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# Comment & Opinions

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## EDITORIAL

### What steps have been made for women?

Saturday is International Women's Day. And what has changed since the last International Women's Day? Are women any closer to equality, are women better able to earn positions of power and authority, earn a living without discrimination, maintain dignity in the face of abuse, hardship and poverty? Are women in many parts of the world still murdered for their gender? Are women still set on fire, beaten or mutilated for indiscretions or the perception of indiscretions? Are there still societies that keep women covered on religious grounds, to mask their man-destroying wiles? Are there not governments which still condone the rape and torture of women and the infanticide of female children? Are women in Canada on an equitable footing with their male counterparts? The United Nations says we fall far behind such countries as Sweden and the Netherlands in reforms which would see quicker equality. Are we making steps to rectify the situation? The answer in most cases is that women have made tiny steps forward. And while any movement forward is certainly positive, the forces which prevent those steps from becoming great strides are still in place, still in the hands of men who would do much to maintain their control. It will be a fine morning when we wake to find the need for such a day has passed.



## Gift-giving one of toughest nuts to crack

One reason people get divorced is they run out of gift ideas.

Robert Orben

*Gifts are like hooks.*  
I don't know about you, but I find gift-giving one of the toughest nuts to crack in what passes for civilized life these days. What do you buy for Aunt Ida? How do you satisfy the carnal cravings of Uncle Sid? Is cousin Orville even going to unwrap your gift this Christmas, after what happened last year? His n Hersh SealSkin Body Stockings seemed like a great treat to leave under the tree. How were you supposed to know he'd been elected president of the Saskatoon branch of Greenpeace? Giving gifts can often be like juggling eggs. For most of us, that is.

Roy, Collette and Larry Kunkel don't have that problem. They've been exchanging Christmas presents for 11 years. Actually that should read: exchanging Christmas present. Roy and Larry swap the same gift each year. It's a pair of moleskin trousers. As you might expect, there's a story behind it. The story began way back at Christmas, 1987. That's when Larry Kunkel first unloaded the trousers. They'd been a gift from his mother, back in his college days. Larry had never liked the moleskin trousers. They froze stiff as a board in cold weather and needed too much ironing. So Larry did the sensible thing. He wrapped the trousers up in Christmas paper and gave them to his brother-in-



**Basic Black**  
Arthur Black

law, Roy. Problem was, Roy didn't much like them either. He wore them a couple of times, pronounced them miserable and gave them back to Kunkel at Christmas the next year. Larry Kunkel didn't like the trousers any better the second time they appeared in his life, so he dug out some Christmas paper, wrapped them up, and waited for Christmas to roll around. This Ping-Pong gift exchange continued for several years until Roy decided it was time to make the ritual more interesting. He took the moleskin trousers, twisted them into a corkscrew, stuffed them into a 3-foot-long, extremely skinny cardboard tube and mailed the Christmas present to Kunkel. Three hundred and sixty-five days after that Roy looked under his tree to see a tiny, square package with a card that read "To Roy from Larry." It was the trousers, painstakingly folded into a seven-inch cube and wrapped in baling wire. The feud was on. The next Christmas, Collette had the pants delivered to Kunkel's door by UPS. They were in a two-foot-square wooden crate filled with rocks, nailed shut with spikes and banded with strips of steel wire. The next year Kunkel had the trousers mounted inside an insulated thermopane window that came with a 20-year guarantee against accidental breakage.

Calmly, Collette took a hammer to the window, extracted the pants, stuffed them in a five-inch coffee can and soldered it shut. The coffee can was then put in a five-gallon container filled with concrete and reinforcing rods — and delivered to Kunkel the following Christmas. For Christmas of 1995, Kunkel inserted the pants in a 225-pound stainless steel ashtray made from 8-inch steel casings. He had "Merry Christmas, Roy" brazed in bronze on the top. Kunkel got the pants back for Christmas of 1996 of course. Eventually, Collette found a 600-pound second-hand safe in which he placed the trousers. He then had the safe door welded shut and delivered to Kunkel's place of business. Last December Kunkel got his revenge. The pants showed up in Collette's driveway in time for Christmas Eve. They were in the glove compartment of a 1984 Dodge Dart. Or, what used to be a Dodge Dart. Kunkel had mashed the car into a 2,000-pound cube measuring three feet by three feet by three feet. Mind you, Kunkel had the junkyard dealer attach a testimonial certifying that the moleskin trousers were indeed in the glove compartment. Is Collette whipped? Not on your life. "This will take some planning," he says. "I will definitely get them out. I'm confident." I believe him. I also believe that Roy Collette will come up with an even more ingenious delivery system for the moleskin trousers by next Christmas. I mean, you can just tell these two are the kind of guys that put their pants on one leg at a time.

## Seeing the world through a child's eyes

Dear Editor,  
I think happiness is a spring like day, and a very small boy, discovering the great outdoors. I watched him standing at the edge of the cement path and cautiously extend his foot onto the lawn, then deciding it was safe, toddled across it. He then squatted down and examined a low lying pine bough, the grass looked interesting so he wagged his hands back and forth in it and laughed. He looked up and watched an airplane and some birds, pointing as they flew away.

**LETTERS**  
For no reason other than the fun of it he ran as fast as his short legs would carry him up and down the driveway, arms extended and head back. What an adventure! I wish everyone could forget the rat race for a time and witness the pure innocent joy on the face of a little child simply enjoying life. I'm glad I was able to.

Kaye Sutherland

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