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# The nation's laggards, or its leaders?

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**COLUMN:** Jim Meek

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As summer performs an extreme makeover on Nova Scotia – transforming wintry gulag into earthly paradise – I find myself dangerously drawn toward optimism.

So indulge me a moment, while I argue this province and this region are leading Canada – by at least one measure.

Bobby Kennedy started to define this measure in the 1960s, when he was touring the U.S. as a presidential hopeful.

Days before he was assassinated on June 5, 1968, Kennedy delivered a landmark speech in which he challenged that conventional measurement of economic growth known as GDP.

The Gross Domestic Product, he said, "measures everything except that which makes life worthwhile."

This quotation is now a rallying cry for the "happy people" lobby – that growing legion of advocates who want us to institute a "soft" measure called Gross National Happiness (GNH) and another softie called the Genuine Progress Index. None of the happy people likes the GDP – because it rolls everything into a big boiling vat of economic activity.

Yes, the overall economy grows if a new miracle drug comes to market. It also takes off if we have to spend \$1 billion fighting forest fires this summer – and lose \$3 billion worth of timber in the process.

In addition, as Kennedy said, there are those things that the GDP does not measure. "It does not allow for the health of our families, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It is indifferent to . . . the safety of our streets.

"It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, or the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. . . . GDP measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country."

In short, GDP does not measure the quality of our lives, the health of people, or the sustainability of our communities.

Well, I don't believe for a minute that you can enjoy quality of life in the absence of prosperity, but I still think the happy people may be on to something here.

In Atlantic Canada, for instance, we're so darned joyful it's a wonder we can stand ourselves. Why do I say this?

Just this week, I finished writing a research report – based on more than 1,800 interviews with Atlantic Canadians – that showed more than 90 per cent of people in this region are satisfied with their work. An astounding proportion (98 per cent) seem to like their co-workers.

"Gadzooks!" I said to myself. "What goes on here?"

Naturally enough, I went looking for conflicting evidence. And found none.

Instead, I came across a sunny three-part report whose author concludes this region is a sort of work "paradise." Based on a 35,000-person Health Canada survey on Work-Life Conflict in Canada, it describes a region in which people toil harder, longer, happier and with a deeper sense of dedication.

Be still, my heart, there's more.

A University of British Columbia professor (John Helliwell) applies an internationally approved set of indices that make up – are you ready for this? – Subjective Well Being (SWB). This index looks at connectedness to family, friends, community and work.

And guess what? Atlantic Canada is the best place to live in Canada, even as Canada is one of the best places to live on the planet.

Now, I know some really smart people who would tell you that this kind of thinking is dangerously delusional. For while we raise a glass to our Gross Regional Happiness and salute our Genuine Progress, the region's economy continues to trail the nation in terms of GDP growth.

At the same time, the Rest of Canada (ROC) grows more sullen about transferring vast stores of its wealth to our region.

Our "soft" numbers, in short, are not budging the hard measures of real growth.

But wait a minute.

While the sky sings blue and the sun sets slowly over the big lake at Kejimikujik, can't we imagine a world in which this region's soft assets – from educated workers to short commuting times – attract all kinds of smart money?

A world in which we soft-sell our way to hard progress.

Like I said, the happy people may have something going for them, and maybe we should work with them – as long as they promise not to get too darned delirious and annoying.

Jim Meek is a freelance journalist based in Halifax. He is also editor of The Inside Out Report, a quarterly journal based on public opinion research.

# Gross National Happiness index flawed

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**COLUMN:** Don Cayo  
**BYLINE:** Don Cayo  
**SOURCE:** Vancouver Sun

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The International Conference on Gross National Happiness in Nova Scotia last week focused on the idea that the prevalence of contentment, not the speed of economic growth, is the real measure of national progress.

It's one of those ideas that intuitively sounds right, but I'm not sure it stands up to analysis.

Even Ron Coleman, the organizer of the conference, admits that you can't measure happiness per se. So you need measurable surrogates — things that might logically make people happy — as components of the index.

Coleman draws heavily on his own index — GPI Atlantic, or the Genuine Progress Index — which he has been promoting for years as a substitute for the Gross Domestic Product indicator that's usually cited when national progress is being discussed. Levels of health, crime and environmental degradation figure in his index, as do income distribution, volunteer activities and unpaid work in the home.

The Happiness conference went further, adding ideas from the king of Bhutan, who 30 years ago decided to try to balance economic development with environmental preservation, cultural promotion and good governance.

Mind you, Bhutan isn't everyone's idea of the happy kingdom. It's GDP per capita is \$1,400 US per year in purchasing power parity (much less in actual cash). And even if you dismiss this as not being a valid measure of anything worthwhile, consider these facts: life expectancy is just 54 years, one child in 10 dies before age 5, only 56 per cent of males and half that number of females can read and write, and 100,000 refugees are camped just outside its borders claiming to be victims of racism.

This questionable role model aside, the other big problem with a happiness index is that it's too heavily based on perceptions.

Family violence statistics, for example, might look horrendously worse now than in our "idyllic" past for the simple reason that child abuse was once not counted as a crime, and spousal abuse was hardly ever reported. Environmental monitoring might detect progress on some specific emissions, but does it reflect the fact that DDT isn't used any more, or that many fewer people smoke, or that the rules on land-clearing now offer far greater protection for waterways?

On the home front, if I'm sipping wine as the salmon sizzles on the barbeque, is this unpaid work that actually adds to the Gross National Worth? And if two people with sharply opposing views — say one is pro-choice and the other pro-life — work tirelessly on behalf of their causes, their efforts might cancel each other out with no net effect on the quality of life, yet their volunteer hours would be counted double. The index would add value for people working on behalf of causes that others despise, and I don't see how the index could or would differentiate between the volunteer who works effectively and the one who wastes time.

If you're thinking that what I'm saying is, effectively, this index will have more or less the same flaws as the more conventional GDP measure, that's largely true. GDP, too, is a flawed measure. It counts negatives — gambling addictions or oil spills or crime waves — as positives because they generate economic activity, even if it's unwanted. It fails to measure costs swallowed by society — traffic congestion, or dirty air, or depleted resources. And it doesn't deal at all with equitable income distribution — assuming Canadians could even agree on what's really fair.

But GDP and related figures are at least based on one countable — money. While I agree with critics who note that money isn't the only thing that matters, it is important, not least because we need it to pay for so many good things — health and education and a clean, safe environment — that all of us value.

So, although we ought to understand the limits of conventional measures and not treat them as more than they are, I'm skeptical that Coleman and colleagues will come up with anything more useful. In fact, I'm not sure we need their index at all.

What we do need, in public forums as well as our private lives, is to constantly weigh a lot of considerations — pros and cons — and try to ensure that life, on balance, gets better. We must each do that according to our own values, not some academic's, or the king of Bhutan's.

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# HAPPINESS MEETING WASTE OF TIME, MONEY

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**BYLINE:** KEITH MCLEAN, LONDON  
**COLUMN:** Letters to the Editor

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I was stunned when I read the article, Well-being can mean more than just money (June 20), about the latest "think-tank" that was meeting in Nova Scotia to discuss, of all things, "a way to calculate a country's gross national happiness."

Tell me that can't be happening. Imagine 400 people from 35 countries meeting to discuss such an inane and asinine topic, not to mention the cost of hotels, meals and transportation for such a group.

What a supreme and utter waste of time and funds -- when the political will is non-existent today to implement whatever recommendations they might come up with.

It's almost as ridiculous as allowing SUVs and buses and diesel trucks to spew their pollution into the air, causing smog alerts -- and then banning cigarette smoking.

# YOU CAN'T BUY HAPPINESS

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**COLUMN:** Our view

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It makes perfect sense, but will it ever fly? There's a movement afoot to get governments to decide policy based on happiness, rather than the economy.

For decades, economists have been measuring success according to the size of the Gross National Product. The logic of that would seem to be: The richer you are, the happier you are.

There are at least two problems with that. One is that, since wealth is unevenly distributed, great numbers still live in squalour. The other is, money can't buy happiness.

The second International Conference on Gross National Happiness was held in Antigonish, N.S., last week.

"The conventional paradigm that bases progress just on economic growth alone is not satisfactory," says Ron Colman of GPI Atlantic, a non-profit research group in Nova Scotia.

"It's too narrow, so we know we have to assess our progress in a more comprehensive and accurate way."

Gross national happiness doesn't measure happiness directly — that's probably impossible. What it does factor in are environmental preservation, sustainable economic development, cultural promotion and good governance.

For too many years, it's seemed to be almost a knee-jerk reaction for governments to mouth platitudes about quality of life and the environment, while doing the minimum for them. Environmental awareness is gradually nudging government policies in many countries around the world, but progress is painfully slow.

Doesn't it make simple sense that people simply want good lives for themselves and that the economy should serve that end, rather than our lives serving the economy? Thomas Jefferson incorporated a similar thought in America's founding document, the Declaration of Independence, with the felicitous phrase, ". . . life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

The tiny Asian country of Bhutan played host to the first international happiness conference last year. It was in Bhutan where the concept originated more than 30 years ago. The king of Bhutan decreed that gross national happiness should supersede the gross national product.

"We're bringing all these people together to try to say, 'What would a sane, decent, good society look like when you put all of these parts together?' " Colman said.

Our values govern our lives. Happiness, surely, is a better value than greed. **KEYWORDS=FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**



# A happy occurrence

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Last week, there was no better place on Earth than Antigonish to go put on a happy face.

OK, so you may think that measuring "Gross National Happiness" – as opposed to the Gross National Product – is one of those airy–fairy concepts or that playing host to the second international conference on the subject was so much pie in the sky.

But the 400 or so health professionals, academics, farmers, environmentalists, business folk and entertainers who attended this powwow weren't of the kooky variety. These were serious people who were trying to make the world a better place, in the finest tradition of the Antigonish Movement.

