



regional viewpoint

Standing back inch or 2

By Jim Irving

Every so often I get the feeling that, maybe I'm standing too close to my subject — e.g. York County board of education — to comment on it properly; that I'm just a bit too quick to scoff at ravings other than my own.

So, this week I stood back an inch or two, and tried to see if what Sam Chapman and a few others were saying was true: the basics of education needed to be re-defined; the simple matter of referring to them as the three "Rs" — and vice-versa — didn't stand up in this space, as well as spaced-out age.

The three "Rs" had their place, but they weren't to be relied on to provide stability in all things; they hardly showed children how to deal with love, or anguish, or even their parents when it came to deciding who should have the final say on the channel selector.

Then Trustee Dorothy Zajac of King wrote to The Liberal to say that, among other things, "basic education is for (sic) more than reading, writing and arithmetic." There had to be much more: art, music, French.

Hadn't strayed

With that, and her other admission to being one of Wells, who has long presided over the turmoil with determined passivity, I knew I hadn't strayed too far off the path, after all.

If you add French to the curriculum for example, — and the board had that chance last October, but voted against it — do you start at the conversational level?

No, you begin at the beginning, as with all subjects. The subject, itself, isn't the basic, per se, it's what it im-

parts, so that you have some equipment with which to tackle the world of learning around you.

As for music, does not the same apply there? You start at the bottom of the scale, as it were. As I recall, when they tried to make us all instant connoisseurs in Grade 3 or 4 with music appreciation classes, which consisted of endless sessions of Bach and Schubert, et al, along with deep breathing commentary about how great they were, — "Can't you see that?" — they nearly killed our appreciation of that kind of music for all time.

Experiment ended

Luckily, they eventually stopped the experiment when too many children started dreaming of wild-looking men

astride bass fiddles, instead of having their slumbers interrupted by the more benevolent countenances of Dracula and Dr. Frankenstein's playmate.

As for art, unless you have a natural talent for it, is it anything other than frustrating when it becomes a serious subject and you find yourself diligently striving to make a circle out of a square?

So, let's hope the board doesn't spend the first part of its term jamming everything it can think of into the curriculum in an effort to see what constitutes the basics, and the second part trying to see what child belongs where.

The fact that your child is the gentlest soul there and will experience wincing pain when the teacher, or one of his pals, single some out for ridicule, or example — will only add to any further

burden of being apart.

He will always have that kind of sensitivity, because it's not something that's acquired at school, or at home; it's part of the child from the beginning. But whether it becomes a strength or a weakness in his life is a matter of his home.

Loving kindled

It's there that the feeling of love and loving is first kindled. It's there that the sense of self-esteem and security gets its foothold.

It's there that the child gathers momentum to look beyond his own yard and head off to kindergarten for the first time, more with a spirit of adventure than of adversity.

The sensitive teacher can spot a kindred soul and that gives her extra

direction in dealing with him. But then the sensitive teacher can do that with all her students, even though her role is basically that of teacher and not psychologist.

She is there to teach the rudiments of those homely, old subjects; those old subjects that give every child a chance to start off equally at at least one stage of their lives.

Basics from home

Those basics that will help him cope with this new world, have to come from home. There, the parents can be literate, or illiterate; just so long as they're not afraid to take the child's hand when it's extended.

That is very basic. Or would you have them skip that step and teach him how to shake hands instead?



sharon's sunshine

By Sharon Brain

It's too soon to start talking about Christmas.

Everyone I know agrees the Christmas season should not be open for discussion until Dec. 15.

We all believe any move to start it any sooner is mere hyper-activity at best, or gross commercialism at worst. But I keep meeting these same people in the plazas. They pretend they are picking up a few things the kids need for school.

But I know

But I know they are Christmas shopping.

Because that's what I'm doing too. We blame it on the merchants who

start putting up decorations in early November. But it's not their fault.

People who sell things can't help giving holidays when people buy things.

It's our fault. We've let it happen.

We've let a fat man in a red suit take over. In fact there are lots of other things happening at this time of year that need celebrating more.

