

Too rich

Homes study is wise step

Richmond Hill council's decision last week to use \$10,000 of available provincial money for a housing stock study was a very wise step.

It's only too bad such a study wasn't undertaken earlier.

It will be important for council to know whether or not the Official Plan relates new housing to the existing and future job market.

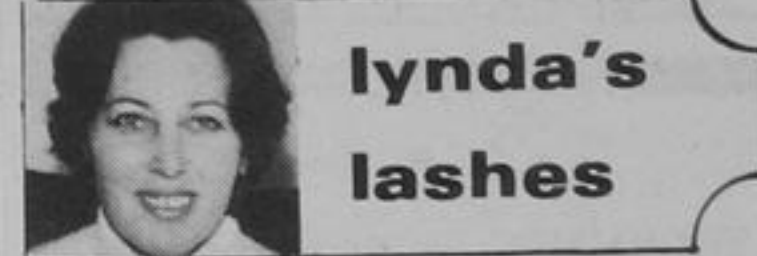
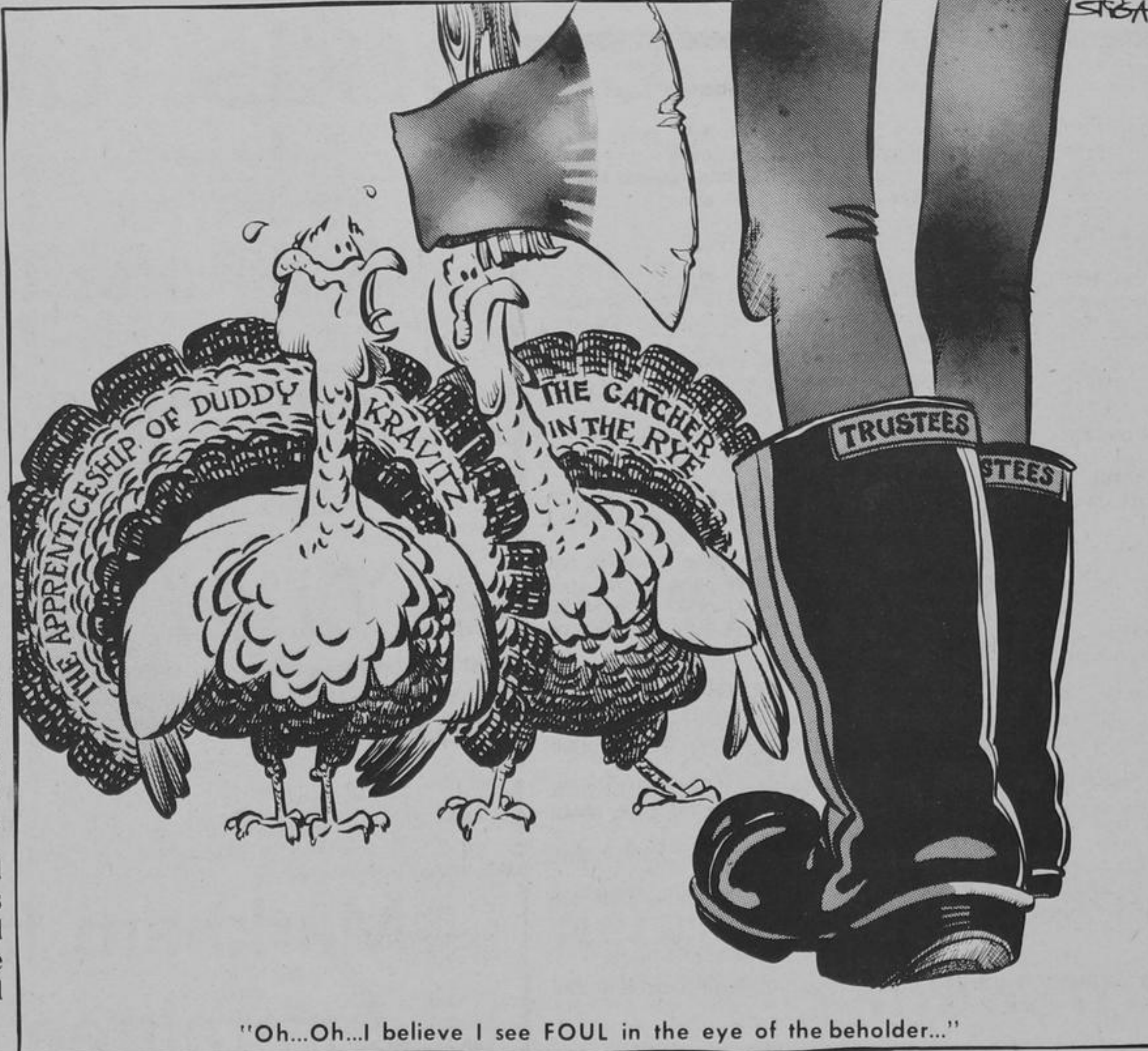
But it will be even more important for the public to have this information.

