



OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Looking Back ...



The season's first snow of 1962 fell in October, and while motorists without snow tires cursed it, the children sure loved it. It all melted away soon, though, and fall weather was back again. Milton got about four inches while Campbellville and some rural districts got 10 inches to a foot of the white stuff. Danny Cross, here, helped Marie Dagistino shovel the snow off her front walk.

Premier Harris changing his horses in midstream

In June, 1995, Ontarians made a decision on who should govern the province for the remainder of the century.

They looked at the issues and based their decisions on the detailed policy platforms of the political parties. The Mike Harris government was given a mandate.

Two issues which the government is moving forward on, fast and furiously, are reform of Ontario's property tax assessment system and the structure of local government.

On property tax assessment reform, the government says that it has made its decision. An army of tax collectors has been given its marching orders to implement Actual Value Assessment in time for the 1998 municipal tax bill.

And although the premier, after a meeting with Metro's six mayors, indicated the jury is still out, Municipal Affairs Minister Al Leach, has publicly stated that he's in favour of abolishing the six municipalities and creating a megacity.

In the "Common Sense Revolution" election platform, the Harris Tories were silent on the matter of property tax reform. On resolving the issue of efficient local government the document said, "We must rationalize the regional and municipal levels to avoid the overlap and duplication that now exists."

In a 1995 pre-election survey, the Taxpayers Federation surveyed Ontario's political parties on a variety of issues.

Let's Talk Taxes



with PAUL PAGNUELO

When asked if his party would eliminate regional and county governments, transferring their responsibilities and funding to local municipalities and/or to the provincial government, Mr. Harris replied "Undecided," but added "looking at favourably."

On a second related question as to whether his party would eliminate local municipalities, transferring their responsibilities to regional and/or county governments, his response was a categorical "Disagree."

And on property tax reform, Mr. Harris replied that the party was undecided.

Based on its election platform, the Harris government was never given a mandate by the people to enact a particular assessment alternative when it comes to property tax reform. And on the issue of local government Mr. Harris' survey response was diametrically opposite to the "big government amalgamation" direction it now appears to be favouring.

My son

Navigating rules with a new teen driver

My son is 15 and he's all hyped up about getting his driver's license. I can't help it, the notion seems ... unreal. Just yesterday I was teaching him to swim and ride a bike (and he cracked up the bike the first day). Now, I'm supposed to put him at the controls of a two-ton missile going 100km/hr... How should I react? The truth is, he's going to drive, so I have to get used to it.

It may take you a (long) while to accept the idea, but you will. You have to. All kids this age are talking about driving, consumed by it. So, you take some medication and think about how you're going to deal with this rationally.

You have to let your child prove to you that he is responsible enough to drive. He must convince you with actions, not words.

One criterion, of course, is some form of driver's training. He has to take the courses and do well. This not only helps him to learn to drive, but it may help to reduce insurance premiums.

In addition, however, there are issues of responsibility and judgement. The teenager has to demonstrate that he has the good sense to resist temptations — to race, to drink and drive,



Psychology in the '90s

with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

to impulsively pass another car when he's in a hurry. And he has to obey all the driving laws, from seatbelts to speed limits.

I'll tell him I have to be a passenger for a period of time, after he is licensed. While there are sure to be a few mild disagreements on the way, I'll get an idea of how he reacts — to another bad driver, when he's in a hurry, when the light is turning yellow before he gets to the intersection, when someone cuts him off, after a party.

This is a good plan to follow with your teen. He will agree because he'll do anything to drive. Don't be seduced by what his friends are

doing, how much he pleads to go out alone with his girl — first and foremost, you have to feel good about him driving.

Second, you can make sure that your teen shows responsibility and good judgement in a general sense. He needs to know that if you hear that he shows a lack of responsibility or uses bad judgement, in any of these situations, then he can not get behind the wheel of a car for a period of time.

Finally, let him know driving privileges can be revoked even after he is allowed to drive on his own. Make it clear what will lead to a revocation of driving privileges, how long they will be revoked or how he can earn the privilege back.

One caveat needs to be mentioned. Some parents impose unrealistic demands on a teen as a way of delaying the inevitable. Don't make ridiculous requirements — as you are only teaching the child to resent you or worse, to deceive you by going behind your back. You will not stop your teenager from driving for very long, so teach him to do it responsibly.

Tubs are all wet if you ask me

Some people just love a bath, but I don't get it.

I had one the other day. I had just visited the massage therapist and she recommended going home and topping off the relaxing massage with a soak in an Epsom salts bath. I turned up my nose at her suggestion and made no promises.

You know, I shower and never have difficulty adjusting the water temperature, but when I run water for a tub, I either end up with tepid water or water that scalds my toes. I hit the hot one this time round and as I added more cold water, I dance a watery jig (only one overheated foot at a time) and swirled around the salts.

Yes, I could have stepped out of the tub while I got the temperature just right, but you have no idea what wet feet standing on a well-abused bath mat can collect and deposit into the water.

Does anyone else have a problem with the size of our tubs? They are too short for me to



On the Homefront

with ESTHER CALDWELL

comfortably lie down in. Unless I immerse my head in the water (and I can't stand water in my ears), I get a crook in my neck as it rests uncomfortably against the cold enamel.

Whether the head is partially or all the way down in the water, my knees pop up and get cold in the process. If I filled the tub to the brim, effectively emptying the hot water tank, I suppose my knees could be accommodated under the water.

Alternatively, I can raise myself to a sitting position with my feet pressing against the end of the tub below the taps so I don't slither down.

Are we comfy yet?

How people manage to read in a tub is beyond me. I have tried it unsuccessfully a couple of times. I have to hold my hands and arms up out of the water to hold the book — and it better be a light one. Those poor limbs soon tire of their elevated position. And my reading glasses fog up too, so what's the point of the exercise?

But back to the afternoon in question. There I was, finally soaking, first my top half (knees up, remember) then my bottom half. The kitchen timer sat on the edge of the tub. I set it for 10 minutes. It seemed an eternity.

I was not enjoying myself, but goodness knows, I didn't want to under-use all those supposedly healthful Epsom salts. So I persevered.

Even before my sentence was up, I could feel the skin on my finger shrivelling up. Yuck. I pulled the plug, in anticipation of the buzzer going off.

I wrapped the towel around me and puddled downstairs to our bathroom to get the job done the right way. I took a shower. Boy, did it feel good. And just think, every part of my body was enveloped in water — all at the same time.