

Thornhill shortage serious

Parkway belt is too small

The public and the town planners here in York Region should take careful note of a statement made last week about a shortage of public recreation space looming in the Thornhill area of Markham and Vaughan, as well as in southern Richmond Hill.

Metro Planning Commissioner Dennis Barker in a special report warned that the province's proposed parkway belt is too small.

This is particularly important to those here who are fighting to have the city-owned former Langstaff jail farm property switched from the development category to park and recreation uses.

Planning Commissioner Barker's report lends much weight to the jail farm open space use argument.

There has been considerable evidence of recent years that the Thornhill area of York Region was seriously short of open space.

This was clearly documented, for instance, in last year's Markham Town report on parks and recreation space.

Now Barker warns that York Region's already-approved sewer and water service plan will add 500,000 people to the northern fringe of Metro, namely the Thornhill area extended into Woodbridge and Milliken.

For the least, this situation is forbidding.

Barker says the recreation land needs of these new people are over 900 acres, which is fully equal to all the land now reserved in the parkway belt plan from Yonge St. to Woodbridge.

But most of the parkway belt

land will be taken up for transportation and utilities. This is especially so, Barker warns, through the Thornhill area from Leslie Street to Keele.

Still, that isn't the worst of it. In addition, there is a substantial population growth assured in northern Metro where no more open space can be found.

Recreation space for this additional North York and Scarborough population can only be found here in York Region.

If Barker is applying Metro type open space standards in his report, then even his estimate of the space requirement should be very substantially increased.

Metro hasn't reserved nearly enough open space, either according to general standards or according to those standards which have been considered desirable here.

We said in a recent editorial our local towns should be including a planned program of public open space land acquisition in their capital budgets.

But this huge land requirement outlined by Planning Commissioner Barker seems well beyond the financial capacity of the local towns.

Perhaps the towns could make some contribution. If this were added to a land reserve somehow created by the York Regional Municipality, the result could be worthwhile.

But it seems obvious the province must be responsible for financing a very much larger public recreation space reserve than that now proposed in the parkway belt plan.

New Vaughan transit routes need support

Improving and extending public transit service is very desirable, almost crucial, both here and elsewhere.

But to start new transit services is also one of the most difficult and tricky jobs that could ever be undertaken.

Local transportation patterns, little personal preferences and often even popular fallacies and prejudices play all-important roles in the success or failure of transit.

It takes a long time for people to learn about transit services, to become convinced of the reliability and advantages of such services, and to develop the habit.

Sometimes the strangest, most unforeseen and most unbelievable thing may interfere with the success of a new public transit route.

Thus it is very constructive and helpful if the public will take a positive view toward new transit services, support them, try them out and give them a good chance.

Vaughan Town right now is enduring the most difficult period as it starts new transit bus lines in

the Maple-Concord and Woodbridge areas.

The Woodbridge line had a fairly lucky start, but even the free fares haven't been able to bring out many riders for the Maple-Keele-Highway 7-Jane-Steeles route.

It is just about always true there are quite a number of potential riders for such routes who would find transit much better, for their purposes than their present means of travel.

Required are an emergency or series of emergencies, such as car breakdown or snowstorms, to get people on the buses for the first few times and to establish the habit.

But it would be much better for the town, and therefore for everyone, if potential transit riders wouldn't wait for an emergency or other special situation to start riding the buses.

Anyone who might possibly have to depend on this service in the future should get out, try it and use it for a while.

At worst, they will get a free ride. At best, both they and the community could benefit greatly.

Women's 'lib' means less sin for males

It looks like the women's liberation movement has gained more than enough momentum to force an end to one special right that many people at least appeared to believe men had up to now.

And that's the right to indulge a little in those harmful things, perhaps on Saturday night or whatever, that he wouldn't stand for around the home hearth or in the family.

Women have pretty well staked out their claim to keep right up with the men in this kind of thing.

