



On the prowl

After a few months of hibernating, the young lad above is hungry and looking for food — for both himself and for the young family he'll be helping raise over the summer. Last week, as his human compatriots packed Huronia beaches and highways, Rufus dug up nuts stacked last fall, and took time to pose for the photographer.

Staff photo

Hurononia happenings

A near-riot at Sauble Beach west of Owen Sound last weekend was labelled as "spring fever among the young people" by members of the Ontario Provincial Police force in the area, after officers and cruisers were hit by stones and bottles thrown by light-hearted merry-makers. In the rest of Huronia, the scene was more peaceful, but the 85 degree temperature saw thousands of city folk from the south pack beaches and resort communities, for one of the best May 24 weekends in years for tourist operators.

Summer has begun.

This weekend in Collingwood, the Huronia Kennel Club mounts its annual championship dog show at Exhibition Park, on Saturday and Sunday starting at 9 a.m. Fully 1,000 dogs have been entered by their owners in the competition.

Orillia, this Saturday, May 24, is Barn Raising Day, sponsored by the Orillia Agricultural Society at the city's fair grounds. A pre-fab barn will be erected on the site, off Highway 12 one mile west of Orillia, as participants appear in 19th century costumes. Some of the activities, along with para mutual betting on horse races, include demonstrations of home cooking, displays of household goods, spinning, weaving, broom-making, and a taffy pull. There will be square dancing in the new barn in the evening, to the music of Rudy Meekes.

For Georgian College students, this week will see graduation ceremonies at both Owen Sound and Barrie for the bulk of the 500 people who will obtain diplomas or certificates this year. Friday evening, at 8 p.m., Owen Sound campus grads will take part in a ceremony at the Lee Manor. Saturday at 11 a.m. is the ceremony for the applied arts students, with business and technology students' ceremonies starting at 2 p.m.

Artists and craftsmen throughout the Georgian Bay area are reminded of the Orillia Guild of Artists' annual arts and crafts fair on June 21 and 22 at the Orillia Community Centre. Those interested in participating are invited to contact Maureen Scott, president of the guild at 325-8787.

Quote of the week

"The Premier called me a Waffle. Well, I called him a pancake. Then he called me a double Waffle. I called a stack of pancakes. Knowing the way he feels about Quebec, I warned him if he calls me a Waffle again, I'll call him a crepe suzette."

David Barrett, then leader of the NDP, reporting on a conversation with Premier W.A.C. Bennett of B.C., August, 1972. Reprinted from Colombo's Canadian Quotations. Hurtig Publishers

TERRY PENN by John Beaulieu



Education:

It's back to the basics as a gilt-edged system in trouble mounts an expensive rescue operation

by Shirley Whittington

It's going to cost Mr. and Mrs. Simcoe County \$11-million more to educate their children than it did last year. In spite of belt-tightening in some areas (the driver education program is gradually becoming self-sustaining) the total cost of education continues to rise every year.

Rising salaries and labour costs make education an increasingly expensive affair. And as Simcoe County attracts more refugees from the metropolitan jungles of Ontario's Golden Triangle, our school population continues to increase — a statistic which is being reversed in most other counties in Ontario.

What about the products of this gilt-edged educational system?

It depends on which report you read. Universities and community colleges are complaining that first year students are unable to read, write or speak with any precision or clarity. Gordon Pollock, associate registrar at Trent University claims they are "innumerate" as well as illiterate.

Since grade thirteen departmental examinations were scratched in the late sixties, high school graduation marks vary wildly in their validity and universities are getting students who have spent thirteen years in classrooms, but whose actual education is often sorely limited.

Even high school teachers are worried enough about the reading and writing skills of students, that they are pushing for remedial English classes in secondary schools.

Yet an Ontario Institute for Studies in Education study funded by the Ontario Government claims that elementary school students are doing as well in math skills as students ten years ago.

"Parents were losing confidence in the new system of education"

Paradoxically, some months before the OISE study, Education Minister Thomas Wells called for a return to the teaching of "the basics" because he said, "Parents were losing confidence in the new system of education."

The "new system" had its birth in a devey-eyed document called Living and Learning, a report on the aims of education prepared in 1968 when William Davis was Minister of Education. The underlying precept of Living and Learning, (the Hall-Dennis Report) was that the aim of a school was to enable young

people to investigate freely, discuss, evaluate, think and decide.

