

# Comment & Opinions

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Send your letters to the editor to the address below

## EDITORIAL

### Predictions for 1998

The dawn of the new year often brings out the prognosticator in many people, and we are no exception. We will not go out on any speculative limb that could easily snap off under the pressure of uncertainty. We will, however, predict what we can dimly see in the future, barring any change in the political or social wind.

Here, then, is a cursory glance at the year ahead.

■ The Harris Tories, facing the end of their mandate, will begin to mend bridges caused by the deep cuts made in the first half of their term of office. Regional amalgamation will not be attempted, since the area is the source of the party's bread and butter.

■ Smoking will continue to fade from the social spectrum, just as opium use did a century ago. As more and more restaurants and public spaces begin to realize the benefits of a smoke-free environment, the practice will continue to dwindle. Youth smoking, however, will continue to rise since there is, as of yet, no legal penalty to them and stores continue to sell cigarettes to minors with astounding regularity.

■ Effects of the formation of the megacity will begin to be felt in the GTA, as people frustrated by the increase in property taxes downtown flee to the outskirts.

■ The returns from Sunday openings of the liquor and beer outlets should save the day for thousands of government employees facing the loss of privatization.

■ We should have a little more in our pockets this year.

■ The Toronto Maple Leafs won't make the play-offs, but then, that's always a safe bet.



## Broccoli has been getting an unfair rap

Roy Blount Jr. is a droll, laconic gentleman of the south Georgia persuasion. He is also one of my favourite funny men. Or he used to be. Right up until he wrote the following poem:

### ODE TO BROCCOLI

The corner store is all out of broccoli. Broccoli. It's not that I think the poem is unfunny. It's just that I feel compelled to defend the commodity in question. In fact, I might as well own up. I consider myself the white knight of the maligned vegetable. A Crusader for the Crucified Cruciferac.

That's right — call me a pervert, but I actually like broccoli.

Popeye pimps for spinach. Bugs

Bunny stands up for carrots. The Jolly Green Giant is a pea and corn niblets front man.

But of all the vegetables in a can of alphabet soup, from asparagus to zucchini, it's broccoli that lights my fire. I know it's not a popular choice. Near as I can figure, people have always had a knee-jerk hatred for broccoli. A classic cartoon in the New Yorker magazine shows a sulky kid at the dinner table, arms crossed, scowling at his dinner plate and saying, "I say it's broccoli and I say the hell with it!"

My own kids wrinkle their noses in distaste at the mere mention of the B-word. Even George Bush, back when he was president of the Excited States, felt compelled to go on record as a dedicated broccoli-loather.



### Basic Black

Arthur Black

What is this? Broccoli is better looking than your average Idaho spud or gnarly old yam. It certainly smells better than steamed turnip or boiled cabbage.

And as for taste, I'd put it up against sauerkraut or parsnips any dinner time.

Broccoli belongs to the mustard family, as do a lot of greenery that we don't mind chowing down on. Kohlrabi, kale, collards, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower — they're all kissing cousins of broccoli — but they don't get the bad press the way poor old broccoli does.

Hard to figure why. Maybe it's the unnaturally dark green colour that broccoli boasts. Or maybe it's the fact that one of Hollywood's more reptilian producers answered to the name of Albert "Cubby" Broccoli. Whatever the reason, it's an unfair rap.

That unnaturally green colour is mute testament to the fact that broccoli is chalk full of chlorophyll — and that's not all that's good about it. It's loaded with beta carotene, a known cancer combater.

Broccoli is also rich in something called isothiocyanates, which experts say stimulate detoxifiers in the human immune system.

As a matter of fact, researchers at Johns Hopkins university in the US are touting a kind of super broccoli

that they claim can reduce the size of cancerous tumours.

There's nothing magical about the Johns Hopkins discovery — they've simply turned their attention on broccoli sprouts rather than the finished plant that most of us buy in the supermarket. The scientists discovered that broccoli sprouts are 30 to 50 times richer in anti-cancer compounds than mature broccoli heads.

Let me put it another way: if you wanted to reduce your risk of contracting colon cancer by eating broccoli heads, you'd have to chew your way through two pounds of the stuff each week.

Even I don't like it that much. On the other hand, you could obtain the same benefits by eating just one ounce of broccoli sprouts.

How do broccoli sprouts taste? Not bad, apparently. Folks who've tried them say they taste pretty much like your regular bean or alfalfa sprouts with perhaps a bit of a broccoli tang.

That's the good news. The bad news is that it takes a long time for any new food to get through the battery of government tests and trials designed to ensure that it is suitable and safe for human consumption.

That means you can't buy government-approved broccoli sprouts for love or money anywhere in North America right now — and the Johns Hopkins scientists doubt that we'll see them in supermarkets and corner stores until late 1998 at the earliest.

So until that happens, I guess that all of us — you, me and Roy Blount Junior — will just have to content ourselves by eating bales and bales of regular, dark green broccoli. Unbroccoli.

## Great coverage helped United Way exceed goal

Dear Editor,

I am writing to extend my sincere thanks to you for providing coverage of this year's United Way campaign.

Such coverage is very important to the success of the campaign.

I think you know that a major challenge for us in York Region is to raise the profile of United Way of York Region vis-a-vis United Way of Metro Toronto.

We are grateful for Mike Adler's excellent journalism, the paper's great coverage of our events, and your thought-provoking editorial. Our community has paid notice

### LETTERS

to all this coverage!

The fact that the United Way exceeded its goal this year, attests to the leverage you have provided for our campaign.

As we continue to work very hard in building a strong social service infrastructure in York Region, we will appreciate your partnership with us.

Wyn A. Chivers  
Executive Director  
United Way of York Region

### STOUFFVILLE TRIBUNE WEEKENDER

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