



OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Relax and enjoy the walk

My friend just had his 18th birthday and, like me, he is still a sidewalk-bound, ride-mooching bum.

Many people cannot figure out how it is possible to be 18 years old and still not even have your learner's permit, or G1 as they call it these days. Sometimes, I too wonder what it is that seems to be holding me back from this rite of passage.

Is it sheer laziness or am I discouraged by graduated licensing legislation? Is it perhaps because I do not want to fork over the money just to get my driver's license?

Whatever the reason is, I still do not feel like I am missing out on anything all that great.

Whenever I need to go somewhere I just hop on the heel-toe express and walk. If the weather is bad enough to stop me from walking then it is certainly not safe weather in which to drive.

I also have the option of saddling up on my bicycle and pedaling to my destination. If I am going somewhere farther away than Milton, public transportation will take me if a friend or parent will not.

There are considerable advantages to my situation; fresh air, exercise, not to mention being environmentally friendly.

It seems that people are in such a rush these days that taking time to slow down and walk is no longer an option. Once they reach 16 they just have to get behind a wheel.

The expense of driving a car seems more a bane than a boon to me. Not only do you have to pay for insurance and gas but you also have to



Youth Perspective

with ANDREW WILTON

worry about keeping the car in good condition. There is also the possibility of receiving a nasty ticket for parking or driving violations.

Think also of the increased stress that comes from mingling with the more crazed motorists.

There is never traffic on the sidewalk and there is not as much of a need to watch where you are going. Getting run over by a sidewalk-cyclist is perhaps the worst danger.

Despite all this, I am feeling the pressure to get into the driver's seat. It is rather discouraging when I see people younger than me drive, by in easy comfort. It is all in my imagination, I know, but I can hear them mocking me.

There will soon come a time when this walking business will prove impractical. I need to plan ahead and go for my G1 soon, since it will take me a good two years to get my full license. Until that fateful day, however, walking suits me fine.

It is not where you are going that is important but how you get there, and if it takes me a little bit longer then so much the better.

GENERAL MOTORS IS TOO BIG, TOO GREEDY, AND HAS NO LOYALTY TO ANYONE BUT THEMSELVES!



-BUT THEY'VE MET THEIR MATCH.



Get along, little dust bunnies

"I hate housework. You make the beds, you do the dishes — and six months later you have to start all over again." I concur with Joan Rivers, who reputedly made that remark.

As the dust bunnies roll along the floor and catch free rides on my socks, I think of the 101 other things I would do before I would do housework.

At the same time, it goes against my nature to live in dust and disorder, but to quote Phyllis Diller: "Cleaning your house while your kids are still growing is like shovelling the walk before it stops snowing."

Why bother? Yes, the kids are still growing (well, maybe not the 6'5" one) and although they are no longer toddlers underfoot with their toys, their possessions, when left lying around now, are that much larger.

It's not that hubby and I aren't constantly on their cases, but this concept of orderliness is irrelevant to them, especially to the two younger offspring.



On the Homefront

with ESTHER CALDWELL

So if they don't care, I'll try to adopt the same lackadaisical attitude until they grow tired of the mess and pitch in, or until they leave home.

Meanwhile, I'll just find other more pleasurable activities. For starters, I can always be somewhere else.

One of my favourite haunts would have to be the library, where, like a starving person reaching out for sustenance, I grab book after book from the shelves, eager to devour them page by page, whether they be novels, travelogues, or the latest Latin grammar text (and you thought Latin was a dead language).

If it's a sunny day, who wants to stay indoors and vacuum floors and wash kitchen cupboards? Not me. A walk in the woods with a friend is more appealing. A superior way to get my exercise, wouldn't you say?

Daytime really doesn't work for me where housework is concerned.

Forget about scrubbing the tub. I have lists of people to phone, volunteer jobs to do. There's no time to be hanging about the house folding and putting away laundry.

And evenings, well, I couldn't possibly. For one thing, the entire, mostly unhelpful family is sprawled all over the place.

Secondly, I couldn't disturb their precious TV viewing.

Besides, evenings are for expanding my mental and physical horizons with courses, dancing and badminton. So much more uplifting than checking the fridge for forgotten leftovers.

Of course, the cats, who never lift a paw to help around the house. The cats don't mind our domestic chaos. They only whine when their bowl is empty.

And I'm content to cuddle them. At my half-century mark, I can't see myself converting suddenly to domesticity. There are too many other activities that are more fun.

Depression cure likely not in drugs

The most common treatment for depression is medication.

On the surface, it seems hard to argue with the use of antidepressants because they are well-researched and carefully tested before they are allowed to come to market.

Yet, the data don't support the use of antidepressants as the treatment of choice for depression, even for severe depression, according to a recent review of the literature.

It's important to keep in mind that when a new drug is tested prior to its approval, it is not compared to all other treatments available. Health officials will want to know if it actually does what the drug company says it does. Those health officials will not ask if it is the best treatment available. That decision will be left to your doctor.

In addition, drugs don't teach you anything. They may well ease the pain and suffering, which of course is a good thing, but they will not help you deal more effectively with your problems.

For this reason, relapse rates are notoriously high when medication is used.

In the December, 1995 issue of the journal



Psychology in the '90s

with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, researchers reviewed studies that compared the effectiveness of medication and psychotherapy in treating depression.

After reviewing the scientific literature, the authors concluded the following:

Psychological treatments are at least as effective as drugs, even when treating severe depression.

Psychotherapy should be considered the treatment of choice, primarily because of superior long-term outcomes and fewer medical risks than drugs.

If drugs are used, psychotherapy should always be used too. One reason is the high rate

of relapse when medication is used alone — as high as 60 percent.

Antidepressants should not be used for children or adolescents.

If this is true, what has fostered the conventional wisdom (shared by many psychologists) that drugs are the treatment of choice?

The authors blame the drug companies and economics. The notion is that drug companies have to sell their product in order to make a profit and stay in business, so they give it a lot of hype. Skyrocketing health care costs put pressure on quick results, and drugs are thought by many to work more quickly.

In addition, family doctors are not trained in psychological treatments, but they are trained in medicine. A physician is the first person most depressed people will see and most don't make referrals to psychologists unless and until medication has proven unsuccessful.

Ideally, doctors and psychologists should be working together in every office, school and health centre.

Until we get to that point, however, parents have to monitor the use of antidepressants, especially for the elderly and adolescents.