Army a real chance to show its stuff by pitting it against 20 determined Indians hanging out at a drug rehab centre.

I understand that as an act of solidarity with their Canadian Army cousins the United States military will surround and subdue the Cleveland Indians. The fact that those Indians were subdued by the onset of the 1960s is beside the point.

It's hard to make jokes about the probable



**Reaume  
With a View**  
with BRAD REAUME

onset of war in the Middle East, since it's slotted as the site for history's most consequential confrontation: After all, the biblical Book of Revelation mentions Armageddon (as in, Armageddon outta here) as the last stand of sinful humanity before the Second Coming. Put that in your date book.

But seriously; take the NDP. Please. Actually, I could make provincial government jokes but they have their own writers. Just wait for Bob Rae, he killed 'em in . . . um . . . where did he kill them? Oh yeah, the Ontario budget.

What about Brian Baloney? The chin with a grin is back and bringing the House down with his off-the-wall sense of humour. Former New Brunswick Premier Richard Hatfield in the Senate not funny enough? How about Nova Scotia Premier John Buchanan? He was appointed while still in power. Now that's comedy.

Hear about the Newfoundlander who wanted to save Canada? He threatened to join the United States.

Newfies are Canada's answer to American hillbillies. Let's face it — insular, inbred, unsophisticated types are going to be the butt of jokes. When you bring them all together, watch out. There's one mean-spirited but incredibly funny joke out there somewhere involving rotten teeth and pick-up trucks up on blocks in the front yard.

It's hard to be lighthearted with Heavy Stuff. Usually it makes you just want to turn away from the whole shootin' match and do something irrational. But running for office is expensive.

## Small business feels under seige

Small business owners are worried. Results of a recent survey, compiled by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), show the country's small business community is pessimistic, and getting more so, every day.

The "small business barometer" survey, conducted at six-month intervals, attempts to measure the overall economic outlook of small and medium-sized businesses. With 71 per cent of respondents expecting the economy to get weaker (a startling increase from November 1989, which showed 47 per cent of respondents pessimistic about the economic future), the June 1990 survey is an important signal that the economy is, at the very least, in trouble.

Catherine Swift, CFIB vice-president of research and chief economist, says although small business owners' views on the economy have been growing increasingly pessimistic since the first survey was conducted in 1988, this recent sampling shows the most abrupt decline to date. And, adds Ms Swift, as smaller firms tend to feel the pinch of adverse economic conditions earlier than their larger counterparts, the implications of these results for Canada's economy are not promising.

"For example," says Ms Swift, "last November 31 per cent of small business owners said they expected to increase full-time employment in the following six months. However, this has now dropped to only 15 per cent."

Ms Swift says the three top reasons cited by respondents for their pessimism are: lower sales' expectations, the Bank of Canada's high interest rate policy and the federal government's proposed Goods and Services Tax.

"While high interest rates are a traditional enemy of small business," says Ms Swift, "this survey marks the first time that the GST has



**Mainstream  
Canada**

with TERRY O'SHAUGHNESSY

been among the top three concerns for small business owners. The state of small and medium-sized business expectations as outlined in this survey indicates that there could not be a worse time to introduce such a sweeping tax change as the GST."

She adds that it's always significant when the small business community becomes pessimistic about the future of the economy.

"These people are by nature optimistic — a key factor in making this sector the major job creation force in the country," she notes. "How these men and women perceive the state of the economy has a larger bearing not only on the future employment situation, but on the health of the economy overall."

While it's true some economic variables damaging business prospects — notably interest rates and the exchange rate — are not completely under the control of Canadian policymakers, there's one important exception: the GST.

A delay of one year, Ms Swift points out, would permit economic conditions to stabilize, enable consumers and businesses to become better informed about the tax, and allow for the maximum degree of harmonization between the GST and provincial sales tax plans.

□ This column is provided by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and reflects the opinions of that organization.



## Helping hyperactive children

What does the future hold for a hyperactive child? While true hyperactivity is relatively rare, when it does occur it must be confronted. Studies have shown that hyperactive six and seven year olds tend to remain hyperactive through middle childhood and adolescence — only 25 per cent of hyperactive children "grow out of it" in later years.

Hyperactive children do not fare well during the adolescent years — they typically do poorly at school, appear to lack some of the basic social skills needed to be accepted by peers, and are more often considered to be aggressive and annoying.

Depression, low self-esteem, loneliness, and poor coping skills are also common in hyperactive children. This is understandable: If these children are inattentive and impulsive, they will make more errors in school, achieve less, and have less confidence than their classmates. If they can't wait, take turns or share, other children won't want to play with them.

