



James Bailey

It's small comfort, but...

It's weeks like this that make me feel like strangling those cheery souls who say they enjoy living in a country with four seasons. When I extoll the virtues of living year-round in the sunny climes to be found in Florida, California or the Caribbean, they reply only with sympathetic stares which imply that I am not sufficiently sophisticated to appreciate the variety of alternatives offered by winter: skiing, tobogganing, all that nonsense.

There seems to be no one who will defend those of us who would much prefer to roll up in a heavy blanket from October to April to await the dawning of a new spring. Those winter activities which the hardy delight in pursuing seem to me at best a compromise, a rather uncomfortable way of putting in time until the dark days are over and summer returns. I would gladly give a season's ticket at a Collingwood ski resort for but one hour's repose in the Florida sun, complete with funny hat, beach umbrella and chilled can of Budweiser planted firmly in the sand.

The argument that living in perpetual sunshine would be boring is, at best, unhealthy, and possibly masochistic. Owning a Rolls-Royce is probably boring as well after a certain length of time, but I don't see many Rolls owners bopping around in '62 Chevy pickups just to relieve the monotony. Those who find unremitting sunshine boring should logically feel the same way about wealth, beauty, comfort and success. Such people are to be avoided.

For me there is no joy in shovelling my car out of a snow drift, in having my battery boosted, in putting on and taking off rubber boots six or seven times a day, or in raising the value of Kleenex stock through the weekly purchase of that seasonally essential product. The prospect of pounding my kidneys into mush by straddling a noisy snowmobile and tearing off through the bush at high speed offers no thrills. Nor does the uttering of such ubiquitous Canadianisms as "Cold enough for you?" or "I don't mind the cold, it's the wind that gets me." It all gets me.

And there are psychological consequences

to this inevitable bad weather. We Canadians are known internationally for being easy-going or apathetic, depending on whom you talk to, but both positions are two sides of the same coin. Unlike people of other nations, we know that for at least half of every year of our lives, we are going to struggle against, and be depressed by, lousy weather. From childhood, we are environmentally pounded with the message that Nature reigns supreme and that we are at the mercy of forces beyond our control.

Whether we have a good day or a bad day depends more upon that cold front moving in from the west than anything we might do. When that reality sinks in, it's hard not to be apathetic. Who thinks about social issues when his car is buried in five feet of snow?

Ah, well. There are better days coming. The trouble is, there are worse days coming after that — but perhaps there is some benefit to all this misery. Most of the prosperous, industrialized nations of the world experience

severe winters, which suggests that weather has an effect on economics. One school of thought holds that, in the past, people who lived in colder climates were forced to plan ahead, instead of living day by day, in order to have enough provisions stored to survive the winter. The result for them was greater intellectual and cultural development than occurred in populations living in warmer areas, thus leading to earlier industrialization and greater affluence.

I favor the theory that winter stimulates the economy by forcing us to spend to survive. What would our unemployment rate be if we didn't need people to plough roads, rustproof cars, install furnaces, build warm houses, refine heating fuel, and perform all the other services that carry us through the winter? What would happen to the millions employed in automotive-related industries if our cars lasted for 10 or 15 years, as they often do in the South?

So cheer up, folks, it's all for the best. If we get another blizzard like Monday's, there is at least some small comfort in knowing that it's for our own good.



John Stewart

Blow against involvement

A crucial element of citizen involvement at city hall has been "streamlined" out of existence by our new city councillors.

In two 5-4 votes, councillors voted to abolish the administration and finance and physical services committees. Those committees, though they were often cumbersome and sometimes delved into areas of policy which were embarrassing to staff and council, performed a valuable service in presenting recommendations to council, which were usually well researched and which often forced serious re-evaluation of programs and policies.

The supporters of abolition of the committees tried very hard to argue that the present system was not working properly and was wasting staff time. The abolition was not a repudiation of the principle of citizen participation, they said.

They are right that the committee's policy advisory function envisioned by consultants Stevenson and Kellogg in a 1974 staff-management report, was not being adhered to. But if extraneous debates and wasting of staff time are criteria, council would do far better to abolish itself rather than its advisory committees.

The day after a stirring inaugural speech by Ron Searle about how our elected representatives really are citizen advocates, our new mayor was making an inane distinction between citizen participation and citizen appointees to committees. Participation in ratepayer groups in the "purest form" of input, rather than actual involvement in the decision-making process, he said. In other words, it's all right to be involved in the little neighborhood problems, but let us run the city.

