

Bill Rea ? Welcome back to the routine

In my job, I have learned that it's not hard sometimes to make people angry, and I suspect that's what I'm going to do with the next sentence.

I don't like holiday weekends. There, I typed it. It's on the record.

In fact, I don't do any holidays well, whether they fall on weekends or in the middle of the week. The only real positive thing about the holiday weekend we just finished with is it means the end of summer holidays too.

I know many people eagerly look forward to abbreviated work weeks, my wife among them. But the reality of my job is it just complicates things, and throws my routine straight into the bucket.

In my case, I still have to get a newspaper out on time. An extra day off for most people means it's harder to reach contacts, and even if I know how to get hold of them, I usually have a guilt trip if I have to bug them during a holiday.

I operate very much on a routine that consists of a seven-day week, and the time for work is budgetted throughout those seven days. Cutting things back to six days just creates a burden for me.

It's also a fact that a lot of things shut down for holidays, making it harder for me to find events in the community. It's hard being a workaholic.

True, that's not always the case with all holidays, and a lot depends on which community you happen to be in.

For example, there's usually not a lot going on Victoria Day weekend, although nearby Nobleton is an exception. The community there always has a festival the holiday Monday, complete with a parade, entertainment and a lot of other fun stuff, including fireworks. But there's never much going on Canada Day in neighbouring King Township. As we all know, that's not the case in Caledon. That day usually starts very early for me, and I'm usually much too tired to do anything when I get home in the evening. And around Easter, it's usually easy enough to find an Easter Egg Hunt.

Civic Holiday is an easy time to find stuff going on, especially around Terra Cotta with the big bicycle race. It's usually a very hot day, and I sometimes wonder how the cyclists get through it, but they do.

I guess my real problem is these holidays are seldom holidays for me, because I have to work, often putting in full work days. Okay, so I'm jealous!

The Holiday season in December is something of a different matter. Community newspapers usually shut down for about a week, so there's not a lot of work to be done (although I'm usually pretty good at finding some). Besides there's usually so much to be done around the home, I seldom find the time to relax.

Some holidays seem to disappear.

I went to school at a time when kids didn't go to school Remembrance Day, and if Nov. 11 happened to fall on a weekend, then that was one year we didn't get an extra day off.

I always felt a little robbed that there was no school in July, so there was no school for me to absent myself from Canada Day.

The reason behind some holidays and what they signify comes into play too.

For example, Labour day is supposed to be a day to recognize labour. But we all know what's really involved. It's the last day of summer vacation. It's the end of care-free down time for the younger folks among us. I work all summer (apart from the week my wife insisted I take off), but I remember too well what it was like to be a kid, and I can have empathy for what the holiday really represents to them.

Of course, Labour Day means something more to those who are involved in the labour movement. There's even a parade in Toronto. In the years when I worked in the big city, I used to make a point of getting to the parade. There were usually some participation from the communities where I was working, even if it was just politicians. Here were a bunch of labour advocates taking the day off so they could take part in a parade that necessitated me spending part of the holiday working. Some day, when I have time, I'll try to figure out if that makes sense.

The parade ends at the Canadian National Exhibition grounds, and my parents used to take my brother and I to the Ex Labour Day. There was one year we happened to be near the gate when the Labour Day Parade arrived. I was old enough to understand that just because there was a parade didn't mean Santa Claus was going to be bringing up the rear. But I was also young enough to wonder if Santa wasn't involved, what was the point of having a parade.

I guess that helps explain why I never get Christmas greetings from any labour organization.

As much as I enjoy summer, and the lack of worries about getting snowed in or freezing myself numb, I do look forward to Labour Day only because it means a regular routine is about to return. Municipal councils don't meet much during the summer. Caledon council seems to make a point of meeting during my vacation time, but I've already vented about that, pointlessly, I might add.

So even if I do have sympathy for what kids face this time of year, I'm glad to see the end of summer. It means we can get back to what we're supposed to be doing.

A lot of us won't be willing to admit it, but we all need routines in our lives, along with the occasional breaks.

My life oftens seems to be one big routine. True, it involves a lot of work, but that's the kind of person I am.

I enjoy having a certain amount of down time, even if it's not as much as most people get. But I can only be still for so long. I usually get up at 7 every morning, whether I have to or not. Even on vacation, I am usually awake by that hour, no matter what the time was when I went to bed. So I get up and find something to do, very frequently work-related. It's quite often that Beth will get up Saturday or Sunday morning and find me writing away.

So yes, getting back to the regular working routine is something I have been looking forward to.

Of course, theres going to be a lot of stuff happening in the coming weeks, and that's not including the start of school sport, hockey season, fairs and equestrian events (I am glad the Pan Am Games were held in the summer, because I don't know how I would have found time to get to them if they hadn't).

Remember, we're in the middle of an overly-long federal election campaign, so things should be heating up on that front pretty soon.

And things should be fun at the local councils too; both Caledon and Peel.

Enough down time. Bring it all on.

