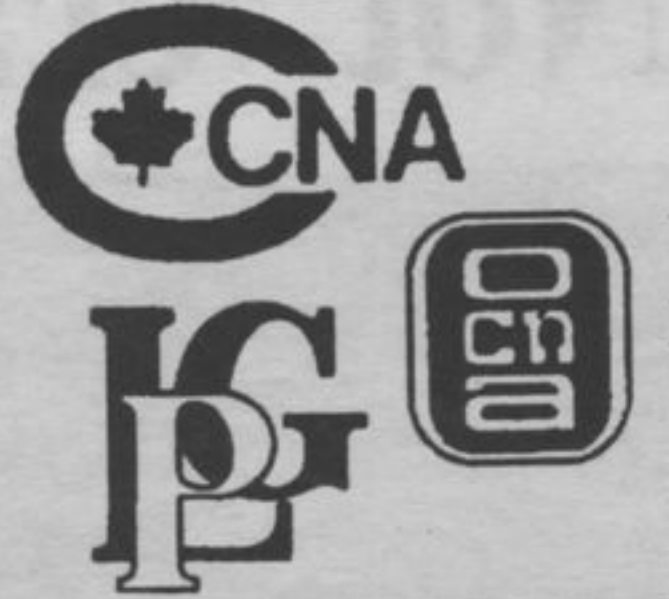


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Sunday shopping: the horse before the shopping cart

At one time not so very long ago, the chances of an NDP government being elected in Ontario ranked with the possibility of communism collapsing and the federal Tories being elected in Quebec. But, as often happens, the pundits were wrong: the USSR is no more; the Tories have 60-odd seats in Quebec; and, perhaps most surprising, the socialist flag has been run up the Queen's Park flagpole.

So what odds could a betting man have gotten on that same NDP government legalizing—or decriminalizing or whatever it is they've done—Sunday shopping?

Never mind that the idea makes a lot of sense. Not to say that it's going to be a saviour for Ontario retailers, nor is it going to make us consumer shell out more money than we would have otherwise. The consensus seems to be that it's just going to spread out the business over another day. And if that's the case, then no doubt many businesses will decide to stay closed on Sunday.

But the point is that business should have the right to make that decision themselves—governments shouldn't make it for them.

Some of the arguments I've heard against Sunday shopping include that workers will be forced to work the extra day, that families will be destroyed, that the sky will fall . . .

But just wait a minute. For one thing, Sunday isn't quite what it was back in the days of the horse and buggy. At places like convenience stores, hotels, motels, hospitals, fire departments, mines, pulp and paper mills, etc., people work on Sunday already. So it's not like a real 'common pause day' really existed before now. Certain segments of the economy used to be prohibited from operating on Sunday for reasons that can best be described as arbitrary.

As for the argument that it's immoral to work on 'the Lord's day', well, why is it immoral for a department store employee and not for a miner?

Fact is, the Sunday shopping law was hypocritical. In effect, it put restrictions on certain businesses that it didn't put on others.

There's no doubt that wide-open Sunday shopping will have some losers. Convenience store operators undeniably are going to hurt. I mean, who's going to pay the higher prices at a corner store when the supermarket is open?

And some mall operators will also be hurt, particularly single proprietors. They usually have no choice in setting their hours—they have open when the mall is open. Quite often these businesses survive largely because they don't have to pay employees the way a normal business does.

In other words, if the mall is open seven days a week, they work seven days a week.

However, the goal of any government should be to limit the number of injustices people have to suffer—they can't hope to eliminate them. And for many border stores and tourist areas, Sunday shopping is a matter of survival. Besides, government has no place in the storerooms of the nation.

Make your voice heard

The Terrace Bay Schreiber News welcomes letters to the editor on any subject.

Letters must be signed and have the phone number and address of the author for verification. We will not knowingly print false libelous or anonymous comments. Letters to the editor are important to community newspapers. They serve to reflect opinions of members of the community we serve. However, we must insist on these rules to ensure that this very important forum is used responsibly. Letters can be mailed to the News, Box 579, Terrace Bay, P0T 2W0.



Never propose to your boss

One of the luxuries of being middle-aged or older is that you can look back on all the jobs you've held.

And to glory in the knowledge that you don't have to do them any more.

Back in the Bad Old Days there were jobs galore. The pay was usually lousy, the working conditions ran the gamut from dreary to downright dangerous, and the boss as often as not was a jerk.

But that was okay. You took the job for as long as you needed it, then one fine day you told your esteemed employer to pound Sifto, and off you went to find another job.

I counted them up once and discovered I had 27 different kinds of jobs before I finally manacled myself to a typewriter for life. I tried everything from door-to-door encyclopedia flogging to swabbing the deck of a Liberian oil tanker.

Being a job gypsy doesn't make you rich, but it does give you plenty to talk about.

The other day I was in a bar, jawing with another Jackrabbit of All Trades. We wound up comparing our work wounds—Softest Jobs. Best Paying Jobs. Jobs We'd Like to Have Again.

And All Time Worst jobs.

"Roofing" I told him. "Tar and gravel. Started at five in the morning and worked until at least three guys fainted from the heat or the fumes. Put a thermometer on the roof one day and the mercury shot right off the scale in less than a minute. Still got scars on my arms from the hot pitch. Get thirsty just thinking about that job" I said. "How about you?"