Only then will it be

politically possible for the councillors to make realistic decisions on future development.

One of the benefits of the new regional municipality has been the fact regional planning has helped bring about a realization that currently popular housing trends aren't necessarily what the community needs.

As Mayor David Schiller noted, there is evidence the types and quantity of new housing are too rich for the local industrial job market.



Book banning motion upsets

By Lynda Nykor

THORNHILL — I don't think I'd want my young (15, 14 and almost 13) teenagers reading Henry Miller's Tropic of Capricorn, or Leonard Cohen's Beautiful Losers, or the Harvard Lampoon just yet.

But neither do I think parent or trustee evaluation should be the sole criterion of the suitability of literature for York County high school students.

That's why I'm a trifle upset by the motion now before school trustees to ban J.D. Salinger's Catcher in the Rye and Mordecai Richler's The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz.

Books have to be considered in total and not just according to a few adult-horrorifying pages or passages out of context. They have to be judged in the light of whether or not their premises are suited to a young mind.

The two books at issue here are about young men at the same stage of their development as the students in our high schools.

Letters

Town offer \$1 for cottage

Dear editor: Are the people in Richmond Hill interested in what Parks and Recreation Director Dave Hamilton wants to buy for a dollar?

Well, let me tell you. First is our cottage at Sunset Beach Park, Lake Wilcox, now on leased land purchased by the town.

My husband and I bought a small cottage to start with. Then we moved to our large six room winterized cottage facing the lake.

We love and take great pride in it.

Now it is going to be torn down to be part of a parking lot for the park which Richmond Hill wants for the people. But do the Hill folks want it?

I would say by the poll taken last summer, very few from the Hill used the park for their pleasure.

And now for the memories. As a teen-ager I spent the summer there, 50 years ago. The park was known as Ash's and Percy was a good friend to all.

There's the day we planted the willow tree, now grown so big and high. Will it

be cut down? Our son catching his first big fish and being so proud of it.

Feeding the birds and the ducks and geese down on the beach. The lovely sunsets from our window.

So many memories over the years. Charlie the ice cream man. Knowles the butcher coming up the hill on certain days of the week.

The old gentleman with the horse and buggy selling his corn.

No, Mr. Hamilton, our cottage is worth much more than a dollar. It just wouldn't buy a key to the front door.

I am noted by my family for being a good bargain hunter. But Mr. Hamilton, you top me a cottage for a dollar!

All we ask at the lake is to be paid a fair assessment value. Is that too much?

(MRS.) GORDON HAFENBRACK
11 Eaton Ave.,
Toronto, Ont.

Blow was low

Dear editor: During the past two years as a trustee on the York County board of education, I have not responded to public criticism.

But if the message had merit, I have attempted to take it to heart.

Recently a Maple correspondent, Graham Lamont, struck a low blow to your intrepid columnist and reporter, Jim Irving, by doubting the veracity of his reporting.

Mr. Irving attributed a quote to me which, paraphrased to avoid repetition, in effect said education and therapy are two different things and the school system should not be involved in therapeutic sessions.

Mr. Lamont finds this position untenable. But I said it, I believe it and I defend Mr. Irving for reporting it.

Certainly the whole child arrives at school. Some children have educational problems such as specific learning disabilities or being exceptionally talented.

When there is no suitable program in the system, the child has a problem and should not be confused with 'problem children'.

The former can be effectively dealt with by providing an educational program, the latter should be referred to the appropriate community resource staffed with professionals in the mental health or family counselling field.

Why should there be any difference in the way school staff handles a physical injury and an emotional problem?

If a child breaks an arm, the staff refers him to the closest hospital after



Trustee McMonagle... she said it

notifying the parent. They would be severely criticized and even sued, if they ignored the injury or attempted to set the arm and place it in a cast.

Why should we expect them to be competent to deal with emotional problems?