No longer do moths and daughters avoid booze, shun smoking, avoid taverns, disclaim rowdiness, stay out of sexual escapades, keep away from crime

while fathers and sons indulge with full confidence the home hearth is healthy.

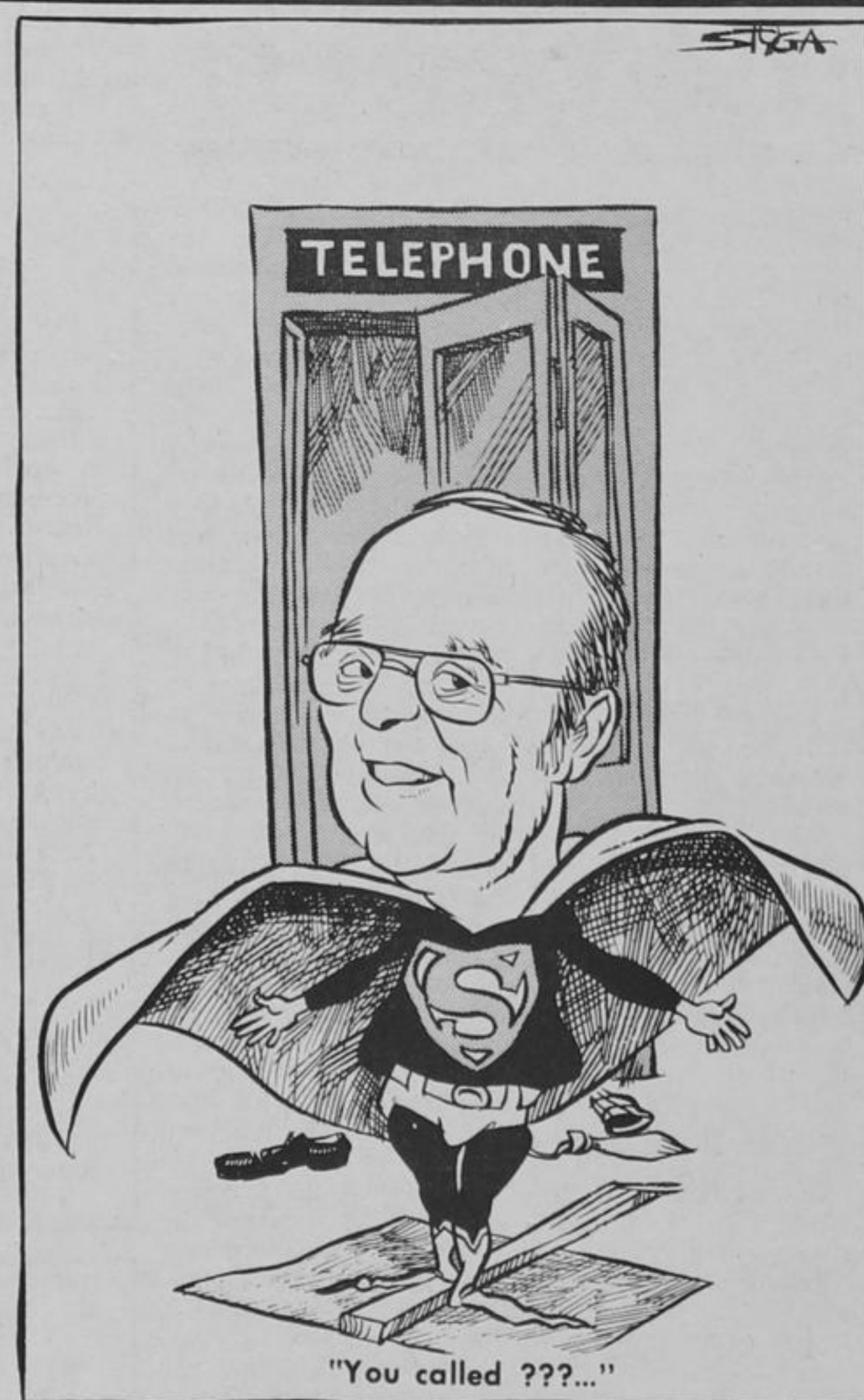
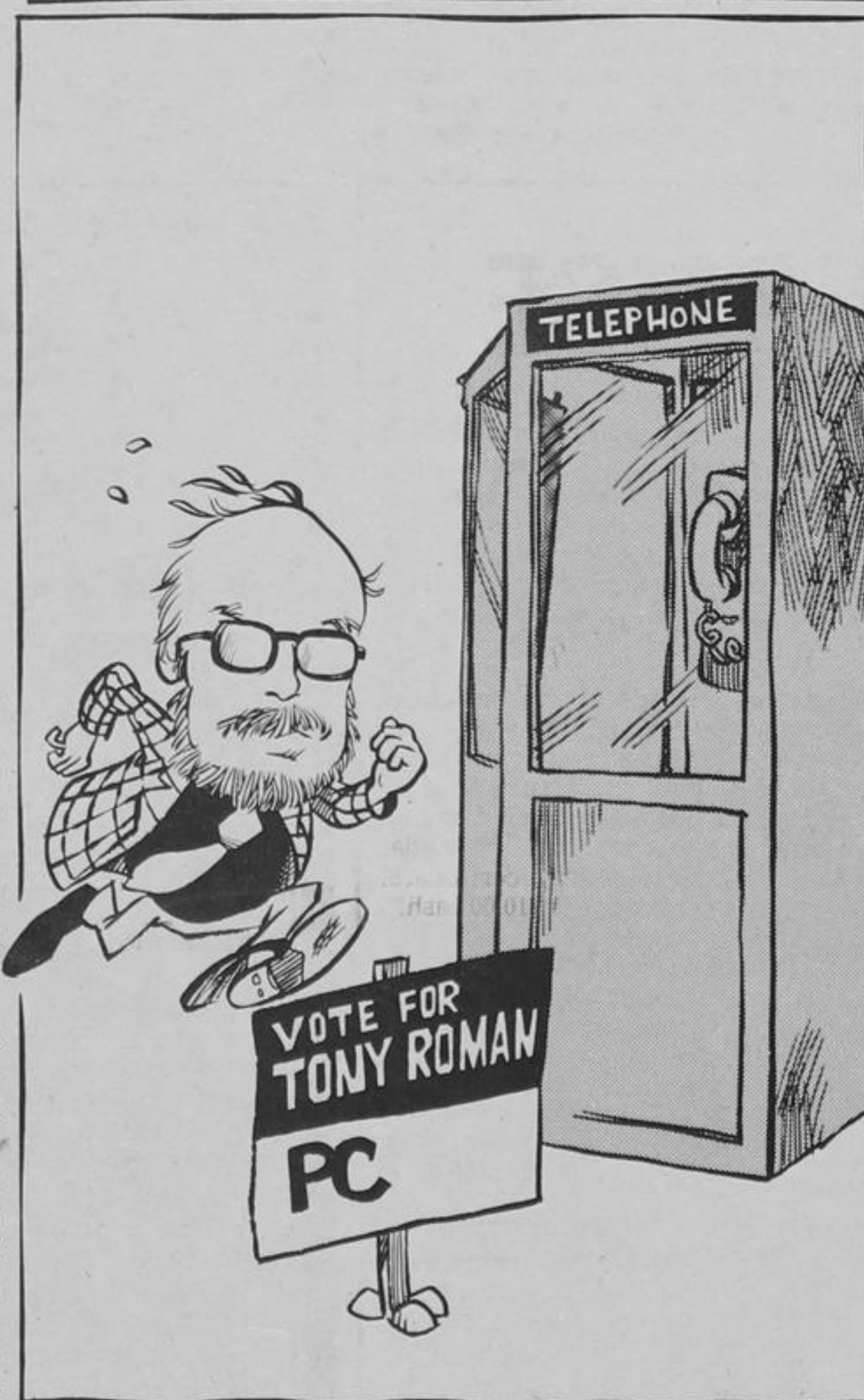
Witness if you will, the obvious evidence here in York Region.

