

THE FREE PRESS

OPINION

Page A8

SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 1996

PHONE 564-0005

Make crosswalks clear to everyone

There is no doubt that trying to cross certain streets in Prince George is akin to playing on the highway. Cars and Cariboo Cadillacs drive with abandon, often reckless, ensuring long waits at intersections without lights (and even then it's wise to pause for a moment). And crosswalks do little to alleviate the problem.

Part of the problem is the drivers. There is no doubt they don't know the rules of the road (or at least prefer to ignore them). Drivers consistently speed, use signal lights after they've begun the turn (the idea, folks, is to indicate where you're going), dart in and out of traffic like a bad roller derby exhibition and think red lights mean hurry up.

But, to be fair, the way crosswalks in Prince George are marked do little to encourage adherence to the rules of the road. It's quite likely that the system, of thick white lines on the road, was dreamed up in Victoria — a place where they don't have eight months of winter and two months of poor ice skating.

During the winter, it's impossible to look at the road and tell where crosswalks are. The signs, for the most part, are small and do little to grab attention.

A simple solution to a possible deadly dilemma is larger signs. Stretching the signs across the road, making them yellow — these are just two ways of getting the driver's attention.

As well, it becomes easier for pedestrians to know where they should cross and when they should walk a few blocks out of their way to avoid getting hit by cars.

Drivers need to learn respect for pedestrians and the city can do more to make crosswalks visible. But an ICBC spokesperson summed it up best when said: You might be right but you don't want to dead right.

In other words, be careful when using city crosswalks.

THE PRINCE GEORGE FREE PRESS

Publisher: Curt Duddy
Editor: Shane Mills

The Prince George Free Press, a politically independent newspaper, is published Thursdays and Sundays by Cariboo Press (1969) Ltd. at 200-1515 2nd Avenue, Prince George, B.C. V2L 3B8
Phone: 564-0005 Fax: 562-0025

All material contained in this publication is protected by copyright. Reproduction is expressly prohibited by the rightsholder.

Editorial: Tonya Hartz, Cheryl Jahn, Frank Peebles and Chris Simnett

Advertising manager: Todd Cernelley

Sales: Judy Bolton, Jason Davin, Zada Gierl, Terry Hamilton, Vince Scott, Richard Skinner, Cheryl Stewart and Carmen Struthers

Production: David Blair, manager; Cam McAlpine

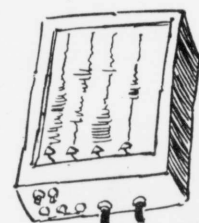
Administration: Tracey Stad, office manager; Marnie Foubert and Donna Lutz

Circulation: Ken Haste, manager; Dennis Callaghan

TRUTH SEEKING DEVICES IN POLITICS

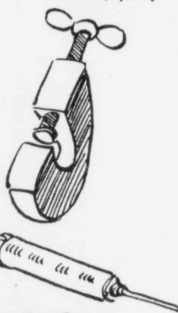
3. LIBERAL....

1. N.D.P...

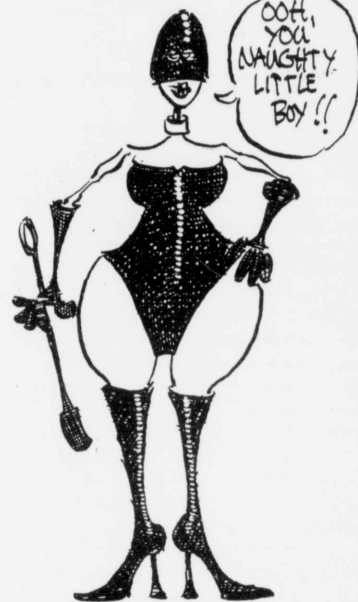


LIE
DETECTOR..

2. REFORM...



THUMBSCREWS
AND
SODIUM PENTATHOL



Stealing from waitresses

This is not a story of outrageous policies introduced by a self-righteous government in "the best interests" of the tax-paying public. Nor is it a story about big-time criminals wreaking havoc on society. In fact, it's about the petty thieves who, for whatever reason, feel they can walk out on their restaurant tab. For retail businesses, it's called shoplifting, in restaurants or pubs, it's called "dine and dash."

So what has spurred this diatribe? Well, Georgina, to be exact. Georgina is an easy going, fun-loving waitress at the BX Pub. Last week, I found out two customers of hers put the normally upbeat woman in tears. There were no scathing comments about the food or the service. In fact, it was not something these guys did that put her tears, but something they didn't do. They didn't pay the tab. Instead they played a couple of games of pool, racked up over \$40 worth of food and drink, and decided they'd rather not pay the bill. When she wasn't looking, they made tracks. So what? many

ery. The dine and dasher has as much as reached into the waiter or waitress's pocket and taken the cash directly. Unfortunately, there isn't much the victim can do except eat the loss. I don't expect it tastes as good as the meal they bought for their dasher!

It's reached such proportions in restaurants and pubs that often servers set up "D and D funds." After each shift, the servers put a percentage of their tips into a pot in order to ease the financial pinch of a dine and dash. That's a practice common at The Keg restaurants, for instance. Unfortunately, the kitty doesn't cover the whole loss and a portion is still coming out the server's pocket. In other cases, most commonly in night clubs, a server will only "run a tab" when he or she has the customer's credit card in hand. It has to be done; the waiters and waitresses clearly have to cover their behinds. In Georgina's case, she's a single mom trying to put herself through college without the loans. She works part time to make ends meet. It's a pretty sad testament of how petty this society can be when guys like Georgina's two mystery pool players have to stoop so low as to rip off a single working mom.



PAST DEADLINE

Cheryl Jahn

would say. The prices restaurants and pubs charge are already too high anyway, right? Well, that's a matter of opinion. The restaurants setting the prices just have to pick up the tab, right? Wrong. I don't think a lot of people know they're not ripping off the restaurant itself, they're actually ripping off the waitress. It is for all intents and purposes petty thiev-