After speaking in favor of abolishing the two committees, Searle said in the next breath that there should be a citizen chairman of the planning committee or else we are paying only lip service to citizen participation. At least lip service is some service. The citizen members of the two abolished committees, who worked extremely hard for the city, would probably be happy with that.

If there was one message which really emerged from the debate this week, it was that the number of committees overextends the city staff. The logical answer is either to hire more staff to meet the need, which the majority of new members opposes, or to reduce the committees.

The majority priority was obviously to reduce committees. But those members who voted that way can't just pretend that by doing away with the committees they didn't impair the process of citizen input. The real tragedy is that without the in-depth consideration of the two advisory committees the quality of council decisions in those two areas may very well suffer.

One citizen representative, after being told which councillors voted which way, dismissed the decision as "obviously political." Former mayor Martin Dobkin, said it was a return to the "closed shop" at city hall of previous years. Former councillor David Culham said it was a "beautiful way to silence your critics, and some of the citizen members of the committees were council's severest critics."

I sincerely hope that politics is not the reason. Direct citizen participation in the political process is not a fad that is going to go away. If councillors don't understand that, I'm afraid they are in for a very difficult two years.



Sid Rodaway

Our way, their way

I'm back again — for the second time.

If anyone actually noticed that my weekly effort at columnizing disappeared last fall so I could take a shot at running for the local board of education, they might have also noticed it reappeared in the Dec. 15 issue only to disappear again until today, the result of a two-and-a-half-week trip in search of the sun.

I found the sun in skimpy amounts, but came back from our southern neighbor, as I always do, with a clearer view of what's right and particularly what's wrong with The True North.

As one American living in Canada said, "This place feels like a company store where they've got you by the neck (he used a more descriptive word) and can charge whatever they decide they want to charge you."

I know all the explanations for Canada costing more than the U.S., but somehow they never seem to hold enough water to be that convincing. We are not America and never can be, but in some spheres they set an example that we would be well advised to follow.

The major difference is competition. America remains a Disneyland of both failed and realized dreams, but here we want a near guarantee of success before venturing into the world of free competition.

It's the small things that are the most revealing. Here the LCBO hesitates to grant a liquor licence to a new restaurant in fear that it may prove disastrous to the licensed establishment across the street. Down there they offer half-priced drinks and free appetizers during the happy hour to pull in the customers.

Here we charge a penny for matches. There you get them free with your smokes.

Here a pretentious greasy spoon prices the blue plate special at \$4.25. There you can eat in a fine restaurant for the same amount and get an unlimited salad bar to boot.

There they let service stations battle it out for the motorists' money at most major freeway exits and place government-operated rest areas at convenient spots along the route. Here we sell the big oil companies the right to build so called "service centres" every 30 or 40 miles

along a freeway and charge usurious rates for their fuel.

There, fierce competition between hotels at major highway exits will lead some to sell gasoline to guests at less than 40 cents a gallon, while at the same time charging them only \$10 to \$16 for a room. Here motels and hotels, if you can ever find one, rip you off for \$30 a night and wouldn't dream of tossing anything else in with the deal — you should be happy if the TV works.

Granted, America can be tacky beyond belief. For example, this sign outside a small Florida bar: "Conserve Water, Drink Booze."

Granted, America can be ugly self-destructive. Their highway-sign problem is a disgrace and the placement of Fred's Pizza Shack beside a graveyard is less than appetizing.

But it is getting more difficult to point the finger. One drive around Mississauga, particularly along Dundas near Dixie Road, will reveal just as much tastelessness and sheer vulgarity as can be experienced south of the border.

While the Caribbean islands grow more expensive and more threatening all the time, America is returning to the spotlight as one of the best travel bargains in the world.

American tourism in Canada is dropping and industry spokesmen are worried. The Yanks are beginning to stay away in droves and I don't really blame them. A vacation in Canada may be pretty, possibly even serene, but it comes at too high a price to be worthwhile.

When the Shriners held their convention in Toronto a few years back most businessmen looked forward to untold millions in U.S. greenbacks crossing their palms. After it was all over they complained that the Americans had kept their wallets in their pockets. The fez-topped visitors had paid for their hotel rooms, their liquor and their food, but that was all. It was an easily predicted behavior pattern when the prices of goods here were compared with the prices charged there.