With the assumption that children were curious industrious and self-starting by nature, the report called for progress at an individual level, with a maximum of choice and a minimum of competition, punishment or external reward.

Messrs Emmett Hall and Lloyd Dennis breathed some fresh air into a system that has traditionally resisted change, but unfortunately they also blew away the good with the bad. In some ways, the new concept proved to be as inflexible as the system it decried.

James Daly of McMaster University is an outspoken critic of Living and Learning and he says acidly, "climbers who recognized the wave of the future as the way to promotion immediately got aboard the Hall-Dennis band wagon."

Frantic obsession

In the frantic post-Sputnik obsession with educational updating, money was poured into this boom in open concept schools with lavish audio-visual equipment and resource centres.

Georgian College in Barrie stands as a monument to this boom in educational building. Today, administrators admit to funding difficulties.

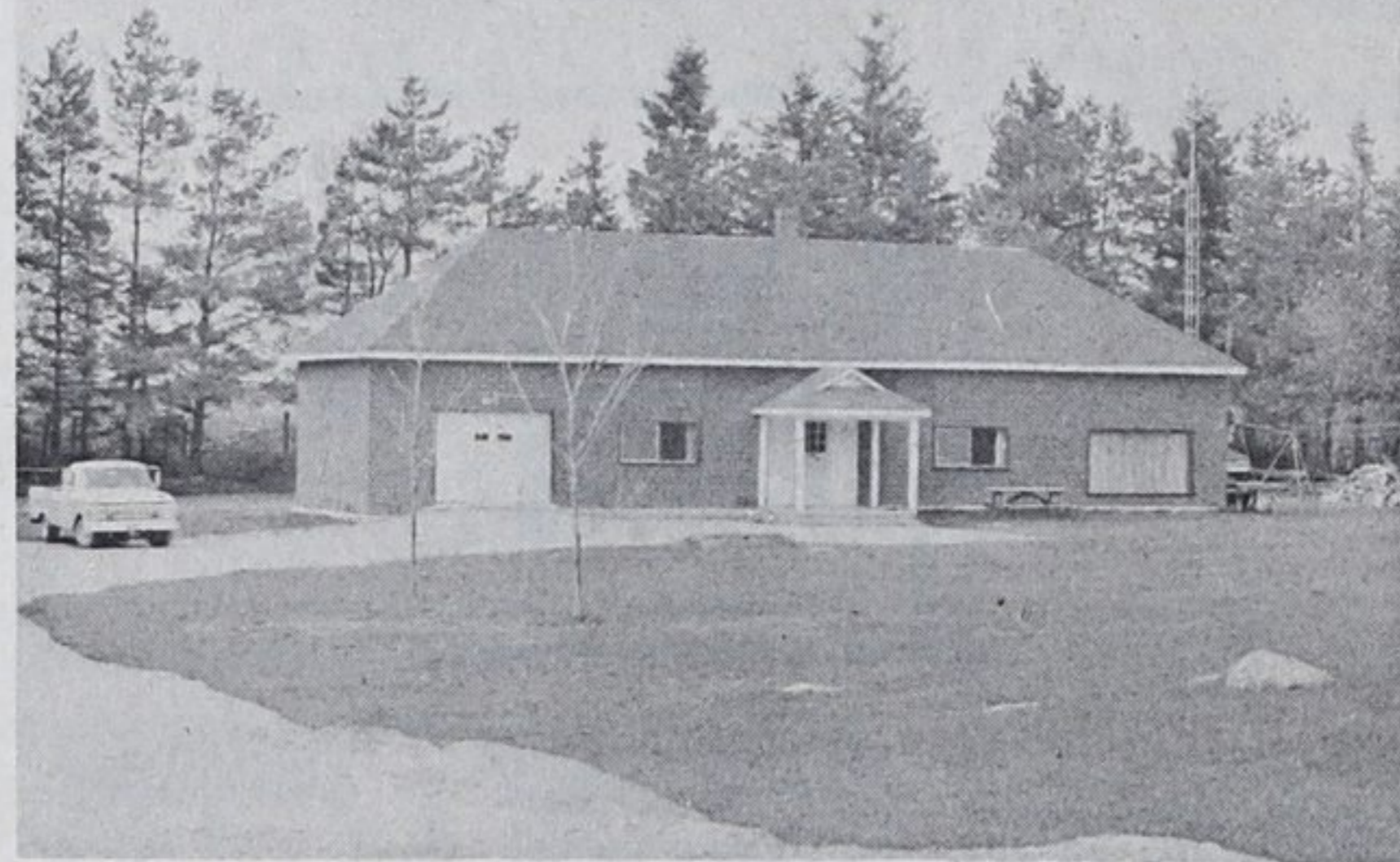
The most dramatic change in our county came in 1969, with the amalgamation of 37 individual school boards into the Simcoe County Board, with headquarters in Barrie. Today that board administers 75 elementary schools, 13 secondary schools and five schools for the trainable retarded, as well as providing facilities for 3,200 summer and evening students.

