

## Maple decision took courage

Vaughan councillors sure showed a lot of courage last week when they took a stand in favor of the 320-acre Leisure Centres amusement park plan.

They aren't trying to win any easy, instant popularity contest.

These councillors must be convinced the plan is good for the town in the long run. Otherwise they wouldn't stand against the loud public outcry opposing the proposal.

It is the council's job to be responsible as well as representative.

All the more power to

them for standing on their belief.

It is a tough decision. There is the bad and the good in the project. There is the part that emotional opposition to change plays in public opinion.

These factors have to be sorted out. It is true many citizens hereabouts haven't faced the fact all the green fields and woods around them are destined for some kind of development. They are living in a dream world.

The choice is between 1/2-square-mile of commercial recreation area or some other sort of use which certainly won't be farming.



"We have mixed emotions about going back to school. I hate it. Mom loves it, and Dad wonders how he'll pay for it..."

## Schools just fine

By Lynda Nykor

We have a firmly entrenched tradition in our house, instigated by yours truly in a moment of madness one Labor Day's eve.

It's called Kids' Day. It means every Labor Day I do just that — I labor at making breakfast and taking it upstairs on trays so our three offspring can partake of it while still in bed.

They have a ball the night before dreaming up menus.

These have tended to get more elaborate with each passing year.

The dreamers wonder why they don't get presents too, since they have to cough up for them on Mother's and Father's Days.

It's the day they don't have to do any chores. They have the whole of the last day of freedom before school starts to relax and enjoy themselves.

**Tribulation day**

They need it, to build up their strength for the trials and tribulations of the next day.

The new blouse will inexplicably pop a button. The knowledge will dawn that all is in vain since having no duo-tangs today means certain failure next June.

Jeans will have to be worn that everyone will laugh at because they don't have the same label as everyone else's otherwise identical jeans.

They'll have other problems to cope with too. They can't communicate with anyone and no one can communicate with them. (It's true, you read it right here in this newspaper.)

**Skills they lack**

They don't know how to lead or write, parse or spell.

Nation-wide, media have been reporting on studies showing the extent of the problem — kids graduating from universities who can't yet read at the Grade 3 level, Ph.D's who can't add, math majors who don't know a slide rule from a yardstick.

But what if we stopped worrying about whether they learned to read and write? I have a feeling that may happen in a few years.

The written word is going to become less and less important.

Our society seems to be headed in that direction right now.

Highway signs are little pictures and computers have invaded all of our lives. Language itself is becoming pithier and more abbreviated.

**They're future**

If kids were encouraged to develop along these lines I'll bet they'd end up just as communicative in their way as we like to think we are in ours.

And I wonder if our thousands of years of history and culture would necessarily be lost.

After all, how many of us have read Sophocles in the original Greek?

Or heard Homer's Iliad sung, the way the tale was told for its first 500 years? Or seen all of Shakespeare's plays staged in the round?

We've managed to hang onto our culture all these hundreds of decades simply by absorbing it in our own fashion. The next generations will do the same.

Maybe they'll even come closer to the original way of conveying it.

They'll watch Greek tragedy being performed, they'll perform Shakespeare themselves, and they might even get the bright idea of putting the liad to music.

**History alive**

History will come alive for them, because they'll see it enacted right before their eyes on the big screen.

In a hundred years or so they'll probably think of us as the last generation to get ideas across by the slow tedious method of the written word.

They won't know how to add, subtract, multiply or do long division, either.

They'll use electronic calculators, more sophisticated, of course, than the ones they're starting to use now.

But then, when was the last time you used an abacus? And do you really miss it?

I think they're going to end up far more aware, far better informed, than we ever were.

## Letters

# Don't fish in Thornhill pond

Dear editor:

I would like to protest the fishing in the pond on Highway 7B in Thornhill. The pond is a very pretty spot and very relaxing for me and others.

I go there every night after all the work is done, to feed the ducks and relax.

It is the only peaceful time I have all day. It helps me and others to unwind at the end of the day.

Another reason I'm against fishing there, and the main reason, is the ducks.

They think you are feeding them when you throw in your fishing line.

They could catch the hook and swallow it.

This could lead to suffering, and maybe to a slow death.

The ducks could get their legs or wings tied up in the fishing line. If they can't swim, they are easy prey for dogs and other predators.

I've seen fishermen at the pond cut off a piece of useless fishing line and throw it into the pond.

They should put it in the nearby trash bin.

I saw three Canada Geese tonight. But they didn't come in close because of the fishermen.

It isn't very often they come in, so it is

very special when they do.

However, they will stop coming if the fishermen are allowed to continue.

