Gitizen comment

Light project deserves support

An interesting event took place at the Penetanguishene town council meeting a week ago.

It was interesting not because it raised any doubts or suspicions but mainly because it has been done so often recently with diastrous results for the taxpayers in certain areas of the province.

The interesting item was the proposal (which was later passed) by Councillor Frances St. Amant that the town sign the contracts necessary to get construction of the McGuire Park lighting system underway.

It was a reasonable request. Summer tends to fill the schedules of all but the slowest contractors. If the lighting system is to have any use at all this summer then it must be installed now without further

That is without question.

The point which does come to mind is that council is now responsible for the entire sum of more than \$30,000 which would cover the installation of the lights.

A few years ago in Etobicoke an ambitious alderman came before council with a proposal which would give that borough an Olympic-sized swimming pool complete with diving towers and all the facilities necessary to train Olympic athletes for the Montreal

It seemed like a great idea at the time. The alderman said he had organized a fund-raising committee which would gather the bulk of the cost of the aquatic centre with the province picking up the remainder in the form of grants. No cost to the taxpayer, he

by Art Evans

M.P.P. Simcoe Centre

the need to undertake a strong and vigorous

In previous reports to you I have discussed

Once council had approved the idea the fund-raising committee became moribund and gathered only \$100,000 in more than two years which left the taxpayers with the bulk of the \$6.2 million cost to make up.

A similar series of incidents occurred in Nepean Township outside of Ottawa where the building of a sports complex and an equestrian centre (supposedly without the aid of taxpayers' dollars) set the township on its financial heels when the needed funds failed to appear.

With the McGuire Park lighting situation we are not talking millions of dollars but thousands and the province, through Wintario, will contribute heavily according to the offerings given by the residents of Penetanguishene.

Councillor St. Amant has placed her reputation and good name on the line in this instance in the hope of raising some \$6,200 from the town residents.

Her belief in the people of Penetanguishene is well warranted. An arena stands today due to the efforts of many local residents. The curling club is nearing its break-even point. And there is no reason the lights should not follow suit.

Far better to give out of the pocket in the effort to match the requirements of the Wintario lottery grant than to be forced to shell out in the tax bills at a rate more than twice what is now being asked.

It is that simple. Frances St. Amant deserves respect for leading this campaign and should be supported to the fullest by all of us.

She would never ask more of us. And we can never ask less of ourselves.

Sugar and Spice

can't make him drink. You can't teach an old

Keith Spicer, the grand poobah of dog new tricks. You can't make a silk purse bilingualism, appointed by the Trudeau government to wet-nurse one of its favorite To these old adages might be added babies, has finally reached a conclusion that another, closely related. You can't create a an average 12-year-old could have arrived at, fluent, sparkling, bilingual cosmopolitan out without undue mental strain, in about 15 of a dull, middle-class, middle-aged civil

I'm glad to see that some semblance of that the government program for creating sense has seeped into the senility surroun- bilingualism in the civil service was bass

You can lead a horse to water, but you ding the approach to bilingualism at Ottawa.

French with tears

Some unkind people might say that Ottawa civil servants have always spoken with a double tongue, even when they had only one language, and why have them speaking doubletalk in two?

Instead of pouring millions into converting stodgy civil servants into connoisseurs of He decided, and had the courage to admit, French language and culture, Mr. Spicer concedes, the money should be spent in the schools, teaching French to children. Great

thinking, Keith. Anyone with any knowledge of learning a second language could have told you that two years ago.

by Bill Smiley

Ordinary, every-day common sense and experience shows us how true this is. Take an average family of immigrants to Canada. German, Italian, whatever you like. The parents have great difficulty in learning English, and retain a strong accent all their lives.

Their children, even though their ally language is their native one when they arrive here, and even though it is spoken almost exclusively at home, are completely at ease in English within a year or two. To hear them chirp and prattle away in the idiom, you'd never know that they weren't born and bred in English-speaking Canada.

For an adult, learning a new language is horribly hard work. And for a bureaucrat or civil servant, it must be doubly difficult. because their minds are constitutionally unable to admit anything new.

French-Canadians who want to get somewhere in Canada, whether it's in business or politics, learn English because they have to. Whatever the pundits say, this is primarily an English-speaking country.

Most French-Canadian cabinet ministers are at least adequate in English. Some politicians, like Pierre Trudeau and Claude Wagner, speak English beautifully, far better than most of their Anglophone peers and opponents.

But when an Anglo politician speaks French, however atrociously, we look upon him or her with amazement, as though it were a sign of genius. What hypocrisy, in a country that is, theoretically, bilingual. (I still wince every time John Diefenbaker strays into what he fondly believes is French.)

As you may have gathered, I have strong feelings about bilingualism. Unlike a great many Canadians, I am all for it. But the government's approach to creating that blessed state has been at best a farce, a charade, at worst a swindle of the tax-

Of course the beginnings must be with the children! On the surface, the study of French in our schools has been encouraged by government. In fact, the moneys for a practical, realistic approach to learning French have been held back from the schools and poured into that bottomless pit at Ottawa.