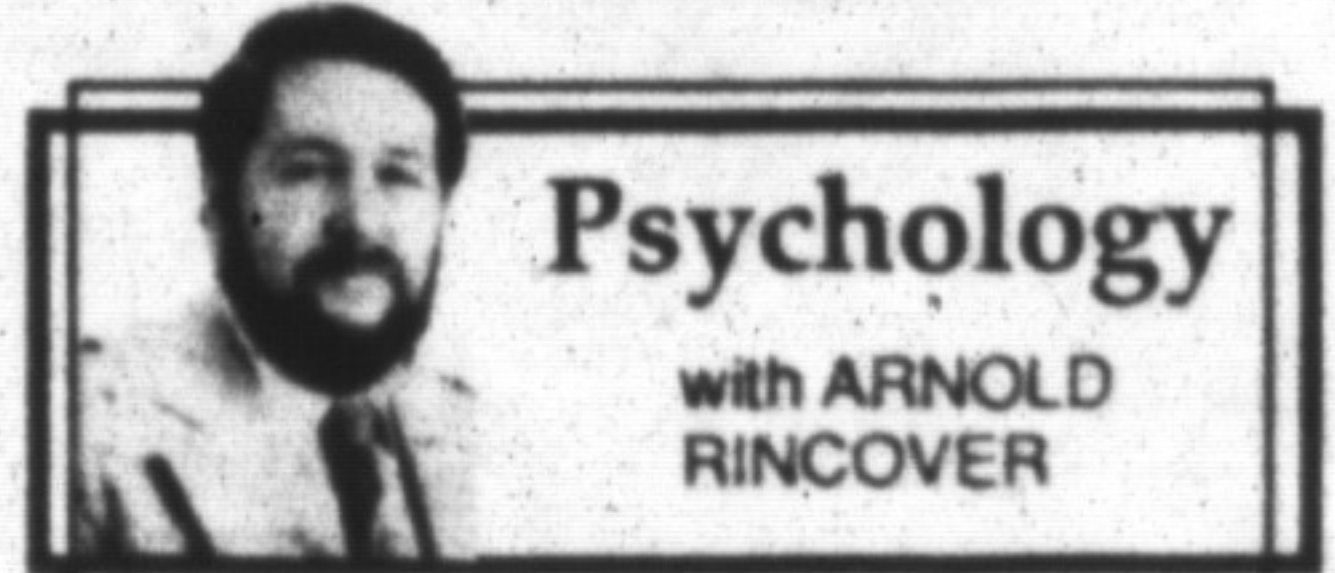
Hyperactivity also has an impact at home, as it often causes significant changes in the family. Hyperactive children have been found to be less compliant and co-operative, more negative, and less able to complete any activity.

As a result, mothers tend to be more authoritarian, more negative (they focus on the problems rather than the good things) and less responsive than mothers of other children. There are generally more conflicts in families of hyperactive children than in other families.

The future is not promising for the hyperactive child if he is left to "grow out of it". If he is properly treated, however, much or all of these negative effects can be prevented.

There are generally three major strategies that parents and teachers can use to help the overactive or hyperactive child. First, we can increase the motivation for attending, co-operating, trying harder. Second, we can present the task differently, to make it easier, shorter, clearer. Third, we can shape, encourage and praise self-control.

All three strategies can and should be used — numerous studies show that they can



**Psychology**  
with ARNOLD RINCOVER

produce immediate and dramatic improvements in a wide variety of skills, from compliance to academic achievement.

Encouraging a child to sit on the sofa (quietly), helping him to clean up his toys, showing him how to read the words in the book, praising him for completing a task or following your instructions, will have a powerful effect on the overactive child.

We can add rewards such as privileges when the child does well, and even some reprimands when the child behaves inappropriately.

In general, we must keep a sharp eye out for when the child is overdoing it, and teach him that good things happen when he shows some self-control. We can say, "You can play with the racing cars when you put the other toys you were using away." Then, we hold the racing cars until it is done, and praise the child warmly when the task is accomplished.

If he has trouble doing it, we help him, show him — a parent may put away the tanks if he puts away the plastic soliders. The parent may take turns with him, putting away one soldier if he puts away another.

Similarly, when reading a story, we make sure to spice it up with adventure, animation, enthusiasm, action, sounds and facial expressions, so it is enjoyable for him to attend. If he fidgets too much, acts silly, talks to loud or too fast, then we stop the story, tell him "I can't read while you're doing that", and continue only when he stops.

If enjoyable things happen when they show self-control, and unpleasant things happen when they are out of control, most children will begin to control themselves, slow down, watch and listen.

**The Canadian Champion**  
*Allen's Business of the Year for 1989*

Established 1961

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The Canadian Champion, published every Wednesday and Friday at 191 Main St. E., Milton, Ont., L9T 4N9 (Box 248), is one of The Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing group of suburban companies which includes: The Acton Free Press, Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, Aurora Banner, Barrie Banner Advance, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Post, Erin/Hillsburgh Echo, Etobicoke Guardian, Georgetown Independent, Halton Hills Weekend, Kingston This Week, Markham Economist & Sun, Mississauga News, Newmarket Era, Oakville Beaver, Oshawa/Whitby This Week, Peterborough This Week, Richmond Hill Liberal, Rockwood Review, Scarborough Mirror, Stouffville Tribune, Today's Seniors, Uxbridge Tribune, Vaughan Liberal, and The Willowdale Mirror. Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing is a division of Harlequin Enterprises Ltd.

Price: Store copies 40 cents each; Wednesday edition home delivery 40 cents weekly, \$20.80 annually. Friday edition \$75 annually by mail in Canada; \$85 in other countries.

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