

## Promises, promises - but what do they mean

We should all by now be used to the incessant stream of pledges made by the electioneering during election campaigns. The promises come often enough, are too often forgotten the minute the winner is declared and are put into mothballs until our leaders feel it's time to reacquaint themselves with the electorate.

We should have learned by now to take them for what they are: vote getters. And yet, all cynicism aside, readers and writers on both sides of the election fence know that it's this stream of promises that election campaigns are all about.

The upcoming June 9 provincial election has seen more than its fair share of promises. Less taxation for the little man, a return to fundamentals in education, more jobs, more industry, less pollution... this and much more from the mouths and press releases opposition and Conservatives alike.

It's difficult however to take the NDP and Liberals to task for their pledges; neither party has been able to prove its worth as an Ontario government, neither has had to explain away unworkable promises. The depth of their promises simply has never been tested.

But with the PC's it's an entirely different story. Here's a party which has ruled Ontario for the past 30 years. And here's a party which this time around has seen fit to run on the basis of its past performance, then throw in 21 dandy pledges in the form of a Charter for Ontario - just for good measure.

Davis and leadership have become synonymous, according to the Tories' P.R. machines. And Davis and the Progressive Conservatives are the ones which will in the next ten years create one million new jobs provide 900,000 new housing starts (down 100,000 from a pledge made last year), protect farmland, improve education, battle inflation, encourage development of the economy's private sector, and balance a budget by 1981. No small feat.

But never a word on how Davis and the P.C.'s plan to implement these astounding, seemingly contradictory promises. Nor a word of explanation on why this road wasn't followed in the past - under the strong, unique leadership of the premier. Why is it that it takes an election for any government to decide it must do something about unemployment, taxation and conservation? Or is it that the wool will once again be pulled over our eyes until, with the P.C.'s safe in a majority government, the old 'we must practise restraint' argument is pulled out of the hat.

The commitment to preserve farmland is an old faithful at election time. The only problem is the big money developers who come knocking at Queen's park are often too difficult to resist. True they provide needed employment - but who's going to feed all that new labour market?

Suddenly it's possible to undertake a

massive reforestation program where only limited funds were available in the past. Now the Tories will create 100,000 jobs a year, although only 76,000 were created last year and indications are less than 90,000 will open up this year.

And suddenly we can consider eliminating seniors from the tax rolls when attempts in this direction fell on deaf ears in the past.

But how is the government going to maintain a restraint philosophy and still implement all these programs? P.C. campaign planners, it would seem, don't give the electorate or the media much credit for basic 'two and twoing.'

We get that same feeling of contempt for the ability of media people from some of the press releases emanating from the premier's office.

Take the 'Premier Davis supports local industry' one dated May 12.

The government has, it reads, in the past few years "made a great deal of progress in getting new manufacturing plants and new jobs" in several areas, including Midland. The 16 per cent unemployment in this riding, the closing of two major employers would seem to indicate otherwise.

Then there's the claim that the government recently "made a fundamental decision" to assist in industrial development in growth areas outlined in the Simcoe Georgian Task Force report. It took some strong pressuring from Midland officials, prodding from MPP Gord Smith, and the announced July closing of Motorola operations to make that decision. And even then it was not made until after the election campaign was well underway. A snow job?

And finally there is the example of the premier himself who, on his recent whirlwind visit to Midland allowed no more than a token two minutes for a press conference. That despite our reporter's request for at least a half hour in view of the fact that Mr. Lewis had taken one full hour to talk to the press. Two minutes is all the premier of this province had to spare.

And yet he and his co-workers rely largely on the media to spread the P.C. word. With two minute press conferences and misrepresentative press releases it'll be the Tory public relation machine's word that'll get out. That makes for bad communication and occasionally bad press.

There's nothing wrong with election pledges - we all want to know where our candidates' heads are at. But when the pledges are so blatantly aimed at buying votes and are difficult to substantiate in view of past performance, you've got to question their intent and integrity.

You cannot, another famous politician once said, please all of the people all of the time. Davis should have stuck to the guts issue - how is he going to deal with unemployment? Instead he opted for a sentimental piece of prose which sets out to be all things to all Ontarians. We'll measure its effect on June 9.



## Letters

### Duplicated efforts

Letter to the Editor:

Recently I learned that the Huronia District Hospital is planning to start teaching prenatal classes. As many people in the Midland-Penetang area know, Prenatal classes have been and are presently being conducted by the Simcoe County District Health Unit, Community Health Nurses, in cooperation with the Board of Education.