French has practically been abolished as a pre-requisite for university entrance. As a result, and because learning it requires some real effort, students shy away from it and look for "bird" courses. Result, French classes in our schools have

shrunk deplorably. This, despite the fact that French is being taught better, and in a more lively, interesting, and realistic way, than ever before. (I studied French for five years in high school, three in university, and can barely proposition a girl, let alone order a meal in French.)

O.K. Let's start all over again with our bilingual program, and forget that painful failure in Ottawa. Start teaching it to kids in Grade 1. Keep it

up. Make it a prerequisite for university.



out of a sow's ear.



commitment to restraint in government spending. Not only is the need clearly evident, but your Ontario Government has acted to do exactly that — to put a handle on public expenditure or to come to grips with the economic realities of the seventies. The challenge facing all of us is the ramcommunity.

page of inflation. It is hurting every citizen in Ontario and in Canada. One of the principal causes of these inflationary pressures is high government spending. Ontario recognizes this reality. Yet in the heady days of growth of the sixties, there were needs to be satisfied - stemming from the extraordinary growth of our cities and towns. We met the needs. Today the challenge is to limit government spending.

Having said that, our Opposition friends criticize the efforts of your Ontario Government to act responsibly and seriously in putting this commitment into effect. It means reducing the high costs of health care in Ontario, closing some hospitals where necessary, limiting municipal expenditures to 8 per cent and social services to 5.5 per cent, to name a few. In so doing our Opposition friends describe our actions as cruel, hearless and irresponsible. They go even further and characterize your Ontario Government as anti people.

How can they make these irresponsible statements when they look at the facts? How can they define these budget increases as "cutbacks", when, in fact, these spending limits truly reflect a reduced rate of government expenditures. Certainly these reduced rates require some hard thinking and intelligent choices to be made by school trustees and locally elected councillors. It requires the mending of our fiscal ways.

And that is the aim of our whole exercise, which the Leader of the Official Opposition totally appears to be missing! He prefaces

his political observation these days by remarks such as - "We in the New Democratic Party are in favour of restraint but..." The New Democrats like talking about restraint, and criticizing this government on its specific actions - but never once from what I can gather, do they propose any specific programs of their own. Their only solid proposal is to increase corporation taxes on the grasping, greedy business

That says two things about the New Democrats: they defend the public sector as highly efficient and the only way to provide services. They perceive the private sector with suspicion and hostility. The other way is to soak the corporations with higher taxes. New Democrats fail to realize that it is the creative capacity and ingenuity of thousands of individuals in the private sector who ultimately provide the real wealth on which social services can be provided.

The simple truth is: Dry up this source of wealth, or talk only about redistributing wealth, and you will soon reach the point whereby the whole economic system collapses under its own weight of regulations and controls.

What Ontario needs today is more productivity - not wild and unrestricted growth, but more goods and services to pay for the existing social services. You cannot tax what does not exist. The New Democrats live in a world of economic illusions. Progressive Conservatives are facing today's hard economic realities.

I say that without hesitation - not to say that the former are "bad guys" and the latter the "good guys". Rather the public record shows that you Ontario Government has bitten the bullet on reducing inflation without drastically affecting the overall quality of public service. The New Democrats are still missing the whole point about controlling

Let's hope they soon catch up.

Snowdrop tulip Pyramid power did not help the dead pharaohs



by Shirley Whittington

There are two sides to every story, but if you want your story to have a happy ending, you're better off with something three-sided. So say the pyramid freaks.

The pyramid has replaced the copper bracelet as a trendy totem. Earth has become the planet of the apex.

I can't find anyone who can explain pyramid power except in the most vague and general terms. Said a young friend, "The apex like, collects cosmic energy, right? And all that energy sorta gets concentrated in one spot, y'know?"

I know a science teacher who swears that plants in his classroom tried harder when they were snuggled under pyramids, and his wife sleeps with one over her bed and says that every day in every way she feels better and better.

rabbit is the most immediate beneficiary of the pyramid craze, because he no longer has to worry about donating one of his feet to humans who want to feel lucky.

I'm not sure that pyramids did the Pharaohs any good. They are all just as dead as they would have been if they'd been buried under plastic bird baths.

rakes in buckets of bucks while his underlings work their hearts out for peanuts has been declared not only unlucky, but illegal in some places. One of the pavillions at Montreal's Expo

and things have been going wrong in that city ever since. Tents are roughly pryamidal in shape. My kids sleep in them every summer, and it

was shaped like an upside down pyramid,

hasn't made them any smarter. pyramidal hats instead of conical ones,

On the other hand, if dunces and Ku Klux Klan leaders cosied their heads under

maybe they'd be smarter and better loved. Perhaps the three sided nature of a pyramid's planes is the key to the mystery. Three is a magic number, celebrated in myth and folk lore.

Photo by Kevin Scanlon

Pythagorus called three "the perfect In terms of good luck and longevity, the number". Then he sat down and thought hard about a triangle and came up with the Pythagorean theorum. Immediately, he became famous.

