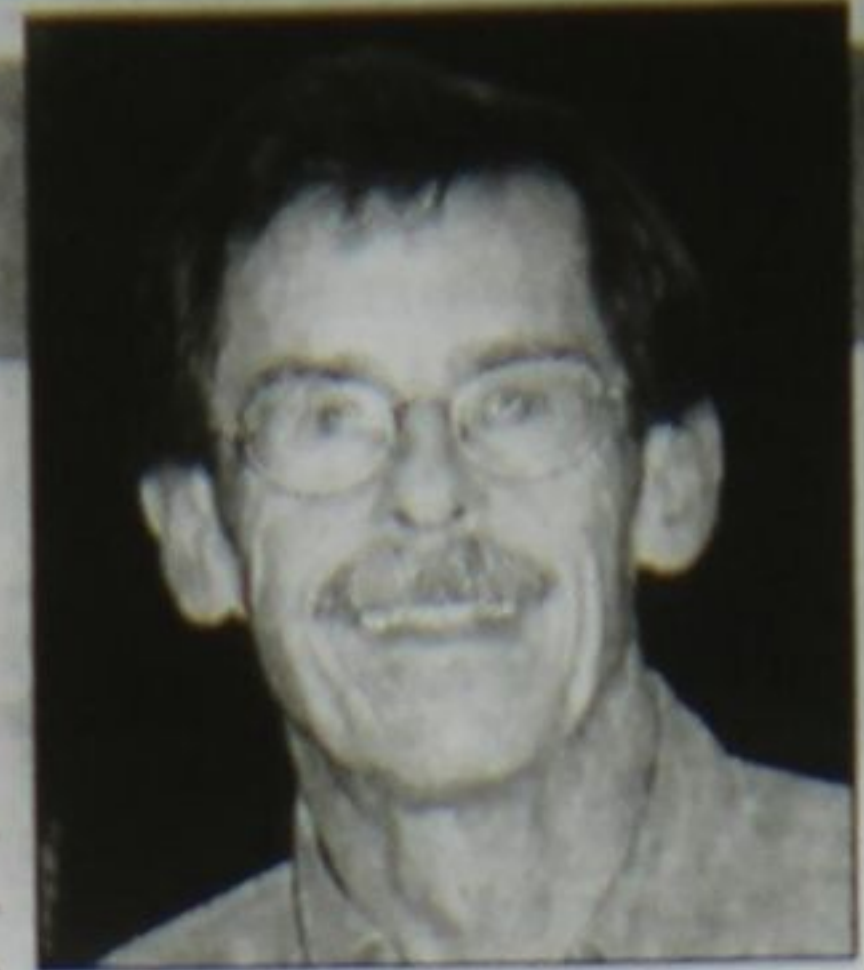


Out in Write Field Wedded Blips



By Bruce Stapley

The recent reports claiming that we married types are in the minority for the first time in Canadian history left me feeling even more of an anachronism than I already did.

I mean my CD collection consist of more than a healthy sampling of the works of expired or aging artists like John Denver, Roy Orbison, Johnny Cash, the Beatles (half of whom have passed on), the Rolling Stones (Keith Richards falls somewhere between the dearly departed and those on the imminent edge), Gordon Lightfoot and Bob Seger. And my vocabulary still includes such 1970's chestnuts as "Right On", "Far Out" and "Cool". I'm yet to be convinced that recently hatched, catch-all expressions such as "Sweet" and "It's all good" will stand the test of time, despite their constant usage by those around me including my wife Sue. But that's another column.

Anyway, as for this "marriage is going the way of the dodo bird" business, I must say in defence of myself and my family that my brothers and sisters and I, our parents,

and even my in-laws have done more than our part to support this faltering institution.

I've been married for 31 years - to two different women, it's true, but that's still an indication of my commitment to the cause. And between the bunch of us, we have gone to the alter a whopping total of 13 times, with four of those unions still very much intact. In baseball, that would be good for a batting average of .308; more than impressive!

Okay, so the old 'Til death do us part' bit has become as folksy as Bob Cole's announcing style on Hockey Night in Canada. But many couples are opting to live together without making it legal, thus saving the woman from having to change her name or, heaven forbid, take on one of those awkward and potentially embarrassing hyphenated names such as Ophelia Nice-Butt.

And just because a couple choose to spare themselves and their loved ones the grind and expense of taking 10 months to plan a lavish six hour celebration - the kind that would give them virtually no way of changing their

minds unless they're willing to alienate and embarrass their families at the last minute - does that make their commitment to each other any less real? Also, according to the stats quoted in the reports on the demise of marriage in Canada, people are tracked from age 16 up. Show me anyone in this enlightened age of educated, working women who chooses to get hitched before age 25 and I'll show you someone very out of step with the times. Thankfully, teen marriages went out with the horse and buggy era.

As for those of us who choose to get hitched and stick it out, now that we have achieved minority status it's got to be downhill all the way from here, with government grants, tax incentives and civil service jobs a whole lot easier to come by. Which can only lead to one conclusion, as difficult as this may be for me to swallow.

"It's all good!"

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