Unisex is the rage in fashion, be it clothes or hair styles. Teenage girls with cigarettes dangling from lips or between thumb and forefinger, are commonplace on the streets.

Can the other indulgences be far behind?

If community is to be healthy, if home and children are to be cherished, must not men now abandon at least this aspect of their chauvinism?

And will they not be the better for it?



Let's ensure softball is a fun game in which every player gets his turn

Dear Editor:

There have been letters of complaint regarding ball injustice published this season, and this is another.

What is the purpose of softball on a non-professional basis?

Surely, for youngsters it is, first, enjoyment; second, acquiring and developing individual skills; third, belonging to a team.

Prior to this season my son played in the Richmond Hill Minor Ball house league and learned to love the game.

This year he joined a town representative team and, unfortunately, his ardor has been dampened. Yet he attended all practices and spent much time practising close to home as well.

On August 16 the Richmond Hill Invitational Boys' Midget Softball Tournament took place, and our local team won both the 'A' and grand championships.

They certainly played good ball and deserved their 7-2, 2-0 and 17-4 wins.

My objection is this: my son was at the ball park from 8:30 a.m. until after 8:30 p.m. and, when his team was not playing, avidly watched the other games.

However he has never played in any of the three games, not even for half an inning. Twelve hours of anticipation gone down the drain!

When the grand championship game ended and the teams were presented with crests and trophies, he had disappeared. He truly felt he hadn't earned them.

I imagine the frustration, humiliation and injustice he felt. His family was there to see him, but he was never off the bench.

Granted he is not an all-star, but how can he improve if he isn't played? Surely, even for an inning in the last 17-4 rout would have given him a sense of belonging and self-worth.

This is not an isolated incident. Recently he played only three innings (in one game) in five or six games.

We realize a coach can only field nine players at a time, but he should be able to substitute, particularly in such a one-sided game.

Those are human beings sitting on the bench, not unfeeling blocks of wood.

To all coaches of our teams who donate unselfishly of their time and talents, I would like to offer my sincere thanks for your earnest efforts.

This year, in the town of the world's fastball champions, there have been serious setbacks in our ball situation, from Dyne's on down.

Perhaps the following suggestions might help over all picture:

1. Players: Play for

your local division team — all players are part of the team. If a teammate is less talented than you, don't criticize, help.

Only by working together as a team can you reach your potential. Play honestly, cleanly, and above all, have fun.

2. Parents and supporters: Come out and support your teams. Let the coaches coach.

3. Ball enthusiasts: Volunteer to help in your ball associations. The same unselfish few are overburdened each year. Learn to coach and umpire.

4. Coaches: Develop your players by playing them and command respect by example.

5. Town Council: Rich-

mond Hill deserves a top softball diamond. Compare ours with those around us; ours needs proper resurfacing.

6. Ball associations: Remind and enforce softball principles.

Lastly, let's ensure that ball is a fun game. P.S. I am representing team next season.

JOHN SHEARER,
10516 Bayview Avenue,
Richmond Hill, Ont.

Dear Editor:

The advisory committee on communications, York County Board of Education, invites the public to a meeting Sept. 24 at 8 p.m., Woodbridge High School.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss present avenues of communication and receive suggestions for improvements and new methods to ensure there is good communication between the board and the community.

Copies of the policies under review by this committee will be available at the meeting or in advance, if requested.

If anyone has a problem in communicating with the board, we would like them to tell us how they feel this committee can suggest to the board ways to solve the problem.

Groups or individuals wishing to present a brief are invited to do so. We would like advance notice, if possible, of such presentations to enable us to allow time for this.

Anyone unable to attend the meeting is invited to send in written suggestions to the committee, P.O. Box 40, Aurora, Ont.

The advisory committee on communications is composed of representatives of various groups — home and school, teacher federations, ratepayers, students, trustees and individuals from across the region.

We look forward to meeting with you Sept. 24. (MRS.)

