

Parents' Council almost made it

The Thornhill Parents' Council has an active concern about, and interest in, our York Region schools and the children in them.

Last week the Parents' Council organized a meeting and a panel discussion which was one of the best of its kind anywhere.

The rise of this council and the ready support evident for it, seems to be an indication of a growing and uncomfortable suspicion in the southern York Region community at least, that all is not well with the school children in these times.

The report of the meeting indicates the parents assembled may have put their fingers on the main problem, but then failed to define it and thus failed to come to grips with it.

Thornhill lawyer David Cork had the right idea when he voiced the opinion something is wrong and the system is starting to crack and crumble, with the teachers not meeting the problem head-on.

Another Thornhiller, psychiatrist John Fotheringham, forged the next necessary link in Cork's chain and put the crux of the problem clearly.

Dr. Fotheringham put it sweetly and innocuously when he said what is necessary is socialization.

In a time of great social instability he wants the schools to inculcate a sense of purpose for the individual, a sense of personal worth and the worth of others, and a sense of community responsibility.

Then it would be possible and worthwhile to impart knowledge to the children, as they then wouldn't waste it and waste themselves.

That was putting it all nicely. But it should, and needs, to be put more bluntly and clearly.

For 'socialization' substitute behaviour, or rather, misbehaviour — which includes bad manners, bad

habits, bad attitudes, bad concepts.

Then substitute for 'inculcate' the plain words that teachers should put a stop to these bad things.

Here the going gets tough.

Even if it were possible for the teachers to put a stop to the anti-social goings on among school children, those very teachers would be set upon and torn to shreds by a well meaning segment of today's community.

That is the segment which believes the child must be allowed to grow and open up like a flower, regardless of whether or not it grows into a weed.

But actually, we don't think the schools can do any more than a small fraction of the job of socialization that the children need.

The schools are well housed, well staffed and well equipped. The problem won't be solved by tinkering with education, or adding frills, or increasing teacher pay and the teacher-pupil ratio.

The necessary socialization can only be achieved through the actions of the adults of the community.

The adults must set the example. But more important, adults must be exposed to their children enough times each day to socialize the children. This is what is lacking today.

Children must be blasted out of their little all-day one-age peer groups. They must spend much more time with children of other age groups and with adults of all ages.

Fathers, and mothers too, plus older sisters and brothers, must not be so distant and far away during so much of the children's waking hours.

Children need healthy and wider spectrum relationships during all the hours of the day.

Only then will the crack and crumble of the system be stopped and the necessary socialization be achieved.

Neighborhood improvement opportunity very welcome

Still, it isn't all easy going ahead. There is still lots of work to be done.

The exact area to be included in the program has to be established. There have to be decisions on which improvements are to be made, and where.

Undoubtedly the consultants' report on opportunities and requirements will form the main basis for consideration over the coming weeks.

The new council will have to earn the confidence and co-operation of the citizens in the Lake Wilcox community.

At the same time the people in the community will have to make an effort of goodwill and unselfishness when such is necessary to work out the program.

A public spirited attitude combined with the realization any improvement selected will ultimately be to the benefit of all, will be necessary if the greatest possible progress is to be achieved under the program.

Richmond Hill Town and the Lake Wilcox area in particular, have now a very substantial reason to look toward the future with a greater feeling of optimism.

Heartening indeed was the news last week of the \$1 million Neighborhood Improvement Program for the Lake Wilcox area of Richmond Hill Town.

This is one of those rare and fine opportunities for real community progress that turn up only once in a while.

