

# Comment

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## This will be a year of major change

When we look back on 1997, it can be safely predicted that it will be a year of great change.

This will be the year when many of the structures we have all come to know, will be either dismantled or remodeled.

In education, for instance, Ontario will see mind-boggling changes. Everything from advertising on school buses to increased commercial participation to even greater cuts into the budgets of schools and most of all, the likely elimination of school boards. Let's not forget the equivalent of Grade 13 going the way of the dinosaur.

Changes will be profound.

At the regional level, there may not be the sweeping changes predicted before the release of the Who Does What report, but it appears the dye has been cast. It seems a matter of time before the regions will fold, and municipalities will amalgamate.

Municipally, changes to the structure will come by the November election, but the nature of these changes remains to be seen.

Even the faces of community will change with further development and growth.

It promises to be a contentious year

because of all these areas. We can expect personal changes as well. Wages are expected to climb and we are supposed to have greater

spending power. Jobs are on the horizon, we're told, and for those willing to grab it, the brass ring will be there. Predictions are just that.

The year ahead will be full of change. Whether the changes will be for the better will be stuff of future soothsayers.



## Stouffville Tribune

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## Travel medical insurance? Don't leave home

Vacations hate me. Every time I try to get a little R&R, I nearly always wind up in the ER.

Faithful readers of this space may recall two years ago this week, I was on the Cruise to Hell. The week before my departure, I got a hang-nail which laid me up in the hospital for four days, and required emergency surgery. I was able to go on holiday, but I had a huge bandage on my hand and was unable to do anything short of keeping score on the shuffleboard court.

Last summer, I lost my keys in the lake while returning from a disastrous canoe vacation, and had to wait three hours for my wife to pick me up from the middle of Algonquin Park.

In 1990, I went to Florida and wound up spending four days in bed with the worst flu of my life. In 1982, a trip to Ixtapa had to be put off for a month because I broke my thumb.

When on a family trip to Scotland in 1969, I wound up in hospital after receiving a concussion on a seaside Wild Mouse roller coaster.

Last week, I booked a trip to the Baja peninsula. Saturday, I fell while skiing. Guess what? I'll likely be making good use of that cancellation insurance.

Reports are still sketchy, but at press time, my holiday is once again beginning to look like an Irwin Allen movie. I don't think I'll go on a trip with a full-length leg cast: the tan line would be hard to explain.

As I write this, there is some debate as to whether I severed a large and particularly valuable



tendon, or just knocked a big chunk off my tibia. Stay tuned, X-rays at 11.

I wish I could relate the spectacular wipe-out that may have

me sporting a cast instead of sport casting, but it really was rather an innocuous fall. Let's just say it involved one of those darn snowboarders, a hill littered with banana peels and a complete lack of ability on my part. It won't be seen on the opening segment of Wide World of Sports, to be sure.

After sliding on my face for a while, my ski caught, and I heard a little piece of me snap.

Surprisingly, I was able to

stand up, and avoided the unbelievable embarrassment of being carried down the hill on a stretcher, which is what happened in 1986 when I cracked my pelvis after skiing into a rope strung between a truck and a building. I actually skied down the rest of the hill and until it started to rain, continued as if nothing was wrong.

It wasn't until I took off my boots and bent my knee that I realized I had experienced a phe-

nomenon similar to that of people who get limbs bit off by sharks - they claim they feel no pain, and that they can still sense their phantom limb. Not until later is pain an issue.

Such was me. I am now on a cane, awaiting the pronouncement of a team of orthopedic surgeons.

Now at the full mercy of jesters of all stripes, my only solace comes from the fact that I didn't go into the travel business.

## Coffee injuries? Bean there, done that

From a spoonful of granules in nuked tap water to Java Junction, Starbucks and the Second Cup is a long and winding road.

Until about three years ago, the inmates of Le Chateau were woefully ignorant on the subject of real coffee. Then Mr. Wallethead, coffee maker extraordinaire, saw an ad for a cappuccino maker and a new era of urban sophistication dawned in the little house on Main Street.

