

# Point of View by Ralph Pohlman



I think it was Calvin Coolidge who, after going to church one morning, was asked what the minister had preached about.

"Sin," the former U.S. president replied.

"Oh? What did he say?"

"He was against it."

I don't seem to hear about sin as much as I used to. My mother used the word a lot, as in, "Oh, that's a sin," when she really meant to say, "What a pain in the butt."

Of course we all know, or should know, about the seven deadly sins -- Lust, Avarice, Anger, Envy, Gluttony, Sloth and Pride. I've practised them all at some time in my life, although it seems the first has been waving me goodbye lately. Oh, I still recognize it when it approaches, but now it always seems it would be such a lot of trouble and inconvenience.

The one that has caused me the most difficulty is Pride. I try to keep in mind that "pride is the never failing vice of fools," according to Alexander Pope, who displayed it throughout his life.

But surely there must be more sins than seven. The Ten Commandments would seem to indicate such, and I've busted

most of those too, although I don't recall making any graven images. Not unless you count birdhouses or garden trolls.

In any case, the Ten Commandments seem to leave a lot of leeway. For example, I went to the library to get a certain book. I put my name on the waiting list, but it seems the book had been checked out by someone six months earlier and not yet returned. Apparently the library had sent a couple of notices with no response.

I suggested they give me the person's name. "I'll get the book back," I promised. But they refused. Something about confidentiality.

"What's confidential about someone who steals your book?" I asked. Anyway, that goes on my sin list; not returning your library book. Although come to think of it, I'm not very good at returning books I've borrowed from friends. Or movies, either. So there's a sin. A social sin, at least.

I understand Buddhists have a roster of over 100 sins and they bang the temple bell on New Year's Eve for every one of them. I don't know what they are but I'll bet that not returning your library book is in there.

Of course, sins are indispen-

sable to every organized society. Without sin there would be an awful lot of unemployment: cops, lawyers, judges, prison guards, not to mention priests.

And I note that the Book of Common Prayer states, "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done."

Here are some "ought not to have done's."

There are a number of driving sins that bother me. Like stopping on the merging lane as you enter the expressway, or travelling at 40 km/h in the passing lane.

How about those folk who talk in the movie theatre? They always seem to be sitting right behind me and one of them has seen the movie previously. The latter can't help declaring what is about to happen. A few years ago, when I went to see *Titanic*, the woman behind me was giving a running commentary throughout, as though it were a football game and she was broadcasting the plays.

"Isn't that beautiful?" she'd exclaim, or, at a suspenseful moment, "The safe is empty."

These are the same people who bring a baby to a public per-

formance. That is a sin, unless it's a bagpipe concert. They also wear that heavy, musky perfume that would give a rash to a mummy.

Here are some more that are on my list:

TV interviewers who ask stupid questions like, "So, how did you feel Mrs. Forklift, when the garbage truck ran over Bobby?" And then there are the interviewees who can't speak without saying, "Yuh Know," as in, "Uh, yuh know, we played real hard, yuh know, and we were, yuh know, real fortunate to win, yuh know."

My dad broke me of that habit when I was a kid. Every time I said, "Yuh know," he'd say, "No, I don't."

And then there are the folks who don't pick up their dog's poop; make speeches longer than 20 minutes; slow down to look for the blood at car accidents; send e-mails on where I can gamble; sing Christmas carols in November and don't start to look for their money till they get to the cashier.

That's probably enough sin for today. But I got more, yuh know.

## Letters

### Free eye exams are already paid

To the Editor:  
OHIP or NOHIP

Re: Sounding off about government de-listing of eye examinations. (Note: Only one examination is allowed every 24 months.)

Essentially the government has been providing this service, which is not free, as it has been paid for by OHIP premiums or payroll tax deductions. You pay into the system for say 25 years -- you are now 50 years old and need an eye examination. Too bad -- you're not covered!

O.K., so let's lobby for a refund. If you act like sheep and do nothing, the government will treat you like cattle.

Paul Clubbe  
Stouffville

### Great re-union

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dedicated hours they put toward this event and the alumni who were able to take time out of their busy schedules to attend.

Gary Gornik  
Chair, 50th Anniversary  
Reunion Committee

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