

The joy of magazines (print's charming)

Shirley Whittington



The prospect of a lengthy wait at the doctor's office never dismays me. I use the uninterrupted time to gorge on magazines. My doctor subscribes to *Punch*. I arrive, ailing, in his waiting room, bury myself in *Punch* and am soon shaking with silent laughter. "The doctor will see you now," says the nurse, with a look that suggests it's not a minute too soon.

Different delights are mine at the dentist's office. He subscribes to *Life* in its new expensive format. I devour it, and then proceed into the *National Geographic* and the glossy decorating mags.

At the hairdresser's I'm plunged into another world with *Soap Opera Digest*, *Movie Mirror* or *The American Hairdresser and Salon Owner*.

At the supermarket I wait in line with *People*, *National Enquirer* or *Rolling Stone*. You've noticed, haven't you, that the

magazines are placed --with the candy --near the cash register? Little sugar addicts impulse shop the *Smarties* and the *Mars-Bars*. Older print freaks are tempted by *Omni* and *Woman's Day*, at eye level.

When I get home from all these free reads, more delights await me. *Maclean's*, *Harrowsmith*, *The United Church Observer*. The days are never long enough for a dedicated magazine freak.

What makes magazines irresistible? Well --they're easily available, portable and disposable. Above all, their variety is infinite, or so it would seem in the current copy of *Writer's Market* where more than four thousand periodicals are listed. If browsing through the magazine rack at the milk store is fun, then cruising the pages of *Writer's Market* is ecstasy, for a print freak.

There are publications for *The American Candlemaker*, *The Canadian Funeral*

Director and *The National Wool Grower*. Also represented are *The Tidewater Vegetarian*, *The Deaf Canadian* and *The Western Horseman*.

The Monumental News Review is not concerned with big current events, but with makers of memorials in granite and marble. *Bedder News*, on the other hand, relates to waterbeds.

The Pest Control Magazine is aimed at professional exterminators, but I imagine it would, if folded properly, kill flies.

Mr. Longears Magazine is the official publication of the American Donkey and Mule Owners Society. (Let us bray?) And yes, Virginia, there really is a magazine called *Pungent Prayer*.

The Gas Digest sounds elementary but is meant for fuel retailers, as is the mysteriously titled *Sooner LPG Times*. Neither has any connection with *Compressed Air*, a suspense-filled organ aimed at those who dote upon pneumatics.

There are pages of men's magazines. *The Playboy* can *Rampage through Swank Pix* in his *Penthouse* or *Gallery* --but here's a riddle--three of these skin mags are edited by women!

Torrents of publications have surfaced in the wake of the women's movement. As well as Ms, there are *Black Maria*, *Earth's Daughters*, *The Second Wave* and the naggingly repetitive *Women as Women as Women*.

Alternative magazines seem to flourish in the US. Students of "objectivist philosophy" read *Ego*. Gay Episcopalians read *The Gay Episcopalian*. Those under 35 who lean to drugs, personal freedom and indiscriminate coupling read *High Times* in their lucid moments. *The American Atheist* addresses itself to exposing "the foolery of religion."

There's *The Happiness Holding Tank* for poets, and *Oink* for poets who are avant-garde. *Victimology* focusses on "the dynamics of victimization" and *The Wittenburg Door* is for men and women "usually connected with the church." And there's *Paid My Dues* and *Wind and Tiger Beat* -- what a wonderful colourful array of transient pleasures!

I will always arrive early for doctors and dentists that subscribe to neat publications, and I fully expect to waste a large measure of my life browsing at magazine racks.

I can't help it. As far as I'm concerned, print's charming.

Education: more than 'See Spot, see Jane!'

Bill Smiley



IN 30 plus years as an editor, a parent, and a teacher, I have been inundated (though not quite drowned) by several waves of self-styled "reform" of our educational system, especially that of Ontario.

Each wave has washed away some of the basic values in our system and left behind a heap of detritus, from which teachers and students eventually emerge, gasping for a breath of clean air.

