

Violence in curling

If I described to you a place in this world where people wearing funny things on their heads stood around throwing rocks into houses you'd probably guess it was the Gaza Strip or the East Bank of Israel.

Unfortunately the place would be Canada, the medium would be television and the sport - and I use that term so loosely I had to smear Poligrip on my gums to get it out - the sport is curling.

A Concise History of Sport In Canada calls curling Canada's oldest and most consistent sport. Wow! Even its most flattering description sounds like a reasonably good laxative.

At this time of year, curling is consuming the channels of television. Even T.S.N., the All-Jock Network which airs only those sports that require the presence of four ambulances and a working priest, is now televising men's and women's curling.

Now I'm sure curling is a great participatory game, particularly for people who get a little vibration in their knickers at the sight of their name in the new phone book or upon hearing their hometown mentioned during the morning farm report, but as a sport for television, curling couldn't top unedited ice fishing or full equipment crokinole.

I'm, sorry, but curling on television is like watching a chess game being played under adverse weather conditions. Its like monitoring a surveillance camera that's scanning government workers on a Monday morning. If put on an opposite channel, the *Labatt Brier* is the only show that could actually boost the rating of the *Tom Vu Free Real Estate*

Seminar.

Curling as we know it should either be banned or restricted to unlit ice houses in New Brunswick and played by bonded and consenting adults. If this thing caught on with kids, this country could just seize up and stop breathing. Eventually our only global, entertainment equal would be Luxemburg.

I'm also a little suspicious that the guy who throws the rock is always named "Skip". I'm curious as to why the other guys aren't always named Tip, Zippy and Biff.

Folks, this just naturally has to stop.

What the game of curling needs is a massive injection of competitive fire, a bold infusion of primeval fury. What curling needs is violence.

I want to see action and bodychecking down on that ice. I want to see rude gestures and hear foul language and above all, I want a five-minute major for "high-brooming" when blood is drawn.

I want to see Skip get slashed and Tip get tripped and Biff go through the boards at the end of the rink.

I want to see the guy with the rock throw it as hard as he can and hold on to it until he gets it into the other team's circle. His opponents try and kick the rock out of his hand while his teammates hack away at their ankles with their brooms.

Suddenly there's pushing and shoving and fisticuffs. The crowd is incensed: it's a lounge-clearing brawl. People are everywhere - flaying, punching, kicking and biting - it looks like a swarm at the Eaton Center. Women are hitting each other with their tams, men are lifting their kilts

continued on page 12



William J. Thomas

Born bad or good

Are people born bad or good, or are they taught to be one or the other?

This must surely be one of the great enigmas of life. One would like to think we come into this world 'a clean slate', so to speak, upon which all of life's influences and experiences will be written as the days, weeks, months and years go by, for the better. But, as some monster-dictator once predicted, "Give me the very young with their unwritten minds, and they are mine for life."

Is that truly how we come to be what we are - unwritten minds imprinted by the strong opinions, mores, and dictates of the era and society into which we happen to be born? Are we nothing more than impressed minds responding like Pavlov's dog to the already determined influences touching upon our lives in one form or another?

When one listens to the un-thinking responses, the parroted replies which issue out of the mouths of most people, you can almost come to believe it - that we are nothing more than programmed human robots responding to the stronger and more vociferous among us, whether consciously or unconsciously.

How else to explain the phenomenon in the political strata, of out-and-out crooks, liars and cheats being elected to positions of prestige and responsibility in any country? Are we so fascinated by raw power that we become mesmerized by these reptiles among us? Are we so in awe of the honey tongues of these mesmerizers that we can no longer think for ourselves? If so, then more poor fools we.

It is impossible to go along one hundred percent with the cliché that

the many criminal unfortunates among us are to be pitied and forgiven because of the awful home environments from which they have come. There are too many examples out there of men and women who have had similar backgrounds, and yet, have managed to rise above them by refusing to accept this as a sorry excuse for criminality, drug or alcohol abuse.

It's this attitude of blaming everybody and everything else but themselves for the sorry conditions of the lives of the trouble-makers among us, which is most appalling. One would like to have compassion for the youngsters one runs across who are so obviously

sliding down the fast, slippery road to their own adult damnation, but what to do when the offered hand of friendship is so disdainfully slapped to one side with a "Mind your own business!" rebuttal? How to help, when any and all forms of assistance are arrogantly refused? How to point out that this defensive arrogance is only working against them, and not doing them a damn bit of good for the future? Or do they really NOT care, as their filthy words, filthy jokes and filthy attitudes proclaim to the whole world?

Is it purely their environment we should blame for these poor, deluded souls who are parroting the attitudes and sayings of the society around them, or is it actually in the genes?

It's the determination to be 'bad' which really appalls yer ole Baba. A determination which is mistakenly confused with being a special kind of person above the common herd through smart-alecky, foul-mouthed,

continued on page 10



Olga Landlak

Special moose hunting rights for north

The atmosphere was tense. Over 300 hunters - nearly all male - were lined up to get into the meeting. It was an abnormally warm February Saturday afternoon. I was amazed that so many hunters took time on a day off to come to a meeting called by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

But the subject was close to their northern souls - moose hunting. They patiently lined up at the door to the hotel meeting room to sign in, and pick up the government "fact" sheets. Harried Ministry official scurried to get the hotel staff to bring in more chairs. Eventually, the hotel manager had to call a halt. The fire regulations did not permit more than 300 chairs. The overflow had to stand.

The meeting I'm describing happened Saturday, February 2 at the Airline Hotel in Thunder Bay. But it could have been any one of several similar meetings held by Cochrane North MPP Led Wood, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister

of Natural Resources. He's holding meetings like this in White River, Kenora, Dryden, Hearst, Timmins, Kapuskasing and 7 other locations across the province.

Wood has the difficult task of carrying out an NDP campaign promise from last summer's provincial election. Candidates like Wood and other New Democrats, time and time again, at plant gates and door steps, heard complaints from unhappy northerners who didn't, or couldn't, get a moose tag. The New Democrats promised a review of the whole lottery system of drawing for moose tags. Bud Wildman, the Minister of Natural Resources, gave Wood the task of delivering on that promise by holding meetings, and submitting a report by March 15th.

From the biologists' point of view, the current system is working. Back in

1983, before the tag lottery was introduced, there were 80,000 moose with an Ontario address. The province decided to double that population to 160,000 by the year 2000, through restrictions on the hunt. We're half way there. The last count of moose noses (1900) came up with an estimated population of 120,000. So from the biologists'

perspective, the restriction on how many moose can be shot (by bullets or arrows) is working.

But from the hunters' point of view, the system is a mess. Provincially, the lottery should give you one chance in three of getting a tag. About 90,000 hunters apply, and about 30,000 tags are issued. The computer uses random numbers to pick the winners, dispassionately treating everyone the same. But that's *not* how the hunters see it working.

Your real odds of getting a moose tag depend on what kind of moose you ask for (cow or bull) and where you want to hunt (which wildlife management unit.) In some areas, like the far north, the number of tags exceeds the number of applications, so there's no doubt you will get a tag. But in other areas, the ratio of tags to applications can be as high as 10 to 1. It's in these areas that the problems come up.

The system is further complicated by a series of "special" pools. If you don't win a tag one year, your application goes into a special "preference" pool the next year. Names are drawn from the preference pool first, before any names are drawn from the main pool. Theoretically, this improves your odds of not being disappointed every year. Yet hunter after hunter stood up at the meeting to complain they hadn't been picked for two, three, and even four years.

continued on page 10



NORTHERN INSIGHTS

by Larry Sanders

