

## BROCK'S BANTER: Reaping what we sow

By Brock Weir

Another steamy heatwave has come and gone, at least for a little while, paving the way for a slightly cooler weekend ahead.

If you're like me, you probably don't handle the humidity as well as you would like. Dry heat is fine, sure, but when the atmosphere is a bit on the sticky side, suddenly you can think of many other places you'd prefer to be rather than in the great outdoors doing what needs to be done.

Maybe you put off that long-awaited barbeque for a few days so you don't run the risk of your face becoming juicier than whatever you're poring over on the grill. Maybe, when facing some back-breaking labour in the garden, you simply decided to give the weeds a bit of a reprieve before helping them meet their maker in a less extreme climate.

Same here, but by the time Sunday rolled around I had my regrets.

?Weeds will grow of themselves in any soil without being sown,? I read that evening, as you can appreciate, it was easy to accept as simple, basic fact. ?The farmer is not to blame because there are weeds in his field, but he is to blame if he allows weeds to take possession of the field. The strength of their growth may even attest to the richness of the soil, but the farmer who plows his field and sows it with good seed is master of the soil. When the harvest comes, it will not be an ingathering of weeds, but of wheat. The trouble is not so much that evil is suggested to the mind, but that the thought is harbored and permitted to remain sufficiently long to welcome other evil thoughts until lust is conceived, which brings forth sin.?

Colour me intrigued!

Naturally, I had to read more.

Granted, I came into this great read in the middle, so I flipped back a few pages and was heartened to see what I was reading was drafted by an expert in his field after significant groundwork and consultation with eminent experts ? all off this hand in hand with some pretty weighty and impressive endorsements from companies and organizations as varied as the YMCA and Ladies Home Journal.

American, sure, but close enough.

I continued.

?God has made no mistake in giving us a strong sexual nature,? he continued. ?We would not take away from any young man, if we could, his sexual intensity or rob him of the most manly, healthy development of his sexual nature. Sexuality has been strongly marked in all the great men who have risen to eminence in all departments of life. Without it, man would be mean, selfish sordid, and ungracious to his fellow-men and uncivil to womankind. Were it not for this nature, which God has implanted in our being, no man would desire to provide for the support of another individual or enter into a relation which would likely impose upon him the necessity of supporting a family of dependent and growing children. No man becomes affable to women until he is rendered so by the awakening of his sexual nature and the quickening of that within him, when held under proper discipline and control, rendering him noble and unselfish.

?No other part of his being so much assists him in the development of that which is highest, noblest and best in his nature. It emasculates either men or animals to despoil them of their sexual power by mutilating or removing any part of their reproductive organs. If a man is this mutilated when he is young he becomes a creature which is repellant to men and abhorrent to women. His body is without manliness, his mind is without ambition, his life is without a purpose, and he walks the earth loathing himself and despised by all who are normally constituted.

?The young man who desires to be pure in life must also be careful about the purity of his blood. No man can eat pork, at least to any considerable amount, without perceptibly poisoning his blood. Numerous forms of skin disease are easily traceable to the eating of pork, both fresh and cured, in the many forms of sausage, pudding, ham and bacon. But some people say if pork is not to be eaten, then why was it created? The hog, like the hawk and the crow, is a scavenger. He was created to eat that which is loathsome, and which, if not destroyed, would endanger our lives by exposing us to infection and death.?

So, there you have it. A potpourri of information that you may use or disregard as you see fit.

The above passages originate in the book, ?What A Young Man Ought To Know,? part of a series of books for young men and women designed to teach them, as the name suggests, everything they ought to know about life, from the birds and the bees, to how to address the urges they might feel growing up, and how to settle into their prescribed gender roles.

We rightly scoff at what was written above in 1897 as appalling, ridiculous, and certainly irrelevant but it is, at the end of the day, just about as relevant as the 1998 Ontario Sex Ed curriculum that has been floated for comeback, but a comeback which was

ultimately nipped in the bud, at least for now, on Monday.

The fact, however, that reverting back to what was taught in 1998 was even a consideration remains very concerning to say the least. You might think it is a stretch to say that principles that were very much in vogue in 1897 are as irrelevant as legislation that was being drafted exactly 100 years, but let's look at facts. Over those intervening 101 years, comparatively little had changed. There was a shift away from health and sex being dictated by tenants of faith, there was a rise in first, second and third wave feminism that turned what was once the norm in gender roles on its ear, and the sexual revolution of the 60s had come and gone.

Much more has changed in the intervening 20 years. The internet and social media has created a very different world than the one Ontarians of my generation had to navigate, and one almost unrecognizable to our parents and certainly our grandparents.

Turning back the clock to teach youngsters how to traverse these waters with principles drafted before Instagram and Snapchat, before sexting, before it became fully acceptable to be one's self, and before young men and women fully appreciate they had the right to say no on who touches their body, is essentially sending them out with little more than that laboured weed analogy from 1897.

But therein is a truth --- we do reap what we sow.