

That's one tough steak

by BRIAN LOCKHART

There's an old joke from way back, in cartoon form, that shows a guy who is down on his luck, eating an old boot.

The joke is the leather came from a cow, so technically it is a form of steak.

When you are starving, you've got to eat what you can find.

A visit to the grocery store is now a scary thought. I'm not sure who is going to have a barbecue with all the trimmings this summer unless you're planning on throwing homegrown carrots on the grill, because not a lot of people can afford to invite a group of friends over and throw some decent-quality steaks over the coals.

The cost of food has gone up dramatically over the past year. In many cases, there was no need for an increase.

Some food producers saw other things going up and raised their prices to match despite the fact that their costs have increased.

Just the small things that were .99 cents a year ago are now \$1.99 in my grocery store. Other items have gone up even more.

Has the cost of growing olives really gone up 45 per cent over the past year?

A report from Food Banks Canada, says almost half of people across the county feel financially worse off than last year and one in four are experiencing food insecurity.

Food Banks have seen an increase in visits that have gone up 50 per cent since 2021.

Since that same year, there has been an increase in people living below the poverty line. However, everyone has a different version of what poverty is.

Some people think you're not living in poverty unless you abide in a log cabin and can't afford shoes for your kids. Others think poverty is when you can't afford two vacations or a new car this year.

A good deal of the inflation is related directly to transportation costs. It costs a lot of money to operate a big rig these days ? and that's how food is delivered.

The federal government's plan to make us all pay more at the pumps has failed, in whatever it was supposed to achieve. At the time, they said it would place us more in line with what European countries pay for fuel.

Why in the world, would we have to be in line with European prices?

I don't care that someone in Europe pays a lot of money for gas.

The report claims there are several reasons for the current situation.

Rising interest rates were intended to tame inflation. However, what those interest rates did was put more pressure on lower-income people who are struggling to keep a roof over their heads in a real estate market that is already overinflated ? you shouldn't have to pay over \$1 million for a detached house ? even in this day and age.

With the price of housing now so high, when a mortgage comes up for renewal, just a one percent increase in the rate can create a huge burden for someone who already struggled for years to come up with a down payment.

Rapid population growth has put pressure on housing availability as well as social services.

Building a huge amount of houses to handle the increase in need is not the solution. It will make a select few individuals wealthy, but the situation never should have happened in the first place.

Builders are now creating solid blocks of housing with no parking, no yard, and no hope ? in a country of 9.9 million square kilometres ? to jam several thousand people in one square kilometre of space.

The federal government continues with an insane immigration policy when many people can't afford a home in their own hometown.

Those who must rent a place to live, are experiencing higher rents ? vastly higher, which of course cuts into the food budget, which then cuts into a person's ability to buy a vehicle, which is needed to go to work, to buy money for food. It's a vicious cycle.

At the same time, inflation is eroding the dollar, and salaries are not keeping up with inflation, and with good reason.

Most employers simply can't pay their employees more and more every year to offset the cost of inflation. They have to make a profit to stay in business.

Current government policies are failing our citizens.

They need to get things under control before we are looking for boots to eat at the next barbecue.