

# OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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## Getting up early for junk food

Wow! Within three days we won the World Series, Jean Chretien became Canada's MVP and Bonnie Brown was traded to Ottawa. Good luck to them all. Now we can return to matters closer to home, local matters that we at least pretend we have a say in. Your ombudsman of optimism shall take them on one at a time.

What do you think about elitist sports? No, I'm not talking about skiing and tennis. I'm talking about minor hockey. We all have memories of cold nights on a frozen river or pond, flooded backyards and rosy cheeks with runny noses. But those are unlikely to be the memories of our children. Warmer weather (at least it seems that way) and organized sports have conspired against them.

Minor hockey has a terrific bunch of dedicated adults giving greatly of their time and patience in promoting skills, team play and good sportsmanship. This group deserves far more praise than it gets.

After that it's just plain downhill.

My son, who is 10, has just begun playing organized hockey. In previous years he skied, played basketball and indoor soccer. Equipment and fees for playing all three of those sports were less than for hockey, and each provided more hours of exercise and training than hockey, primarily because of the lack of ice time available in shiny.

You have to question our government's priorities when one of the three artificial ice surfaces in Milton is for prisoners at Maplehurst. How about moving it to a neutral site? The prisoners who can skate could still use it, as far as I'm concerned.

Lack of foresight, money and community involvement by previous civic leaders has resulted in a 6 a.m. hockey practice time for 10 year olds.

When they get to the arena for some healthy

### VIEW POINT

with PATRICK KELLY

exercise they are confronted by the municipally run concession stands beckoning with junk food. Chips and chocolate bars — microwaved hot dogs and nachos are on the gourmet menu reserved for special occasions, such as when the Jr. A Merchants play. Why not sell the concession to one of the numerous pizza or sub shops in town?

Then again, the concession stand isn't exactly leading any market trends. They don't even sell pad tape or skate laces.

The summer ball parks aren't much better. Why doesn't Rotary Park offer hot dog and hamburgers on a regular basis? They have a concession stand there and do it once in a while.

Even our multimillion dollar leisure centre has a kitchen with poorer equipment than I have at home. Fridges for beer and wine are still an afterthought.

Another thing, why isn't there a connecting lane between the leisure centre and Bishop Reding High School's parking lot? Is this another instance in which a school board has decided not to cooperate? I know common sense isn't on their curriculum.

These are areas where local municipal councillors could exercise some control. The municipality does a good job in providing the services they deem to provide, but more could be done.

Vote for pizza for you and me in '93.

Love those Jays!



## Helping children through a divorce

We've known for a long time that children whose parents are going through a divorce often need some help. They are at risk for a number of different emotional and psychological problems. The divorce may well improve the life of these children, by putting an end to the daily, escalating friction and hostility. Nonetheless, even when the divorce is constructive, it is still only the best of some pretty unhappy alternatives for a child.

The effects of divorce are long-term. It is not just the parental separation that causes stress in children, but a sequence of experiences and adjustments that go on for years: poorer economic conditions; moving to a new residence; changing schools, together with the potential loss of old friends and trying to make new friends; fluctuating visitation schedules; parental redating, remarriage and new, blended families.

Consequently, any therapeutic program for children going through a divorce should be available for the long term, not just when the parents first decide to separate.

Neil Kalter, director of the University of Michigan Center for the Child and the Family, has developed a popular model for helping children cope with divorce. He runs a school-



### PSYCHOLOGY IN THE '90s

with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

based therapy ("facilitation") group for these children. It's been so popular that it has become the model for more than 500 groups in 17 U.S. states and three Canadian provinces.

Dr. Kalter is a strong believer in the value of group rather than individual therapy for these children, for several reasons. First, groups provide a sense of safety in numbers, which individual counselling cannot achieve. Second, kids are grouped so that they are no more than one grade apart, to maximize the cohesiveness and communication in the group. In this way the group can provide strong emotional support.

Third, and perhaps the greatest attribute of using a group format, is to normalize the child's experience with divorce. By hearing other kids talk about their experience and feelings, each child begins to feel less different, less unusual, less alone.