I understand that the Hospital will be purchasing films and various audio-visual aids in preparation for taking over these classes. What does one do if you live here, but plan to be delivered at the Penetang Hospital, or possibly Orillia, or Barrie.

My concern as a taxpayer is how, in this day of restraint, the hospital can justify spending public funds on providing a service which is already being provided in the community. If the hospital is dissatisfied with the classes, why don't they work in cooperation with the Health Unit, who already have the experience and resources for such a program?

Wouldn't it be better if we had a Speech Therapist at our hospital so people wouldn't have to go on the waiting list at the Barrie hospital. Or what about a transfer unit for transporting the very ill, newborns safely to the Toronto centers?

I'm given to understand that the hospital feels this will achieve continuity of care. It is my opinion, that a mother's five days in hospital is a very brief segment of her life with her child. The community is where, hopefully, they will spend most of their lives. Continuity of care includes life in the community - not just the hospital experience!

A Confused  
Taxpayer and Nurse,  
Sheila A. Beausoleil

## Time again for teachers' Slouth of Despond

by Bill Smiley

This is a time of year when a lot of school teachers get a sinking feeling.

All year they have been labouring in the fairly barren vineyards of their students, sustained by the knowledge that there is still time to produce a green shoot or two, and maybe even enough grapes to make some kind of brew.

Suddenly, there are only 16 teaching days left, and there is the dreadful realization that they have exhausted all their skills, and that it had about as much effect on Susie and Joe as would a bucket of water poured over a seal. It just doesn't stick.

Thus, when they should be looking forward with anticipation to end of term and summer vacation, many teachers find themselves instead in a veritable Slouth of Despond.

It is the students' perennial belief in miracles that puts the teachers onto anti-depressant pills about now.

Aside from school work, adolescents are not dumb. They are quite aware that education these days is a sociological jungle from which they have a far better chance of

emerging unscathed than do those poor devils who try to teach them.

They know that in our enlightened society, "failure" is a dirty word, and that everyone from the Minister of Education, through the school board, down to their classroom teacher, will do back flips trying to avoid pinning such a label on them.

Many students know perfectly well that they can goof around most of the year, play truant, miss assignments, be late with essays, and nothing very terrible will happen to them.

In fact, if they go around looking serious and sincere for the last few weeks, and do a little work, there's every chance that they will scrape or scramble through, only to repeat the whole process the next year.

Born and raised in a society where it is no shame to accept charity, because it's now dignified as welfare, where unemployment insurance is a cosy cushion against adversity, where their aged parents will be looked after by the state, where the work ethic is scorned, where the semi-literate hockey player or pop star is not only idolized but rich, the kids are not going to get their

shirts in a knot over something as apparently irrelevant as doing well at school.

And let's not blame them too much. Let's take a look at the world we're passing on to them.

It's a world strangling-drowning in its own poisons, created by the greed of past generations. The kids see the greed and the poisoning going right on. Small wonder they are a little cynical about some of the virtues such as selfishness and the golden rule.

It's a world in which the rip-off is admired, on the whole. They see unions ripping off management, management ripping off the consumer, everybody trying to rip off the government. So why not rip off the school system? It's the biggest sucker of all.

It's a world in which the media panders to the bizarre and violent. The hijacker, the terrorist are overnight sensations. Is it naive to suggest that these are responsible, to some extent, for the bomb warnings, and the incredible vandalism in our schools?

It's a world of drugs. The old man has his drinks every night and gets smashed on the weekend. The old lady has 18 different kinds of pills. Why not run away from reality by

emulating them.

It's a world in which the daily papers are full of examples of corruption in high places. A senator here, a president there, has helped himself. So what's wrong with cheating, as long as you aren't caught?

It's a world in which the best and bravest are often bullied by the brutal and belligerent. So why not give the teachers a hard time? "They can't do nothin' to ya, anyhow," 'cept senja home. So what? Write a note and sign your old man's name."

Not a very pretty picture? You're right, gentle reader. But this is not an indictment of students. It's a cry of shame for the society we're handing on to them.

Let's restore "failure" to our vocabulary. Let's restore "excellence," another word that's been dropped. Let's show the kids that apathy is ugly, that reason is superior to violence, that love and sex are not synonymous, that compassion and courage far outweigh cruelty and cowardice.