Most of the "massive" reforms in our system are borrowed from the U.S., after thirty or forty years of testing there have proven them dubious, if not worthless.

We have borrowed from the pragmatist, John Dewey, an American, who had some good ideas, but tried to put them into mass production, an endeavor but not necessarily noble trait of our cousins below the border.

We have tried the ridiculous, "See, Jane. See Spot run. Spot, see Jane vomit," sort of thing which completely ignores the child's demand for heroes and witches and shining maidens, and things that go bump in the night.

We have tried "teaching the whole child", a process in which the teacher becomes father/mother, uncle/aunt, grandfather/grandma, psychiatrist, buddy, confidant, and football to kick around, while the kid does what he/she dam-well-pleases. And we wonder about teacher "burn-out".

We have tried a system in which the children choose from a sort of Pandora's box what subjects they would like to take, and giving them a credit for each subject to which they are "exposed", whether or not they have learned anything in it.

That was a bit of a disaster. Kids, like adults, chose the things that were "fun", that were "easy", that didn't have exams, that allowed them to express their individuality.

New courses were introduced with the rapidity of rabbits breeding. A kid who was confident that he would be a great brain surgeon took everything from basket-weaving to bird-watching because they were fun.

And suddenly, at about the age of seventeen, he/she discovered that it was necessary to know some science, mathematics, Latin, History and English to become a brain surgeon (or a novelist, or a playwright, or an engineer, etc.)

There are very few jobs open in basket-weaving and bird-watching or World Religions or another couple of dozen I could name, but won't, for fear of being beaten to death by a tizzy of teachers the day this column appears.

The universities, those sacrosanct institutions, where the truth shall make you free, went along with the Great Deception.

They lowered their standards, in a desperate scramble for live bodies. They competed for students with all the grace of merchants in an Armenian bazaar.

Another swing of the pendulum. Parents discovered that their kids knew something about a lot of things, but not much about anything. They got mad.

The universities, a little red in the face, suddenly and virtuously announced that many high school graduates were illiterate, which was a lot of crap.

They were the people who decided that a second language was not necessary. They were the people who accepted students with a mark of 50 in English, which means the kid actually failed, but his teacher gave him a credit.

Nobody, in the new system, really failed. If they mastered just less than half the work, got a 48 percent, they were raised to 50. If they flunked every subject they took, they were transferred to another "level", where they could succeed, and even excel.

The latest of these politically-inspired, slovenly-researched reforms in Ontario is called SERP, and it sounds just like, and is just like NERD.

Reading its contents carefully, one comes to the conclusion that if Serp is accepted, the result will be a great leveller. Out of one side of its mouth it suggests that education be compressed, by abandoning of Grade 13, and out of the other side, that education be expanded by adding a lot of new things to the curriculum.

How can you compress something and

expand it at the same time? Only a commission on education could even suggest such a thing.

There will be lots of money for "Special Education" in the new plan. There will be less money for excellence. Special Education is educational jargon for teaching stupid kids. Bright kids are looked down upon as an "elite" group, and they should be put in their place.

The universities would enjoy seeing Grade 13 disappear. That would mean they'd have a warm body for four years, at a cost to the student of about \$4,000 a year, instead of three.

I am not an old fogey. I am not a reactionary. I believe in change. Anything that does not change becomes static, or dies. Ideas that refuse to change become dessicated.

I am not against spending lots of money to teach stupid kids, or emotionally disturbed kids. But I am squarely against any move toward squelching the brightest and best of our youth, and sending off to university people who are in that extremely vulnerable stage of half-adolescent, half-adult, and turfing them into classes of 200 or 300, where they are no more than a cypher on the books of a so-called hall of learning.

And I have the proof right before me, in the form of several brilliant essays by Grade 13 students, better than anything I have ever written, who have had a chance to come to terms with themselves and with life, in a small class, with a teacher who knows, likes, and encourages them, rather than a remote figure at a podium.