As Nova Scotians will recall, it was Father Moses Coady who pioneered this gospel of self–help and social justice during the Great Depression, aiding poverty–stricken miners and fishermen to achieve financial independence through interdependence. To this day, the Coady International Institute at St. F.X. University in Antigonish perpetuates his legacy by training students from emerging nations in the art of lifting people out of poverty.

At bottom, that is what Gross National Happiness is all about: progress. Not just material progress, which is how we tend to measure it in the West, but in a holistic sense. The well–being of citizens – and of nations – depends on a complex ecosystem of economic, environmental, social and political conditions which are difficult to reunite all in one place.

In all these domains, Canada is remarkably blessed, although it has as much to learn from the rest of the world as it can teach.

The collapse of the northern cod stocks demonstrated how economic well–being goes hand in hand with environmentally sustainable practices. With better governance, this catastrophe could have been avoided.

The ingredients that go into Gross National Happiness are well–known. "What we have here is all the elements of what it really takes to create a good society," said Ron Colman of GPI Atlantic, the non–profit research group that organized the conference.

The secret lies in finding the collective will and wisdom to implement the recipe for success. Here's hoping last week's meeting of the minds can further illuminate the way to a more utopian existence – one of humanity's perpetual quests.

# Bhutan aside, happiness can't be legislated

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There is a tiny country in the mountains north of India where the average annual income is about \$1,400.

The nation, with a population of less than a million, has had television for only seven years, and Internet access for less than that.

The national airline has two planes, and the country's two access roads are often blocked by snow or rock slides.

Police there charge citizens who don't wear the nationally approved costume, climbers are not permitted to scale the awesome Himalayan peaks for fear of disturbing the spirits, the law limits investments from other countries, and tourist numbers are regulated.

By current Western standards, that sounds like a recipe for poverty and misery.

But the Kingdom of Bhutan has surplus happiness, and it is exporting it to the rest of the world.

Thirty years ago, King Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck decreed that happiness is more important than money, and he put his money where his mouth was.

King Wangchuck and his ministers hung back from the global rush to progress, legislating policies in keeping with the philosophy that having money is not the same thing as having happiness.

That involves conserving its fragile mountain ecology, including the protection of 86 per cent of its forests. Unlike its nearest neighbours, Bhutan spends about a fifth of its budget on health care and education.

It doggedly preserves and promotes its traditional Buddhist culture, and pursues the ideal of good governance.

It sounds like paradise, but it's becoming harder for Bhutan's leaders to maintain happiness policies in the face of the electronic images flashing into their isolated nation from the rest of the world.

The Bhutanese are not smiling, mindless robots, but humans with hopes and fears and wants and needs – all the things that make us susceptible to the lures portrayed on TV and computer screens.

While Bhutan is catching our techno–bug, we want their happiness quotient. Bhutanese happiness is proving so desirable that hundreds of people from 33 countries met in Antigonish this week to hear all about it.

At the second International Conference on Gross National Happiness, they pondered how things like literacy, shorter work hours, mass transit and waste reduction could make us happier.

I didn't go to the conference, but I read all I could find about it, which was surprisingly meagre, given the importance we place on happiness.

How often do parents say that they only want their children to be happy? Not wealthy or healthy or smart or

handsome or popular, but happy!

In Canada our homes are chockablock with stuff. The deadliness and power of our simplest military firearm would shock King Arthur's knights. Children who can't attend school are rare.

We have more food and drink than we need in this land; and most of us have experienced communication via telephone, TV or the Internet. We have more of everything than in any previous generation, but do we have more happiness?

Legislation on helmets, driving, hunting, playground equipment, baby furniture, boating, workplace practices, and more, provide for our safety. Tax laws enforce our contributions to health care, education and other social initiatives.

Our government tells us to treat our families with care, lays out parameters for reproduction and, to a certain extent, protects us from ourselves.

Our lives are so closely regulated that it appears we could live til we die and never suffer a moment of personal responsibility.

And, apparently, we are still not happy – or not happy enough. So are happiness laws next, then? Pay attention to this: One corner of Bhutanese happiness rests on the country's strong spiritual culture. That point seems to have been downplayed in this week's conference, but King Wangchuck gave it equal weight with ecological protection, health and education, and care-filled government.

That doesn't mean we should all be forced to observe the same spiritual tradition or religion. That is not Canada. That is not where we are as a nation.

But, just maybe, we could treat our spirituality as something more important than an hour on one day a week.

Maybe we could experience it as something other than an extracurricular activity, shoehorned between soccer practice and the regular weekly card game.

Maybe we could exercise and feed our souls and allow them to thrive along with our bodies and our wallets.

Maybe we shouldn't be holding our collective breath waiting for someone else to make us happy.

Monica Graham is a freelance writer living in rural Pictou County.

# Showdown: happiness versus misery

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**COLUMN:** Ralph Surette

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There was a big international conference in Antigonish this week on "happiness." Specifically, some 450 delegates from over 30 countries gathered to advance the cause of Gross National Happiness (GNH) – that is, the promotion of policies that lead to greater well-being rather than merely to more money and consumption which, it is argued, only lead to greater unhappiness in the long run.

You might think the whole idea rather odd – "happiness" these days being as likely as not to connote a kind of fuzzy-headed cheerfulness, as opposed to the "reality" of bad news.

Nevertheless, this is a big idea that's gaining traction. One of the reasons is that the prevailing big idea – economic growth at all cost – is not only not making us happy, but is arguably destroying the Earth and its environment, which will make us spectacularly unhappy in the long run. Various countries – Great Britain, Brazil, among others – have written social well-being into their policy aims instead of presuming, as we generally do, that economic growth will take care of everything.

Another reason is that we all – or at least most of us – want "happiness." Few want trouble and misery. Defining it, however, is an old problem that philosophers have chewed on for millennia.

In that connection, there was an intriguing paper from a team at the University of Texas, in which the authors retrace what is historically the most dramatic happiness issue ever. When Europeans "discovered" the Western Hemisphere, they found the inhabitants remarkably content compared to European misery under feudalism. Leading European philosophers like John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau were profoundly influenced by this as they evolved theories of "natural rights," as were European nation-builders in the New World.

The fact that the newborn United States declared "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" as its stated aim owes much to native ways, say the authors. Thomas Jefferson, framer of the U.S. constitution, asserted that native peoples possessed "an infinitely greater degree of happiness than those who live under European governments." They are not submitted to "any coercive laws" and their "only controls are their manners, and the moral sense of right and wrong . . ." Notably, the land and its creatures were considered a gift of the Great Spirit to everybody. Being at one with it was a key part of their contentment.

Others – Benjamin Franklin, Simon Bolivar (creator of several Latin American countries), even Christopher Columbus ("they are the best people in the world and the sanest . . . they love their neighbours as themselves . . . they are faithful and do not covet what others have . . .") – had similar views. Despite this, Europeans couldn't help but try to wipe them out. Is misery always destined to prevail? Or are we learning something now? The elements of happiness are presumed to be a sound relationship with nature and other people, which implies sustainable economic development, good governance and cultural integrity, values that counter the acquisitive compulsion of modern life. Many of the presentations at the conference were highly academic, dealing, for example, with the ins and outs of ways to apply such policies within bureaucracies. Others dealt with examples of community development, including some in fishing communities in the Maritimes.

This is the second such conference. The first was last year in Bhutan, a Himalayan constitutional monarchy between India and Tibet, and a country which prides itself on its social and environmental integrity – to the

point of limiting the number of tourists (9,000) that may enter each year. It was its king who, in 1972, declared that GNH would thenceforth be more important than Gross National Product in the mountain state.

It's in Nova Scotia this time because GPI Atlantic, which is constructing a Genuine Progress Index (GPI) for Canada – measuring progress by more than just economic production, as the standard measures do – did the footwork to get it here. For GPI founder Ron Colman, "there's no reason why Atlantic Canada can't be a leading world model" in good development practices.

Meanwhile, last fall, a study done at the University of British Columbia found that the happiest people in Canada were in Atlantic Canada, the unhappiest in the biggest cities. Colman has something to work with.

Ralph Surette is a veteran Nova Scotia journalist living in Yarmouth County.

# Delegates eager to hear how to rule by happiness

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**COLUMN:** Donald  
**BYLINE:** Jim Mac  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Jim MacDonald Lyonpo Jigmi Thinley

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ANTIGONISH – The former prime minister of Bhutan admits to being overwhelmed with the amount of interest shown in his country's way of life.

Delegates from more than 30 countries came to Antigonish for the four–day Second International Conference on Gross National Happiness, an event designed to challenge traditional ways of measuring successful development.

For three decades, Bhutan has used happiness as the foundation for decisions on sustainable economic development, cultural promotion, governing and environmental preservation.

Lyonpo Jigmi Thinley said this mindset was so different from what the rest of the world was practising that his government, concerned for Bhutan's credibility on the global stage, only started sharing its blueprint with the rest of the world in 1998.

"When anyone spoke about happiness as the purpose for development, it was dismissed as a utopian idea, impractical," Mr. Thinley said before closing ceremonies Thursday.

"But we saw the relevance of it in our own lives, in our own country and we pursued it and never really were of the view it would have the acceptance to the degree that it seems to have."

More than 400 people attended workshops and seminars over the course of the conference.

Mr. Thinley, now Bhutan's home minister, said the appeal of his country's way of life derives from the realization that obsession with materialism leads to disappointment.

Happiness, he said, "is something that everybody, without any difficulty or question, can subscribe to."

Mr. Thinley said that in Bhutan, the gap between rich and poor is "very, very small, as opposed to what one might see in developing countries."

He also said per capita income is among the highest in the region and environmental programs are a priority.

Bhutan, which is 26 per cent dedicated as wildlife sanctuaries and 72 per cent to forest coverage, was the recipient of the United Nations Champion of the Earth award for placing the environment at the centre of its development policies.