We've forgotten the events that require celebrations are those when only lots of friends can make them bearable.

Why else are weddings such big occasions?

November and December are full of just such difficult times.

Need celebrations

So we need lots of minor celebrations.

They would help us bear those little nasties of life that up to now we have suffered through in the loneliness of our own homes.

What if, on that first dreadful morning when there was frost on your windshield, you knew you could be an hour late for work.

For certain everyone would be celebrating the event over a morning egg nog with their neighbors?

We need Scrapper Day.

Why isn't there a festival to celebrate the first snow fall? Kids rush to the windows when it happens, and smile and cheer.

If the adults knew it would be a holiday, I bet they would cheer and smile too.

Leaf burner festival

A suitable late October holiday would

be the Leaf Burners' Festival.

Now Leaf Burners do it sneakily, knowing they risk the wrath of the neighbours and the fire department.

But Leaf Burning is fun, so why not celebrate it? If it all took place on one day, the fire department could cruise the streets awarding prizes to: the house with the smokiest fire, the person most likely to burn down his home, the dog with the most singed tail and so on.

People with asthma could leave the country for the day.

We need to have a little more awareness of the potential pleasures of our lives.

Why are there no Snow Tire Parties? Surely when everyone gets theirs on, that's worth celebrating.

Antifreeze dance

That could perhaps be coupled with

an Antifreeze Dance.

Admission would be free to all those with a certificate from their garage.

Why don't we celebrate the day the groundhog goes underground as well as the day he comes up?

And what about last Duck Day? Since that means the end of the hunters as well, I'm sure the folks at Holland Marsh would be glad to organize that particular festival.

The season could culminate with Welcome Winter Day Dec. 21.

Everyone would put on their best snowsuits and head off for a street dance to celebrate the arrival of our most famous season.

All the hugging

Think of all the hugging that would go on at that party.

Merely to keep warm, of course.

By the time we were all rested up from these festivities, Christmas would be here.

No one would expect home made ornaments on the Christmas tree. No one would have time to worry about Christmas cards, or presents for people you only see once a year.

All those Santas who are wiling away long hours at the malls and plazas right now by leering at their pretty elves, would stay where they belong until Christmas Eve.

They would keep themselves busy at the North Pole making toys.

Hopefully, with all that extra free labor, the price of toys would go down and Christmas wouldn't be such a pain in the credit card.

Instead, it would be a quick and merry holiday.

Any opposed?



yesterdays

by mary dawson

Whatever happens to the Langstaff Jail Farm in the future — be it included in the green belt, become a site for giant hydro towers "stalking through the land", or a nature school — it already has had an interesting history.

Doris Fitzgerald, writing in The Liberal in 1967, said the southerly 200 acres of this property were part of the Crown grant to Abner Miles, Richmond Hill's first hotel and storekeeper.

90-years owners

The first occupant and subsequent owner of the property was John Langstaff, his son-in-law, and the property remained in the possession of

the Langstaff family for more than 90 years.

It was the site of several manufacturing plants and the owners gave their name to the whole neighborhood.

These 200 acres were bought in 1893 by David Boyle Sr. for his son David.

The elder Boyle also transferred to his son the easterly 105 acres of Lot 36, Con. 1, Vaughan Township (across Yonge Street) which he had bought in 1869.

Home on knoll

David Jr. built a large brick home on a knoll overlooking the intersection of the Langstaff Road (Highway 7) and

Yonge Street.

He was justifiably proud of it, his 200 acres of fertile, well-managed farmland, and his three orchards.

He planned to pass the property on to his son, Morgan, to carry on the family tradition of good farming.

But this was not to be.

During the years between 1911 and 1913, his aging neighbors to the north and east — James Russell, Nathan Chapman, William Russell, George Quantz and Walter Quantz — found offers for their land made by the City of Toronto to be most attractive. They accepted.

Jail farm expropriated

Expropriation threat

Then pressure was brought to bear on the Boyles — with an offer of \$39,000 for the 200 acres and a threat of expropriation if the offer was not accepted.

