

This eReview highlights some of the year's quirkier family related news item.

2007 in Review: How Canadians Did Marriage and Family

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JANUARY

Triple the love, triple complications

On the second day of 2007, the Ontario Court of Appeal made legal history by granting a boy three legal parents. A lesbian couple wanted both of their names plus the biological father's name on the child's birth certificate. This new precedent just made family law a whole lot more complicated (don't even think about children's rights).

FEBRUARY

The limits of Canadian diversity

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada called for more screening of younger expectant moms for fetal abnormalities in February. More women, they say, ought to be given the screening so they can terminate their pregnancies should they discover their child has a fetal abnormality such as Down Syndrome. Dr. Andre Lalonde told the *National Post* on January 6, 2007, "Yes, it's going to lead to more terminations, but it's going to be fair to these women who are 24 who say, 'How come I have to raise an infant with Down Syndrome, whereas my cousin who was 35 didn't have to?' ...We have to be fair to give women a choice."

We think we have to be fair and call a spade a spade. Eugenics is alive and well in Canada.



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MARCH

Deconstructing gender- one washroom at a time...

University campuses in Manitoba, Winnipeg and Toronto advocated for gender-neutral washrooms this year to accommodate transgendered students. VP of student services for the University of Winnipeg Students' Association told the *National Post* "Gender-neutral washrooms are important because it deconstructs the idea of gender as a whole." Wiping out genders altogether is a daunting task—but not to the intrepid stalwarts of the student unions.



We think this whole policy needs to be flushed.

APRIL

Nothing says love like these e-cards

Torontonians diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infections can now send anonymous e-cards to past sexual partners. In April, Toronto joined inspot.org, an online partner notification system. Toronto Public Health received \$59,220 to sign on to the service, which lets users pick one of six e-cards to notify past sexual partners that they may have been exposed to an STI.

One reads: "Who? What? When? Where? It doesn't matter. I got an STI; you might have too. Please get checked out." And the sex isn't to blame, inspot.org counsels, "STIs are part of life. One reason they're so common has nothing to do with sex, and everything to do with silence."

Sending an e-card instead of talking to someone kind of sounds like silence to us. Thank you, Toronto Public Health, for this brave, albeit anonymous, battle against the spread of STIs.

MAY

Jilted fiancé can keep \$49,000 engagement ring

Jilted men will be glad to know: Engagement rings are the property of the buyer, not the receiver, if the engagement ends, according to a BC Supreme Court ruling this May. Justice Ian Pitfield ruled that an ex-groom-to-be could keep the \$49,000 sparkler he gave his Vancouver fiancée. According to the judge, "the ring was given as evidence of the mutual promise to marry...The contract has been terminated. The parties should be restored to their pre-contract positions."

Good thing things didn't work out: A woman who breaks off an engagement and then takes her ex-fiancé to court over the ring sure ain't worth marrying.

JUNE

No Spanking in the Senate

In June the Senate moved to eradicate Section 43, which allows parents to spank their children, from the Criminal Code of Canada with Bill S-207. Testifying before the Senate Committee on Human Rights, IMFC executive director Dave Quist said that a no-spanking law would be difficult to enforce and spawn a kind of "neighbour spy upon neighbour" mentality. He went on: "[w]orst of all, this bill is a slap in the face to children truly suffering abuse...[w]ith this current Bill in the Senate, select senators are trivializing parenthood by micromanaging how good parents discipline, while turning attention away from real abuse."

JULY

Baby TV

For better or worse, BabyFirstTV entered Canadian homes this July. The channel is advertised as being "designed to enhance baby's development in a delightful and engaging way." Better or worse than daycare? Class size is certainly smaller. Chalk one up for Baby TV.

AUGUST

Web site details government licensed daycare conditions

In May the *Toronto Star* broke the news that certain licensed daycares in Ontario were running under substandard conditions—information that was only made public thanks to access to information requests.

In August, the Ontario government launched a web site for parents to be able to check on whether or not licenses centres have provisional licenses, and why.

Is launching a web site the very best they can do when they've overseen dysfunctional daycares for years? It's enough to make all of us instant libertarians.

SEPTEMBER

Our marriage is extremely important, honey

An Aug/Sept 2007 poll by the Canadian Press- Harris-Decima, found 53 percent of Canadians think marriage is less important to society than in years past, but only 17 percent say it is less important to them personally.

Of the 83 per cent who said marriage is just as important to them today as in years past, fully 100 per cent had their spouse standing behind them, telling them how to answer that question.

OCTOBER

Drug wars

On October 4, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced the National Anti-Drug Strategy with an additional injection of \$63.8 million to the existing \$385 million spent on drug programs. Of the new money, \$10 million will go to prevention aimed at youth and their parents. Over the next two years, \$21.6 million will go to law enforcement and \$32.2 million will go to funding treatment.

Drug prevention begins with parents. "A good drug policy for families must confront permissive cultural apathy towards drug abuse with current and accurate information," wrote the IMFC's Peter Jon Mitchell. Smoking up is as bad as smoking, for example, not necessarily a message teens today are getting: Canadian teens use marijuana at higher rates than other countries.

NOVEMBER

Adult stem cells just as viable

Two scientific papers confirmed in November that adult human cells can be reprogrammed to function in the same way as embryonic stem cells. The author of one of these cutting edge studies was also the first scientist to isolate human embryonic stem cells in 1998. Now in 2007, his latest study shows it is possible to produce "induced pluripotent state cells" (iPSCs) with all the characteristics of human embryonic stem cells from adult human cells.

DECEMBER

Remembering Tracy Latimer

Robert Latimer was denied parole on December 5 for the murder of his daughter, Tracy.

Born on November 23, 1980, Tracy loved spending time with her family. She preferred meat and potatoes to spaghetti, which she would eat only slowly. She enjoyed playing dress up with her sisters, and would choose red nail polish over all other colours. Her father killed her by carbon monoxide asphyxiation in the family garage in 1993.

Elite opinion has shown a reverent compassion, not for the little girl, but rather, for the father who killed her. We can debate whether he is a threat to society forever, as did a *Globe and Mail* editorial on December 6—but clearly this is not the only reason why we incarcerate criminals. Robert doesn't deserve a shorter sentence. Tracy deserved far better than she received.

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