

OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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It's not all from the garage

Lovely, tasteful appointments; room enough for two cars, and storage space for various outdoor equipment, it's a garage and I've seen it at a garage sale. Problem is, when I offered to buy it, they said it was already sold.

The garage sale is not for the uninitiated. It's the only place you still pay 10 cents for something, avoid the myriad of taxes, and mere minutes later, feel ripped off. It's only when you arrive at home with a full-size black light poster of Elvis, and realize it's too big for the bathroom wall, that the hole in your pocket becomes evident.

People spend years to achieve a highly refined taste in merchandize, then they lay out all their mistakes on the lawn, and try to sell them to you in full view of the world. Frilly, purple lampshades; paintings of subtly positioned naked women in a Spanish motif; piles of coffee table books that show a day in the life of Nepal: you know, stuff you can really identify with, that's what's for sale.

When a garage sale is announced people actually come early to try and get the good buys: like there are any. State that your sale begins at 8 a.m. on Saturday and people phone Friday afternoon saying that they want to come very much but... they have to have the cat fixed, so they'll stop by in an hour. "Okay?"

The next morning, after you've already sold the pre-Roman marble statuettes that crazy Uncle Harold, the globetrotting archeologist, willed you, you hear a loud knock on the garage door about the same time your alarm clock goes off.

People want to get in and buy, buy, buy. Garage sales are perfect for finding things like that missing Hardy Boys book, the only one you haven't read. Who cares if you're 37 years old and the Hardy Boys never even heard of a digital watch? The important thing is that, *It Happened at Midnight* by Franklin W. Dixon, (who had a suspiciously similar writing style to that of the author of Nancy Drew books) is a modern classic.

REAUME WITH A VIEW

with BRAD REAUME



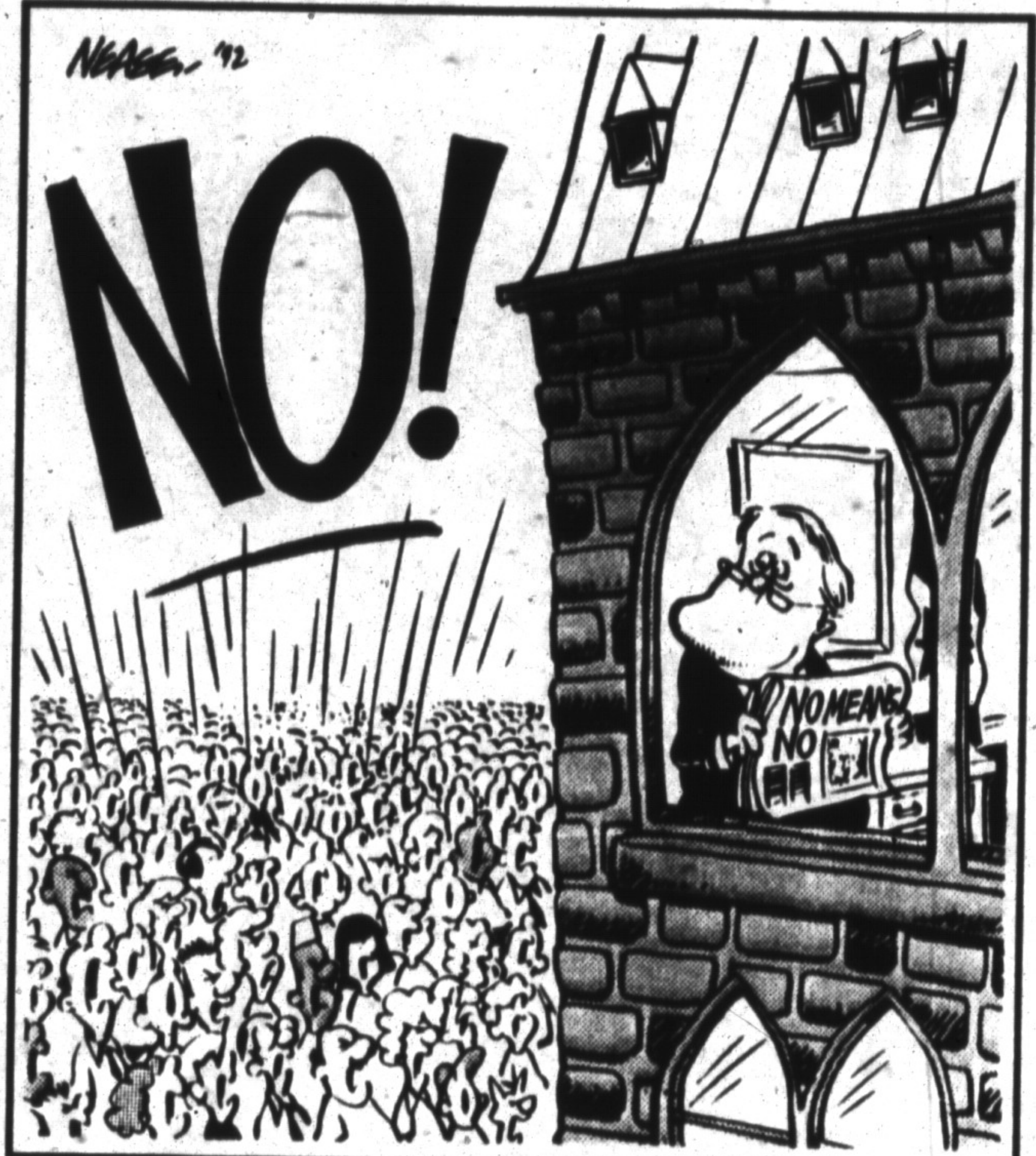
The trend now is to have neighbourhood garage sales, with whole streets and blocks involved. Not only are more potential buyers attracted to the mall-like atmosphere you create but the whole street is inconvenienced at the same time. Parking is horrendous and packs of crazed people ease your street, glancing in open windows, guessing your income and social background based on the quality of your junk. Lovely.