There isn't much in the way of fish in that pond, just goldfish, other small

fish, and turtles.

I'm sure there are other ponds which are more productive for fishing.

I'm not totally against fishing. I've done some myself.

But I'm against it in the pond at Thornhill. Do something now before the ducks are injured or killed.

I'm writing with the support of a dozen of my friends whose signatures

also appear on this letter. Thank you for allowing me to express my opinion.

BONITA-ALICE JOHNS  
 7636 Yonge St.,  
 Thornhill, Ont.

# No trustee flu for me

Dear editor:

A difference of opinion has arisen between Mayor Margaret Britnell of King and the York County board of education, regarding the percentage of increase in this year's education taxes.

In a recent letter to the press, Director Sam Chapman has gone and made it a question of decency.

It remains to be seen (he says) if Mayor Britnell has enough of a sense of decency to make an apology to the staff of the board (for being wrong, or unable to cope with simple arithmetic).

I don't know how Mayor Britnell, or any of us, could have the decency to apologize to the board, since that very decent body seems to have pretty well cornered all of the available supply.

You may remember, too, how it used to corner all of the available parking space near the town library before being presented by the grateful taxpayers with its present modest

facilities.

With great decency the trustees recently voted to take no action to roll back the rather decent salary increases dished out last fall to Director Chapman and his executive staff, in circumstances of the most dubious legality.

Chapman's salary, for instance, zoomed from \$41,000 to a very decent \$47,765.

They have now most decently been taking the money for about a year.

These decent increases were all massively in excess of the rather indecent guidelines of the Anti-Inflation Board.

A recent letter to the board from Jean-Luc Pepin, indecently called the raises excessive, and questioned the methods used in obtaining them.

After saying that, Pepin very decently passed the buck and threw the decision back to the trustees.

They, of course, very promptly, by a vote of 12 to 4, solidly established decency.

The name of John Raniowski, chairman of the salaries committee, was thus cleansed.

He is now considered to be thoroughly decent, and can once more sleep peacefully.

I heard recently that Civil Servant Sam has already applied for his salary increase for the coming year.

Which should be a very comfortable year. For him.

For he no doubt applied for a very decent increase, the better to demonstrate his relentless resolve to very decently restrain the costs of education.

The exact figure is top secret to protect anyone from being indicted for mass manslaughter of taxpayers dropping dead from shock.

I also read today that the board of

trustees seek written comment from the public on their draft policy on 'values' education.

Their statement reads: 'The board believes the purpose of values education is to assist students in the development of a personal moral code that will give them strength — ('I have to break off here, since I feel myself being overcome by an attack of extreme decency.)

Really I wouldn't want to rub shoulders with the board of education and many of its trustees.

What with the present risks of swine flu, encephalitis, and legionnaires' disease, to get infected with a personal moral code, and decency, would be just too much.

SID BRITTON,  
 84 Hillview Rd.,  
 Aurora, Ont.

## Viewpoint from the regional desk



BY JIM IRVING

It is Saturday afternoon and I am sitting in my shorts out on the balcony fronting my dwelling, letting a benevolent sun — that is all but keeping the sky from being completely blue — touch up all those white spots it missed between my ears and my ankles when it shone for a solid 28 minutes and 32 seconds on that unforgettable day on my holidays, during the so-called summer just past.

Meanwhile, the magnificent sub-cellular tones of Alexander Kipnis singing "In Diesen Heil'gen Hallen" (Within this Sacred Dwelling) from Mozart's Magic Flute, join me and the sun from just inside the door. And I know that, even if what I'm trying to write doesn't come out just exactly the way I want it, it won't be because the setting was wrong.

So, at least one of us is going to enjoy my efforts today.

If, however, the whole thing has the heavy tread of a school board report on "Easy and Instant Communication," then maybe there will be those who will say I spent too much time in the sun and not enough with the muse.

And then, of course, there will be those who won't notice any difference, anyway.

Which brings me back to the beginning, and as good a place to start as any.

**Curtain choices**

Every so often in one of my writing asides, I drop a hint of sorts to the Curtain Club to be less English in its presentations.

It's not enough, I keep saying, to maintain a high standard of production, nor to cop a few acting firsts here and there.

They should remember they are in Canada now and perhaps assimilate a bit more.

That latter bit is most necessary, as Canada is probably the only place in the world where the newcomers don't seek to be accepted by the natives, but where the natives seek to be accepted by the newcomers.

So, as residents of Canada, the club

members should try to slip in the occasional work with a North American setting.

That doesn't mean only Canadians could then try out, but only that those English members of the club would have to tone down their accents a bit.