At the end of one of our amusing little dinner parties, he could now pose the hitherto unimaginable question - regular, cappuccino or espresso? Our friends were suitably impressed and one adventurous soul requested espresso.

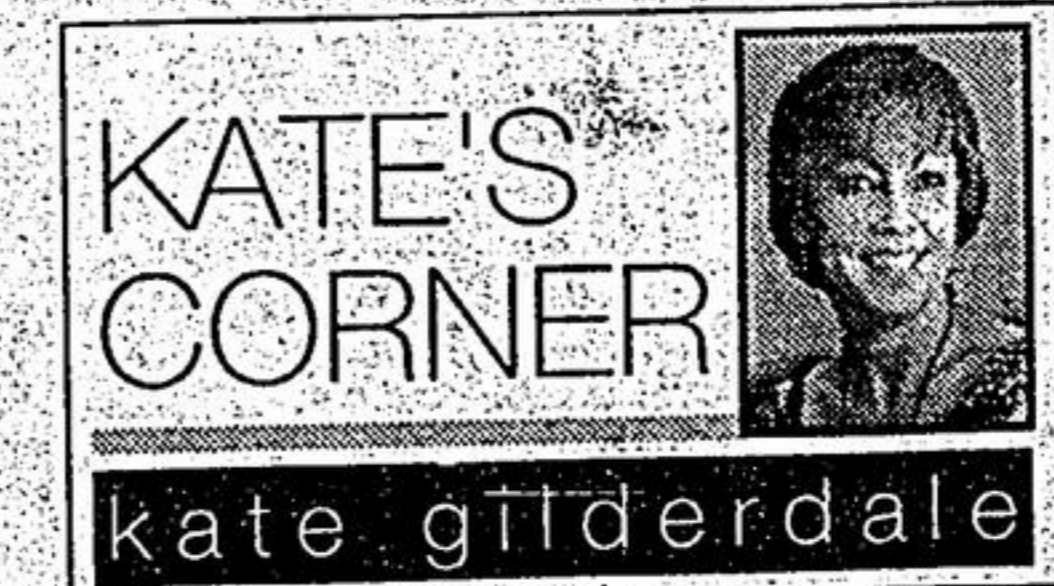
Without so much as a glance at his life insurance policy, my husband retired to the kitchen to grind the beans - yes, Virginia, we even bought the requisite coffee grinder - and

steam the milk. A few minutes later, there was a loud hissing noise, followed by a strangled bellow of pain.

I rushed into the kitchen to find Mr. Wallethead running cold water over his scalded hand and an interesting art nouveau arrangement of coffee shrapnel all over the ceiling and walls. It reminded me of the time Granny Pat tried to make raspberry jam in the pressure cooker.

You learn something new every day and that day my significant other learned where the steam came out of the machine. For a while we went back to black, cream only or regular, but the old man has never been one to duck a challenge and he soon returned to living on coffee's grinding edge.

His efforts improved immeasurably but the machine was so compact that it took about two hours to make three minute cups of specialty coffee



and in the last couple of years, our cappuccino maker has sat on the shelf, gathering dust.

However, even I have become aware that a cup of instant is hardly the thing to offer the educated gourmand and we have now graduated to a Bodum, one of those glass things in which you allow the coffee to brew before pressing down gently on the beans and Eureka! coffee that not only tastes good but doesn't strip the enamel from your teeth.

All these wonderful innovations notwithstanding, there's nothing to beat the taste of a cup of real coffee from one of the burgeoning army of trendy cafés, a rare pleasure which,

for some strange reason, has not yet been banned in the nasty nineties.

On a recent trip to Queen Street West, Clare offered to buy me a coffee at Starbucks. I settled for a latte mocha, tall, which to her horror set her back almost three dollars. But what a three-dollars' worth. It was slathered with whipped cream generously topped with cocoa and must have contained a year's supply of bad cholesterol, not to mention my total calorie and fat intake for January.

This was not so much a cup of coffee as a decadent dessert. My own growing appreciation for real coffee, meanwhile, has persuaded me that it is worth the odd life-threatening injury to my nearest and dearest to taste the subtle delights of the versatile bean, as opposed to ingesting the old dishcloth aroma which is the province of instant karma.