



SINGING FOR SUPPER: Trinity United Church choirmaster George Elliott (seated) and the senior choir entertained at the church's Mother's Day dinner at the Acton Arena and Community Centre. Back, left to right: Erma Nessel, Helen Bittorf, Ralph McKeown, Keith Black, Bob Landsborough, Paul Youngblut, Robin Bassett and Roberta Bassett. Front: Ann McIntyre, Gail Manuel, Mary Walmsma, Marg Deadman, Fred Piehl, Lise Landsborough, Lenora Vickery and Evelyn Watson. - Frances Niblock photo



WONDERFUL WOODWINDS: An ensemble of players from Trinity United church entertained guests at the church's successful Mother's Day dinner at the Acton Arena and Community Centre. From left: Fred Piehl, Paul Youngblut, Hayley Green, Lois Matton, George Elliott and Lenora Vickery. - Frances Niblock photo

Clergy insight Respect for all living things

By **REVEREND BOB MATTON**
Trinity United Church

Over the past month, like many people, I have been rejoicing in the new life of springtime - singing praises to a natural resurrection after a albeit easy winter. Along with the continuing return of songbirds from their winter getaways, the budding and coming into leaf of the trees, and the return from dormancy in neighbourhood flowerbeds, I've witnessed to much activity along the spillway that runs behind our home in the Bovis subdivision.

The song of our resident toads resounds each year about this time, especially in the early morning and evening continuing well into the night. Their high-pitched warble heralds the mating season, as well as unfortunately the wrath of their slaughter by those who would either rain large rocks down upon them or snuff out their lives by other cruel means. It leaves me dumbfounded and saddened that the innocence and wonder of early childhood is so easily displaced by a wanton disrespect for such living things by pre-adolescents.

When the conversation turns to the subject of cracking down on crime in general and toughening up the Young Offenders Act in par-

ticular, I invariably respond to the effect that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure", that by being pro-active rather than reactive we could very well deter and neutralize in a child's formative years many of the negative influences that inevitably lead too many in later years to anti-social behaviour as well as criminal activity. In my opinion, an emphasis on the teaching of universal moral values to our children would prove without a doubt more effective in the long term than any knee-jerk measures that focus on retribution and punishment of the offender.

At the top of my list of core moral values, teaching about respect would provide a key, opening the door to the teaching of other values. Beginning with a respect for

life, for all God's Creation and for all living things, we might learn the importance of co-existence and of reigning in our propensity to disregard all that is weaker and smaller than ourselves. Toads and other living creatures, upon whose habitat we are in fact the intruders, have a right to life that deserves our respect and consideration. Even in those exceptional cases where they might be deemed a pest or nuisance, humane methods of control should be carefully considered.

Likewise and perhaps moreso with regard to our treatment of animals we have adopted as pets, their abuse is not merely witnessed in the exceptional cases reported in the media and documented

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