# 'I am a corporate sinner': Who is Ray Anderson? The U.S. executive is the darling of anti-corporate activists, the 'mahatma' of business bashing and star of the film *The Corporation*. But who is he?

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**BYLINE:** Peter Foster

**SOURCE:** Financial Post

**ILLUSTRATION:** Black & White Photo: Peter J. Thompson, National Post / RayAnderson flogs his anti-business bible, Paul Hawken's *The Ecology of Commerce*, at Toronto's Shared Air Summit this week.; Colour Photo: 'I AM A SINNER': Peter Foster on the Ray Anderson myth.: (Photo ran on pg. FP1.)

**NOTE:** Next Saturday: Peter Foster on the truth behind the greenface of Anderson's Interface carpets.

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Ray Anderson is a businessman and a sinner. That combination is hardly likely to shock anybody these days. The media has for years been chock-a-block with tales of insider trading, cooking the books, and living large at shareholders' expense. But Ray Anderson's self-confessed sin puts mere greed, exploitation or malfeasance in the shade. It is that, as an industrialist, he is a "plunderer" of the Earth's resources and a polluter of its environment, not to mention a "thief from future generations."

As the founder and chairman of Interface Inc., one of the largest carpet companies in the world, the Georgia-based businessman appears to be a powerful witness for his own prosecution, not to mention that of the capitalism more generally. Since an "epiphany" in the early 1990s, Anderson has been sharing his massive mea culpa with appreciative congregations of the environmentally concerned all over the world. This week, he beat his breast at the Shared Air Summit in Toronto and at the International Conference on Gross National Happiness in Antigonish, N.S.

Last year, Ray Anderson began to reach a wider audience via his starring role in the award-winning Canadian documentary *The Corporation*. Based on a book by Joel Bakan, *The Corporation* promotes the thesis that large businesses are fundamentally evil and destructive. If they were individuals, they would be psychopaths. The corporate system is analogous to slavery. Corporations are claimed to have been handmaidens of fascism and dictatorship, promoters of birth defects and cancer epidemics that seek to privatize rainfall and gag free speech. The film is replete with images of sharks and Frankenstein monsters, with scenes of smokestacks and smog.

Celebrity left-wingers old and new, from Noam Chomsky to Michael Moore and Naomi Klein, are trotted out to make the case against corporate capitalism. But the most surprising — and perhaps even most eloquent — condemnation comes from Ray Anderson, with his arresting admissions of sin and plunder.

In the movie (and in all his speeches, including those he made in Canada this week), Anderson explains how he came to the cause. After 21 years as an entrepreneur, he was called upon to speak to his employees about what the company was doing for the environment. He had never given the matter a thought. Desperate for

inspiration, he received a copy of a book called *The Ecology of Commerce*, by Paul Hawken. Anderson was horrified by Hawken's catalogue of alleged environmental destruction and species extinction. He was particularly haunted by the phrase "the Death of Birth," which had been coined by controversial Harvard biologist E.O. Wilson. Anderson described it as a "spear in the chest." A subsequent address to employees reportedly left everybody in tears, and led to a "change of paradigm" for his company. Anderson realized that he had been taking "the way of the plunderer." He says in the film that he believes the day will come "when people like me will wind up in gaol." He concludes, "The Industrial Revolution is not working."

This week he told his Toronto audience that unless businessmen got aboard his crusade, then our descendants faced "a hellish world." As usual, he stepped from the podium to thunderous applause.

Anti-business businessmen are a much less rare phenomenon than might be imagined, but Anderson is a figure that demands, rather than invites, psychological analysis. More intriguing is how people could take his metaphorical self-flagellation seriously. If you think you are sinning, there is surely only one moral solution: to stop. Ray Anderson's answer, however, seems to be to go on a regimen of industrial "sin lite" on the path to personal and corporate salvation. His performance in *The Corporation* has attracted hardly a trace of skepticism. Indeed, Anderson has been singled out in reviews as the film's "hero." *BusinessWeek* described him, apparently without irony, as "the movie's mahatma." *Newsday* declared that Anderson's commentary was "a breath of fresh air, given the litany of societal crimes elsewhere committed by slaves of the bottom line." *The Globe and Mail* painted him as a "hopeful" example of "business leaders who have faced the ugly facts." A *Globe* review of Bakan's book suggested that Anderson was an example of a man of "integrity and social conscience," and that *Interface* was "extremely successful financially."

Almost everybody seems inclined to take Anderson at his word, but it's hard not to notice that, for a sinner, he seems mightily self-satisfied. Few people appear to have read his Bible, *The Ecology of Commerce*, looked into the psychological roots of his epiphany, or examined what he has actually achieved. Least of all does it appear to have occurred to anybody that somebody should be defending the system to which Ray Anderson is putting the boot.

Is capitalism destroying the Earth? Has Ray Anderson really discovered a new and more benign approach to business? What does his status as a media hero tell us about the intellectual tenor of our times. Above all, where, exactly, is this guy coming from?

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Ray Anderson was born in the sleepy little Georgia town of West Point, an hour's drive southwest of Atlanta. Sitting astride the Chattahoochee River, West Point was the site of the last fort to fall in the Civil War. Today, it is a mix of struggling industrial enterprise, old Southern money, and bedroom community for Atlanta.

Anderson, the third son of an assistant postmaster, was always ambitious and competitive. He won a football scholarship to Georgia Tech, then went to work in the carpet business for a company named Milliken. (Around 80% of the carpet manufactured in the United States is made in Georgia). As he rose through the management ranks, one of his jobs had been to start up a carpet tile operation, a concept that had been developed in England. Anderson saw that carpet tiles had a big future — a future that would get much bigger with the need to access the underfloor wiring so necessary to the computer and telecommunications revolutions.

He left Milliken to develop his idea in partnership with a British company, Carpets International. Over the coming two decades, Carpets International would be one of the dozens of acquisitions Anderson made on the way to building *Interface* into one of the largest carpet companies in the world.

I interviewed Ray Anderson last spring in Vancouver. He inevitably started by telling his tale of sin and



plunder, complete with the spear in the chest, and the epiphany. I asked him if he didn't underplay the huge amount of human wealth and welfare generated by the capitalist system.

"But it's all at the expense of the Earth," he said. "What kind of wealth is that, generated at the expense of the Earth?"

I asked him if Earth had a value independent of human values.

"If all that wealth destroys the Earth," he replied, "what will be left for the next generation? What economy can survive without air? What economy survive without water and energy and materials and pollination and seed dispersal and flood control and climate regulation?"

I noted that when I looked around (particularly on a beautiful spring day in Vancouver), I didn't see a plundered world.

"You're looking in the wrong place," said Anderson.

I asked him if he considered himself a capitalist.

"Absolutely," he said. "I'm also an industrialist and an entrepreneur and as competitive as anybody you're likely to know. Hawken would say that the only problem with capitalism is that nobody's tried it. We think of capitalism and we focus only on financial capital. We ignore human capital and natural capital."

Who is this "we"? I asked.

"The members of this industrial system," he said.

"But you don't think that way," I suggested.

"I'm called a radical industrialist," replied Anderson. "I'm still a plunderer, but only two-thirds as much as I was."

Despite my, at times, obviously skeptical questions, Anderson's genial, charming good ol' boy persona slipped only once during the interview. In *The Corporation*, Anderson suggested that "not a single scientific paper in the past 25 years has indicated anything but that the biosphere is in decline."

"Have you read Bjorn Lomborg's *The Skeptical Environmentalist*?" I asked.

"Enough to know that it's bullshit," he snapped.

I pressed on, noting that Lomborg's well-documented conclusion was that the world was not going to hell in a handbasket.

"And he's dead wrong," said Anderson. "I haven't read the book myself but I've read the opinion of people I respect who say it is not scientifically based, it's not good science, and he's wrong."

— — —

Reaction to the name of Bjorn Lomborg has become a litmus test on environmental issues. A Danish academic of leftist and environmentalist bent himself, Lomborg was, around 1997, affronted by the rosy projections for the future of capitalism made by economist Julian Simon. He set his students to an exhaustive examination of the facts on resource depletion and environmental degradation. To his surprise, he discovered

that Julian Simon was right and the environmental alarmists were wrong. Everywhere he checked out the environmental "litany" of death and destruction, he found it had been either greatly exaggerated or entirely falsified. Wealth was not bought at the expense of the environment. On the contrary, above a certain level of income, increased wealth went with environmental improvement.

This finding begs an intriguing question: Why would Ray Anderson and so many others — including prominent scientists — be so violently opposed to the notion that the world isn't going to hell in a handbasket? The superficial reason, in the case of Anderson, was because he had embraced a book — *The Ecology of Commerce* — whose message was precisely the opposite of Lomborg's.

Paul Hawken's book carries a stark and simple message: "Business is destroying the world." The culprit? "The greed of the rich and powerful."

"Quite simply," wrote Hawken, "our business practices are destroying life on Earth. Given current corporate practices, not one wildlife reserve, wilderness or indigenous culture will survive the global market economy. We know that every natural system on the planet is disintegrating."

The book reflects a troubled world and an even more troubled mind, a world of teeming masses breeding exponentially, of foetuses with impaired immune systems, of mothers with toxins in their milk, of human bodies too toxic to be put in landfills, of creatures poisoned by the industrial system, of ancient forests wiped out, of species eliminated wholesale, of mountains of waste, of a globe threatened by climate change and environmental apocalypse.

According to Hawken, many of whose ideas would be reflected in *The Corporation*, industrial society equals "waste, degradation and dehumanization." And even if all businesses adopted the best practices of allegedly "good" companies, such as Ben & Jerry's, Patagonia, or 3M, the world would still be heading for Hades.

