

## Appointment with Pohlman

### What's it all about, eh?

By Ralph Pohlman

I learn a lot from reading the newspaper with my coffee every morning.

I usually start with the comics and then move on to the sports pages and finally the interesting articles in the front section. I don't read anything about Iraq, Afghanistan, Rwanda or the Middle East. Why? Because it is always the same, nor will it change in my lifetime.

To be candid, I throw away the business and financial sections and anything that has to do with travel, cars, or decorating condos. But that's just me. Those may be the very ones you like. Anyway, today I thought I'd explore a couple of important topics that were recently in the news.

The first item appeared under the heading, "Canadians don't know their history, study shows". An outfit called the Dominion Institute, co-founded by a guy named Rudyard Griffiths, conducted a survey and found that only 46 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds knew Sir John A. Macdonald was our first prime minister. And 38 per cent knew that Newfoundland was the last province to join confederation.

They didn't do very well on the year of confederation (26%). Most didn't know that the Battle of Vimy Ridge was fought in the First World War (37%); that Nov. 11 marked the end of the First World War (37%); who Louis Riel was (25%); what prime minister won the Nobel Peace Prize (12%).

In the study, 1,004 young people were asked 30 basic questions about Canada's past. But then again, maybe it was the questions. I decided to set up my own series of questions to see how

Canadian you are. The answers are at the end.

(1) What are the denominations of Canadian Tire money?

(2) How do you pronounce "about"?

(3) Who was Tim Horton?

(4) Can you speak any of Canada's three official languages (English, French, Hockey)?

(5) If you speak Hockey, what is a "deke"? What do you call the area between the blue lines?

(6) If the world were to end at midnight, what time would it be in Newfoundland?

(7) Have you ever made love in a canoe? Describe. Do you have pictures?

(8) Robert Service wrote, "There are strange things done in the midnight sun/By the men who moil for gold." Name a strange thing you have done. How do you moil?

(9) If someone shouts, "Yes! Yes! Harder! Harder!" what are they doing?

(10) In the 1800's a police constable found a dead horse on Roncesvalles Ave., (then in the municipality of Parkdale) and dragged it to King Street. Why?

I found the next item in the Belleville Intelligencer on Nov. 1. It was an article by Dr. Gifford-Jones who writes those medical columns. The heading read, "Charcoal-activated underwear helps with distressing flatus."

Yes, the fact is that kings, queens and the rest of us pass flatus, more commonly known as farts, usually discreetly, 15 to 25 times a day. Fortunately, flatus is usually odourless (although some are known as SBD, meaning Silent But Deadly) consisting of oxygen, carbon dioxide, hydrogen or nitrogen. But some gasses are powerful and can't always be blamed on the dog.

Now it seems that a guy named Buck Weimer of Pueblo, Colorado, has invented underwear that will trap and annihilate obnoxious odoriferous farts before they have a chance to escape. There is a replaceable charcoal pad at the rear exit hole.

His underwear is called "Under-Ease" and is available for both sexes. The company motto is, "Wear them for the ones you love."

Weimer's charcoal underwear with filter pad costs \$24.95. You can buy two replaceable pads for \$11.95. See [www.under-tec.com](http://www.under-tec.com). In Canada, call 1-719-584-7782. What a great gift! You could give a pair to your boss, your mother-in-law, your bank manager, your occasional sleeping partner.

One final item:

It seems that the prudish city council of Surrey, B.C. decided to stop renting the city wave pool to the Surrey Skinnydippers Club. The club took the Surrey City Council to court and the case eventually ended up in front of the B.C. Supreme Court which confirmed the right of Canadians to skinny-dip at private parties. The newspaper heading read, "Canadians' right to skinny-dip upheld." What a great country, eh?

Okay, here are the answers to part one:

(1) 5, 10, 25 and 50 cents and \$1 and \$2; (2) "About"; (3) You're kidding; (4) Soccer doesn't count; (5a) "deke" means faking the other guy out of his socks; (5b) The neutral zone; (6) 12:30 a.m. (7) Send me the pictures; (8) For example, have you ever eaten a Nanaimo bar in a bar in Nanaimo? Moil = drudge in the mud; (9) Curling; (10) He couldn't spell Roncesvalles.

There! That's what you need to know to be a Canadian



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## ICE SAFETY

By Micole Ongman

Being outside in the winter is wonderful, but we all know how cold the air can feel on our cheeks and our hands.

If you don't take the proper precautions; a warm hat and mittens, a cozy scarf; you can end up feeling pretty miserable. Did you know that cold water chills 25 times faster than cold air?

Staying away from ice is the safest way to play, but if you are going to be playing on ice, make sure you are prepared so that you won't get into "hot water" if you fall into cold water.

Hypothermia is the lowering of the body's core temperature. Each year it kills many. It can happen any time you are out in the cold and poorly prepared.

If you are on land you can reduce your risk by wearing warm clothes or staying out of the cold. Hypothermia can kill people trapped in cold water by reducing their ability to swim and stay afloat. It doesn't matter how good a swimmer you are; the cold water can numb your limbs, making them difficult to move and making it impossible for you to stay on the surface.

When you are wearing layers of wet clothing, the fear is that the clothing will drag you down into the water, but in fact the opposite is true. Air trapped in your clothes will help to keep you afloat and keep you warmer until you can get help. Even your own wet mittens can freeze to the ice and provide traction to help you pull yourself from the water.

No ice is without risk, and by knowing the signs of safer ice, you can minimize that risk. Safer ice is at least four inches thick, new, clear and hard. We all know we should avoid ice that is slushy, has open patches or is thin, but not all unsafe ice conditions are obvious. For example:

Ice that has thawed and refrozen, even if it appears to be quite thick, can be very dangerous. The re-freezing process weakens the ice and it may have "rotten" areas that are unsafe to walk on even though you can't see them.

Any ice on or near moving water is unsafe; the crust that forms on top of a river is unstable because of the water swirling beneath it. Lake ice is very fragile around open areas or along the shoreline, where even ice that looks solid is weak.

Even on safer ice never play alone, no matter how old you are. Adults or buddies can call for help when you can't, or can use an implement like a hockey stick or rope to help pull you to safety from a distance.

Be safe, be prepared, be water smart and enjoy what the winter has to offer.

*Micole Ongman is program aquatic supervisor, leisure services, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. Information in the article was provided by the Lifesaving Society.*

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