BETTY CANIVET
Chairman of the advisory committee on communications,
RR 3, Woodbridge, Ont.

Letters

Viewpoint from the regional desk

BY JIM IRVING

The grey in my hair is fast catching up with the black, and my memory fades in and out anymore like a lighthouse beacon.

But I can still remember with instant playback clarity an incident of my childhood, which I find myself recalling more and more these days.

And that was a murder. A cold-blooded murder of a farmer from the little town of Wolseley, Saskatchewan, by a man he had given a ride.

The man was subsequently caught and hanged for his crime.

It was my first exposure to such an occurrence so close to home and I suppose that's why I remember the details so well. The names of the murderer and his victim; the little grey coupe that the murdered man drove. The drizzly day it all took place.

Murders, I thought, were just something that happened in the movies, put on to exploit the talents of such as Edward G. Robinson and Jimmy Cagney, and to provide a scary hour or two of "entertainment" for a depression-ridden public.

They didn't happen though in the real world. Nobody would ever deliberately take someone else's life.

Then the Wolseley farmer was killed and one was confronted with the fact murders did happen outside the movies. Also, if someone was caught, tried and convicted for the crime, he paid with his own life.

It was a harsh penalty, but it didn't seem out of line for the crime committed.

Since that time I have read about many murders, but none — until recently — has ever hit with the same kind of impact as that first one back those many years ago in Saskatchewan, which introduced me so suddenly, powerfully and dramatically to that sometimes - other world beyond the playground.

Now another brutal murder has taken place close to home, and once more one reels from the impact of it all.

A beautiful young girl, only 18 years old, was strangled as she walked toward her Thornhill residence, shortly after alighting from a bus at Steeles Avenue and Leslie Street, the night of August 20.

Strangled by someone, one can only feel is a lunatic. What other reason could be given for it?

But whatever the reason, it brings up the question again of what kind of punishment should be meted out — or at least, what kind of action should be taken — if this maniac is ever caught.

For capital punishment is a bad, bad word, the kind of hasty jargon used only by unthinking people.



Murder and hanging

Hanging someone, the apologists claim, only demeans.

How decent of them to feel that way. The original brutal murder, I suppose, doesn't demean. No, of course not. There is always justification, the bitter childhood, etc. And for society to punish someone for transgressions formed by the unquiet past, makes society the guilty one.

Well, I doubt if any of us had exactly the kind of childhood he would have fashioned for himself. But is society so insecure it feels it's accountable for all our mistakes; perhaps even for helping to fashion the kind of warped specimen, whose hatred manifests itself in bizarre murders of helpless people?

I don't think society need feel guilty for creating these original monsters. But I do feel it has to take some responsibility now for providing the kind of atmosphere in which they can flourish.

Capital punishment may not be a direct deterrent, as many claim. But with the abandonment of any lasting penalty for murder, there is an overall feeling produced that life is cheap; life is no longer the precious thing we once thought it was. Feeling that way a deterrent hardly even enters the picture — instead, the situation has become like all those four-letter words we hear now, from five-year-old kids to 100-year-old adults.

They're so commonplace, they no longer shock with the same intensity of yore.

I remember once when I was about 10, visiting my grandma and grandpa in Manitoba. My father was dead and I was the youngest of three, the other two being girls.

We were a close family, but there was no doubt about it, being surrounded by women all the time, my own healthy male instincts often got suppressed.

So that is one reason why this little incident that happened one day at my grandparents' remains evergreen.

I was playing in the front yard, and my grandfather, who was nearby, suddenly let out a stream of curses. I don't know if he had hit his thumb, or what happened, but he evidently felt a good bit of blasphemy was necessary.

I guess it was the masculine association I needed at that particular time, for it brought about a release that I can feel to this day.

At first, I just stood there with my mouth open. I was so amazed to hear such language. And then I started to laugh, and I laughed so hard I had to run into the outdoor john and lock the door until my joint and devil were over.

At least, that is probably how it would have been interpreted by my grandmother, who was as

Trustee asks citizens to communicate

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