For the student, garage sales are heaven sent. They offer the perfect place to purchase lamps, chesterfields, and tables that are already damaged enough to not warrant moving more than once.

The proper puppy-dog expression and various homeowners, not well-acquainted with the thrust and parry of retail ales, will quickly glance around for their better half, before telling you to take it for free. Of course, until you get it in place and attempt to use it, you think you got the better deal. A tour de force of caveat emptor! (Two, two, two foreign lingos in one expression.)

When it comes down to it, I believe that it's the well-appointed sales area that generates the most sales. If your garage retail space is poorly planned, if oil stains the cement floor and various unrecognizable auto parts abound, then your garage is patently unsuitable for the neighbourhood sale.

If, on the other hand, you're the type to put curtains in your garage windows, then you should think seriously of going into the garage retail business. You could sell a lot of garages.



Illness can make marriage better

When a man suffers a heart attack or cancer, or any other brush with mortality, it will have a dramatic and profound effect both on him and his spouse.

The relationship often changes. For some, it brings them closer together, while for other it tears them apart.

Researchers Veronica Fiske of the University of Michigan and Howard Liddle of Temple University have been studying how illness influences couples.

One interesting finding is that openly discussing the disease is not always best, despite popular wisdom to the contrary.

For example, it was thought that a group of cancer patients and their families would be better adjusted if they talked openly about their illness, rather than avoiding the subject or suffering silently and alone.

After all, talking about it would at least break the tension in the air; you would know what the other person is thinking and feeling rather than always trying to read their minds and moods; and you would become closer together by sharing your feelings and sharing the pain.

Instead, concordance is more important than candor, according to Mr. Liddle. What seems



PSYCHOLOGY IN THE '90S

with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

to be important is not how much you share, but how much your desire to share is similar. The more couples share the same desire to talk — whether it be to talk a lot about it, or not at all — the better they will cope with it and maintain their psychological well-being.

One study described a couple who didn't care to talk about the 55 year old husband's lung cancer. The wife didn't want to talk about it "because we communicate without talking". The husband said that "you don't sit down and spend your evening talking about a disease... we don't avoid it, we just don't do it." Both spouses were of course sad about the disease, but they were not clinically depressed or anxious.