"The degradation of our habitat," wrote Hawken, "could include the drying up of traditional breadbaskets, rapid desertification, empty reservoirs, collapsing coastlines, hurricane winds of 300 miles per hour, increased pestilence, famine and droughts."

But Hawken's image of commerce is a demonic parody that nobody could, or would, possibly defend. "The conservative view of free-market capitalism asserts that nothing should be allowed to hinder commerce," he writes, without citing anybody who actually holds such a view. He goes on to say that "Defenders of the status quo sometimes cite the Book of Genesis ... " But he doesn't say who such blinkered Bible thumpers are.

Unspecified "business ideologues" apparently regard species extinction as a "so what" issue. However, "We can't turn our backs on the web of life that sustains us, and live in a biological vacuum engineered by technology." We aren't told who is recommending that we live in this biological vacuum.

Hawken claims that, "Business often invokes the Darwinian maxim of 'survival of the fittest' to defend its competitive actions." Just that, yet again, we aren't given any names.

It's not just business as usual that Hawken doesn't like; it seems to be people more generally. Humans are depicted as weeds and parasites, are compared to other thoughtless life forms, such as algae or reindeer, and castigated as merely "one species" that is taking more than its "fair share."

In Hawken's world, trade, in particular international trade, is bad. Small, local and labour intensive are all good. Also — astonishingly — poor is good, or at least better than rich. "A restorative economy," writes Hawken, "is not going to lead to a life of dulling comfort and convenience."

Competition is to be banned as "impractical, wasteful, expensive and degrading to all involved." Governments

will "set the conditions for the market." In particular they will promote taxes to reflect "real" costs, after, that is, assuming the Solomon-like role of determining what "real" costs are.

All this implies a level of rigid economic and social control that Hawken never explicitly acknowledges. He speaks vaguely of a "consensus-building, collaborative approach." Except that the decisions have already been reached. In any case, according to Hawken, anybody who disagrees with his view is "in denial."

The culprits of present and future disasters are clearly identified. "We have spent too much time and money," writes Hawken, "making the world safe for upper-middle-class white men." Men, presumably, such as Ray Anderson. Which makes it all the more astonishing that Anderson would embrace Hawken's thesis so enthusiastically, especially since the thesis was, as Lomborg subsequently demonstrated, so utterly flawed.

So here we have to ask another key question: Why did Hawken's book evoke such a profound response in Anderson? Was there some particular reason why he was primed for an epiphany, for a damascene conversion?

# Happiness movement a non-starter

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**PUBLICATION:** The Moncton Times and Transcript

**DATE:** 2005.06.24

**PAGE:** C2

**BYLINE:** Down To Business Alec Bruce

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My ancestors came to Nova Scotia in the late 18th Century under a thick fog of funk and fury. Forced from their hovels near Edinburgh by poverty, disease and oppression, they were not happy to make the months-long Atlantic crossing. And, having landed, they were not happy to call their rock-strewn plot of scrub along the Eastern Shore home.

They griped when their patriarch, James Bruce, met an untimely end after a tree fell on his head. They whined when their crops failed, leaving them with nothing but wild roots and tubers to munch. They wailed when their animals vanished, their houses burned, and their children died.

If only these incorrigible complainers had known what we know now. According to the organizers of the second International Conference on Gross National Happiness, every hardship or setback can be overcome simply by embracing peaceful, easy feelings, and working (happily, I assume) to manifest them in daily life. Apparently if incongruously – this is especially true on the blood-drenched battlefields of business and industry.

Says Ron Colman of GPI Atlantic, a non-profit research group that hosted this don't-worry-be-happy shindig in Antigonish, N.S., last Monday: "(We want to know) what are some of the social, economic and environmental conditions which are likely to produce higher levels of well-being . . . (For some, the goal is) redirecting global development towards socially and environmentally responsible policy and practices. The goal is to ensure long-term prosperity and equity for everyone."

Oh, is that all? And when this lofty objective fails to produce anything material (because nobody actually knows how to "ensure long-term prosperity and equity for everyone"), would we still be happy?

Never mind. Here's what Paddi Lund – an Australian dentist who once contemplated suicide, but decided instead to take a chainsaw to his receptionist's desk and write a book about building "happiness-centred businesses" – has to say: "Imagine members of your team saying how nice it is to work with you, what a wonderful environment it is, and saying that after they've been with you for years. Sound too good to be true? Well, you can read all about how (I) made a happy environment for (my) team through a system for communication."

Dr. Lund is the newest hero of the worldwide happiness movement. His tome, which sells for \$29.95 a pop, and includes such carefully chosen words of wisdom as "customers don't buy because the products are cheaper or better, but because of the people in the business," have topped bestseller lists around the world. Doubtless, the recovering orthodontist is now, finally, happy.

All of which is to say that the standard of joy in one business is the measure of misery in another. And that renders the happiness movement – like the "slow-down" and "play-at-work" trends – nothing more than rank marketing, promising solutions to problems it can't possibly solve and usually for a fee.

In the Atlantic provinces, where we still struggle to remain commercially competitive, productive, innovative and bottom-line driven, sturdier objectives should preoccupy us: better schools, easier access to higher education; more accountability among our elected officials; more intelligent and productive approaches to

international trade and investment.

In the long run, achieving these ends will provide greater social and economic comfort than most of us have a right to expect. Happiness I prefer leave to philosophers and the judgment of my own ancestors who, if they were alive today, would say to those who expect more: "Quit your complaining."

# A happy balance; Ex-PM: Money isn't everything

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle-Herald  
**DATE:** 2005.06.22  
**SECTION:** NovaScotia  
**PAGE:** B7  
**COLUMN:** Donald  
**BYLINE:** Jim Mac  
**PHOTO:** JIM MacDONALD Kerry Prosper of Afton First Nations prepare to  
**ILLUSTRATION:** present a ceremonial blanket to Bhutan's former primeminister during the opening of the International Conference on Gross National Happiness in Antigonish on Monday night.

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ANTIGONISH – The former prime minister of Bhutan says he is encouraged by interest shown in his country's efforts to achieve happiness through unconventional methods.

Hundreds of international delegates listened intently Tuesday as Lyonpo Jigmi Thinley gave the keynote address at the Second International Conference on Gross Happiness.

For the past 30 years, the small country on the slopes of the Himalayas has focused on redefining what constitutes prosperous development, which Mr. Thinley said has traditionally been measured with a global materialist perspective.

"Evidently there is growing interest in how to be happy as opposed to how to make money," he said. "Dollars and cents are not the bottom line in life. It is our hope that as more thought is given to this common quest in life, there will be more ideas and reasons why GNH (gross national happiness) should guide human development to further human civilization."

Mr. Thinley, who is now Bhutan's home minister, said his country has strived to maintain a balance of four elements – environmental preservation, sustainable economic development, cultural promotion and good governance.

But he said the theory is tough to practise because issues such as the nature of a political economy under a GNH regime have to be addressed differently from the gross domestic product way of thinking.

"It must value social and economic contributions of households and families, free time and leisure, given the roles of these factors in happiness."

Daw Penjo, Bhutan's ambassador to Canada, said earlier that holding the conference outside of his country will help gauge other nations' interest in the Bhutanese model.

Lt.-Gov. Myra Freeman congratulated Bhutan for receiving the United Nations Champion of the Earth Award for placing the environment at the centre of its development policies.

Ms. Freeman said the conference drew "some of the world's leading practitioners of socially and environmentally responsible development."

One of those people was Rev. Francisco VanderHoff, founder of the fair-trade movement. Last week, he was knighted by French President Jacques Chirac.

# Communication called crucial to population issues in towns

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2005.06.22

**SECTION:** NovaScotia

**PAGE:** B7

**COLUMN:** Donald

**BYLINE:** Jim Mac

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ANTIGONISH – An observer of trends in small towns says there is no easy answer to problems caused by population erosion.

But David Bruce, director of the rural and small town program at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick, is a believer that communication can provide some of the solutions to address out–migration.

"Communication is absolutely right," he said after a workshop on sustaining rural development during the second International Conference on Gross National Happiness.

"If there isn't a sense that people can talk to one another in a community, you're not going to get any idea about where the community should go in the future."

This can include making young people in the area feel appreciated, which Mr. Bruce said can encourage them to return to their hometowns to set up business after receiving a post–secondary education.

Another situation he said may need to be addressed is how some rural areas counteract the lack of resources that are available in urban settings.

For example, if public transit is not readily available to people in small towns, Mr. Bruce said a group of citizens could step in to organize a shuttle service operating on a not–for–profit basis to assist the elderly.

But a certain degree of bureaucracy is involved in this form of volunteerism, Mr. Bruce said, which is why government agencies need to be a guide to available resources.

"Our argument is volunteers need assistance to function like a business," he said.

## --Fourth NewsWatch--

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**DATE:** 2005.06.20  
**CATEGORY:** General and national news  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw

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Alberta Premier Ralph Klein is expected to tour some of the flooded areas of his province today.

In Drumheller, officials are bracing for the worst as water levels continue to rise on the Red Deer River.

Crews spent the night reinforcing dikes, but there are fears they won't be able to hold back the raging floodwaters.

About 27-hundred people are out of their homes.

In Calgary, 15-hundred people are out of their homes and a state of emergency has been declared.

Mayor Dave Bronconnier says the crisis is far from over. (4)

(With-Alta-Floods)

A flood warning and a state of emergency remain in place for Edmonton.

Evacuations likely won't be necessary, but as a precaution, residents have been given advice on how to protect their homes.

And, Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan says as long as certain requirements are in place, federal disaster assistance programs are ready to go. (4)

(Martin-EU)

Prime Minister Martin says deals are in place with the European Union

to stop overfishing in the North Atlantic and to fight pandemics.

Several agreements were reached yesterday during a one-day summit in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, with E-U representatives.

There's also one to share airplane passenger lists to help fight terrorism. (4)

(Iraq-Violence)

A suicide car bombing in Kurdish northern Iraq has killed at least 20 people.

