



**Editorial**

**What's Easter?**

Easter. What does it mean? An unemotional, objective dictionary listing will tell you that Easter is the Sunday following the full moon on or after the vernal equinox, but it is obviously more than that.

Christian Churches commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ on that special Sunday, and even if you don't happen to believe that legend, you can always use this holiday weekend as a personal resurrection of your own, or at least a rejuvenation.

Why wait until New Year's Day? Why don't we all come up with a few resolutions for this week instead? It seems like the perfect time to do such a thing.

It doesn't have to be anything too taxing or significant. Just smile to your friends and neighbors. Take the dog for a walk, or better yet, take yourself for a walk. Contribute a little something to your favorite charity, or do some volunteer work for them instead if you don't have the money to spare right now.

Write a poem. Sing a song. Draw a picture. Spend some time with your relatives. And make it last all year long. That way you'll make this holiday a good one for everybody around you ...and yourself.

The staff of the Terrace Bay-Schreiber News wishes you and yours a very Happy — and safe — Easter.



**Close To The Edge**

By Conrad Felber

Alcohol. It's not a pleasant subject, but somebody's gotta talk about it once in a while, and I guess now is the time. I was inspired to use booze as a topic this week with the arrival of a news release from the Addiction Research Foundation (ARF). Seems the Foundation convinced the manager of the Towne Cinema in Terrace Bay to screen a short animated film all about the evils of alcohol (or, to be more precise, alcoholism) just before the main feature a few weeks ago. This was a one-time-only deal, but as luck would have it, I was at that particular screening (the full details of the ARF film can be found elsewhere in today's issue of the News).

As we filed out of the theatre at the end of the movie (it was "Out of Africa," in case you were curious), we were handed a questionnaire to fill

out and mail off. I guess the best way to give you some idea of what I thought of that alcohol film would be to reprint some of the questions plus the answers that I provided for them.

There were no real questions, I should point out. What we were given was a list of statements and a multiple choice response ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Statement number one was "The short film was entertaining." I agreed (but not strongly).

Question number two asked if the viewer believed a short educational film with a feature film is a good idea. To that one I responded with "strongly disagree." I was neutral on whether the film was informative, but I again strongly disagreed with the statement "I would enjoy seeing other short films like this" at the show.

I guess the main one for me was

number five: "I go to the movies to be entertained, not educated." I strongly agreed with that one, I'm afraid. Yet, why should I apologize for that? It's completely true. When I plunk down my four bucks I want to forget my troubles, and here ARF is trying to remind me of them instead.

This is *not* to say that I'm a boozier. I have been known to put back a few from time to time, but that's my right as a (semi) adult in today's society. See, the film tried to present the idea that alcohol is not OK. When it becomes socially unacceptable to drink, even in moderation, then and only then will alcohol be *not* OK. Besides, it seems to me ARF has forgotten that, unlike marijuana, the sale and consumption of booze is completely legal, and both the provincial and federal governments reap huge tax revenues from beer and li-

quor sales. I believe I know what ARF was trying to say, but I don't think they said it very well.

Even if they said it perfectly to begin with, I still think lecturing to moviegoers is not the right way to go about it. All of that aside, I must approve of the local theatre's attempts through the ARF film to make us all a bit more aware of the problem. They should be commended, and I'm glad *somebody* out there cares about us. But I also care about my movies and I like to have a good time at them. Films like the one on alcohol by ARF just put me in the wrong frame of mind. I just hope this was merely an experiment and not some sort of trend. Next thing you know, they'll be showing commercials at the show! Hey, don't laugh ... they've already tried that on a limited basis down south. It's enough to make a man drink (oops! Sorry).



P.S. What do you think of my new column title? I've always thought calling it by my name was a bit pretentious. I have also taken the liberty of putting in Arthur Black's traditional column title. We've got other changes and surprises in store for you in the future ... stay tuned!

**Black N' White**

By Arthur Black

I woke up this morning in a total cold sweat. I was panting, my stomach was churning, my teeth were clenched and my mind was visegripped in a pervasive sense of total dread as if a Steinway was poised over my head, hanging by one frayed cord.

"What" I asked myself "is this?" Flu? Hangover? The old war wound? Nah. None of the above. It took me a while but I finally recognized what I was suffering from.

Senior Matriculationitis. Grade Thirteenophobia. Final Exam Flashback.

Exam Anxiety.

It's amazing. It's been more than a quarter of a century since I actually lived through the horror of High School Finals, and I can still have nightmares about them.

And I'm not alone. Medical researchers at the Mayo Clinic have

discovered that Examination Trauma is one of the most common anxiety dreams North Americans suffer from. There are variations on the theme. Some folks dream they're late for their exam. Others dream that they haven't studied enough. The worst of all is the dream that you've shown up all prepared for the final in French Composition, only to discover that today is the Trigonometry final.

For me and people of my generation, exam anxiety is merely an unpleasant memory, but right at this moment it's malaise that's gnawing at the guts of high school kids right across the country. They're behind in their work. They haven't understood a word the teacher's said since Christmas. They're positive they're not going to make their year.

They're not going to sleep very well tonight.

Well as lame and fuddy-duddy-ish

as it sounds kids, I have to tell you that it could be worse.

