



# OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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## We all pay for these parties

The Premier of Ontario got caught with his pants down — or should I say golf shorts. It was recently revealed Mike Harris had, for years, been receiving an expense allowance from his riding association to pay for the necessities of life — tuxedos, golf and country club memberships and the like.

What's wrong with that, you say? Whose business is it if the Premier's Progressive Conservative riding association wants to give him an expense allowance? And whose business is it if he wants to spend that money on a round of golf? It's taxpayers' business.

You see, Mike Harris and the Ontario Tories, just like a myriad of other politicians and political parties throughout Canada, are making you pay for their weenie roasts and golf games via something called the political contribution tax credit.

The tax credit, one of the most lucrative available, allows individuals who contribute to political parties to reduce the amount of income tax they pay. Those who contribute \$100 to a federal party, for example, have their taxable income reduced by \$75. Supporters of particular parties get a nice little tax break and their beneficiaries build up their war chests for the next election.

Here's where the average taxpayer comes in. The political donation credit is an indirect form of public subsidization because it lowers the taxes which would otherwise be payable by the individual or corporation claiming it. This write-off must be made up for through higher taxes on all taxpayers. If you didn't make a direct party contribution this year, you donated to most of the parties anyway indirectly through the party tax credit.

Like it or not this insidious credit has indirectly clothed and pampered politicians including Preston Manning, Bob Rae and Lyn McLeod.

Let's  
Talk  
Taxes



with PAUL PAGNUELO

But you're not just paying for party parties and whatever else party officials might cook up — you're also being forced to fund political views and opinions that you may oppose or even despise.

The real insult is not that our money is wasted on perks for politicians, but that it is being used to force individual Canadians to pay for political views they would otherwise never support.

At the provincial level across Canada, political contribution tax credits were worth \$8.1 million in 1993 and federal credits topped a whopping \$19.6 million. That means \$27.7 million in political tax credits was indirectly funnelled to political parties at taxpayers' expense for the production of campaign ads, brochures, paid party staff and numerous other self-serving activities.

Wouldn't this money have been better spent on health care, education, or a reduction in taxes for all Canadians, not just those who are party supporters? Do parties that haul in millions upon millions of dollars every year need a public subsidy? It's time for political parties to pull their snouts out of the public trough. Abolishing the political contributions tax credit would be a good start.

"Let's talk taxes" is provided by the Ontario Taxpayers Federation.

## Was your child born to be a psychologist?

Psychology has long been one of the most popular majors in college. Many students are sensitive and caring and believe these characteristics enable them to be effective psychologists. It's not that simple, as most of these students are not really suited for a career in psychology. How can you tell if your child would be good at psychology?

Recent research at Georgia State University looked at the childhood characteristics of students who later made it in psychology. One interesting finding is that these students often played the role of counselor in their own family. Some were peacemakers, some were mediators, some were just good listeners for anyone who was upset. They were also the ones who their peers confided in and turned to for advice. The research concluded that these kids identified with their role of negotiator and confidante, so it was natural that it fed into their choice of occupation.

Other psychologists disagree. Contrary to popular perceptions, they feel the role of confidante and peacemaker makes for a bad psychologist.



Psychology  
in the '90s

with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

The concern here is that constantly trying to help others leaves that child's own emotional needs unmet. They are as needy as the people they are trying to help. These kids are drawn to psychology as a way of resolving their own emotional conflicts; as a result, they make up an unhealthy group of wounded psychologists.

Some researchers feel it is the smart students who will be successful, that good grades predict professional success. Though grades are important and predictive, the correlation is not that high. Grades seem to be necessary, to learning the principles of psychology, but not sufficient

to make a good psychologist.

Many believe that it is a person's personal skills and make-up that best determine success in psychology. The psychologist has to have a sturdiness, an emotional strength, not only to have a balanced perspective but to be calm, effective and to take charge in the most emotional situations. It is the empathy, the understanding, reading people's expressions, looking beyond their words, asking the right questions, that leads to success.

The truth is that all are important. You have to be smart and dedicated enough to learn the basic principles, so you know what issues should be brought to bear. You have to want to help others, or it doesn't matter how much you know. You have to be relatively healthy and emotionally sturdy to be effective in desperate circumstances. You have to like listening to other people's problems, being their confidante, without wanting to be their hero or saviour. You not only have to have felt some pain yourself, but you had to do more than survive it — you had to come through it stronger, wiser, more resilient.



## Watch plays together, stay together

Saturday night is family night at our house.

Between the months of October and June, my family doesn't spend a whole lot of quality time together. Dad's usually got meetings to attend. Mom's either marking schoolwork or going to meetings of her own. I'm kept busy with school, a part-time job and friends. The only time we're together is at dinner, which is a rarity in itself.

Most Saturday nights though, my family draws together and spends at least two hours sharing and discussing our feelings about a common interest.

"Ah, look at that! He cross-checked him right into the boards!"

That's right. The cause of our family togetherness can be spelled out in four words: Hockey Night in Canada.

For many families, mine included, Saturday night has turned into a sort of ritual. The evening usually starts on a low key. Around 7:30, someone will make the rounds muttering the same three words to everyone, "Leaf game's on." Once the message is out, all family members finish whatever they are doing and migrate to the TV room, where the first period is well underway.

It doesn't take long before Dad is yelling at the TV, loudly lamenting the Leafs' inability to

Hyde  
Seeks

with ANDREW HYDE



take a pass or the stupidity behind a certain player's dumb penalty. Everyone on the couch holds similar views, but Dad is the only one who voices them. He speaks for us all.

During the first intermission, the customary feast is prepared. A bag of potato chips is opened and everyone savours its saltiness. After this is washed down with Coke and the family receives a benediction from Don Cherry, we are all set for another two periods of hockey, intermingled with a thousand beer commercials.

A tremendous amount of history is passed down through the generations as well. Tales of waiting by the players' entrance, going to school with so-and-so, seeing a young superstar battle his way through the minors. All these stories have been told by the warmth of the glowing TV.

And now that the NHL playoffs are with us, these rituals take on a new meaning. Playoffs are a new season, like Advent or Lent, where everything is intensified. We still come together as a family, but there seems to be a greater purpose.

Mom cheers for the underdogs. I cheer for whoever's in my pool. Dad continues to yell at the Leafs, but he's louder during the playoffs. Suddenly double overtime becomes a reasonable excuse to skip your homework.

More importantly though, Saturday night becomes every night. At a time when parents and children don't see hide nor hair of each other, playoff hockey brings families together most nights of the week. These two or three weeks (depending on how far the Leafs go) are more successful in renewing family ties than even the most qualified counsellor or therapist.

Maybe it's a sign of our nationality. Perhaps it's a carrying on of tradition. Maybe it shows a messed-up sense of priorities. Nevertheless, it's hard to deny hockey's ability to bring people together.

Andrew Hyde is a Milton District High School cooperative education program student working at The Canadian Champion. He is currently mourning the Toronto Maple Leafs' early playoff demise.