Although Boyle Sr. hired the best legal talent in the city, he was unsuccessful in fighting city hall.

On May 1, 1914, the family moved to Homewood Hall, an interesting older home in the heart of Thornhill.

Mr. Boyle was deeply concerned about the fate of his 20-year-old driving mare, May, so gave her to an elderly gentleman near Aurora.

May was deeply attached to her former owner and home. Three years later she managed to escape from her new home.

The horse made her way back to the Boyle farm on the Vaughan side of Yonge, where Morgan Boyle was farming.

Became jail farm

The expropriated Boyle land became the nucleus of the 790-acre jail farm.

A large brick building was erected to house the inmates and administrative offices and the large residence at the

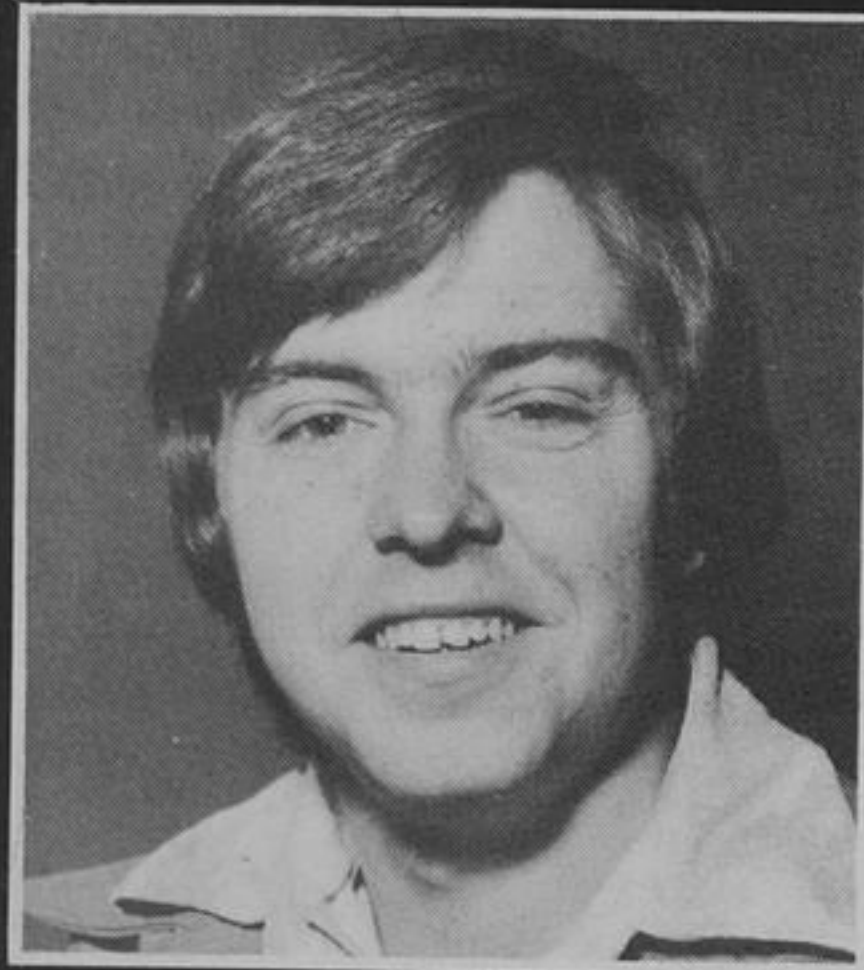
corner became the home of the governor of the jail.

During World War 2 the property was used as an Ontario Hospital. But it has been vacant since the hospital closed a couple of decades ago.

The Boyle farm on the west side of Yonge was sold for a subdivision in 1950.

Ten years later the two-storey post office and general store, built by Boyle in 1914, was demolished to make way for road reconstruction.

David Boyle served as postmaster at Langstaff from 1902 to 1927.



I'm switching

In the last election I voted for the mayor. This election I'm voting for Gord Rowe who has always supported my efforts in organizing community sports.

Tom Simpson

Vote Rowe for Mayor

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