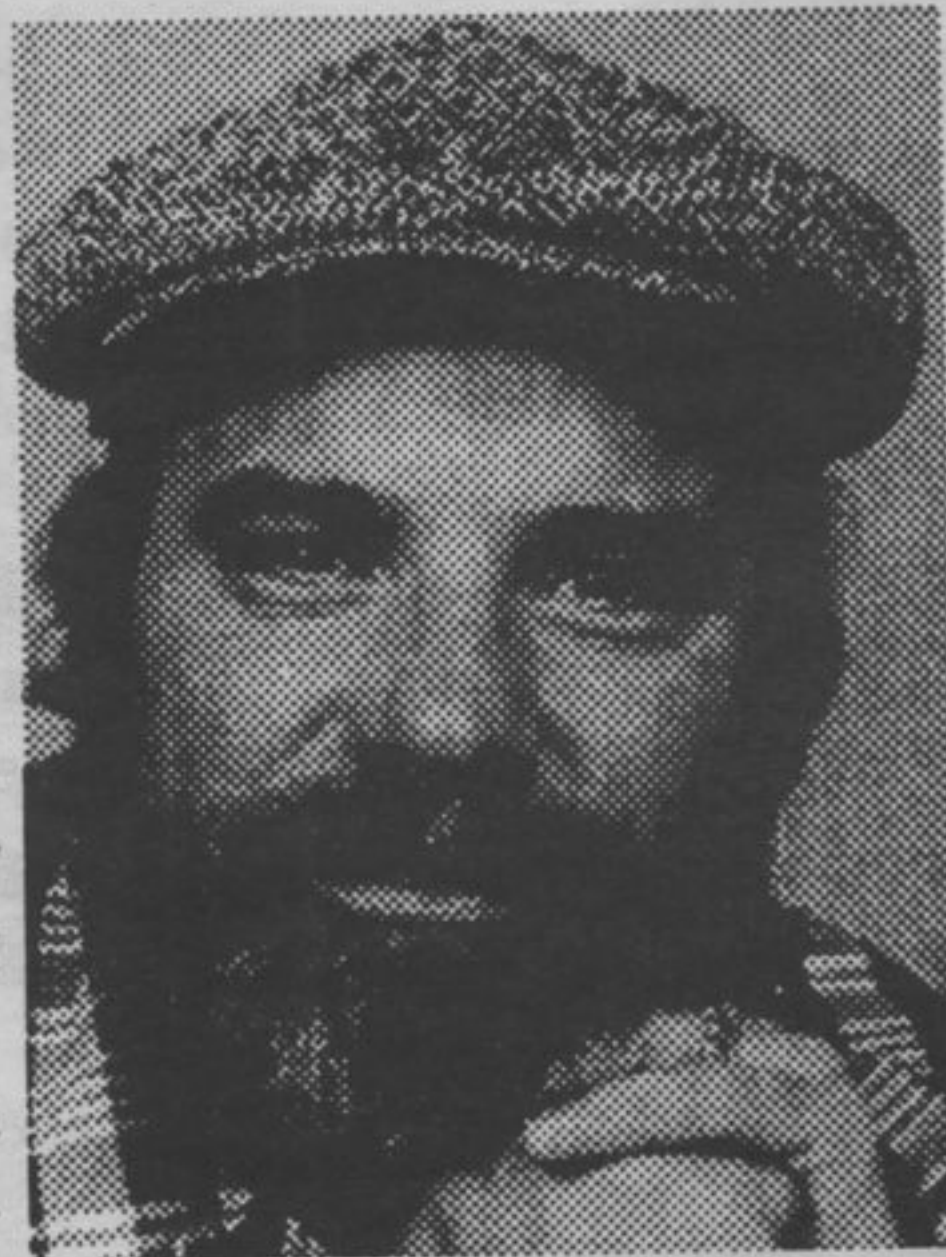
He was a battered-looking guy with big callous-hardened mitts and twitchy eyes that looked like they were sitting on a lot of secrets. I figured he'd come back with a story about digging for emeralds in the jungles of Brazil or rearranging kneecaps in the jungles of New Jersey.

His big fist trembled as he reached for the

draft glass and his voice dropped to a husky mutter.

"Personnel recruiter" he croaked. "Toughest job I ever had."

Turned out he'd spent two and a half years screening recruits for a large Toronto corporation. "Before that I'd worked the oil fields in Alberta, tugboats in the Georgia Strait and a spell of hardrock mining in Manitowadge—but the only job that ever gave me an ulcer was a desk job on Bay Street."



Arthur Black

I thought he was pulling my leg, but maybe not. I'm beginning to think that interviewing prospective employees may be one of the toughest gigs a guy can draw.

I have in front of me a list compiled from a survey conducted by the International Association of Corporate and Professional Recruiters. The Association asked its 600 members to list some of the more "unusual questions" they'd been asked by people looking for a job.

Here's a few of the choice ones:

"Why am I here?"

"Why aren't you in a more interesting business?"

"What are the zodiac signs of all the board members and their wives?"

"What is it that you people do at this company?"

"Does the company have a policy regarding whether employees can carry guns?"

"Will the company pay for moving my two-ton rock garden from California to Maryland?"

And my favourite: "I know this is off the subject, but will you marry me?"

Puts a whole new perspective on that beady-eyed guy sitting on the other side of the Personnel Desk, doesn't it?

Yessir . . . I've been a roofer, a sailor, a cattle prodder and a bartender, but I've never been a Personnel Recruiter and I'm glad of it.

I don't think I'm tough enough.