Police say the bomber was disguised as a police officer.

He drove his car into a gathering of 200 traffic police during morning roll call.

The attack on a main street in Irbil wounded an estimated 100 people. (4)

(Air-India-Memorial)



Preparations continue for Thursday's 20th memorial for the victims of the Air India bombing.

Hundreds of relatives are making the trip to Ireland to mark the occasion and remember the 329 people who died in the tragedy.

A number of politicians, including Prime Minister Paul Martin and B-C Premier Gordon Campbell, are to attend. (4)

(HEALTH-KICKER-Gross-Happiness)

The second International Conference on Gross National Happiness is being held in Nova Scotia today.

Hundreds of representatives from 35 countries will gather in an attempt to figure out the secret to happiness.

G-P-I Atlantic is organizing the meeting.

Spokesman Ron Colman says the panellists will try to figure out the major social, economic and environmental conditions that are most likely to produce higher levels of happiness. (4)

(NewsWatch by Kris McCusker)

# Don't worry, be happy

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**PUBLICATION:** The Fredericton Daily Gleaner  
**DATE:** 2005.06.20  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1  
**COLUMN:** News – Other  
**BYLINE:** Canadian Press  
**DATELINE:** HALIFAX

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Happiness, it seems, is something that can be measured.

Hundreds of academics, farmers, environmentalists, business people, entertainers and health professionals are trying to figure out just how to do that, and to convince others that it is just as important an indicator of a country's success as its economic well-being.

They are meeting in Antigonish, N.S., today for the second International Conference on Gross National Happiness, a movement that is attracting a varied mix of adherents around the world.

"We don't claim to measure well-being directly, but rather what are some of the social, economic and environmental conditions which are likely to produce higher levels of well-being," said Ron Colman of GPI Atlantic, a non-profit research group in Nova Scotia.

"The conventional paradigm that bases progress just on economic growth alone is not satisfactory," he said.

"It's too narrow, so we know we have to assess our progress in a more comprehensive and accurate way," he said.

Colman and other delegates contend that a better way of determining a person's well-being and the well-being of their surroundings is by looking at several factors – environmental preservation, sustainable economic development, cultural promotion and good governance.

The theory was developed more than 30 years ago in Bhutan, where the king declared gross national happiness to be more important than the small Asian country's gross national product.

Colman went to Bhutan last year to attend the first conference on gross national happiness and discovered a group of people keen on "redirecting global development towards socially and environmentally responsible policy and practices. The goal is to ensure long-term prosperity and equity for all."

Colman said the old model of thinking that it was jobs versus the environment no longer works, since the two can be inextricably tied. For example, there can't be uncontrolled fisheries without considering how that's going to affect jobs in the future, he added. About 400 people from 35 countries will look at that approach this week, examining things like how Brazil is creating a "sustainable city" based on mass transit rather than automobile use and how the Dutch government gave its citizens far more free time and sharply reduced unemployment by encouraging shorter work hours.

# Conference plans to take the measure of happiness

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**PUBLICATION:** The Sault Star  
**DATE:** 2005.06.20  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**SOURCE:** Canadian Press  
**DATELINE:** HALIFAX

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# Gathering ponders how to measure happiness

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**PUBLICATION:** The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge and Waterloo)  
**DATE:** 2005.06.20  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** NEWS  
**PAGE:** D10  
**SOURCE:** Canadian Press  
**DATELINE:** HALIFAX

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About 400 people from 35 countries will look at that approach this week, examining things like how Brazil is creating a "sustainable city" based on mass transit rather than automobile use and how the Dutch government gave its citizens far more free time and sharply reduced unemployment by encouraging shorter work hours.

Also, Denmark is phasing out agricultural pesticides and encouraging organic agriculture. Honey Care Africa has pioneered sustainable community-based development practices in Kenya.

A natural builder will also demonstrate how to construct a building of straw, clay, earth and tires.

The head of an international interior furnishings company will explain how he turned his business into an environmentally friendly, sustainable organization that he hopes won't produce waste.

"We're bringing all these people together to try to say, 'What would a sane, decent, good society look like when you put all of these parts together?'" said Colman.

"People who have secure incomes, a good quality environment, strong and safe communities tend to score higher on measures of well-being."

# Happiness as important to success as economics: conference; Group says many factors affect an individual's well-being

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**PUBLICATION:** The Moncton Times and Transcript

**DATE:** 2005.06.20

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** B1

**COLUMN:** Canada

**DATELINE:** HALIFAX (CP)

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# Happiness can be measured

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**PUBLICATION:** Prince George Citizen  
**DATE:** 2005.06.20  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Canada  
**PAGE:** 6  
**SOURCE:** Associated Press  
**DATELINE:** HALIFAX

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# Conference measuring happiness: Second International Conference on Gross National Happiness begins today

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**PUBLICATION:** The Daily Courier (Kelowna)

**DATE:** 2005.06.20

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** Canada

**PAGE:** A7

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**DATELINE:** HALIFAX

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# Happiness at centre of international conference

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**PUBLICATION:** Cape Breton Post

**DATE:** 2005.06.20

**SECTION:** National

**PAGE:** A6

**BYLINE:**

**SOURCE:** CP

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# The secrets to happiness

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**PUBLICATION:** CTV (CTV News)

**DATE:** 2005.06.20

**TIME:** 23:00:00 ET

**END:** 23:30:00 ET

**SECTION:** CTV News

**COLUMN:** CTV News

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LLOYD ROBERTSON: And finally for us tonight, what does happiness mean to you? A good question. One as old as humankind. Of course finding personal contentment can mean different things to different people and to different societies. But suppose the best ingredients can be summed up in a single happiness index? That idea has drawn people from all over the world to a Canadian maritime city. CTV's John Venavally–Rao joins us.

JOHN VENNAVALLY–RAO (Reporter): When we measure the progress of a nation, we often focus on how much stuff it produces.

RICHARD REOCH (Conference Co–Chair): Essentially it's about money, it's about buildings, it's about commerce.

VENNAVALLY–RAO: But when it comes right down to it, is that really the best gauge of success?

REOCH: It's evident from countless studies that more wealth does not make people happier.

VENNAVALLY–RAO: And making happiness the priority is what they've come here to talk about. Folks from all over the world converging on Nova Scotia, hoping to change the way we measure well–being.

ELA BHATT (Conference Delegate): Everyone who has a soul, you know, living wants to be happy.

VENNAVALLY–RAO: This entourage from the tiny Himalayan country of Butan of particular interest because their country started a kind of happiness index 30 years ago. People there are relatively poor, but...

JIM TIMSIT (Conference Delegate): I was in Butan last year, and I've seen more people happy in Butan than anywhere else in the world. And when you think about it in our terms, towards our standards, they have nothing.

VENNAVALLY–RAO: The country has preserved its pristine environment and its indigenous culture and has declared gross national happiness to be more important than it's gross domestic product. We asked the folks from Butan if Canadians looked happy.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Certainly they look busier, certainly they look busier.

VENNAVALLY–RAO: The conference to examine things like work hours, use of pesticides and automobiles and how they impact our quality of life. What's striking is that compared to 50 years ago, western countries are producing twice as much.

ANDERS HAYDEN (Conference Delegate): But the number of people who say they're happy is almost exactly the same as it was in the 1950s. VENNAVALLY–RAO: Over the next four days, these delegates will try to figure out what truly matters to people, and along the way they may even enlighten themselves.

TIMSIT: Am I happy? I'm working on it.

VENNAVALLY–RAO: John Venavally–Rao, CTV News, Antigonish.

ROBERTSON: And here's something to be happy about. Tomorrow is the first day of summer. That's the kind of day it's been this Monday, June 20th. I'm Lloyd Robertson. For all of us here in the national news room, good night. Your local CTV News is coming right up.

# Happiness at centre of international conference: Conference on Gross National Happiness examines conditions that could lead to happiness

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**PUBLICATION:** The Sudbury Star

**DATE:** 2005.06.20

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A9

**SOURCE:** Canadian Press

**DATELINE:** HALIFAX

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# Happiness the centre of international conference: Hundreds gather to find ways to determine well-being

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**PUBLICATION:** The Kingston Whig-Standard

**DATE:** 2005.06.20

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** National / World

**PAGE:** 32

**BYLINE:** Alison Auld

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**DATELINE:** HALIFAX

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# Happiness at centre of N.S. conference

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**PUBLICATION:** The Daily News (Kamloops)

**DATE:** 2005.06.20

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A8

**BYLINE:** Alison Auld

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**DATELINE:** HALIFAX

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# Happiness is . . . not what you may think

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald  
**DATE:** 2005.06.20  
**SECTION:** NovaScotia  
**PAGE:** A1  
**COLUMN:** Donald  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**BYLINE:** Jim Mac

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Colman was one of 70 foreign dignitaries at last year's inaugural conference. Thirty years ago, Bhutan's king established the philosophy that gross national happiness is more important than gross national product.

Several things must happen for this idea to have any meaning, Mr. Colman said. They include good governance, sustainable and equitable economic development, social and cultural cohesion, as well as environmental conservation.

Colman said the old model of thinking that it was either jobs versus the environment no longer works, since the two can be inextricably tied. For example, there can't be uncontrolled fisheries without considering how that's going to affect jobs in the future, he added. As well, Brazil is creating a "sustainable city" based on mass transit rather than automobile use and how the Dutch government gave its citizens far more free time and sharply reduced unemployment by encouraging shorter work hours.

Also, Denmark is phasing out agricultural pesticides and encouraging organic agriculture. Honey Care Africa has pioneered sustainable community-based development practices in Kenya.

The head of an international interior furnishings company will explain how he turned his business into an environmentally friendly, sustainable organization that he hopes won't produce waste.

