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## Dialogue on Drugs; a video for parents

As a community we must all wonder why kids experiment with or continue to use drugs and how, as concerned adults, we can keep them from becoming involved with drugs.

There is now a home video, *The Drug Dialogue, Learn How to Talk About Drugs With Your Kids*, available through local police services, that can be of real practical help to any adult trying to communicate with kids about making choices when it comes to drugs.

Sometimes it must seem there is no getting through to children. Communication can become very difficult and often ends in argument rather than discussion. This usually happens because parents don't realize that the decision on whether or not to try drugs or continue to use them is the child's alone. However, parents can influence a child's decision and, more importantly, help the child learn to make good decisions. These are the main messages of the home video.

What really makes this video different are the suggestions it gives to parents and adults on how to improve their communication skills.

All too often, the video points out, what adults think is a discussion a child takes to be a lecture. The *Drug Dialogue* provides concrete suggestions and examples on how to prevent a discussion from becoming a lecture. It also suggests ways to avoid emotionalism which can turn a discussion into an argument.

Adults are responsible for improving communication between themselves and children. Their age, maturity and experience gives them the greater ability. This home video will help them to improve their communication skills thereby helping them to help children make good decisions.

Robert A. Cotton

## Tyrants of the world cannot be appeased

Dear Editor:

Why are we fighting? this is indeed a thought-provoking question. A recent editorial in the News expressed the Editor's viewpoint.

We, as a society, value peace. We abhor the thought of humans killed or maimed in war, particularly when we view the gains of the conflict in a material light. This revulsion is perhaps most clearly and graphically expressed in the "No blood for oil" slogan espoused by the Anti-War movement.

While one of the Gulf war's major concerns is oil, the war is not necessarily about oil. Hussein, by his actions has demonstrated that he is a ruthless tyrant. We learned from Hitler that one cannot appease a tyrant. Neville Chamberlain's "Peace in our time" stance that led to World War Two has become the historical example of the ultimate sell-out.

A scenario very similar to the events that led to World War Two would almost

certainly have played itself out in the Middle East had Hussein been permitted to continue with his plan of conquest.

Had he been allowed to succeed in his obvious plan to swallow up the oil-rich middle east, he would have effectively been in control of two thirds of the world's known oil reserves, which would have made him one of the most powerful individuals in the world.

A world leader who has used weapons of mass destruction against his own people, who ruthlessly exterminates those who oppose his will, and endorses the mistreatment of prisoners of war is dreadful to contemplate.

Peace activists, while noble in their aspirations, are playing into Hussein's hands, as we noticed when he publicly acknowledged their efforts on CNN.

I served as a professional soldier for twenty four years.

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## February not so bad

I have, down the centuries, tilted at my share of windmills in this space. I have looked on the bright side of Post Menstrual Syndrome. I've championed the Toronto Maple Leafs, The Beachcombers, the prose style of Richard Rohmer and I believe I even once said a kind word about Bill Vander Zalm, but I have not, by Thor, tried to use this column to defend the indefensible.

Until now.

I am about to say a few kind words about February.