**Audition Canadians**

Or if it's an English play, then auditions should be just as wide open to Canadians, who would then have to attempt an English accent.

Which is fair enough on both accounts, n' cest-pas? For aren't performers supposed to be able to do just that very thing?

As I say, I've harped on this off and on for some years, with my latest spiel coming just a few weeks ago. At that time I said the club should audition a few Canadians for its English plays.

"You'll find they not only walk upright," I wrote, "but probably can do one of those foreign accents from across the sea as well."

"You know what of mean?" the latter, of course, meaning we could sound as English as the best of them.

**What they did**

So what happened? Did the Curtain Club politely ignore my little outburst as usual and head down to the docks to audition the latest boatload of immigrants from over 'ome, the way any sensible group would do?

No. Instead it cast about in the usual manner and then, when it found it was still short one, Gerry Crack, its distinguished and astute director, called me on the phone one day.

"James, old boy," he said in that hearty cross-the-sea voice of his, "how'd you like to be in our opening play?" (See How They Run — an English farce).

"We need someone to play the part of the intruder. I think you might be right," he added, neatly sidestepping the fact nobody else had tried out for the part.

**Usual aplomb**

"Well, gosh, I-uh, ah, sure, I guess — I mean, uh, well, thanks," I said, with the usual aplomb I have in such mat-

ters.

So, naturally I accepted. I mean, isn't that just what I'd been grossing about all along? That Canadians could do those foreign accents as well.

So now that I've accepted, will I have

any difficulty sounding like an English-

man?

Who said anything about sounding like an Englishman? I play the part of a Russian.

Oh, well, it's a start, isn't it?

Isn't it?

Or does it really mean "Do svidaniya," (Daws vee tawn ya) as they say in Russian.

And "Goodbye" as they say over here.

# I'm a baseball widow

By Sharon Brain

THORNHILL — My husband plays baseball. And golf, and hockey. And squash.

But baseball is his passion. I'm fairly passionate about it too. Passionately bored.

Let me hasten to add that it is an active boredom. I'm not bored because I was waiting at home for him. I'm bored because I was at the game.

I wonder what it is like to be one of those baseball wives who thinks a diamond is something one wears on one's finger, or doesn't really know what hubby does when he leaves the house in that strange little boy's uniform and comes home late and smelly and mad.

**Why he's mad**

I know he's mad because he booted the ball in the third inning and struck out to end the game.

I know he's smelly because the batter who followed him kept hitting foul balls that had him yo-yoing and forth between first and second for five minutes.

I know he's late because he was at the pub replaying the game and arguing he deserved a hit, not an error, his second time at bat. I especially know about the error because I scored it.

**Route to sanity**

After nine baseball seasons, I find the only way to keep my sanity

while sitting on those granite bleachers (cleverly disguised to look like wood), is to keep score.

It gives me something to do other than swat mosquitoes.

It also means people talk to me. "What's the inning?" or "How many runs did they get?" may not be my idea of great conversation. But it does help pass the time.



The guest spot

A topical column of opinion by our readers. Submissions should be no more than 800 words. Typed preferably.

**Catcher leads**

The leader of this chatter is usually the catcher.

The thought of someone with a stammer crouching behind the plate fills me with terror.

I know that then the game would take at least five pitches, as it is impossible for the pitcher to release the ball until the catcher has gotten off at least five lines, such as: "Hummin' good in there. Blow it by him. You got him. He's yours. Down the pipe. Here it comes batter. Honey ball."

The team at bat spends most of its time encouraging the man at the plate, but still finds lots of time for "rhubarbs for the Ump and the fielding team."

**Ump gets sarcasm**

The Umpire, by virtue of his authority, gets mere sarcasm, as in "Nice call, Ump." But the fielders are ignored until a

particularly bad play delights their opponents.

Then a cheerful form of raillery occurs.

Its object is to humiliate the recipient until he answers back.

Personal remarks are particularly well received, as in "Get yourself a ladder, Shorty."

**They're in there**

All this chatter is designed to show the players are really 'in the game'. I suspect it also helps keep both them and the spectators awake.

After the game any team worth its stretchy pants retires somewhere to gloat, moan, and wet its lips.

First the game just played is recalled in loving detail.

Next the Ump (who is useless) and the coach (who knows nothing about baseball) are discussed.

Then highlights of the present season and those just past, are replayed.

**Swap stories**

Then stories of famous ball players, who were no better than team members when they were kids together, are presented.

Finally, talked out and over-liquified, the team staggers home. It could have been worse, I guess. It could have been a tournament. They go on for days.

(Mrs. Brain lives at 85 John St. in Thornhill. — Editor)