I don't expect it anymore than I expect our family physician to give remedial reading lessons, and to make my point perfectly clear, I don't want the teaching staff involved in providing therapeutic sessions.

I am sure Mr. Lamont doesn't expect teachers to treat emotional problems either and I hope he will call me so we can clear up the obvious misunderstanding.

In the meantime Mr. Irving, keep up your hard investigative reporting. You hold a precision mirror to our ruminations at the board of education.

Sometimes your 'on target' comments have been very uncomfortable, at other times comforting, but always an honest effort at reporting the facts and stating your opinion. Bless you for that!

Mr. Lamont, I like and respect most of the teachers I have met.

(MRS.) JEAN MROSS,
Publicity and public relations,
285 Emerald Isle Ct.,
Richmond Hill, Ont.

(MRS.) CHRIS MCMONAGLE,
Public school trustee,
51 Colonsay Rd.,
Thornhill, Ont.

Adults brink

Catcher in the Rye in particular is the story of a boy poised on the brink of awakening to adult consciousness. If you don't read this book as a teen-ager then, really, there isn't a great deal of point in reading it at all.

It's a book teens will read and say, yes, that's what this painful process of growing up feels like. To read it at 35 or 40 is to make it little more than an exercise in nostalgia.

Duddy Kravitz is a more complicated proposition because at the end of it, there's some question about whether it's right or wrong to espouse the kind of moral values Duddy does.

But I think in our fluctuating world some discussion of morals, even if the answers aren't pre-ordained, is not going to be that insidious.

And how many parents can honestly say what's in these books is going to come as a revelation to their children? Have you looked at the lyrics printed on the backs of their record albums lately?

Television sex

Have you watched the television shows they're watching? This week alone, I saw a judge go off for a weekend with a lady he wasn't married to, saw an elderly couple discuss their "horniness", saw Rhoda visit her estranged husband for the express purpose of sleeping with him.

When you get right down to it, you can't expect the sexual revolution to be closed to everyone under 21. We can't expect our children to live in a Victorian cocoon till they graduate from high school.

As a kid, I read voraciously, anything I could get my hands on.

I remember one time my mother discovered a book I'd gotten from the local library, a book she considered not quite the thing for my tender sensibilities.

She made a terrific row and the book was taken out of circulation. To this day I recall nothing of its contents.

Beliefs tumbled

At about the same time, though, I read a book by Albert Camus entitled The Plague, and it called into question every facet of the upbringing I'd had.

I came from a reasonably religious family, and yet this one book sent everything I'd been taught about religion tumbling to the ground. I no longer believed in God and I doubted the very foundations on which our society rested.

I spent sleepless nights wrestling with the problems Camus presented, and if my mother had known about the turmoil, she might have wanted to ban this classic, too.

The point is this: let the experts decide.

The people in charge of setting the English curriculum for high school students are specialists.

They've spent at least four years in university learning to be, if nothing else, discerning about reading matter.

Trust specialists

Though you might question your doctor or your lawyer, you wouldn't treat your own illness or plead your own case in court.

You're paying your educational specialists a lot. (If you've recovered sufficiently from the shock of record covers, I suggest you look at your latest tax bill and see how much of it goes to education.)

Give them the same latitude to do what they think is right that you give to your doctor and your lawyer.

And if you find you really are horrified by something on your child's course, ask for the rationale behind it.

Because once you start banning, you might find you have to include everything your child does — records, television, books, the whole cultural context he's been living in for years.

Postal box charge is up 150 per cent

Dear editor: I am writing this letter in protest. Last week I received my annual notice form from the post office, with reference to the renewal of my post office box.

Last year the cost for a box in town

was \$4. This year they are charging \$10 for the same box.

Now Prime Minister Trudeau is supposed to be exercising controls, why aren't they being exercised on the post office?

The increase I'm experiencing is 150 per cent, not the eight per cent which is supposed to be acceptable.

If I put a mailbox at the end of my laneway, I would be charged nothing for mail delivery.

By having my mail in town I save the post office gas money because I drive in to get it. But I get charged extra. Is this fair?

When I asked the post office about this raise, they said they couldn't do anything about it.

There would be no use contacting Sinclair Stevens (PC-York Simcoe), my member of Parliament, as he already knew about the increase.

I feel this raise was unjust!
JARLINE CYMBALISTY,
RR 2, King City, Ont.