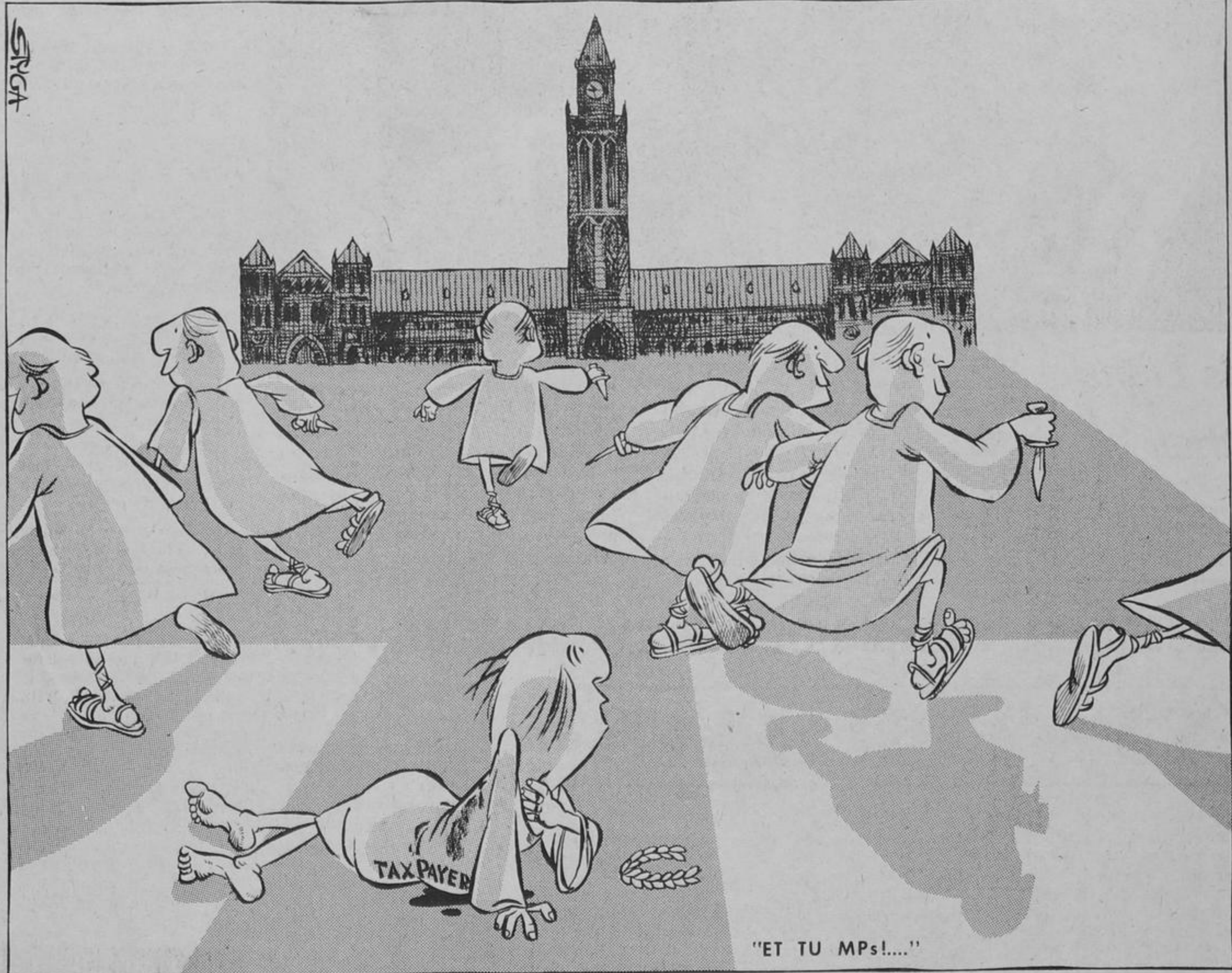
The federal and provincial authorities are to be highly commended for their ability to see the need and great value of this type of program here at this time.

A lot of hard work by local citizens and town councils had to be exerted over the past four years to make this breakthrough possible.

It is a tribute to these community leaders that they saw the need and opportunity, then worked to see a solution found.

Here is a case of money spent on town planning (in the form of consultants) that has paid off many times over for the municipality.

This is a program which can come to grips with one of the biggest local problems left over from the 1970 regionalization of York County.



Letters

On junior kindergarten issue

Does public school board majority know what it's doing?

Dear Editor:

Why do the majority of the members on the York County Board of Education continue to give the public the impression they do not know what they are doing? Why do they solicit the advice of parents and then choose to ignore it in a very arrogant manner?

On April 28 the board chose to defeat the motion which would have introduced junior kindergarten into York County. Most of the people I have spoken to were not as upset over the decision, as over the manner in which it was reached.

For example, Vice-Chairman Craig Cribar made a statement that

"people keep throwing more things at us".

Yet the board actively solicited the advice of various interest groups and even set aside a special evening (February 6) for briefs to be presented.

Mr. Cribar also expressed the fear the board would become a cradle-snatcher.

Yet this fear never surfaced in the many progressive boards of education that have long since introduced this program.

Trustee Gary Adamson asked whether the public wanted junior kindergartens to educate or for baby sitting.

Mr. Adamson had asked this exact same question

February 6.

The representatives making the presentation on behalf of junior kindergarten answered emphatically it was for social and educational purposes.

They said they would not want a program implemented if it only provided a baby-sitting service.

Trustee Robert Houghton voted for the junior kindergarten program in the program committee of which he is chairman and then proceeded to vote against it when it came before the full board.

Board members complained they did not know what the program would cost.

Yet figures were made

available to them that evening by the senior administration which they simply ignored or neglected to read.

Many people were sincerely interested in the implementation of a junior kindergarten program in York County.

The group presenting the brief February 6 represented parents from Oak Ridges, Aurora, Kleinburg, Thornhill, Vaughan, East Gwillimbury and Georgina.

