



KATE'S CORNER
Kate Gilderdale

Families require nurturing

Just when full-time parents were about to be listed as an endangered species, along comes an international survey which confirms the unsurprising fact that high-powered business executives have precious little time or energy to expend on their own children.

The survey, published in last week's Toronto Star, found that more than half of leading executives spend less than two hours a week looking after their children and 27 per cent spend less than 15 minutes a day playing with them. Over 40 per cent never read to their children.

A family relations expert summarized things neatly: "It's really devastating what's happening," she said. "Children are a very low priority in our society. We are seeing the effects of this already and it's going to get worse."

Yet society continues to exert pressure on mothers to get back into the work force and pursue a career within months of having a child.

Those determined to raise their own families are constantly being castigated with snide remarks like, "it's all right for you, but most people don't have the luxury of choice."

That's like saying you should sell your house because not everyone else can afford one.

For many families, jobs for both parents are a matter of necessity rather than choice, and obviously single parents have no other option, but why should those who can stay at home be made to feel inadequate for taking on the challenging, frustrating and rewarding job of bringing up their own children?

When I had my first child ten and a half years ago, it was considered acceptable to stay at home at least until he reached school age. A decade later stay-at-home parents are regarded as dropouts who refuse to face their responsibilities in the real world.

It's no longer enough to have a part-time job, or to work flexible hours to accommodate family life. To be acceptable now you need a career and total commitment to your business goals.

Doesn't it seem strange that we don't feel the same dedication is necessary when it comes to the care and nurturing of our own children?

On my visits to schools, I'm depressed by children's emphasis on possessions and designer clothes; their belief in the importance of status symbols and material wealth.

Many of them are involved in expensive extra-curricular activities and spend their summers in designer camps, but how often do they enjoy shared family experiences?

On the rare occasions everyone is at home, the kids are usually glued to the tube, while their parents struggle to keep up with cleaning, cooking, laundry and shopping.

They may be together physically, but that's as far as it goes. Both mornings and evenings turn into a nightmare of rushing and nagging, with frantic searches for lost homework, skates or ballet shoes.

Children need time to learn and grow, without being scheduled to death by the pressures of their parents' career commitments.

Only by giving them that time can we bring back the true magic of the childhood years.

Cyclists vulnerable to strains

By DR. JOHN BARE
Impatient motorists may sometimes regard bicyclists as the proverbial pain in the neck, but in fact neck strain is a common hazard risked by bike riders.

If you ride long enough some degree of cervicodorsal strain is unavoidable, but there are a few things a rider can do to reduce the consequences or delay their onset.

1. Make sure the important landmarks of the bike that affect your riding position fit correctly.

2. Change the position of your hands on the handlebars frequently. This will also change the position of your upper body and helps prevent or delay muscle fatigue.

3. If you feel strains and pains, take a short break for a few minutes rest.

New grains proposal is approved

By W.J. BAXTER
Agricultural Representative.
A new 3-year grains stabilization plan has been announced by the Ontario Minister of Agriculture and Food, Jack Riddell.

The plan covers corn, soybeans, winter wheat, spring wheat, barley, canola and oats for the 1988 to 1990 production

years. In the new plan, producers are not required to pay fees up front or estimate tonnes to be sold. Fees will be deducted from payments.

Producers, who were eligible to enrol in 1988 but do not do so before the deadline date, may enrol in subsequent years but

with a penalty of 10 per cent. Only one enrolment form is needed for the entire three-year term.

To be eligible, producers must have sold the tonnage of grain applied for. Grain fed at home or sold to a family member is not eligible.

All sales must be properly

documented. The deadline for enrolment is April 28.

Producers, who were enrolled in the 1985-87 plan, have received information brochures and enrolment forms. New producers can pick up these items at Ministry offices in their county.

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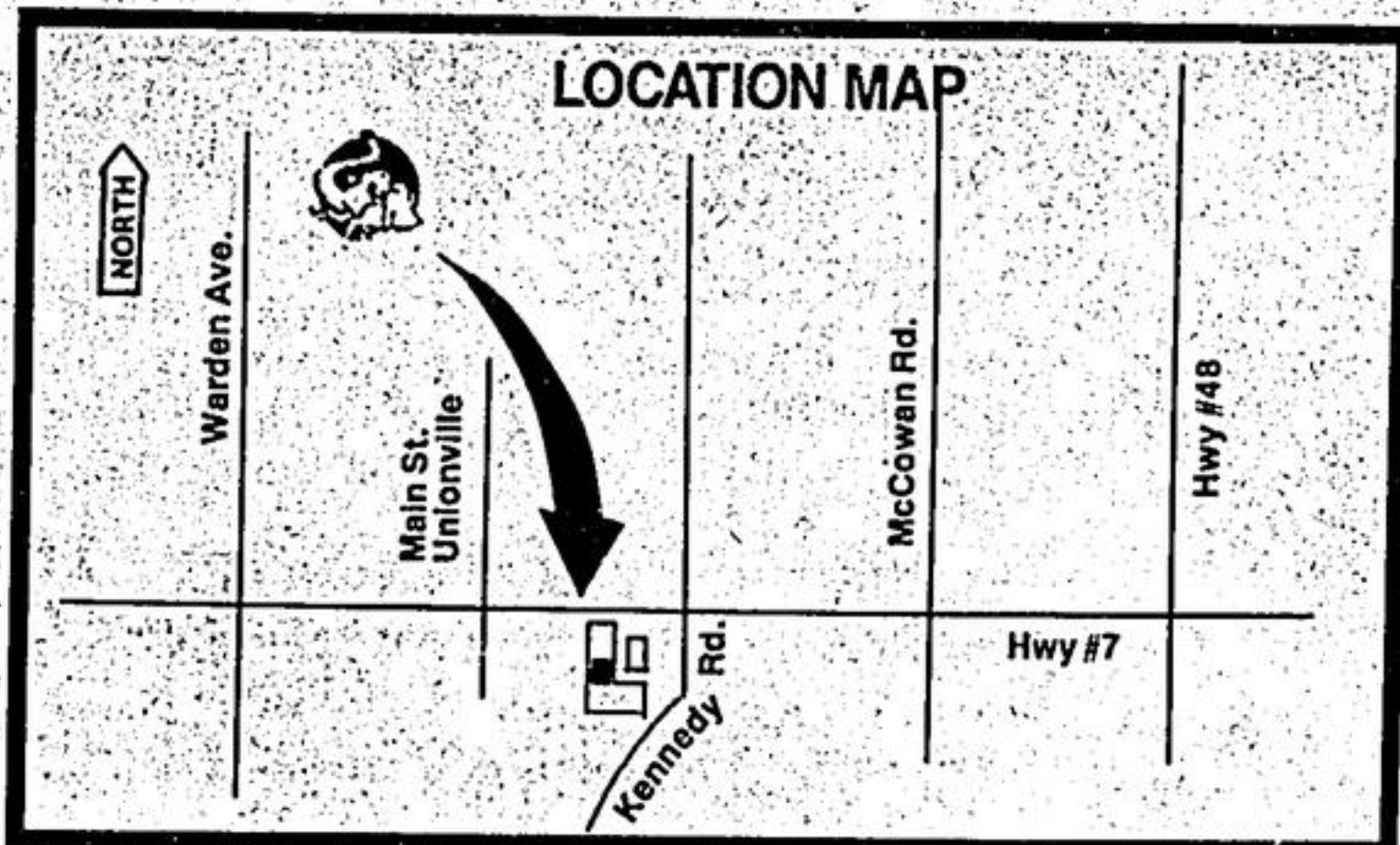
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