Block parent thanks

Dear editor:

The Block Parents Association of Richmond Hill wishes to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the success of the Block Parents Day at the Richmond Heights Centre.

Valuable support was given by Mayor David Schiller, Alf Stong (L-York Centre), York Regional Police, Richmond Hill firefighters, St. John's Ambulance, Girl Guides, Richvale Lions majorettes and many citizens.

They gave freely of their time and services.

A special thanks must be extended to the Richmond Heights merchants. They provided the space.

School negatives emphasized

By Doreen Quirk

If one's only knowledge of the school system in York County came from reading The Liberal over the past few months, one could be excused for believing it is impossible to obtain a good education in our public schools.

Headlines such as "School board machinations," "Big useless school board," "Loose bowels survey," "School profanity," "School buses losing wheels" now leap at us weekly.

Many people have time to read only the headlines and perhaps the first paragraph of a news report.

As a result, their impression remains entirely negative.

Good example

The article entitled "School buses losing wheels" is a good example of an unjustifiably negative headline. This headline puts fear into the hearts of all parents who read it, making them wonder if they dare trust their children to our school buses.

The first paragraph of an unsigned, supposedly objective news story takes a gratuitous crack at the board when it states, "While the wheels may be occasionally turning at York County board of education meetings, it seems they're just as

occasionally coming off some of their school buses.

The ensuing article does state quite correctly that three buses have lost their wheels, two in 1973 and one in 1975 and that there were no injuries to students.

No perspective

But the reporter made no attempt to put these figures into perspective by reporting some 230 buses carrying 19,000 students, have travelled 11,000 miles daily, 190-200 days a year for 7½ years.

Nor did the article outline the extensive safety checks carried out regularly by both the board and the four bus companies.

The fact school bus drivers must undergo extensive training in safety procedures was also ignored.

Confidence plot?

One wonders if The Liberal is trying to sell newspapers by undermining the confidence the people in York Region have in their schools, their teachers and their elected officials.

By choosing to report only some of the facts about various issues, The Liberal is encouraging taxpayers to view with despair the people responsible for their children's education.

One issue that has received much one-sided coverage in The Liberal is



the matter of salary increases offered to the boards' administrative employees prior to the formation of the Anti-Inflation Board.

Bad emphasis

The Liberal concentrated most of its reporting on the fact the salary of the director was raised to \$47,000.

It did not mention that 15 of those staff members were earning \$10,000 per year and that the board was finding it impossible to fill the vacancies created by retirements because men in the bargaining unit were earning more — thanks to overtime pay — than their supervisors.

I wonder why The Liberal did not feel it was relevant to report that the salaries earned before their 16 per cent increase by 42 of the 57 people

referred to in the report, were, in fact, under \$15,000 per annum?

Ignored facts

Even the facts surrounding the recommendation of \$47,000 for the director of education were ignored. Surely the people of York Region have a right to know that salary is less than our neighboring boards are paying, and that the board requires the director to work 12-14 hours a day.

Thus his hourly salary is around \$15. Taxpayers can compare that with the \$28.55 that washing machine repairmen charge for a call, the \$12.50 earned per hour by electricians, or the \$19 hourly wage of a plumber.

Then they can decide for themselves whether or not it is too much for the person responsible for the education of York County's 45,000 children.

Schools ignored

Finally, I wonder why The Liberal has lately almost totally ignored the schools in the region.

The activities of trustees form only a very small part of the educational picture. But with the exception of the sports' pages, news articles about our schools have been hard to find.

I should like to have seen articles about the Gilbert and Sullivan

operetta produced by a K-6 school, about the 22 German teenagers attending our schools right now, about the 608 children in our French immersion summer schools, about the curriculum nights where parents can find out whether or not the schools are teaching the basics, about the math teacher whose talk, "Drill-the Name of the Game," was highly praised by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, meeting in New York City.

What about this?

I'd like also to know where The Liberal was when some 200 teachers, parents, ministers and trustees met in Aurora last week to talk about what kind of values we want our children to learn in school.

Surely, Mr. Editor, pleasant happenings can also be newsworthy. If you agree, then it's time The Liberal started to "accentuate the positive."

Meanwhile my fellow trustees and I shall keep on trying to "eliminate the negative" so that we can all be proud of the education that is received by York County's children.

(Mrs. Quirk of 11 St. Andres Ct., Thornhill, is a Markham trustee on the York County board of education.-Editor)