I'm sorry for them, and what we have shown them. But I don't despair. Let's show them it's a beautiful world, and that they are beautiful and that they are needed to make it more beautiful. Then watch them go.

## Letters to the editor

### Efficiency of Midland OPP praised

Dear Sir:

This being police week, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Midland OPP for their fast and efficient answer to my urgent phone call during a treacherous storm on Georgian Bay the weekend of May 7 and 8th when my husband, Ken Vanderhart, son Ken Jr., son-in-law Bob Moreau and brother-

in-law Mickey Vanderhart were caught in the storm near Honey Harbour and couldn't get back to Victoria Harbour.

We are forever grateful.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. K. Vanderhart  
and family

### Cancer Society appreciates support

Dear Madam:

A campaign for funds is only as successful as the people who organize it, the volunteers and workers who canvass hundreds of homes and large areas, the general public who so generously support it, and the local news media who publicize the work of the organization.

The sincere and grateful appreciation of the Midland and District Unit of the Canadian Cancer Society is extended to all who assisted in putting the April campaign well over its objective.

Sincerely,  
Marion Sleep  
P.R. Convener

## I wrote a letter to my love

by Shirley Whittington

Eaton's big store in Toronto was recently abandoned and is presently in the hands of Tepperman, the wrecker. Before the walls came tumbling down, there was a gigantic sale of department store memorabilia, and a man called Albert Edelstein bought a couple of antique postal wickets from the store's old post office.

Imagine his surprise when he got the wickets home and discovered that they contained twenty pieces of uncollected mail! Some of that mail dates back twenty years. Improperly stuffed in the wicket, the letters had somehow become wedged in the back, and they had simply never been picked up by the post office.

It's an offence to open another person's mail, but if I were Mr. Edelstein, I'd be mightily tempted. What burning messages were contained in these ancient letters, written so long ago, mailed but never delivered?

Imagine one would find something like the following tucked inside those yellowing envelopes.

"Dear Arnold: After giving the matter some serious thought, I have decided that I will marry you after all. Meet me next Thursday in front of the Arcade on Yonge Street, and we will set the date. If you aren't there by one o'clock, I'll know it's all off. All my love - Arabella. PS - Don't try to phone me. Daddy still hates you and he'll just hang up."

"Dear Mr. Pearson: Thanks for your letter asking me for a grass roots opinion on that young professor from Laval. I hardly know what to think about him. I mean, he's French, but he speaks English as good as you and me, so he should be able to get along okay in Canada. I hear tell, though, that he's kind of pinko, and he wears sandals too, just like I don't think he has a hope in Canadian politics. As ever - Joe Straight."

"Dear Don: Take it from me - you should stick to Shakespearean acting. I don't know who you're basing this Charlie Farquarson character on, but farmers are the backbone of this country, and I don't think people should go around making fun of them. Forget it Don - there's no money in that sort of thing anyway. Memorize King Lear, and who

knows? Some day you may make a name for yourself. Best wishes - G. Whizz, Guidance Counsellor."

"Dear Virginia: Your little friends are wrong. Of course there is a Santa Claus. As long as there is an Eaton's Catalogue, and a Life Magazine and a Canadian Army Navy and Air Force. You have my word on it. Yours truly - John Bassett, Publisher, The Toronto Telegram."

"Dear Mrs. Fernzдорfer: Please disregard the credit notice you will be getting in the mail in a day or so. Your account with us is for \$21.60, not \$2,160.00, as incorrectly noted on your statement. Our chief accountant had a terrible headache last Wednesday, and made some rather grievous errors. However, we are beginning installation of a modern computerized accounting system which will eliminate the possibility of human error. Such a mistake will never occur again. Sincerely yours - Eaton's Credit Department."

"Dear Santa: Thank you very much for the Wetmums Doll and the doll dishes and the cute little cradle. I am sending them all back and I hope you won't be mad because I just love you heaps and heaps. But I'm going to school

now and I don't want to play house any more. We play doctor at school. That is more fun. Your friend - Margie Sinclair."

"Dear Mr. Lear: I have your letter suggesting a new television series based on a character called Archie Bunker. You must be kidding, Norman. Nobody has a name like Bunker. Who would identify with that? as for a lead character who flushes the toilet audibly on screen, and uses words like nigger, polack and kike, the concept is so outrageous that it's beneath contempt. Here at the CBC we have more faith in the Canadian viewing public than that. They would never accept anything in such bad taste. You could try the idea on some American network, but believe me, Norm - I don't think they'd touch it with a ten foot pole. As ever - Edward Fruitfly, CBC Programming Director."