If hard-nosed competition is what allows one country to climb up on top, Canada seems doomed to stay on the bottom.



Stewart Page

About playing the game

The coaches tell kids there's basically only one way to play the game — to win. "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing," according to the late Green Bay Packer football coach, Vince Lombardi.

The media, mainly the print media, helped people like Lombardi by publicizing whatever he said, as if the man were handing down the 10 commandments of sport. These same scribes (some call them puppets under control of team owners) are still doing the same things today in professional hockey, still writing down everything the hockey hero says, still gaping into their masculine eyes with unquestioned adoration.

The "interviewing" of the hockey hero, for example, has now taken on a standardized, fairly cut-and-dried, format.

The hero trudges in to the interview, probably in some sense smarting from sarcastic comments voiced by dissident sports analysts to the effect that his kind is likely to be a "high-school drop-out," hardly able to put together a complete sentence, and so on. Sweat pours off him, but he's proud of it. It shows he has to work hard. He then grabs for a towel, wipes his

brow and continues panting away like a hungry animal.

The poor chap, following the accepted format which seemingly has to be adhered to, is then asked some probing, incisive questions. "Ricky, you've just come into the league a year ago," observes the interviewer, showing he already knows a lot of relevant information, having prepared extensively. "How are you finding it as compared with the other leagues you've been in?" he asks in great seriousness.

"Well, it's a lot different than junior — the guys are just so much better, it's just a lot tougher" is the correct answer.

"What's the main difference?" The player then says the main difference is in the skating and checking. "Down in junior, sure, you had a few guys who could really play hockey, but up here, wow, every single guy is really something else, or he wouldn't be here, you know."

Yah, right, responds the interviewer. "Tell us, Rick, what's the part of your style of play you think you do best?"

"Well, I guess it's my skating. I've always

been a pretty good skater. I'd like to get a few more goals, though." Laughter.

"Right, uh, how's your line going now. You seem to be going pretty well tonight. Is there any particular thing the team is doing differently now than before?"

"Well, you know, uh, we're going pretty good. The line, uh, I've been playing on a line with Billy and Joey and, uh, the coach thinks we're starting to go pretty well. All the guys are working hard. It's a really good bunch of guys. There's, uh, a couple guys who pull practical jokes on us 'n that, and that helps keep us all loose. And there's pretty good spirit on the team you know. It's a pretty good buncha guys and I played with some of them in junior, you know."

"Rick, I know some of the youngsters watching would like to know what players you've faced that you think are especially difficult to handle."

"Well, that's tough you know because up here you know they're all tough (laughter) but, seriously, I think maybe Bobby Clarke of Philadelphia is pretty tough. He's such a great 'holler guy' and a real team player. Also, Bobby

Orr is just great. Once he really gets going, he's really hard to stop... but for me they're all tough (laughter)."

Sometimes the hockey player, still dripping sweat, gets a general question about what the interviewer terms "violence" in hockey. He usually responds so as to prove conclusively that among NHL authorities and owners there is seemingly little visible concern with what 'those intellectuals' ("who probably never played the game in their life") term "violence in hockey." Recently, a Hockey Night in Canada interviewer asked "Tiger" Williams whether he would ever come to imitate Stan Mikita of Chicago. Mikita had entered the NHL as a chippy, quarrelsome player, who eventually calmed down and stopped being penalized so much. But the Tiger replied that being punchy was actually the way he got into the big league in the first place. "If I was to go out and start playing like Stan Mikita," said Tiger, "all I'd get would be a bus ticket to Dallas." The Dallas hockey team is not really the big time.

Dr. Page is director of research at Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital.



Community Alive!

How to do a survey

Questions are never indiscreet, answers sometimes are.

—Oscar Wilde

A well-organized survey is one way to find out more information about a problem or issue. It gathers many different opinions and facts, and shows how the issue is viewed by people in the community. A good survey takes in a wide range of persons and organizations and has a carefully planned questionnaire.

If possible, find someone skilled to develop these. A researcher in a university or other institution of further education can help you. In addition, they may be able to provide students who will carry out the survey. A government department, market research firm or advertising agency also may be able to help you.

TECHNIQUE

The person-to-person interview is the most effective way of conducting a survey. A mailing usually has a small return.