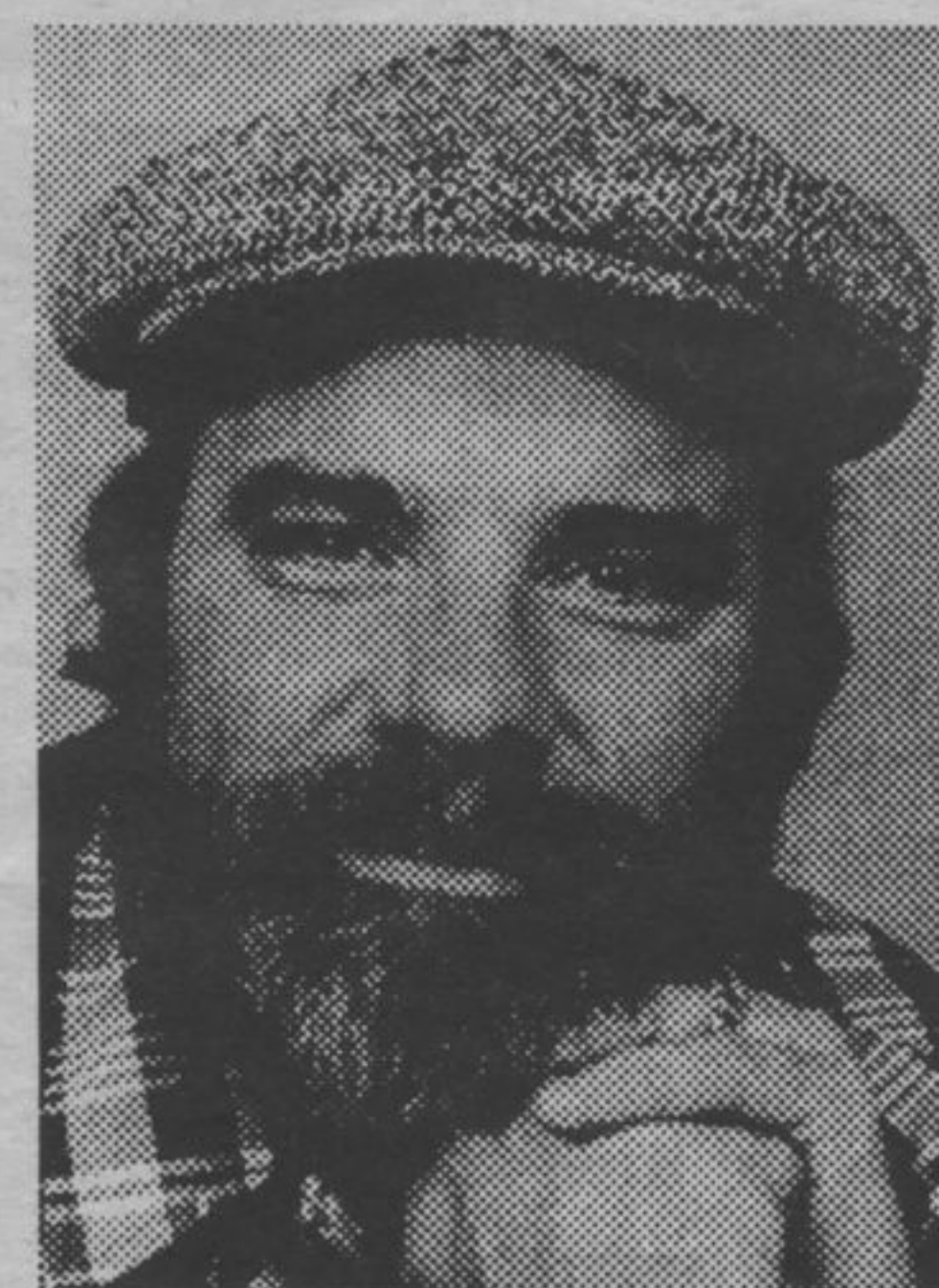
I know, I know - it is the most unloved, intrinsically despicable month on the Calendar. Citizens can find it in their hearts to forgive April for its showers and November for its gales, but February? It is the dead cold heart of the unforgiving winter wasteland. The middle of nowhere. In February, the festive Christmas season is just a mocking memory. Spring is a heart-tickling tease beyond the farthest horizon.

It's hard to feel good about February.

Even its name is clumsy and unmelodic. It comes from "februa" - a Latin term for thongs of goatskin that were used during the festival of Lupercalia back in Roman times. Selected youths would run around the streets of Rome swinging these goathide thongs at childless matrons. Legend had it that getting swacked with a februa during Lupercalia would make a woman fertile.

So there you have it - a month named after a chunk of goat hide. But enough gloom! I come to praise February, not to moan about it. Let's look on the bright side.

Well, there's Groundhog Day, for one thing. Each year on February 2nd, citizens from burghs as various and far-flung as Alliston, Ontario and Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania crouch, shivering in the mud and snow around the entrances of groundhog holes to see (a) if the groundhog survived January and



Arthur Black

(b) whether he will come out, stand semi-erect and cast a shadow. If he does, it's supposed to mean that we're in for six more weeks of winter.

I think it's rather wonderful that come February 2nd, winter-bound humans still have the pluck to get up, get dressed and go outside to skulk around rodent dens waiting for the weather word from furry forecasters.

But Groundhog Day isn't the only celebration that makes February such a fun month. Oh, my no! Why, there's the Milwaukee Home Improvement Show opening on February 7th; and Ferris Wheel Day on February 14th. Did you know that George Washington Gale Ferris invented the Ferris Wheel? Well he did, and his birthday

anniversary is February 14th. I'll bring the candles if you'll bake the cake.

Canadians are downright hearty when it comes to enjoying February. There's the Winterlude Festival in Ottawa and Expo Nautique - the Montreal International Boat Show. On February 8th, hordes of winter-whipped frostbacks converge on Kelowna, B.C. for the annual Spaghetti Bridge Building Contest. The Calgary Winter Festival gets underway on February 15, as does the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous. There's a Winter Carnival in Muskoka and the world famous Yukon Quest in which champion teams of dog sledders race over 1,000 miles of the toughest terrain on the planet to get from Whitehorse to Fairbanks, Alaska.

I know - I haven't even mentioned the February festival or carnival or fiesta or hootenanny that your town holds each February - but that's my point. Canadians are so busy inventing different kinds of fun in February we don't have time to notice what a bummer of a month it is.

But you know the very best thing about February? It's something the Ancient Romans bequeathed more than 2,000 years ago. Looking at their calendar they realized that July had one more day than August. Since both months commemorated Caesars it was important to strike a diplomatic balance. So the Romans plucked the 29th day off the tail end of February and gave it to August. This made August the same length as July. It also gave the month of February its most attractive characteristic.

Brevity.