We all cut our literary teeth on trios of bears, little kittens, blind mice, billy goats gruff and men in a tub. Wynken and Blynken are meaningless without Nod.

Christianity is rooted in the Trinity, Three Pyramid selling, in which the guy at the top Wise Men, and hope, faith and charity. As well as three Graces, there are three Furies, and every one of us is alleged to be a tripartite being - physical, spiritual and emotional.

A good story - like The Three Musketeers has three parts, a beginning, a middle and an

No matter how you look at it, three is a biggie, unless you are in love, when it becomes a crowd or a terrible problem.

Placing mystically endowed three sided figures on a solid no-nonsense rectangle makes a pyramid, and these days, that's good magic. Entrepreneurs are now manufacturing pyramids, and you'll soon be able to buy cosmic energy collectors at the five and dime.

I plan to buy a bunch, because I can think of dozens of uses for them. I will keep all my lottery tickets under a

pyramid, as well as my bank book, my typewriter and my tomato seedlings I'll fit another pyramid over my head, and

if my hairdresser can incorporate it inconspicuously into my coiffure, so much the better. Just thinking about all that cosmic energy constantly zapping its way into my head makes me giddy.

(There is a danger that some of the good stuff might slide off the edges of the pyramid and settle in my shoulders, making me into a middle aged offensive tackle, but a bit of eavestroughing around the edges should keep the magic rays up where they'll do the most

Little tiny pyramids would do wonders for my eyelashes, and I plan to tape a set over my fingernails at night.

I may even sew a couple into my brassiere. If pyramid power doesn't work for me, I'll take each one apart into separate triangles and apply for a job in a rhythm band somewhere.

With my luck, three strikes and I'd be out.

Letters, comment, opinion

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by Kevin Scanlon

The one sided adventure of Bare Wabbit

Bare Wabbit was one strange crazy rabbit. Everyone throughout the hutch which was known as Perkintang knew it and stories circulated relentlessly of his excesses and his growing disrespect for the norms of the tiny community.

"You've got to stop acting the fool," some over there." would tell him.

"I was thinking of that," Wabbit would reply, "besides, madness is much more my "You've got to settle down in a normal

life," others would admonish him. To which, he would answer, "I've got a whole eternity set aside for that. Lots of time

for staring at the ceiling after I'm dead." Still others could criticize his thirst for the fermented juice of the carrot.

"No problem" he always responded, "I'm switching to beet-top wine next week." The worst of his habits was that around

which his entire life was centred. He called it The Plan. No one was really sure where it came from or when and few really cared as long as they could be assured that it was

It all started (in fact, The Plan was entirely formulated) in the lettuce factory where he worked on the assembly line with hundreds of others.

His fellow employees had gotten used to his constant flow of nasty comments: "Lettuce, eeyuch!" or "How can anyone eat this stuff?" or "Green is obscene!"

started talking about The Plan. "Someday soon I'm going to get out of this place," he said, "and I'll go far away to find out what's on the other side of that big hill

But even they were stunned when he

Pages torn from the editor's notebook

"And," he added as silence rocked the factory, "I'll see this Big Bunny I've heard so much about."

The workers didn't really believe him, of course, because they knew that young rabbits had no sense but one old foreman, a wise and well-travelled cottontail, said, "You will go over that hill and find another hill and another after that and another after that and yet another after that but you will never see the Big Bunny."

"I will, " Bare Wabbit said, "and someday a long time from now I will come over that hill back there and you will know that I have seen all there is to see.'

Throwing down a head of lettuce he stormed into the office of Jack O'Hare, the factory manager.

"I'm leaving," the young rabbit said. And he did.

The next morning he struck out toward the distant hill carrying over his shoulder a small sack containing a change of underwear, a Rolling Stones T-shirt and two bottles of cabbage wine.

And, as expected, he found another hill after the first and another after that and yet another after the next one. That night he

slept peacefully in a deserted chicken coop. Two days later he found himself on the side of the highway leading to the city. He had never seen a highway before but remem-

bered reading a story about hitchhiking. With all his courage he stuck out his paw as the cars flashed past His first ride was with a man who sold new

shoes for old feet. Later he met a man who sold overpriced

luxury cars to overweight people who couldn't afford them. The man was proud of his latest sales gimmick which was to include a 20-week course at Fat Tummy's in the purchase contract. The ad copy stipul "Skinnies need not apply."

Then there was another man and another ride who told him that biodegradable socks were the next to best thing to being there. "You can eat them right off your feet," the

There was another ride when the man gave him carrot daiquiris just to keep him quiet. And yet another man who did nothing but thought that gun control was being enforced to protect the bankers.

"If they don't have guns," the man said, "then everyone will be armed and when inflation gets too bad we'll all start robbing banks so the government has to do something to stop this problem from raising its ugly

head. Don't they?" Bare Wabbit could do nothing else but nod. Suddenly he found himself in the city and we will find out next week what happens when a young rabbit is let loose in search of the Big Bunny.