These people certainly deserved a far more serious treatment of the matter by the majority of board members.

When are the trustees

going to wake up and do their homework and act in a responsible manner and thus earn the respect of the people they represent?

WALTER GULA,
82 Dawn Hill Trail,
Thornhill, Ont.

Bill C-388 should get senior citizen letters

Dear Editor:

We appeal to all Canadians, especially the elderly, to write a short letter to their member of parliament to voice their support of Bill C-388.

This bill is "to allow free access to all senior citizens" to Canada's National Parks, a small step forward in the seniors' 1975 slogan "It's the time of our lives."

Minor fringe benefits like this with no cost to the public purse would encourage more seniors to become involved and participate in such group projects as they could organize among themselves and gain some reward in doing things for others.

Write Minister of Urban Affairs Barney Danson, House of Commons, Ottawa, K1A 0A6, (no postage needed) and voice your support of Bill C-388.

Or ask your grandchildren to write, so Bill C-388 will be passed on the third reading before the House rises for the summer recess.

Should this bill be defeated, we will have only ourselves to blame.

JOHN FERGUSON,
President Woodbridge Senior Citizens,
8253 Islington Avenue,
Woodbridge, Ontario.

Urges support for new Richmond Hill recycling committee

Dear Editor:

A committee was formed last week, by Roy Clifton, to organize the recycling of all materials that can be reprocessed.

At present, too much is being thrown out into the garbage dump and you know what problems this has caused in this country, such as dumping sites and all the extra labor involved.

Furthermore, there has been so much said in this country and by our southern neighbors about the disappearance of our natural resources!

This is something that concerns you, your children and all future generations! Please give this some thought, the committee is going to need your help.

Mr. Clifton is looking for a suitable building in this area, starting NOW, because this is so important. The committee discussed the materials that can be recycled at present.

Some members of the committee have done a lot of hard work in reclaiming usable materials with the help of anyone they could find, including children.

I have the greatest admiration for them, their dedication and their interest in our country.

Mrs. Don Daynard was in the hot seat and gave us the benefit of her vast knowledge acquired in organizing the Unionville Recycling Depot, which is a hustling and bustling organization.

So much is being done by so few — for you.

I came away from the meeting feeling tired from all the work they are doing. I also came away feeling very guilty I have done so little for my country, the best in the world.

We conducted a small experiment in our own backyard.

We saved all paper, cans and bottles — the kitchen

wastes went into the compost pile — our Wednesday garbage can was only half full.

It can be done. However, we, too, became careless and forgetful because we did not have a handy depot.

My own feelings after considerable reading, enquiring and experimenting is — garbage dumps could become almost obsolete some day — it

depends on you and on me.

Our committee will keep you posted on developments. It is looking forward to your suggestions, help and blessing — we are going to need them. The committee also needs a place to meet, right now.

The late John Kennedy said something significant, "It's not what this country is going to do for you, rather what are you prepared to do for your country."

Something like that, anyway.

Thank you Mr. Clifton for your invitation. Without it I would still be watching TV.

MIKE HARRISON,
88 Naughton Drive,
Richmond Hill, Ont.

Rent controls bring slums

Dear Editor:

If rent controls are imposed, will the costs of maintaining apartment buildings also be controlled?

If not, get ready to live in a slum. This has been the

experience in the U.S.A. when the tenants set out to "get the landlord".

WILLIAM RAE,
29 Savarin Street,
Scarboro, Ont.

Ottawa should recognize aircraft noise problems

(Guest editorial from The Etobicoke Advertiser — Guardian)

Etobicoke can hardly expect any sympathy from the federal government because some schools and homes are suffering the effect of overhead aircraft noise.

It would be too easy for the federal government to take the attitude that it is not responsible for the mistakes of Etobicoke council and the Ontario Municipal Board in approving housing in the first place.

However, the argument that Etobicoke lacked foresight of airport expansion and increased jet traffic deserves little credence.

Etobicoke council has consistently rejected development proposals bordering the south and east perimeter of the airport, but it cannot be faulted for building up the area south of Eglinton Avenue.

Foresight only goes so far and the airport air traffic has expanded so rapidly that it has councillors' heads

spinning.

All along, the Etobicoke board of education has cautioned council to consider the effects of air traffic noise when approving a development, and Etobicoke council has used caution in its approval of such developments.

If the federal government takes the position it is the provincial government's job to bale out Etobicoke, then it will be shirking its responsibility.

John Tolton, chairman of the Etobicoke board of education, has just skimmed the surface in asking the federal government to provide funds for sound-proofing and air-conditioning Etobicoke schools under flightpaths.

Etobicoke's noise problem, or will be, common to other major cities across the country, and it deserves far more recognition than it has been getting.

