# OPINION

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## It will be a taxing new year

ACQUAINTANCES, as the song goes, may be forgotten, but 1997's tax changes are sure to stick with you throughout the year. Here's a sampling of some new adjustments you'll be forced to get acquainted with in the coming months.

Director of Advertising

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Canada Pension Plan contributions -As of January 1, the CPP's contribution rate rises to 5.85 per cent of individuals earnings from this year's 5.6 per cent. That translates into a maximum tax increase of \$104 per employer and employee.

If that isn't enough to put a lemon in your holiday punch, then consider this: The tederal and provincial governments are conspiring to bump the CPP rate yet again in 1997. As it stands now, the plan is to raise contribution rates from the new level of 5.85 per cent to a whopping 10 per cent of earnings. The average taxpayer and his or her employer will be hit with a \$722 increase in annual CPP taxes. This \$10 billion tax grab would be the largest single increase in Canadian. more fees in 1997 than you did last year. history

announced his 'new' GST plan (to be imple- rise to \$1,000 from \$825. harmonizing provinces." Poppycock!

As admitted by Nova Scotia's government tone of three provinces that signed on to the BST gives you a sinking feeling, doesn't it? or blended sales tax), consumers in that province will end up paying an extra \$84 million a year on \* purchases. For the average Nova Scotia family. that works out to \$172 more in sales taxes. Those with a family income of more than \$50,000 can expect to pay \$335 more a year.

But it's not just Atlantic Canadians who'll pay for the BST. In 1997, taxpayers in every



### with PAUL PAGNUELO

province outside the Maritimes will be doling out \$349 million of a four-year \$1 billion bribe used by Ottawa to persuade the three harmonizing provinces to subscribe to the BST.

In essence, Ontarians, Albertans, and others will be paying provincial sales tax in the three harmonizing provinces without ever having purchased any goods or services in Atlantic Canada.

User fees - If you're a business immigrant or a boat owner (or both), you can expect to pay

Starting Jan. 2, business applicants who want' The GST/BST - When Paul Martin permanent residence in Canada will see the fee

mented on April Fool's Day, 1997), he issued a Ottawa also has plans for a new fee structure document that claimed "Harmonization will for pleasure boats. Although the details have yet mean lower taxes for consumers in the three to be worked out, the feds want to raise \$14 miltion annually by taxing the use of sailboats, small motorboats and even rowboats. Sort of

How about calling or writing your MP to say what you think about increasing taxes and your ever-shrinking after-tax income? It may just be the most profitable resolution you'll ever make.

"Let's talk taxes" is a commentary provided by the Ontario Taxpavers Federation. Commentaries are by the OTF's executive director Paul Pagnuelo.



Hillbilly days during the W.I. Dick Middle School summer playground program developed into a morning of fun and games at Centennial Park in July, 1971. Resting listlessly are (bottom I-r); Stephen Callahan, Lisa Gervais and Susan Frame. At top are (I-r) Wendy Somerville, \* Derrick Neelands and Joanne Auger. An afternoon of fun planned by the leaders was canceled due to inclement weather.

### Secure enough to listen to others?

SAW REX MURPHY, NEWFOUNDLANDER first. CBC hack second, do a piece trying to dis-Leern what Canada is, and what it means to be a Canadian.

My reactions ran the gamut.

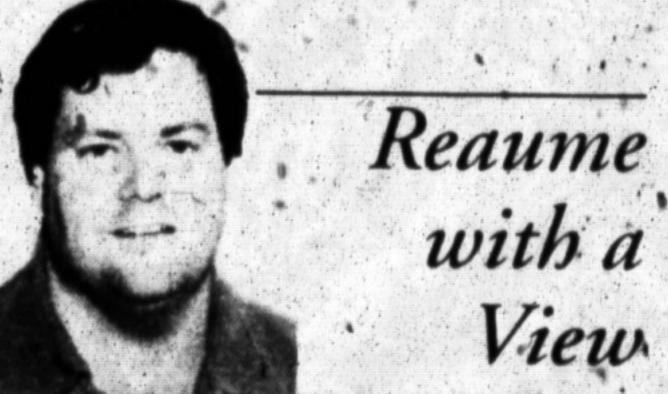
Initially I wondered how much money we have invested in this quest, and to what end. Are these angst-ridden television moments part of a larger cultural focus to unify the country?

Then I wondered how a Newfoundlander, a Rex-come-lately to Canada, was going to be able to tell me what it is to be Canadian? After all, they just got on board in 1949, when nobody else wanted them.

I realized these points are missing the real question, which is: What makes a nation? Then based on that definition, how strong is ours? How cohesive is our tribe?