Many people will not give personal information unless they like and trust the interviewer. Therefore, the interviewer must create a friendly atmosphere. The person should be told what the survey is about, and that he or she has been selected for the interview by pure chance — representing many others. If a person is unwilling to answer a question, the interviewer should respect his or her privacy and pass on to the next.

THOSE TO BE CONTACTED

There are three ways to decide who to interview: Choose people or organizations at random by some mechanical formula, such as every fifth house on the street; list geographical areas, then choose units to be surveyed at random; analyze the population in question by age, residence, occupation, etc., and assign interviews in the same proportion as these characteristics exist in the whole population.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

When you write the questions you must continually keep in mind the aim of the survey. What information is needed, and how will the results of the survey be used? Ask yourself whether each question is really necessary.

There are several types of questions: yes-no questions, multiple-answer questions and open-ended questions. The first two types are easiest both to answer and to evaluate. However, open-ended questions (where the person is free to give any answer) are often the most important questions of the survey.

Survey questions should be asked in logical sequence and those which are easiest to answer should be first. Questions should be worded simply and each should ask for only one decision. Leading questions should be avoided.



Terry Jones

Our most precious resource

It has been almost a year now since I was appointed parliamentary assistant responsible for the Ontario Youth Secretariat. We've had a busy and challenging year, but one I've thoroughly enjoyed.

Over the past months I've had the opportunity to meet with many young people in all parts of the province. I've talked with them about their needs and their concerns, and I've been able to make their views known at Queen's Park — to see their suggestions translated into action.

Our young people are our most precious natural resource. They've never been more educated and they've never had more to offer. But we must work to tap the potential of this new generation so that society as a whole may benefit from their energy, their ability and their enthusiasm.

As you may know for some time now, we've been actively involved in a study on youth and alcohol. Young people across Ontario have told us they are drinking more, drinking earlier and many are having pretty serious problems as a result.

No government wants to intrude further into the personal lives of the people. And few

people want ever-increasing regulation or control. However, when you see a problem of this dimension, you cannot sit back. Government has a duty and an obligation to look for possible solutions and take decisive action.

In the spring of last year, the youth secretariat made over 30 recommendations to the Ontario cabinet, and many have already been implemented.

Because of our report, official age-of-majority cards, with a picture of the holder, are now the only identification accepted at liquor control board outlets.

An all-party committee of the legislature is getting ready to report on ways in which drinking-driving laws can be better enforced. And the ministry of transportation and communications is actively considering proposals for probationary rather than full licensing of new drivers. The ministry of health is involved in a multi-media alcohol-education program, and we are seeing new and improved messages emphasizing personal responsibility for moderation in alcohol consumption.

These are just a few areas of our report which have seen immediate action, and I am fully confident that further recommendations

will be implemented in the very near future.

Another area of real concern to young people is the financing of post-secondary education. As a government, we fully recognize this concern, and we have for many years attempted to keep university and college tuition fees to an absolute minimum. But the current economic situation we are experiencing prevents us from providing students with the kind of protection which was possible in the past.

As in every other area of spending, costs of post-secondary education have been rising at a rapid pace. We believe that these costs should be shared in part by the students who use them, and in part by the taxpayers of the province. Therefore, we have suggested that universities increase their tuition fees by \$100 for a two-term academic year, and community colleges increase their fees by \$75 for the same period. This is the first fee increase in five years, and still means that students will be paying only a fraction of their educational costs.

The increase does not in any way change our government's policy that no student will be denied a post-secondary education for financial reasons. As in the past, students who can't afford their share of education costs will be able

to apply for assistance in the form of loans and grants from an enriched Ontario Student Assistance Program. Higher tuition fees will be fully considered in assessing every student's financial need.

Even though the winter months seem to stretch endlessly ahead, this is just a reminder to students that it's never too early to start looking for a summer job.

There is every indication that the market will be a tough one this summer, and most of the good jobs will be gone by early spring. The sooner you look, the better your chance of working at something you really want to do.

The staff of the Ontario Youth Secretariat has prepared a booklet to help you find a summer job. It contains pointers on how to prepare a resume or a letter of application, and what to expect when you go for an interview. If you would like a copy of this booklet, please call my office at 965-4849, or drop me a line at 880 Bay St., 5th Floor, Toronto M5S 1Z8. I'll be glad to send one out.

Mr. Jones is Progressive Conservative MPP for Mississauga North.