Centralization was an emotional issue, and after six years of operation, it still has its critics. An obvious disadvantage is that geographically, the county is one of the largest in the province. That makes it difficult to twin schools (a cost-cutting procedure that puts one principal in charge of two schools).

It isn't easy for taxpayers to attend board meetings, especially in February. Teachers complain of delays in getting simple repairs or replacements when equipment breaks down.

One teacher put it this way: "Anything that gets big costs more to run, scares more people and tends to operate in isolation."

And yet centralization has conferred benefits, particularly on children in the rural sections of Simcoe County. Before 1969 only 50 percent of our children could attend kindergarten. It is now available to



It once was a school

Before Simcoe County's 37 school boards amalgamated in 1969, only 50 percent of the county's children attended kindergarten. It is now available for all children, complete with bus transportation, and has been one of the

beneficial effects of centralization. But amalgamation spelled the end for most one and two-classroom schools. Many, like the one above, are now privately owned, and used as year-round homes or country retreats.

Staff photo



Informal study session

Classroom formality gave way in the late sixties and early seventies to the "Open Concept" in Simcoe County schools. Carpets appeared on floors, teaching methods became less structured and more

geared to individual student's wishes, and the atmosphere became more relaxed. Now, seven years after the Hall-Dennis Report, Living and Learning, was published, teachers and parents are fin-

ding that the pendulum may have swung too far. Across Ontario, the cry is "back to the basics" for what writer Shirley Whittington says will be "an expensive rescue operation." Dave McCausland photo

all five-year-olds, complete with bus transportation.

Safety standards

Rural schools which were unsafe and inadequate in many cases were closed down, and all schools in the area were brought up to fire safety standards.

One trustee on the board, maintains that "by centralizing operations we were able to act as one employer instead of 37, and we can deploy our personnel efficiently to bring the level of all schools to a uniform standard. Specialists are available to all schools now. And certainly in ordering supplies we save money because we buy in larger quantity."

Administrative space in the Education Centre in Barrie is shared with the Simcoe County Separate School Board, an innovation which is unique in the province. Says director Jack Ramsay, "We share in many audio visual services, and with oral French teachers. This co-operation between boards is a real step forward."

"... it seems incredible that in the fifties, kids were suspended from school because of hair length or mode of dress"

Meanwhile, there were dramatic changes within the school walls. At the elementary level formal grammar and drilling in number facts gave way to creative multi-media expression and the new math, which bewildered many a parent.

School atmosphere became more relaxed and permissive, and today it seems incredible that in the fifties, kids were suspended from school because of hair length or mode of dress.

Elective enrichment programs were added and youngsters learned to crochet, play tennis, make bread or films. Parents were encouraged to come into the schools to assist in reading and enrichment programs.

For many children, school became a joyous and exciting experience. They were discovering, investigating and discussing.

But secondary school teachers began to find amid the joy and freedom, there was a distressing lack of the fundamental skills needed for advanced study.

The adoption of H-S 1 (the provincial guide book for high school teachers) in 1971 further muddied the academic waters. In line with Living and Learning's insistence that students have freedom of choice in what they learned, H-S 1 abolished compulsory high school subjects and new courses sprang up in bewildering array. Graduation depended upon completion of a fixed number of credits.

Although guidance teachers and principals struggled to assist students to choose wisely, the inevitable result of such unfettered choice was the attrition of many academic subjects. Latin was an early casualty, and interest in English and history began to wither.

Some teachers found themselves engaged in popularity contest, with the very existence of their subject areas at stake.

The multiplicity of choice made timetabling a nightmare, and in many high schools some form of data processing has been adopted to deal with report cards.

