

Family for rent at bargain price

by William J. Thomas

It's being widely reported that the people of Japan are suffering "burn out" and succumbing to stress-related diseases because they work 14-hour days producing expensive electronic gadgets which we Canadians can only afford to purchase by holding down two jobs and logging overtime on weekends. (Boy, are those people screwed up or what?!) The Japanese population is also aging and with their children off chasing the almighty yen, the older folks are lonely. That's why Nihon Kenkasei Honbu (NKH) a personal service company in Tokyo is offering to rent—not making this up—a stand-in family to lonesome Japanese couples to fill the void left by their real family. The fee for these "entertainers" is \$1,300 for a half-day of company and communication.

Can you imagine? What kind of people would actually rent family members out to stranger for monetary gain?! Has the devaluation of human life come to this?

Did NKH of Tokyo think for one minute they could just run an ad in a newspaper and find "spare" family members that would just pick up and.....did they even once consider the feelings of.....did anybody not notice the.....

Did I mention my mom is living with me now?

My brain is a bit addled these days mainly because I haven't had a night's sleep since the middle of February so just so we're clear on this—did I mention the fact my mom was living with me in a recent column in this newspaper or did you see my FREE TO A GOOD HOME ad in the classified section?

But seriously we're getting along just great, Marg and me. A lot better in fact since I've

started eating all the greens on my plate and brushing after every meal. You know, I don't care how old you are, you have no idea how much dirt collects behind your ears until your mom actually shows you that wash cloth.

Me, Marg, Malcolm—we're a real family, not some stand-in lease-by-the hour family with easy monthly payments in Japan.

And do we have memorable moments or what?

Me: "I gotta go to the store and get some litter so I can clean out his box...do we need milk?"

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Ontario's spending growth is also well in excess of any other provincial government, among those who have tabled budgets so far this year.

Considering the Rae government has also downloaded at least \$541 million of its deficits to transfer payment receipts such as municipalities, it's not much to boast about.

Of particular interest is what isn't on the table, at least on budget day: The Minimum Corporate Tax. The budget speech refers to it only as a matter for further study, which will result in a "technical paper" later this fall, and can only aggravate business uncertainty and investor wariness between know and then.

Those measures which are contained in the budget tally up to a billion dollar tax grab.



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Monsieur René Trahan
Département des ressources humaines
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Terrace Bay (Ontario)
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