"We're bringing all these people together to try to say, 'what would a sane, decent, good society look like when you put all of these parts together?' " said Colman.

"People who have secure incomes, a good quality environment, strong and safe communities tend to score higher on measures of well-being."

Each factor will be analyzed during the conference in workshops and seminars hosted by those considered forerunners in their respective fields.

Also on hand will be Sierra Club of Canada executive director Elizabeth May, who will be involved in a session discussing good governance and engaged citizenship, as well as Joel Salatin, who has been described as a guru of organic farming.

"What we have here is all the elements of what it really takes to create a good society," Colman said.

"What we really want to encourage is all these people to talk with each other, to interact, to dialogue, because it's through the collective wisdom (the goal can be accomplished)."



# Happiness discussed at Nova Scotia sessions

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2005.06.20

**SECTION:** Canada

**PAGE:** A8

**SOURCE:** CP

**DATELINE:** Halifax

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# Wanted: a world happiness standard: Movement seeks a way to measure countries' well-being rather than their wealth

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**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2005.06.20  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1 / Front  
**BYLINE:** Alison Auld  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**DATELINE:** HALIFAX

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# BC-Cda-News-Digest

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**DATE:** 2005.06.19  
**CATEGORY:** National general news  
**BYLINE:** THE CANADIAN PRESS  
**PUBLICATION:** cpw

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CALGARY (CP) \_ Under deceptively sunny skies Sunday, some Albertans started hauling sodden belongings out of their flooded basements while others were coming to grips with losing their entire household contents.

Still others braced for what was expected to be the worst flooding in history on the Red Deer River \_ so much water that officials were calling it a one-in-200-years event.

“In terms of the water flow and the magnitude and the intensity, what we are going to be facing in this area is going to be something that we've never witnessed before,” Alberta Environment Minister Guy Boutilier told a news conference in Red Deer.

The Red Deer River, swollen by days of heavy rains, was expected to peak in the central Alberta city around midnight Sunday night and then rage south through the town of Drumheller. It was not a question of if but when, Boutilier said, and damage would be “quite substantial.”

The wet weather had already caused massive flooding in Calgary, where a state of emergency had been declared before the normally placid Elbow River spilled over its banks.

Kelly Toombs' apartment was under water Sunday, but it'll be days before he expects to be able to start any cleanup.

“I never thought I'd be starting over at 48, but here we go,” said Toombs with a rueful grin.

Martin, EU officials reach deals on security, environment at brief meeting

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, Ont. (CP) \_ The European Union may be having internal troubles, but Canada and the EU work so well together they reached agreements on issues ranging from security to the environment, Prime Minister Paul Martin said Sunday.

Martin wrapped up a one-day summit with EU leaders in this scenic border community by announcing deals to work together to stop overfishing in the North Atlantic, fight pandemics like avian flu, and share airplane passenger lists to help fight terrorism.

“We've agreed to share airline passenger information in a way that balances security needs and the protection of individual rights,” Martin told reporters as the summit ended.

Canada and the EU also agreed on the need for more co-operation to tackle problems such as the drought in Sudan, fighting in Afghanistan, continuing strife in the Middle East, the lack of security in Haiti, and growing concerns about Iran's nuclear program.

“It is simply unacceptable in a world in which we all want to limit the threat of nuclear proliferation, that the world is unable to come to a satisfactory agreement with Iran,” said Martin.

“I do not believe that the world can simply stand by and watch the possibility of Iran going from step to step

towards the creation of making itself a nuclear power."

Investigator disputes Ottawa claim it can't order hatches for float planes

EDMONTON (CP) \_ A Transportation Safety Board investigator is slamming Transport Canada for its claim that it has no authority to make float planes safer.

Bill Kemp says the federal department could require float planes flying in Canada to be equipped with escape hatches \_ either doors that can be jettisoned or pop-out windows \_ if it wanted.

"I just don't buy that at all," said the Edmonton-based investigator.

"They can set whatever regulations they deem necessary. They are passing the buck as far as I am concerned."

At least 37 people have drowned in float planes in Canada over the last two decades because they couldn't get out of submerged cabins.

Last week a Transport Canada spokeswoman said the federal department has no authority to order modifications to Cessna or De Havilland Beaver float planes because they are not made in Canada.

The department noted it is the responsibility of the manufacturer to make the changes or the U.S. Federal Aviation Authority, which received a copy of the Transportation Safety Board letter on the issue.

But an FAA spokesman said the U.S. regulator will not act without a formal request from Canada and it has yet to receive one.

The Transportation Safety Board has pointed out repeatedly that the doors on the aircraft are difficult to open. Often the plane's wings fold over them on impact.

Keeping sub fleet sidelined for seven months unnecessary: report

HALIFAX (CP) \_ Within weeks of a deadly fire aboard HMCS Chicoutimi, navy engineers and electrical experts deemed Canada's three other used submarines safe and recommended they be put back to sea, say newly released documents.

But the advice was ignored by senior officers who insisted on further technical improvements and were concerned that even the slightest hiccup would have further vexed the glitch-filled program.

"There were a number of different considerations that had to be weighed," said Lieut. Diane Grover, a spokeswoman for the commander of the navy, Vice-Admiral Bruce MacLean.

"Ultimately the decision was one rooted in responsible risk management and personnel safety."

A defence analyst said keeping the entire fleet sidelined for seven months hurt training in a submarine program that was already behind schedule, but the decision was likely considered a justifiable trade-off.

"I don't think the navy could have ignored the political implications," said David Rudd, president of the Canadian Institute for Strategic Studies.

"A second accident, even a minor one, in the wake of the Chicoutimi fire would have been dynamite. DND had no doubt about the safety and utility of the fleet, but there might have been a lot of people in Parliament

that did."

Less than a week after an electrical fire killed one officer and ravaged the inside of Chicoutimi last October, its sister boats, Victoria, Windsor and Corner Brook, were pulled out of service.

Happiness at centre of international conference in Nova Scotia

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**DATE:** 2005.06.19  
**CATEGORY:** National general news  
**BYLINE:** ALISON AULD  
**PUBLICATION:** cpw

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# Prep–LifeWatch

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**DATE:** 2005.06.20  
**CATEGORY:** General and national news  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw

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A subtle change in a memory–making brain region seems to predict who will get Alzheimer's disease nine years before symptoms appear.

The finding is part of a wave of research aimed at early detection of the deadly dementia — and one day even preventing it.

American researchers scanned the brains of middle–aged and older people while they were still healthy.

They discovered lower energy usage in a part of the brain (called the hippocampus) correctly signalled who would get Alzheimer's or a related memory impairment 85 per cent of the time. (AP)

(HEALTH–Alzheimer's–Twins)

Education and a healthy youth may override genes in determining who gets Alzheimer's disease.

That's the finding of a study of dementia patients and their healthy identical twins.

Researchers combed Sweden's twin registry to find 109 identical twins where one had Alzheimer's or another form of dementia but the other remained healthy.

Then they checked the twins' medical histories.

Scientists reported at a conference in Washington that having had a stroke increased the chances of dementia six–fold. (AP)

(McDonald's–AIDS Lawsuit)

A new trial begins today in Cleveland, in the case of a man who says he was pressured to resign from McDonald's because he has AIDS.

Russell Rich was a corporate manager at McDonald's.

The 41–year–old won a five (m) million–dollar verdict in his discrimination case against the burger chain in 2001.

But the verdict was overturned after an appeals court ruled that McDonald's didn't get a fair trial.

A McDonald's spokesman denies the allegations made by Rich, adding that the corporation has a zero–tolerance policy prohibiting any form of discrimination. (apb)

(HEALTH–SARS–Cure)

The official Chinese news agency reports a drug used to treat schizophrenia has been shown to prevent and treat severe acute respiratory syndrome.

The agency says the research was detailed by Chinese and European experts at a conference in China.

The drug, cinanserin, was found to inhibit the coronavirus that causes the deadly flu-like SARS.

(AP)

(HEALTH-Gross-Happiness)

It appears that happiness is something that can be measured.

Hundreds of academics, environmentalists, entertainers, health professionals and just plain folks are trying to figure just how to do that.

And they hope to convince others that happiness is just as an important indicator of a country's success as its economic well-being.

Those pushing happiness will meet in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, today for the second International Conference on Gross National Happiness.

The movement is said to be attracting adherents around the world. (CP)

(HEALTH-Sexual-Literacy)

Researchers in San Francisco want to talk about sex, and not just the naughty bits.

Academics, social scientists and policy makers from around the world are gathering this week for a conference on human sexuality.

They'll also discuss what are described as the "moral panics" caused by such topics as homosexuality, abortion and sex education.

The premise of the conference is that ignorance and intolerance about sex have disastrous consequences. (AP)

(HEALTH-Women-Grapefruit)

A study of smells shows that the scent of grapefruit on women makes them seem younger to men -- about six years younger.

However, a grapefruit fragrance on men does nothing for them.

The study by the Smell and Taste Institute in Chicago was conducted to determine what makes women smell young.

Institute director Alan Hirsch says he smeared several middle-aged female subjects with broccoli, banana, spearmint leaves and lavender, but none of those scents made a difference to the male species.

But the scent of grapefruit changed a man's perception of how old a woman was. (apb)

(LifeWatch by Bill Kay)

# NS–Gross–Happiness

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**DATE:** 2005.06.20  
**CATEGORY:** Atlantic regional news  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw

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ANTIGONISH, N–S — Hundreds of people from 35 countries will gather in Nova Scotia today in an attempt to figure out an age–old question — what's the secret to happiness?

The second International Conference on Gross National Happiness is being held in Antigonish.

G–P–I Atlantic, a non–profit research group, is organizing the meeting.

G–P–I spokesman Ron Colman says society's progress should be measured by overall well–being — not by its economic strength alone.

Colman says the group will try to identify the key social, economic and environmental conditions that are most likely to produce higher levels of happiness.