The credit system certainly satisfied the needs of the individual student, but it placed the immature student in danger of premature concentration in some subject area at the expense of other basic ones. Mistakes in choice could be fatal to his future.

Within a few years, educators recognized the dangers, and now a grade nine student must have four credits designated as English studies and two Canadian studies. At the elementary level, the Simcoe County Board has directed that there be more emphasis on basic skills — a directive that was issued some months before Education Minister Thomas Wells admitted that these basics were being neglected.

How do things stand today? There are signs that we may be heading into an era of higher standards in basic education.

Says one trustee: "We want to find the right blend of the old and the new in education. Our strength lies in the recognition of our mistakes. But in our emphasis on teaching basic skills, we have to be very careful that we don't throw out everything that is new."

For some of our young people, it may be too late.

One teacher observed that, "education is the business of making happy, well-valued members of society. How happy is a young person going to be if he finds himself unemployable? And how rich will his leisure time be?"

It seems as if during the heady sixties, we may have thrown the baby out with the bath water.

Now, at last, some thought has been given to rescuing the baby. It's likely to be an expensive rescue operation, but we cannot afford to abandon it.

columns

Moms don't need pay for housework -- just a Belle of Rights for the refrigerator door



by Shirley Whittington

The close proximity of Mothers' Day and May Day did not escape my notice. Some women in Toronto made the obvious connection, and chose May Day for a demonstration, insisting on pay for housework.

I don't agree with their position. I do not wish to be paid for the housework I do, because I would either starve or be fired, and replaced by Carmelita Pope.

Mothers have already won one important right in the world of equal opportunity — the right to hold down two jobs

instead of one. At their outside places of employment, they are treated like regular guys. Their mail is addressed to Ms. and nobody holds doors open for them.

At home, however, mothers are oppressed and exploited by the emerging adults with whom they share living space.

Mothers need a Bill of Rights. (Equal rights purists may call it a Belle of Rights if they wish). At any rate, I have drawn one up and I'll post it on the door of the refrigerator if I can find my roll of cellophane tape.

A mother has the right to wear jeans, ride a bicycle, use Second Debut or go to classes in modern dance if she wants to. And nobody should laugh at her.

A mother has the right to like South Pacific, Merv Griffin, Chatelaine Magazine and fruit salad lunches at fancy restaurants, without being scorned.

A mother has the right to serve liver, fish sticks, powdered milk and margarine once in a while, in order to balance the

budget so that she can afford any of the above.

A mother has the right to say no to extra dinner guests who loom in the kitchen doorway after the pork chops have been counted and fried.

A mother has the right to walk away from empty toilet paper rollers, unmade beds and overflowing wastebaskets without feeling guilty. The same goes for the stuff piled on the stairs awaiting dispersal to the various bedrooms.

A mother has the right to refuse to remove splinters, to untie knotted shoelaces or grapple with seized-up zippers. She also has the right to yell at her son when she finds him artificially aging his new eighteen dollar jeans with bricks and javex.

A mother has the right to dress for a party without a small child staring at her and asking why she puts all that stuff on her eyes.

A mother has the right to say "Yes"

when a child says "Y'know what?"

A mother has the right to exclusive custody of her tennis socks, bicycle clips, hair dryer, typewriter, bath towel and the pencil beside the telephone.

A mother has the right to ask what the new girl/boy friend's father does.

A mother has the right to cherish female friends who are not wives of her husband's friends. She also has the right to socialize with people of whom her husband and children mildly disapprove.

A mother has the right to disappear for a weekend, with or without her husband. She is not obliged to spend a day beforehand pre-cooking the meals for the stay-at-homes.

A mother has the right to lock the bathroom door if she wants to.

A mother has the right not to worry if her child has a piano exam a dentist appointment and a one thousand word essay due on the same day.

A mother has the right to hide incoming

supplies of Oreo cookies, raisins, chocolate chips and bananas.

A mother has the right to a secret hiding place of her own where she can keep old love letters, her graduation picture, a good novel and her very own bottle of Courvoisier.

A mother has the right to be right, once in a while.

And if these rights aren't recognized, a mother has the right to stage an unscheduled wildcat strike. My personal work stoppage is planned for the night of the high school graduation dance. My son and I will be in the laundry room. He will be dancing around impatiently in his shirt tail, while I press his pants for the big event.

I plan to steam-iron one leg very carefully. Then I will walk off the job.

That's called striking while the iron's hot.

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