

WORD'S WORTH

With Eric Balkind



Learning to be a squeaky wheel

It's interesting, enlightening and often dismaying to watch the efforts going on, at all levels in the country, to defend (and in some cases to whitewash) particular viewpoints and actions. Consider a few recent examples.

On the local scene ...

The Niagara Escarpment Landowner's Coalition has apparently requested that the U.N.'s designation of the scarp as a "World Biosphere Reserve" be temporarily suspended; they've also requested the Niagara Escarpment Commission be abolished in favour of local government control.

It doesn't take much insight or particular knowledge to see what's likely going on here. Both the U.N. designation and the control exerted by the NEC are likely to limit and sometimes even prevent commercial development in this very special and sensitive area. Ergo, if you can't get your own way, get rid of whatever it is that is frustrating your plans.

On the Provincial scene ...

An unique, small tract of old-growth forest known as Gillies Grove lies within the town limits of Arnprior, near Ottawa; in their wills, the original owners sought to protect this small tract in perpetuity. The land in question was bought by the English Oblates of Eastern Canada who gave a written understanding that the property would be preserved. Now these same Oblates have applied to the Ontario Municipal Board for approval to develop the property into a series of luxury estates.

Is it possible that the Oblates already knew, when they originally purchased Gillies Grove, what they really wanted to do with the land? Their current request certainly makes you wonder what they really had in mind.

On the national scene ...

When the world learned (as the result of an amateur video) of the appalling living conditions of the Inuit in Davis Inlet, Tory government minister Tom Siddon scrambled to contain the damage with the claim that, no, he wasn't responding to the uproar, he was acting on a recently-received report put out by his ministry officials detailing the need for action.

Such transparent claims seem to be the accepted way of life in Ottawa and, truth to tell, Siddon must be a past master at the art; he did it with nary a sign of a blush on his face.

All of which brings us to the actions by two FOAD (Furiously Opposed to Acton Dumping) members who got themselves ejected from the august halls of the Ontario legislature recently when they sought to confront Premier Bob Rae. Later, Diane van de Valk and Rita Landry explained that they planned to target Rae "until they get some answers from him."

Confrontation may not be the preferred "Canadian" style, but taxpayers who stop to think about the costs to date accruing to all of us as the result of local government's fight against the dump may find that the only way to get answers is to follow some form of direct action; the results seem to have something to do with the old notion about who gets the grease.

Could be that locally, provincially and nationally we'll be seeing a lot more squeaky wheels around in days to come. Providing that such "wheels" are well-informed, that is the healthy way to go.

Wit & Wisdom

If it is true that there are lessons to be learned from living, then experience may be our best teacher. On the other hand, it would be helpful if we could learn from the experiences of others — or would it?

Over a two year period, a young Taiwanese man wrote 700 love letters to his girl friend trying to persuade her to marry him. It was later reported that the girl in question became engaged to the postman who faithfully delivered all the letters.

Liu Pi was an eminent medical researcher who persuaded the Tang emperor Hsien Tsung to try his new anti-aging medicine. It is reported that the emperor fell dead.

Ibsen spent the last six years of his life, unable to write, staring out of his window. One day, a visiting nurse announced that he was feeling better. "On the contrary," said the old man — and died.

An airline decided to hire psychiatrists as special security officers to keep a careful watch on passengers awaiting departure. One psychiatrist promptly arrested another.



LETTERS

More courses, please!

To the Editor,

This past week I took part in the "Victorian Wreath" course in Acton offered through the Recreation and Parks Department. It was great! And the instructor, Penny Butterworth, did an excellent job!

It was great to see courses finally offered in Acton, and I hope Rec. and Parks continues to offer more for Acton.

Fran Burton
Acton

Speaking out in defense of self defense

To the Editor,

I run a club in Acton at the Scout Hall. One of my instructors wrote this letter for his local paper. I think his thoughts are relevant to our community.

Mark Yates
Promor Karate

I started teaching Karate in Grand Valley during the fall of 1992 and though I've been involved with Martial Arts for a number of years, it isn't until you start to teach that "IT" happens. I never thought that people actually believed "IT."

"IT" is the myth of what Karate is and all the little myths and misconceptions that surround the legend. I never thought I'd feel compelled to write *in defense of self defense*. I never realized how misunderstood it has become.

To start, there is a big difference between defending oneself

and beating someone up. We do not promote violence. Karate has sadly become associated with aggressive action and violence. Actors like Van Damme, Chuck Norris, The Ninja series and ever popular Ninja Turtles have hacked, slashed, pounded and pulverized their way into our lives and seem to now set the model for our vision of Karate.

I thought everybody knew that the "movie-style Martial Arts" films were done with tongue in cheek to bring it closer to fantasy than reality. I can guarantee you that, to try some of those stunts, and stunts they are, will put you in the hospital either through your own actions or your attacker's. Movie-style Martial Arts are next to useless in a real life self-defense situation.

What Karate does teach you first hand is how to spot aggressive behavior, identify potential trouble situations and how to avoid them or deal with them effectively. As a matter of fact, violent and unruly individuals are not tolerated in any Karate club I know of. All thought and action flows from a basic philosophy, "THE PRINCIPLES OF BLACK BELT," these being "Modesty, Courtesy, Integrity, Self-Control, Perseverance, Indomitable Spirit." Not bad qualities to bring out in a person, I'd say.

Karate's true secrets lie in its use of balance, leverage and self-control — a combination that suddenly makes big and strong much less important. Keep in mind that Karate was specifically developed by those and for those who were otherwise considered small, weak and defenseless.

Which brings up the second great myth, and it's one I don't

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