Advanced technology brings new problems with it, and the federal government should learn to face these new problems rather than shifting the blame.

Viewpoint from the regional desk



BY JIM IRVING

Education Minister Thomas Wells recently announced that the schools should add sex education to the curriculum.

It was really the job of the parents to put their progeny in the know, Wells said, but it wouldn't hurt to have a little organized instruction as well.

Can't you just see the picture now in homes throughout the region?

Wife: Darling, can you put down your paper for a minute? I think it's about time we discussed that — well, er, you know.

Husband: Just as soon as I finish the sports news.

Wife: Dear, the Expos lost again. That goes without saying.

Husband: I'm reading about the Alouettes.

Wife: Same difference. They haven't won a game since Honus Wagner left.

Husband: Virgil Wagner, dear, not Honus. Honus was a ball player.

Wife: Well, maybe the Expos could get him. Anyway, we've got more important things to talk about.

Husband: Like what?

Wife: Well, you know . . .

Husband: Yeh, I think I do.

Wife: Good. Then will you begin.

Husband: Look, dear, can't we leave this till some other time?

Wife: No, we can't. With Billy going into grade 3, we have to start taking an interest now, whether we want to or not.

Husband: Okay, what do we have to decide?

Wife: We have to decide whether it's a good thing for him.

Husband: If what's a good thing for him?

Wife: Sex education, damn-it.

Husband: See, already it's starting to get dirty.

Wife: (exasperatedly) George, what about sex education for our son?

Husband: Really, I don't think he needs it. Look at me, I never had any.

Wife: After 10 years of marriage, do you think I don't know. (Softens) Darling, look, the schools feel it's up to them to educate the kids in the mysteries of sex. I feel it isn't, but I don't know how we should go about educating them instead.

Husband: Maybe we could let them sit in once a week.

Wife: Once a week — aren't you flattering yourself?

Husband: Well, you're not exactly like a firehorse answering the bell yourself, anymore.

Wife: That's neither here nor there . . . Husband: It's not here anyway.

Wife: George, what are we going to do?

Husband: Well, if you don't want the school to tell him, we'll just have to do it ourselves.

Wife: You mean tell him about sex? Actually sit down and tell him?

Husband: Sit down or stand up; it can be done either way.

Wife: George, don't be vulgar.

Husband: What do you suggest?

Wife: I just don't think Billy's ready yet, no matter who tells him. After all, he's only nine.

Husband: Only nine. The way things are moving nowadays, we could already be too late.

Wife: I still say it's too early. Maybe we should put him in another school.

Husband: Honey, the only way to do it is to tell him ourselves. That's all there is to it.

Wife: But how? . . . Where? . . . When do we begin?

Husband: Whenever he brings the subject up. One of these days he'll be asking

Should attend Vaughan council

Dear Editor:

I have heard the question asked: "Why don't Vaughan residents attend town council meetings?"

It's a good question. We elected this council to see to our interests, but are they doing their job?

How can one know if one never attends a meeting? Council meets in the afternoon, an awkward time for men to attend, to be sure.

But that doesn't stop the ladies from attending. Remember this is International Women's Year.

Besides most committee meetings are in the evening and are open to the public. They are in the town offices in Maple.

Don't sit home and wonder what you can do. You can do plenty.

Just by your presence at meetings, you cause council members to realize there is an interest in what they do.

They will know someone is observing their performance and most likely discussing it with others.

If you don't like what you see and hear, make it known.

Our mayor and council must know the electors intend to see they work in our interest.

Our present apathy might suggest otherwise.

Many times, items on the agenda are boring and insignificant.

But on other occasions, most interesting and perhaps startling issues arise.

If you don't understand what it's all about, you will if you attend often enough.

VALERIE TINTLINE
Weller Crescent,
Maple, Ontario.

What about those courses of sex education in our schools?

where babies come from . . . Just like he did when he was 5 years old.

Wife: Yes, it was cute then. But now, what if he asks? Oh, George, I'm terrified.

Husband: For Pete's sake, what for? We'll both tell him, that's all.

Billy: (Entering) Hi, Mom, Dad. What's up?

Wife: We, uh, we're just talking about you.

Billy: You were? What about?

Husband: Well, we were talking about this new course in the schools. It has to do with . . . well, it's about . . . it's kind of to teach children about . . . well, you know

Billy: You mean, that sex thing? Where babies come from and all that? Should be keen.

Wife: Yes, (Pauses) It should be . . . Where have you been?

Billy: Over at Bobby's. We're building a rocket. Hey, did you know Bobby's mother is going to have a baby?

Wife: She is? . . . How do you know?

Billy: Bobby told me. Says it must have happened this winter when their television was on the Fritz.

(Good luck, everybody.)