On the other hand, couples with very different styles of communication are at much greater risk for having conflict, distress and unmet needs. It's not the lack of communication that divides them. It's the different desires or needs for communication.

The husband of a 63-year-old lung cancer patient said he "doesn't deal well with illness. It's good that she's calm, because I couldn't deal with it any other way. I don't want to talk about it at all."

The wife, however, felt "angry because he blocks it out... this is lung cancer we're talking about, not tonsils". In this couple, the husband was okay because he never talked about it, but she had very low morale, felt lonely and isolated.

The couples who don't adjust well are usually couples who had some previous problems in the relationship. Couples who were unhappy with each other after the disease were often unhappy with their marriage before the disease struck. Happy couples, however, almost invariably said that the disease brought them closer together.

An additional finding in this research is that there are two common reactions by a spouse, when a serious illness is diagnosed.

Some spouses tend to become overprotective. They become overanxious in their desire to help, threatened by the loss of someone so close.

Some spouses, however, become hostile — because of the decrease in the closeness of the relationship, the lack of open communication about thoughts and feelings, or the restricted lifestyle that results from the disease.

Don't worry, be happy; Convincing your dog

Ever wonder about anxiety? Not yours, I'm sure you've analyzed that to death; we all have. I'm talking about your pet's anxiety. We'll look at dogs first, and deal with cats next time.

It may seem that your dog hangs around, living the good life, eating, drinking (with accompanying bodily function), and just generally enjoys himself. You're right, up to a point.

Much of a wild dog's life is spent in repose. When he's not actively hunting, he interacts with pack members according to their status, maybe plays with his offspring and, very important, he sleeps. So, yes, resting is a major element of a dog's makeup.

However, our domestic dogs do not exert themselves hunting their dinner (pawing at the cupboard door, and making sad eyes of hunger don't count). They don't even, for the most part, get a lot of exercise. There is not all that much reason for them to sleep deeply. Boredom and depression can cause excessive refuge in sleep.

Being adaptable creatures, dogs adjust to the lifestyles in which they're raised. Mostly. Some dogs have higher energy levels than others, and some dogs handle change better than others.

Change in lifestyle equals anxiety. Ask any psychologist. It's also true that exercise and mental stimulation are very helpful in relieving



PETS AND YOU

with ANNE NORMAN

ing depression and anxiety. What works for people works for their pets as well. If you don't deal with potential anxiety situations as they emerge, you will certainly have to deal with the aftershocks.

Let's say, for example, that Ralphie has been used to the routine of the family leaving for school and work through the day. He probably (if he's proven himself trustworthy) lounges around whatever areas of the house he has access to, and waits for someone to return home so the fun can resume.

He has come to look forward to welcoming his family home at regular times. His kids get home after school, maybe share a snack or a game with him. Mom and Dad show up later and, most likely, Ralphie gets taken for a walk sometime after that. Familiar interactions take place.

Should there be any change that is upsetting you,

to the dog (different after-school activities delaying the kids, or someone changing jobs so that Ralphie's routine is turned upside-down), he's going to call out for help.

Humans bite their nails, become short-tempered or experience appetite changes when they're anxious. Your dog may rip up the garbage, destroy a possession belonging to his favourite person, or (most unacceptable and totally gross) "forget" his house-training.

When these things occur, take a moment to collect yourself and remember — this is very important — remember not to fly off the handle and blame the dog. If you catch him in the very act of committing a crime, you can, of course, reprimand him but most of these incidents happen when no one is home.

You have to look at the whole picture, and try to figure out what's really happening. Punishing a dog for something he did hours before is terribly cruel; he doesn't have a clue what you're mad about, and all you are doing is confirming his belief that there is something dreadfully wrong at home.

Your dog is not acting out of spite. The longer a stressful situation goes on, the more anxious he becomes.

Understand your dog's needs when changes threaten his security. Let him know he's secure with you. He deserves that, he loves