

Comment & Opinions

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EDITORIAL

Workfare plan improved

October is the date touted by the provincial government for some York Region social assistance recipients to begin contributing to the workfare program, Ontario Works. Where those welfare recipients will be placed is a question that is still up in the air.

The plan would see welfare recipients directed into community services, employment opportunities or training programs. Most will be placed in minimum-wage jobs, says John MacKinnon, York Region's manager of the Ontario Works program. For those who earn more on social assistance than minimum wage, some salaries will be increased through a plan called Steps which is already in place. Most of those registered, McKinnon says, will be single employable males. Single parents will not be a target, unless the youngest child is more than six years old. The government has been tinkering with the workfare program since coming into office, trying to make it less ominous. Since the uproar over the plan's introduction by Minister of Community and Social Services David Tsubouchi, the Tories have been quietly setting it up in various regions under the direction of the far-more-inconspicuous Janet Ecker. Ecker assumed the role of minister after Tsubouchi was shuffled by Premier Mike Harris. Since that time, the Pickering MPP has been putting the gears into place to get workfare running with very little fanfare.

The plan is obviously less extreme than when first proposed, and although still poison to many community groups and social service providers, the new program is easier to swallow. By targeting those most able to contribute, the plan has a better chance of success. However, steps need to be taken to alleviate the unemployment in this province, especially among young people.



I'm taking a stand, like it or lump it

It's time to revisit my stands. Like it or lump it, here's what I think about:

- Capital punishment: It's a barbaric act and should never be reinstated. Legalizing murder sets a country back a century or two. As a Canadian, I'm proud that we don't have executions. I can name three people who'd agree with me: Donald Marshall, David Milgaard and Guy Paul Morin.
- Life prison terms for first degree

murder. Life should mean life. There should be no exceptions. First degree murderers should never be released. They should all die in prison of natural causes.

- War: Don't go.
- Canada's military: Get rid of it unless its restricted to building dikes in Manitoba. (See war).
- The Reform Party: Get rid of it. (See war)
- The Bloc: Get rid of it (See War)
- Abortion: If a fetus isn't a baby,



Off the Record

Joan Ransberry

what is it? The thing I notice most about people who support abortion is: They were born. Come to think of it, they were born to chose. Canada is a very affluent country. It's a country that can well afford babies. It saddened me to realize that since it's

cheaper to kill babies than to raise them, we take the abortion route. There's no such thing as an unwanted baby in Canada. I can support this with one word: Adoption.

■ Homosexuality: Some people are gay. Some aren't. My homosexual friends accept my being heterosexual so I follow the Golden Rule and grant them the same respect. If a homosexual was teaching one of my grandchildren, I'd be concerned with what was being taught in the classroom. I wouldn't give a hoot what the teacher does in bed. The only sex life I'm interested in influencing is mine.

■ Sex education: You can't learn too much about sex. Sex education belongs everywhere, especially school.

■ Immigration: Open Canada's immigration doors wider. We can always use the talent, the skills and the money that comes from other lands.

■ Marijuana: While grass will never be as harmful as alcohol, we should be careful about legalizing it. It might result in more heavy users. Pot heads are lazy. We've got enough lazy people.

■ Divorce: Sometimes it's the only route. Still, I've never met anyone who got a divorce without suffering a great deal. The breakdown of a marriage is such a sad, sad experience.

■ Racism: There's no place for it in any country, in any town, in any public place or in any home.

■ Guns: An all out ban on all guns is long overdue.

■ Marriage: It's society's finest institution. If a certain man asked me to marry him, I'd say "yes" in a heartbeat.

■ Laughter: We need more of it.

Tips for homeworking procrastinators

"You're perfectly healthy, but unfocused"

When I laughed cynically at this diagnosis, my ophthalmologist insisted he was merely referring to my eyesight, but he had inadvertently summed up my personality in one neatly turned sentence. Self-help books on organizational skills notwithstanding, my ability to stay on task, as current parlance would have it, is more or less non-existent.

This is because, one, after 50 years of absorbing all kinds of rubbish, my brain is full and two, I cannot retain a thought for the time it takes to get from my office to the basement - thus I have no idea what I am doing down there when I arrive. The only way I can find out is to go back to where I started from and repeat the process.

Also, it is an incontrovertible fact that whatever task I am engaged in is less appealing than one I encounter en route from office to basement. This is both a blessing and a curse. For instance, there are times I am obliged to write a rather dry piece of prose, and it is then that the laundry gets done.

When I am on a creative roll, on the other hand, family members have to wear the same socks for a week. Work-



Kate's Corner

Kate Gilderdale

ing at home means cooking dinner at 10 a.m. and slaving over a hot computer keyboard at midnight. It also means entertaining the duct cleaner, the gas person and a persistent seller of aluminum siding instead of getting on with the task at hand.

Figuring that I may not be the only person in this predicament, I decided to suggest some coping strategies for the chronic procrastinator working at home.

When everyone else has left for the real world, force yourself to ignore the tottering pile of dirty dishes abandoned on the counter by the under-20s in the household, who have not yet learned how to open the dishwasher and insert the crockery within.

If you do manage to train them in this delicate art, they will nevertheless fail entirely to remove large pieces of debris from the plate and all your glasses and mugs will end up with

baked-on spaghetti shrapnel and other unsavory souvenirs of last night's dinner.

When creative inspiration fails to strike, do not wander aimlessly about the house rolling up foil balls to amuse the cats or making disgusting cups of fake coffee in the microwave. Grit your teeth and step over the assortment of homework binders, magazines and discarded socks on the stairs and make a mental note to demand their removal when your darling children come home. Never, ever do it for them.

This will narrow down your circle of friends, the more fastidious of whom may never return when they come for dinner and your darling children have still not got around to the chore at hand. Not only will your friends be aghast at the mess, there is a good chance they will break their leg falling over the discarded items and end up suing you.

Keep a regular work schedule and don't fritter away office hours chatting on the phone to others who are similarly undisciplined. I'd like to continue dispensing my pearls of wisdom, but I'm running out of space.

And besides, my stomach just sent out for a cup of nuked water and granules.

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