The group will study the well–being of countries that have cut down on pesticides, automobile use, and work hours.

The first conference of its kind was held last year in Bhutan.

More than 30 years ago, the king of the small Asian country declared gross national happiness to be more important than its gross national product.

(CP)

mep

# HFX OUT HQQ

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**DATE:** 2005.06.20  
**CATEGORY:** Atlantic regional news  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw

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A New Brunswick man is dead after steamroller accident at a construction site over the weekend.

Fifty-two-year-old Barry Wilson, of Sackville, died early yesterday while working to repair a broken waterline on a highway off-ramp along the Trans-Canada Highway in Sackville.

The accident happened after the steamroller Wilson was operating slid down a slope.

R-C-M-P are still investigating the incident. (Moncton Times and Transcript)

(Submarines-Risk)

A newly released report suggests it was unnecessary to keep Canada's submarine fleet sidelined for seven months.

H-M-C-S Victoria, Windsor and Corner Brook were restricted to port last fall after a fire killed one officer and injured eight others aboard their sister ship Chicoutimi.

Weeks after the tragedy, the navy's Subsafe board deemed the three operational submarines to be safe and recommended they put back to sea.

But the proposal was overruled by navy brass, which wanted additional technical improvements. (BN)

(Nfld-Byelection)

Advance poll turnout for a provincial byelection in Newfoundland is reported as heavy.

Voters will go to polls in the Exploits district, in the central part of the province, on Thursday.

Voters cast 439 ballots Saturday, more than double the advance poll turnout for the 2003 election.

Premier Danny Williams called the byelection hours after Roger Grimes announced his resignation as provincial Liberal leader and gave up his seat in the provincial house of assembly. (CP, VOXM)

(NS-Strip-Mine)

Hundreds of residents have turned out to protest a proposed strip mine in Cape Breton.

The demonstration happened yesterday in the Florence area, where Pioneer Coal recently won strip mine contract at the old Prince mine site.

The demonstration saw dozens of cars and trucks snaking through Florence and Port Aconi for about an hour, honking horns and displaying signs in their windows.

Janice Lettues, a resident, says she's worried the project will destroy the area. (ATV, CP)

(NB–Casino–Dispute)

The next phase of the Tobique First Nation's casino dispute will play out in court today.

A group of band members took control of the complex June 7th, demanding more accountability of band council businesses.

Lawyers for both the elected band council and the dissidents are scheduled to appear in the Court of Queen's Bench in Fredericton.

The group says profits from the complex, which features bingo, a restaurant and video lottery terminals, have been mismanaged. (New Brunswick Telegraph–Journal)

(Gross–Happiness)

Happiness is at the centre of an international conference in Nova Scotia.

Hundreds of academics, farmers, environmentalists, business people, entertainers and health professionals are trying to figure what makes people happy.

Many have suggested that happiness is just as important an indicator of a country's success as its economic well–being.

They will meet in Antigonish today for the second International Conference on Gross National Happiness. (BN)

(Atlantic Update by Murray Brewster)

# HEALTH-KICKER-Gross-Happiness

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**DATE:** 2005.06.20  
**CATEGORY:** General and national news  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw

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(CP)

mep

# BC-Cda-News-Digest

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**DATE:** 2005.06.19  
**CATEGORY:** General and national news  
**BYLINE:** THE CANADIAN PRESS  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw

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CALGARY (CP) \_ Under deceptively sunny skies Sunday, some Albertans started hauling sodden belongings out of their flooded basements while others were coming to grips with losing their entire household contents.

Still others braced for what was expected to be the worst flooding in history on the Red Deer River \_ so much water that officials were calling it a one-in-200-years event.

“In terms of the water flow and the magnitude and the intensity, what we are going to be facing in this area is going to be something that we've never witnessed before,” Alberta Environment Minister Guy Boutilier told a news conference in Red Deer.

The Red Deer River, swollen by days of heavy rains, was expected to peak in the central Alberta city around midnight Sunday night and then rage south through the town of Drumheller. It was not a question of if but when, Boutilier said, and damage would be “quite substantial.”

The wet weather had already caused massive flooding in Calgary, where a state of emergency had been declared before the normally placid Elbow River spilled over its banks.

Kelly Toombs' apartment was under water Sunday, but it'll be days before he expects to be able to start any cleanup.

“I never thought I'd be starting over at 48, but here we go,” said Toombs with a rueful grin.

Martin, EU officials reach deals on security, environment at brief meeting

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, Ont. (CP) \_ The European Union may be having internal troubles, but Canada and the EU work so well together they reached agreements on issues ranging from security to the environment, Prime Minister Paul Martin said Sunday.

Martin wrapped up a one-day summit with EU leaders in this scenic border community by announcing deals to work together to stop overfishing in the North Atlantic, fight pandemics like avian flu, and share airplane passenger lists to help fight terrorism.

“We've agreed to share airline passenger information in a way that balances security needs and the protection of individual rights,” Martin told reporters as the summit ended.

Canada and the EU also agreed on the need for more co-operation to tackle problems such as the drought in Sudan, fighting in Afghanistan, continuing strife in the Middle East, the lack of security in Haiti, and growing concerns about Iran's nuclear program.

“It is simply unacceptable in a world in which we all want to limit the threat of nuclear proliferation, that the world is unable to come to a satisfactory agreement with Iran,” said Martin.

“I do not believe that the world can simply stand by and watch the possibility of Iran going from step to step

towards the creation of making itself a nuclear power."

Investigator disputes Ottawa claim it can't order hatches for float planes

EDMONTON (CP) \_ A Transportation Safety Board investigator is slamming Transport Canada for its claim that it has no authority to make float planes safer.

Bill Kemp says the federal department could require float planes flying in Canada to be equipped with escape hatches \_ either doors that can be jettisoned or pop-out windows \_ if it wanted.

"I just don't buy that at all," said the Edmonton-based investigator.

"They can set whatever regulations they deem necessary. They are passing the buck as far as I am concerned."

At least 37 people have drowned in float planes in Canada over the last two decades because they couldn't get out of submerged cabins.

Last week a Transport Canada spokeswoman said the federal department has no authority to order modifications to Cessna or De Havilland Beaver float planes because they are not made in Canada.

The department noted it is the responsibility of the manufacturer to make the changes or the U.S. Federal Aviation Authority, which received a copy of the Transportation Safety Board letter on the issue.

But an FAA spokesman said the U.S. regulator will not act without a formal request from Canada and it has yet to receive one.

The Transportation Safety Board has pointed out repeatedly that the doors on the aircraft are difficult to open. Often the plane's wings fold over them on impact.

Keeping sub fleet sidelined for seven months unnecessary: report

HALIFAX (CP) \_ Within weeks of a deadly fire aboard HMCS Chicoutimi, navy engineers and electrical experts deemed Canada's three other used submarines safe and recommended they be put back to sea, say newly released documents.

But the advice was ignored by senior officers who insisted on further technical improvements and were concerned that even the slightest hiccup would have further vexed the glitch-filled program.

"There were a number of different considerations that had to be weighed," said Lieut. Diane Grover, a spokeswoman for the commander of the navy, Vice-Admiral Bruce MacLean.

"Ultimately the decision was one rooted in responsible risk management and personnel safety."

A defence analyst said keeping the entire fleet sidelined for seven months hurt training in a submarine program that was already behind schedule, but the decision was likely considered a justifiable trade-off.

"I don't think the navy could have ignored the political implications," said David Rudd, president of the Canadian Institute for Strategic Studies.

"A second accident, even a minor one, in the wake of the Chicoutimi fire would have been dynamite. DND had no doubt about the safety and utility of the fleet, but there might have been a lot of people in Parliament



that did."

Less than a week after an electrical fire killed one officer and ravaged the inside of Chicoutimi last October, its sister boats, Victoria, Windsor and Corner Brook, were pulled out of service.

Happiness at centre of international conference in Nova Scotia

HALIFAX (CP) \_ Happiness, it seems, is something that can be measured.

Hundreds of academics, farmers, environmentalists, business people, entertainers and health professionals are trying to figure just how to do that, and to convince others that it is just as an important indicator of a country's success as its economic well-being.

They will meet in Antigonish, N.S., on Monday for the second International Conference on Gross National Happiness, a movement that is attracting a varied mix of adherents around the world.

"We don't claim to measure well-being directly, but rather what are some of the social, economic and environmental conditions which are likely to produce higher levels of well-being," said Ron Colman of GPI Atlantic, a non-profit research group in Nova Scotia that is organizing the meeting.

"The conventional paradigm that bases progress just on economic growth alone is not satisfactory. It's too narrow, so we know we have to assess our progress in a more comprehensive and accurate way."

Colman and other delegates contend that a better way of determining a person's well-being and the well-being of their surroundings is by looking at several factors \_ environmental preservation, sustainable economic development, cultural promotion and good governance.

The theory was developed more than 30 years ago in Bhutan, where the king declared gross national happiness to be more important than the small Asian country's gross national product.

# DELEGATES STRIVE FOR HAPPINESS

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**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun

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**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 16

**BYLINE:** CP

**DATELINE:** HALIFAX

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The Gross National Happiness movement was born 30 years ago in Bhutan, where the king declared gross national happiness to be more important than gross national product.

# WELL-BEING CAN MEAN MORE THAN JUST MONEY A THINK-TANK HAS FORMED TO TRY TO DETERMINE A WAY TO CALCULATE A COUNTRY'S GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS.

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**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press

**DATE:** 2005.06.20

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A8

**BYLINE:** ALISON AULD, CP

**DATELINE:** HALIFAX

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Colman went to Bhutan last year to attend the first conference on gross national happiness and discovered a group of people keen on "redirecting global development towards socially and environmentally responsible policy and practices. The goal is to ensure long-term prosperity and equity for all."

