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PUCK STOPS HERE?

Is Bell's suspension start of a new NHL standard?

SPORTS — S1

**UNITED WAY**
How it turns lives around
SECTION P**CANADA'S NEW FAMILY UNITS**

TORY ZIMMERMAN/TORONTO STAR

Sean Slaven provides homework help yesterday for son Brendan, 11, who lives with him 65 per cent of the time.

DADS IN CHARGE**19.9%**

Percentage of lone-parent families headed by men, according to the latest census data released yesterday. That's twice the growth of single-parent families headed by women

NO KIDS**42.7%**

Percentage of families comprised of couples with no kids



RON BILL/TORONTO STAR

Like many GTA couples, Samantha and Cory Wright are childless.



RICHARD LAUTENS/TORONTO STAR

For same-sex married Toronto couple Ernie Chan, left, and Ben Xie, who wed in 2003, the "social institution of marriage is very important."

GAY COUPLES**45,345**

Number of same-sex couples across Canada, of which 7,465 were legally married. Their numbers grew 33% from the last census, almost 6 times the growth for opposite-sex couples



YVONNE BERG/TORONTO STAR

Evi Deloukas, 45, was thrilled to have Angelina Primavera, 2 months, later in life.

THE STORIES BEHIND THE TRENDS

The family is a dynamic institution and Canadians' ideas about what constitutes it continue to evolve. See stories on pages A12-A14.

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Do you think marriage is important? Speak Out at [thestar.com](#). More on recent census releases at [www.thestar.com/census](#)**TTC hikes Metropass fare \$9.25**

New TTC fares start in November

Tickets and tokens	\$2.25	up 15¢
Cash	\$2.75	unchanged
Monthly Metropass	\$109	up \$9.25
Senior ticket	\$1.50	up 10¢
Child ticket	50¢	up 3¢

SOURCE: Toronto Transit Commission

Transit commissioners okay 'bitter' increase in attempt to stave off deep cuts to service

TESS KALINOWSKI
TRANSPORTATION REPORTER

The TTC's fare hike could cost the system 6 million rides a year.

But that's small potatoes compared with the millions of transit trips that will be lost if "intolerable" overcrowding on more than half of the system continues, according to TTC officials.

Yesterday, transit commissioners voted unanimously to increase fares, admitting their decision will have the greatest impact on some of the most vulnerable, including the working poor and students.

In November, 15 cents will be added to the cost of tickets and tokens, bringing the price to \$2.25.

Riders will also pay much more — \$109, up from \$99.75 — for the Metropass, which was exempted from last year's fare increase. TTC chair Adam Giambra resisted a recommendation from staff to increase it to \$111. The \$2.75 cash fare will remain the same.

The increase means the threatened cuts to 37 money-losing bus routes and closing of the Sheppard subway line are off the table — for now.

The commission also voted to implement in February service improvements, originally scheduled for this fall, that were postponed to meet city hall's budget restraints — including a plan to put 100 more buses on the road.

Yesterday, reaction from regular riders to the increased fares ranged from distress to resignation.

"As a student, everything is expensive," said Christina Ballarano, 19, who lives in Hamilton but rides the TTC five days a week. "This is just more money out of my pocket. But I still need to ride to get to school so I'll pay it."

Calling the fare hike a "bitter" move, Giambra said the TTC

TTC continued on A6

OLDER MOMS**9.4%**

Percentage of children under the age of 5 whose mothers are in their 40s

ONTARIO VOTES**Ex-Harris minister sees peril for Tory on schools**RICHARD BRENNAN
STAFF REPORTER

LONDON, ONT.—Progressive Conservative Leader John Tory's policy on funding religious schools may well cost him the Ontario election, says a former provincial Conservative cabinet minister.

Dianne Cunningham, who was colleges and universities minister in the former Mike Harris government, told the Star yesterday that Tory's \$400 million promise to provide public funding to faith-based schools is a "very controversial" proposal.

"He has kind of got himself into something.... He may go down on this but he will go down as a straight shooter," said Cunningham, who was defeated in the 2003 election and is now director of a non-partisan think-tank, the Lawrence National Centre for Policy and Man-

agement at the University of Western Ontario.

"The only positive to come out of this is that people are saying he at least has the guts to say what he is thinking," said Cunningham, who said that she hasn't made up her mind on the issue.

"I am hearing more and more people

SCHOOLS continued on A17

More election coverage on A16-A17 and at [thestar.com/election](#)**FULL INDEX PAGE A2**

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The Canadian family is slowly being reshaped

More men heading up single-parent households, same-sex and common-law unions on rise: Census

Sep 13, 2007 04:30 AM

FRANCINE KOPUN
FEATURE WRITER

Sean Slaven cannot imagine his life without the routine of picking up his 11-year-old son Brendan after school, monitoring his homework, making his favourite meal of Indian butter chicken, and then playing ball or watching the season finale of *Canadian Idol* together.