Investor's Inquiry



by Charles Colling
Everyone seems to be talking nostalgia and heritage of late and it seems this might be a good time to compare the trading patterns and procedures of the thirties and forties with those of today.

It must be remembered that in those days there were no computers or mechanical devices as we have them today. All contracts etcetera were figured by hand or in the latter part of the earlier years by electric adding machine.

Each section of the office, for example; the floor traders, bookkeeping department and securities department each had their own recap of the days' trading.

These recaps or "blotters" as they were known all had to balance with each other

and then the contracts mailed out to the clients. What made it so interesting was that in those days there was a transfer tax on every trade and in addition, Quebec had its own tax which had to be figured on any trade made on the Montreal Stock Exchange.

This often lead to an imbalance on the three recaps of anywhere from one half cent and up. This often meant that your evening was planned for you by the firm until a balance was arrived at. It wasn't all bad though as most firms gave you one dollar for your supper which meant a small steak, potatoes, vegetable, pie and coffee. No overtime was paid but as the exchanges were open on Saturday morning from ten to twelve noon, and you had fallen too far

behind in your work during the week, you were always welcome to spend part or all of Saturday afternoon at the office to get caught up.

Most brokers in those days had "board rooms" where a prospective client could sit and watch the tape or look at the quotation board. The competition amongst brokers was often quite keen in their efforts to attract customers. Our firm used to serve coffee and donuts to everyone in the board room in the morning and tea and cookies in the afternoon.

The wetter or colder the day, the "busier" you were at the office. These quote boards usually covered at least one wall of the room with a narrow platform about two feet high running the full length of the board. From this platform the "board markers" posted all the quotes and sales as they came through the Translux.

Jay L. Francis, who was quite a dapper

gentleman got the idea of hiring young men to mark the board in his office on Bay Street. Needless to say for a few weeks he had more people in his board room than any other broker in Toronto but for some reason or other there seemed to be very little work being done and it wasn't too long before they reverted to men.

Next week I will continue in this vein and give you some changes in the trading patterns over the years.

In sending in questions to be answered in these columns, please remember that Securities Commission Regulations will not permit giving opinions or recommendations on any specific securities. All other signed inquiries will be answered as soon as possible. In all answers only the inquirer's initials will be used. Address all questions to "Investor's Inquiry" c/o The Midland Times, Box 609, Midland, Ontario.

You and Your Credit



by Paul Mattar
Credit Bureau of Midland
Penetanguishene, Collingwood

Most of us figure we'll do all right if we balance the budget and stay out of jail in the '80s.

But it doesn't have to be that way if we use a little forethought in our buying and spending habits.

An integral part of our own personal good credit history is embodied in how we choose to allot our disposable income as well as how we choose to utilize our overall income. Don't let your dollars do a magic disappearing act every month.

Whatever your income may be, chances are you'll get more satisfaction from it when you plan just where those dollars are going.

Family spending plans differ because we

as individuals differ in our plan preferences and our own personal responsibilities.

Any budget you contemplate should be used only as a general guide and be subject to the change and flexibility that suits you and your family's lifestyle.

That doesn't mean that you should not plan your spending and then stick to your plan, but it does mean that you should make sure your lifestyle doesn't cost more than your income.

In other words, don't try to live up to champagne standards when you possess only a beer budget.

Because of our own individual preferences it's hard to fit ourselves into any predetermined slots as far as percentages are concerned.

However, for those that require the discipline of fixed

figures, here are seven areas of spending with some generally accepted figures to help you appropriate your take home pay.

The figures quoted are maximums and should be adjusted to suit your situation: housing - 30 percent, clothing - 15 percent, transportation - 15 percent, savings and insurance - 10 percent, home operation - six percent, food - 25 percent, social and sundry - 20 percent.

Remember, these are maximums and have to be adjusted to your lifestyle so they will add up to 100 percent of your monthly take home pay.

If you have specific topics or questions you would like to have discussed, just write to "You and Your Credit," P.O. Box 176 Midland, Ont., or call Paul Mattar at 526-5468.