Traditional definitions suggest that particular geography, climate, language and history all contribute to a sense of nationhood. Such is the way with Canadianism.

Try turning the question of national character around and asking other people such as an American, or a Frenchman, or Englishman or



with BRAD REAUME Brazilian what defines them.

What binds Frenchmen together? Cream sauces? Cheese? (It might bind them, but not together.) Snooty waiters?

What binds Americans together? Handguns? Ignorance masquerading as arrogance? A belief . that they are the best?

What binds Brazilians? Piranha? Rain forest \* "destruction? Urban violence and poverty?

What binds Englishmen? Cholesterol? A helief their island empire is the most civilized on earth? No, in fact, it is cholesterol.

Americans were created by weaving realities of history, geography and language together, so were the French, the Brazilians and the English and the Indonesians and the Peruvians and the Italians and the Icelanders, and the Pakistanis and ... well, I think I've made my point.

However in almost every case, where the geography gets unwieldy you tend to find regionalism.

Yet Canadians are more tolerant than many other nationalities because with so many immigrants it would be difficult to succeed in life if we weren't. And many of his have an immigrant in our recent family background, so we empathize. Our mindset is outward looking because with people from all over the world and a small population we are interested in how our relations are getting on.

That single fact produces in Canadians an understanding that there is a greater world out there, that there are ideas out there and ways of doing things that are just as effective as our

Canada is essentially a group of people who are outward looking. We are a people who can see over the horizon, who aren't so enamoured with ourselves that we cease to acknowledge anyone else. We feather our nests but are never satisfied.

Of course that plays havoc with our politicians.

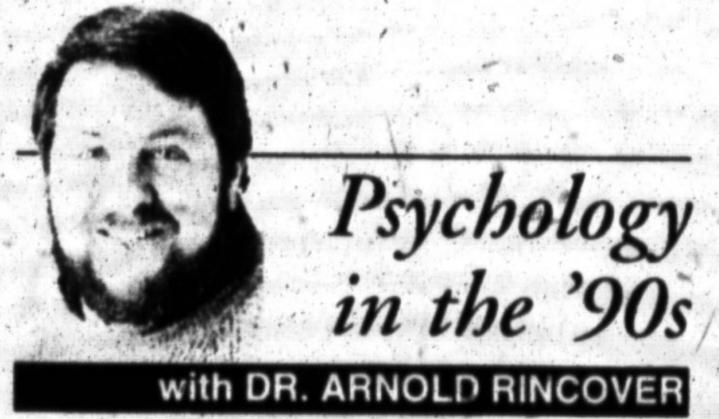
## How to help your children cope with a move

THEN WE MOVED A FEW YEARS AGO, MY wife and I were worried sick about the children. The kids didn't want to go. They didn't want to leave their friends, their school, the park behind our house. They were very emotional and very adamant about it.

Most parents fret when a move is in the offing and most children don't want to go. That represents no small problem, as almost one million children move each year in Canada. Every family moves an average of once every six years.

A new review of the research, published in the American Psychiatric Association Monitor (August 1996), reveals that for most children the upset due to relocation is temporary. The vast majority of children quickly make new friends, find new haunts and adapt to the new school. There are, however, some children who will need a little extra help to get through the move. The following general findings have emerged in the research:

· Moving can have long-term negative effects for children who are at risk, children who are doing poorly in school, who have social problems, or whose families are moving because of a family crisis (such as divorce)



· If none of these risk factors are present, any strain of relocation should be short-lived:

· The older the child, the more difficult and upsetting will be the move - adolescents are hit few years. This buddy system didn't necessarily hardest:

· At risk children adapt much better if we give them a little help (described below).

Young kids can have problems because their coping skills are not well developed and they have a difficult time understanding the reason for the move. At the same time, they can meet other kids and break into new peer groups easier. Cliques aren't so well entrenched at this age.

Adolescents, on the other hand, may understand the reasons for moving too well, and object

to them. They feel their needs play second fiddle, their parents don't care about their feelings.

Dr. Leonard Jason, at DePaul University, studied ways to help "at risk" children adapt to a move. He tracked children in 30 schools. He found that pairing a child up with a buddy in the new school was a very powerful tool. Kids were paired up with a same-sex partner upon arrival, and the buddy was told to introduce the new child to other students, spend time with him at lunch and recess.

The buddy system was especially effective if. the buddy was also a student who went through the same experience, having moved in the last improve a child's grades or study habits, but it dramatically reduced rejection, helped the child make new friends and was a source of support for the new student.

Finally, parents must be careful not to go overboard in worrying about their children. The literature shows that parents actually worry too much and become overprotective. In one study, 22 per cent of mothers reported that moving was very stressful for the family, while only 12 per cent of their adolescents thought it was stressful."