Colman said the old model — jobs versus the environment — no longer works, since the two can be inextricably tied. For example, there can't be uncontrolled fisheries without considering how that's going to affect jobs in the future, he added.

About 400 people from 35 countries will look at that approach this week, examining things like how Brazil is creating a "sustainable city" based on mass transit rather than automobile use and how the Dutch government gave its citizens far more free time and sharply reduced unemployment by encouraging shorter work hours.

Also, Denmark is phasing out agricultural pesticides and encouraging organic agriculture. Honey Care Africa has pioneered sustainable community-based development practices in Kenya.

A natural builder will also demonstrate how to make a building of straw, clay, earth and tires.

The head of an international interior furnishings company will explain how he turned his business into an environmentally friendly, sustainable organization that he hopes won't produce waste.

"We're bringing all these people together to try to say, 'What would a sane, decent, good society look like when you put all of these parts together?'" said Colman.

"People who have secure incomes, a good quality environment, strong and safe communities tend to score higher on measures of well-being."

# MEASURING HAPPINESS

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**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun

**DATE:** 2005.06.20

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**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 28

**BYLINE:** CP

**DATELINE:** HALIFAX

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# Groups aim to find way of measuring happiness

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**PUBLICATION:** The Province  
**DATE:** 2005.06.20  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A16  
**SOURCE:** Canadian Press  
**DATELINE:** HALIFAX

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Colman said the old model of thinking that it was either jobs versus the environment no longer works, since the two can be inextricably tied. For example, there can't be uncontrolled fisheries without considering how that's going to affect jobs in the future, he said.

# Gross National Happiness; Meeting strives to measure well-being beyond the economy's GDP

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**PUBLICATION:** The Hamilton Spectator

**DATE:** 2005.06.20

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** Canada/World

**PAGE:** A11

**BYLINE:** Alison Auld

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**DATELINE:** Halifax

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They'll also look at how the Dutch government gave its citizens far more free time and sharply reduced unemployment by encouraging shorter work hours.

"We're bringing all these people together to try to say, 'What would a sane, decent, good society look like when you put all of these parts together?'" said Colman.



# Forget GDP, let's measure Gross National Happiness

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**PUBLICATION:** The Sunday Herald

**DATE:** 2005.05.29

**SECTION:** NovaScotian

**PAGE:** S2

**SOURCE:** First Words

**BYLINE:** Silver Donald Cameron

**ILLUSTRATION:** File Finding a way to measure happiness, which includes living in a safe community with stable families and caring neighbours, good health, and a clean environment is the goal of a St. Margarets-based organization. Maritimers live in an economically depressed region but are found to be happy with their lots in life.

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"I love living in a depressed area," sighed the professor, holding up a glass of white wine in the evening sunlight. "One lives so well."

The remark lingers in my memory because of its curious truthfulness. East Coast incomes may be lower than those elsewhere, but we own our own homes, we eat well, we get good medical care, our divorce rates are low and our communities are safe and functional. We have a celebrated regional culture, a glorious landscape and a satisfactory educational system. A dollar goes a long way here. This is a good place to live.

I know, I know: there's no excuse for complacency. We could certainly do better on every one of these indices. Nevertheless, surveys consistently show Atlantic Canadians to be the most contented people in Canada. Newfoundlanders even claim the most active sex lives.

Our economy may be depressed, but our spirits are not, and only an economist would think that the latter depends on the former.

The problem is measurement. Industrial societies have come to regard the gross domestic product as the major indicator of social progress, which it is not. The GDP is a purely economic statistic. It simply tallies up the value of all goods and services that are exchanged for money. House fires, automobile production, crime, food harvests, war, lumber sales, pollution, the plumber's bill, tobacco smoking – good and bad alike, they all contribute to a rising GDP.

On the other side of the ledger, the things that truly make us happy – good health, a clean environment, a caring community and stable families, for instance – literally count for nothing in the GDP.

Can't we find a better measurement?

Since 1997, a small organization based in St. Margarets Bay has been using Nova Scotia as its laboratory in developing a genuine progress index based not just on economics, but also on sustainability, well-being and quality of life. GPI Atlantic ([www.gpiatlantic.org](http://www.gpiatlantic.org)) has issued numerous carefully researched and thought-provoking reports on aspects of Nova Scotians' well-being, including recent reports on air quality, solid waste and working time.

And now the work is going national.

GPI has not been working in a vacuum. Across the country, other organizations have also been working on measures of human well-being, including universities and government agencies such as Statistics Canada and Environment Canada. Funded by Toronto's Atkinson Foundation, about 20 such research teams have pooled

their resources in a national working group, aiming to produce a national measurement called the Canadian Index of Well-being.

Group spokesman Roy Romanow believes the new Index will "engage Canadians" in a discussion about "what it means to have a world-leading quality of life and genuine sustainability." The index will help us all to understand the complex long-term effects of the choices we make, for example, instituting corporate tax cuts while under-investing in education, and it will give us a far better instrument for holding governments and corporations accountable.

The index, says Romanow, rests on a fundamental change in our understanding of the intricate relationship between social, health, economic and environmental issues. Health Canada, for instance, has identified a dozen "determinants" of health. Genetics, gender and personal habits play a role, but nine of the 12 determinants are social factors such as income and social status, the physical environment, social support networks, education and working conditions. Improve any of these, and you will improve health as well.

But you won't really know you've made improvements if you have no way to measure them. And that's what the index will provide. The working group will report this fall on three core areas of well-being: population health, living standards and time use.

Romanow believes the Canadian Index of Well-being is part of a huge shift in our thinking about health. "Health" first meant the control of infectious diseases, and then the treatment of non-communicable conditions. The "third revolution," Romanow says, is to conceive of health as a state of positive well-being, focused on the prevention of illness and distress.

GPI likes to quote the King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, who declared 30 years ago that "gross national happiness is more important than gross national product." Appropriately enough, Bhutan was the site of the first International Conference on Gross National Happiness, held in 2004.

Thanks to the work of GPI, the second such conference, with a star-studded list of international participants, will be held here in Nova Scotia, at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish on June 20-24.

The Canadian Index of Well-being is our first attempt to measure gross national happiness. When we can measure it, we will be able to see what helps and what doesn't. We may even be able to show that the East Coast is a sane and balanced place, and not a depressed region at all.

Author Silver Donald Cameron lives happily in Cape Breton.

# How are we (really) doing? National index to tell us; Satisfaction gauge may be used to shape government policy

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**PUBLICATION:** Toronto Star  
**DATE:** 2005.05.08  
**SECTION:** NEWS  
**PAGE:** A8  
**SOURCE:** STAFF REPORTER  
**BYLINE:** Jordan Heath–Rawlings

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A new Canadian index will gauge how people are faring overall, not just how much they're spending.

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing will be far more accurate than its economic cousin, the gross domestic product, says Roy Romanow, who was in Toronto last week to present it at the United Way of Canada conference.

"(The GDP) tells us how much total income we are producing, but tells us nothing about how that income is distributed," said Romanow, the former Saskatchewan premier who chaired the 2002 commission into medicare.

The index has been five years in the making, and some of its first quarterly figures are due to be published in the fall.

"When the single most influential national lens that we use to measure our progress and wellbeing as a country is confined to a narrow set of economic indicators, it sends inaccurate and even dangerous signals to policy makers."

The gross domestic product is driven skyward when bad things happen and money is spent to fix the problems, Romanow said. Problems like the Quebec ice storm, traffic accidents, street crime, deforestation.

But the Canadian Index of Wellbeing is driven down by negative things like crime, poor health and unaffordable tuition.

The index takes its cue from countries like the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, where the government measures the level of satisfaction among its populace and attempts to shape public policy to better those levels. In Canada, a national working group of about 20 organizations was convened with funding from the Atkinson Charitable Foundation. "We, along with others, had been doing this work in a very scattered way," said Ron Colman, executive director of Genuine Progress Index Atlantic, a non-profit organization that had been developing a wellbeing index for Nova Scotia. "What the Atkinson foundation did is bring everybody together."

Measuring the level of life satisfaction among the people of a country is certainly not confined to Bhutan, although it was there that the king declared in 1972 that "the Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product."

New Zealand also produces national reports on the wellbeing of its citizens, which are often taken into account by the government in making decisions.

Colman says the Canadian group is learning from the models of New Zealand and Bhutan how to best ensure the government, which has no real connection to the wellbeing index, acts on what the data indicate Canadians are experiencing.

"We're learning how to push this further along on the public policy agenda," he said. "But they are also learning from us that there is strength in having data come from an independent source."

Researchers across the globe have been attempting for decades to find a formula that objectively measures how satisfied people are with their lives, without much concrete success.

Dutch professor Ruut Veenhoven, a highly regarded researcher in positive psychology – the study of what makes us happy and why – has for 20 years been working on the World Database of Happiness. He has found that, although the most prosperous nations tend to score higher than the poorest ones, there are exceptions. El Salvador, for instance, ranks 7.2 out of 10, the same as Great Britain.

Veenhoven's research was largely based on people's own judgments of how satisfied they are with their lives. The Canadian Index of Wellbeing will be calculated based on data gathered by about 20 researchers, from Statistics Canada, Environment Canada and researchers from several universities.

While it's unavoidable some self-reported data will be used, researchers are planning to take into account harder numbers, such as the costs of education and of everyday essentials.

"This is not a feel-good type of self-survey," said Charles Pascal, executive director of the Atkinson foundation. "This is using data to measure, in a very tangible way, the things that matter to Canadians."

The working group will measure areas such as living standards, health and welfare and levels of political engagement.

Said Dr. Robert McMurtry, a London physician who also serves on the Health Council of Canada: "I can remember the days when you didn't have so many people who couldn't afford higher education, when you felt a lot safer walking the streets at night and when pollution wasn't such a problem. I'd like to see us have a standard by which we can measure whether these things – which are so important to us – are going upwards or downwards."