Who knows what was in those letters? And if they'd been picked up and delivered, how many lives would have been altered?

Mr. Edelstein thinks he might mail the letters anyway, which isn't a bad idea. After all these years, another two or three week delay isn't going to make much difference.

## The saga of Baker and the motorbike-part one

by Ray Baker

I'm not sure when the urge struck me this year. Think it must be something to do with spring, and the sap running. Anyway, a friend of mine had moved up to a bigger bike, a 500 cc twin 'Kamakazi' and his 175 cc stood forlorn in the corner of his garage looking like a dog whose master has gone away.

So we got talking, and I mentioned the price of gas, and my wife wanting the car, plus the fact I had sold my pick up truck. We both agreed it was time I bought a motor bike to go to work and back on. I had already done some research.

Newspapers and trade magazines had been studied and tabulated, analyzed for size, make, model. The overall picture emerged as follows:

Item: The top three best selling bikes were all Japanese, Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki. The common denominator for service, spares, dealer access, and c.c., over three hundred adverts, came out as a Honda of 195 cc. Well my friend had a 175 cc twin Honda. That's close enough, so we agreed on a price.

All that remained were the minor details, like finding the money, and working my way through the latest legislation on motorcycles,

and selling the idea to Mom.

No problem

Having travelled behind me for millions of miles on dozens of bikes (a few years ago mind you) Mom just said "well if you're not too old to climb on the bike and get to work and back on it, you could leave me the car".

So armed with this burst of enthusiasm, I tackled the legislation, recently passed, and the new licensing system.

The driver examination centre assured me that the millions of miles etc, and my existing licence were meaningless, we start again from scratch. Sitting down I got the eyesight test over with a 20 / 30 which is better than 50 / 50 I guess. Followed by the three page, twenty questions to a page, written test. You must get 16 out of each twenty right to pass.

I blew one question though. I said fourteen inch was the height from the bars to depressed seat level. It's fifteen. For all you gentle readers out there to whom this question has been a constant worry. Rest easy. Fifteen inches.

Now came the licensing form in three parts to baffle the average man. You apply for class 'R' which, if you pass, enables you to drive for sixty days only. Then you go back

for a road test and obtain an 'M' for Motorcycle, which in turn is incorporated into your existing license to form a 'group four'. Then you can drive a car, a motorcycle, an ambulance without patients or a school bus without children on board.

This class 'R'. Daylight only. No passenger and no highway more than 50 mph is a 'lulu'. Using a 25 x magnifying glass it said 'subject to these conditions' and 'from date of validation for 60 days'. The validation is applied after the eye test, the written test and the car park test behind the T.D. bank in Midland

THE TEST ITSELF IS NEXT WEEKS COLUMN

So clutching the three part form I had passed eyesight and written only. Then would come the car park bit with an examiner. Then with an 'R', practice for up to 60 days and go back for a road test for the 'M', then group four. OK?

You sit down with your friendly neighbourhood insurance agent, shell out with a smile. Up to 100 cc equals light weight, 100-250 cc equals medium, 250 cc and up equals heavy. The rates are graded accordingly.

Then the dealer, who picks up the bike, off comes the plate. And a safety check, shell out

with smile etc and into Midland Flour and Feed, with ownership, bill of sale, insurance and roadworthy certificate.

Now you really smile as you shell out for the transfer, the sales of 7 per cent and the current plates. And you're in business. Well nearly.

Back to the dealer, on with the new plate and the bike is delivered back to your house. And that's all there is to it. No sweat.

Your bike sits there, gleaming filled up. Occupying less gas, and space, than the pick-up. Licensed, insured, roadworthy and ready to go...and so are you. But with the 'R' license you only get to ride if after the T.D. car park bit.

So onto a trailer behind the car on a Sunday morning behind the high school. Your test is the following day. So you ride for three hours in ever-decreasing circles until you disappear up your own exhaust pipe.

Next week's exciting conclusion deals with the actual test(s) and walking the plank.

Ray Baker is a manager at Midland's RCA plant and a freelance writer for Markle Community Newspapers. He and his family live in Penetanguishene....

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