The group leaders — always one male and one female, so each sex has someone to identify with — constantly emphasize that a child's feelings are normal, commonplace, typical. A major goal of therapy is to show them that their worries and feelings are shared by many, many other children.

Finally, a unique benefit of doing therapy in a group is that a child sees different children at different stages of the divorce experience. In this way, younger kids realize other kids have survived, even prospered down the road. The "veteran" kids can also share ways they learned to cope with the initial separation and the painful feelings associated with it.

Many issues are discussed in Dr. Kalter's curriculum, such as: parental hostility, both before and after the divorce; why parents get divorced and how it can help the family; how custody is determined, and how much say children have in the process; visitation with the non-custodian parent; a child's relationships with live-in partners and step-parents; remarriage and blended families.

As well, children are given free rein to discuss anything on their minds, which leads to some remarkable, vivid and poignant scenes: sadness at the loss of the family unit; secret longings for a parental reconciliation; feelings of guilt at possibly having caused the divorce; divided loyalties toward the parents; the excitement and anger felt when a parent starts dating; and a sense of confusion or dislocation when a parent moves out or remarries.

## Forget about those smudges on the wall

My Dear sister-in-law:

It was great to see you this past Thanksgiving weekend at our cottage. Our paths meet but twice a year and unfortunately, we usually find ourselves on those occasions surrounded by tons of relatives.

In this last instance, there were 30 of us rounded up in our cottage with 13 of that number being active children — from crying babies to boisterous teenagers.

You and I had no opportunity to sit down and talk quietly, so I am writing this letter as a result of my need to advise you on an important issue: housework.

I caught a snippet of a conversation being carried on at the table after dinner. You were bemoaning the fact that you regretted the day you had your white kitchen cupboards installed, for since then you have spent countless hours trying to remove fingerprints. In fact, you mentioned that some days you spent an hour rubbing and scrubbing and cursing.

Unless you have some unfathomable guilt such as that suffered by poor Lady Macbeth, I would say: Forget it. Let the cupboards smudge up.

There are better and more entertaining things to do with your time, but just in case your housekeeping problem blinds you to other exciting possibilities, I am offering you alternative activities.



### ON THE HOMEFRONT

with ESTHER CALDWELL

Invite your tiny pooch, Cracky, for a long walk. Let him shuffle through the autumn leaves and sniff the treasures along the way. Take him down to the water's edge and while he continues to sniff, you can look out across the St. Lawrence and watch the freighters and other watercraft motor by. Sit down on a bench and soak in the tranquility.

When you return home, make yourself a coffee, get comfortable in an armchair in the family room and read the morning paper. And while you are at it, you could grab a pen and notepad and write a few lines to forgotten friends and relatives — maybe even your sister-in-law.

Don't forget your organ in the livingroom. Open the blinds and let the sunshine pour through the windows while you practise your pieces. Move on from the hymns and try some upbeat music. Improvise. See what melodies you come up with. Sing along. Only Cracky

will hear you. He won't judge your talent; he'll be happy with your companionship. Invite him to sit beside you on the seat.

Meet a friend for lunch at a quiet cafe where the two of you can share a meal, pleasurable experiences, aspirations, and dreams.

And for goodness sake, don't mention housework.

Go cross-border shopping. Check out the bargains, fill up with gas. You can do this alone or in the company of others.

In the evening, rent your favourite movie and curl up on the couch with a bowl of popcorn and your significant other. Or if you are feeling more energetic, go line dancing, take aerobics or tap dancing classes, play badminton.

Run yourself a bubble bath, turn the lights down low — better yet, light some candles, put on relaxing music, and luxuriate in the warm water as it eases away all the tensions of the day.

Do you get the idea? Use your imagination and let me know what you come up with.

Meanwhile, I really have to go now. There is a thick coating of dust on the piano, coffee table, windowsill, and TV in the livingroom. No matter how often I wipe the dust away, it always comes back.

Why, I could spend as much as an hour a day on that job alone.