You could be Japanese.

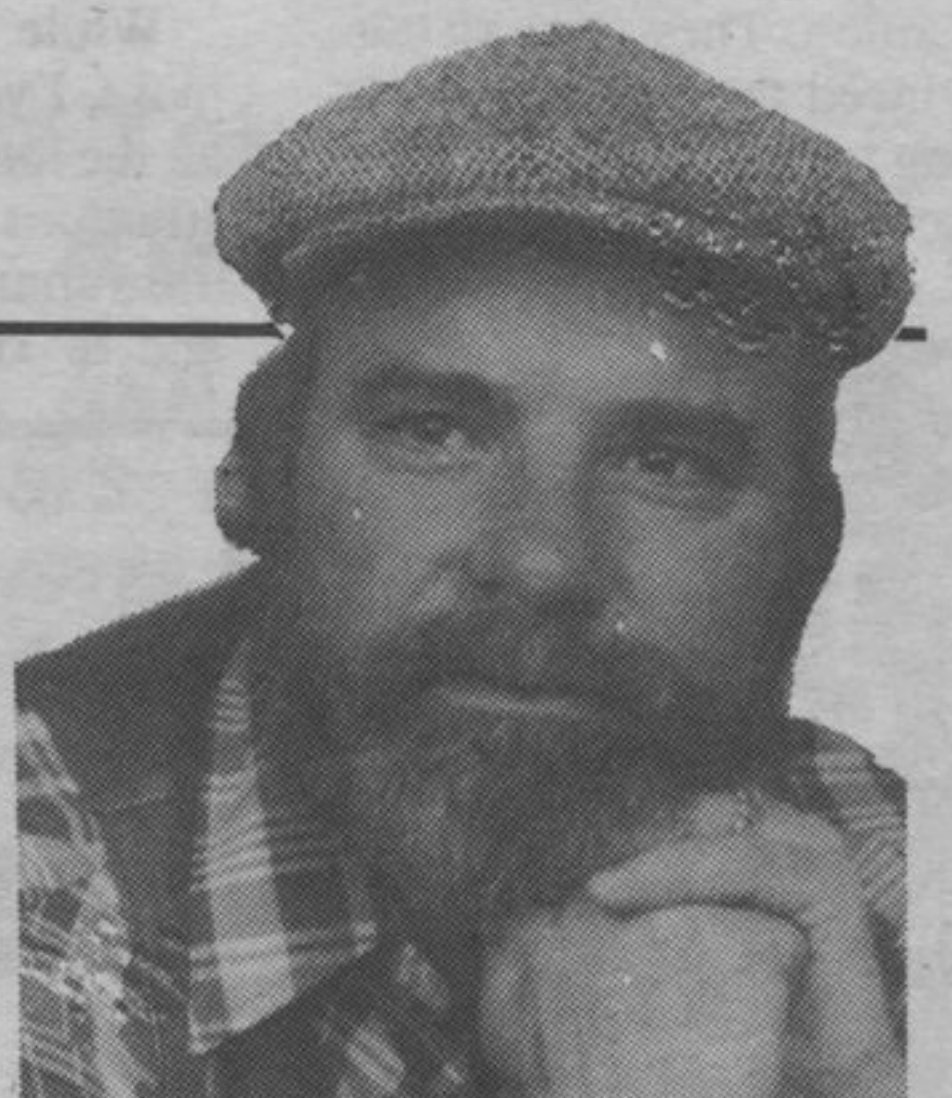
Care to hear what Japanese kids are going through right now? Well, one of them -- Shinichiro Kitada of Tokyo -- is probably straightening his carefully laundered and crisply pressed military-style school uniform in front of the bathroom mirror, just before he sets off for school. Classes start at 7 a.m. for Shinichiro and they carry on for seven hours, five days a week. He also puts in two and a half hours doing homework each night and shows up Saturday mornings at school for another half day's whack at the books. Oh yes -- and Shinichiro goes to cram school as well -- two or three evenings a week for another two and a half to three hours a pop.

What's a little alarming to a Western observer is the fact that Shinichiro Kitada's grinding academic commitment is not unusual

in Japan. The hours he puts in are about the accepted average for a student of his level. A full sixty per cent of his classmates attend weekly cram school classes, just as Shinichiro does.

Is it worth it? Well, it depends on your values of course, but for most middle class Japanese the returns more than justify the output. Academic excellence means access to positions in senior government departments -- or better still, a job with a top-of-the-line Japanese corporation such as Mitsubishi or Suntory.

Mind you the price is high. A workday that includes seven hours in the classroom plus two and a half hours in cram school plus two and a half hours of homework doesn't leave a lot of time for sipping sodas down at the corner store or shooting baskets with the boys at the schoolyard. For Japanese students like Shinichiro



Kitada, the school year is just one eye-blurring stretch of study-eat-sleep-study-eat-sleep endlessly repeated.

Which is all the more impressive when you learn what niche Shinichiro Kitada occupies in the Japanese academic hierarchy.

Shinichiro Kitada is enrolled in the Japanese equivalent of what we would call junior high school. The boy is only 15 years old.

If he does well in his exams this year -- which is to say, 90 per cent or better... then he goes on to high school.

Then things really get tough.