Slaven, 42, is the male head of a single-parent family – one of a growing number of men in Canada who care for their children half or more than half of the time. He shares custody of his son with his former wife, and Brendan is with him as much as 65 per cent of the time. Slaven wouldn't want it any other way.

"If you're an access parent you're a visitor in that child's life. You're always trying to do things that are fun, fun, fun – you don't get involved with their school, you don't get involved with their lives. They're strangers to you," says Slaven, a self-employed sales professional in Burlington.

According to 2006 census data released yesterday, lone-parent families headed by men increased 14.6 per cent during the five years prior to 2006; lone-parent families headed by women increased 6.3 per cent.

In fact, the Canadian family is slowly being reshaped: Marriage continues to lose ground to common-law relationships, same-sex unions are on the rise and families without children have become more common than families with children as the population ages and fertility rates decline.

"Family has always been a dynamic institution," said Alan Mirabelli, executive associate of the Vanier Institute for the Family. "If you ask people what their ideal of family is, they'll simply describe the family they grew up in, but family goes back 3,000 years. It transforms itself."



TORY ZIMMERMAN/TORONTO STAR

Sean Slaven provides homework help yesterday for son Brendan, 11, who lives with him 65 per cent of the time.

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The 2006 census enumerated nearly 9 million families in Canada. Married couples constituted the largest group at 68.6 per cent, but their proportion has been steadily decreasing for 20 years. The proportion of common-law families meanwhile, has been growing in leaps and bounds. In 1986, they accounted for 7.2 per cent of all census families. Now they account for 15.5 per cent.

Of the 33 census management areas in Canada (population of at least 100,000) Toronto has the second-highest percentage of married couple families at 75.3 per cent. (Abbotsford, B.C., has the highest at 76.2 per cent.) Toronto has the lowest percentage of common-law families at 7.8 per cent.

"It may be that immigrant families are more likely to be married than to live common-law, and certainly the high immigrant population in Toronto may be a contributing factor," said Pamela White, director of the demography division at Statistics Canada.

Christine van Cauwenberghe, a financial planning expert with Investors Group, says many people in common-law relationships often don't realize the implications of their union. They may find that in some ways they are as legally bound to each other as married couples, but there are important exceptions: in Ontario, for example, married and common-law couples are treated differently when it comes to the division of family property and inheritances.

Nationally, the number of same-sex couples grew 32.6 per cent between 2001 and 2006, to 45,300 couples. Of these about 7,500 or 16.5 per cent, were married. A little more than half of the couples were men (53.7 per cent).

The trend to lone-parent families may have stabilized, according to the data. The proportion of lone-parent families in 2006 was 15.9 per cent, up just .2 per cent from 2001.

Although the majority of lone-parent families in 2006 were headed by women (80.1 per cent), the number of lone-father families rose dramatically over the five years preceding the census.

One explanation is that fewer mothers are granted sole custody following a divorce. In 1980, mothers got custody 78.2 per cent of the time. By 2003, the figure had dropped to 47.7 per cent, with joint custody awarded in 43.8 per cent of cases, according to the census report.

"There is certainly much more shared custody, especially when you're talking about couples in the 35-45 age range, because more women in that age range have careers that are very demanding," said Nicola Savin, a Toronto family law lawyer with 20 years of experience.

"I'm delighted to see this, absolutely delighted, because I was one of those dads," said Danny Guspie, executive director of Fathers' Resources International. "It tells me that finally society is starting to catch up with itself. As our judiciary begins to age, younger people are coming in with more well-suited family ideas, rather than gender-based family ideas."

In a way the increase in single-parent households led by men is not surprising, says the Vanier Institute's Mirabelli. With more dual-income families, the decision about who gets custody is shaped to a certain extent by the job demands of both parents. He said it could also be that older children are choosing dad as opposed to mom and dads are now willing to honour that choice.

Michael Kaufman, 56, a former single dad who shared custody of his son between the ages of 9 and 16 with his former spouse, says he believes the arrangement allowed him to share more quality time with his son.

"I think quality comes out of quantity," said Kaufman, an educator and independent consultant on gender issues. "Those moments happen when you're shopping together or washing the dishes or making a meal or working in the garden or building something. If you're spending time together, if you're doing things together, those conversations will happen, those wonderful moments will happen."

- CANADIANS BUCKING TRADITION
- SAME-SEX UNION RAPID GROWTH
- QUEBEC COMMON-LAW LEADER
- PARENTS' HOME BECKONS
- SINGLE-PERSON HOMES GROWING