

regional viewpoint

There was an election last week — do you remember? — and a few snowflakes and candidates fell before the evening was over.

Not enough to make it a completely fresh field on both sides, however, so that when the new year begins, there will be pretty much the same faces around the council tables and the school board; status quo, revisited, as it were.

And that, no matter what you might have been told, is not quite the opposite of apathy.

Still, there are those who would view the return of the old, familiar faces, chanting the old, familiar platitudes about "learning experiences," "child oriented programs" and "in-depth dialogues" — as reassuring. Meaningless, mind you, but obscure enough to lull those trapped by the posturings of academia into a misguided sense of security.

Howevah, the votes have been counted and the practical thing to do would be to accept what's happened, setting aside one's own prejudices in favor of the organized malarkey around the table; in this case, the one occupied by York board of education.

One last indulgence

But before I do, do you mind if I indulge just one last time with the old crew? I hadn't intended to; I had really planned to set down my manifesto here, like a good politician, about how it was all going to be a great, new start for all of us. How I would view the 1976-77 school board as eager, ready and untried; anxious to do what had to be done, willingly and without fanfare.

How I hoped they would accept me and any other members of the press with the same adventurous spirit and without preconceived ideas.

Well, there goes another old year's resolution. I really wanted to write on and on about that, but, unfortunately I had to break off in mid column to attend the board's regular Monday night meeting, and, of course, the board got wrangling again in the same old way and my prejudices flowed freely once more.

But, as Jim Corcoran, the 18-year-old trustee-elect from Woodbridge, said at intermission: "I just wanted to get up there and say something. I said 'is that really happening.'"

Professional development

One of the things that he could have been referring to was the "discussion" on Trustee Chris McMonagle's resolution on professional development days. After viewing a slide presentation, proudly presented at the Nov. 22 meeting, Mrs. McMonagle felt moved to move that, if that was what professional development days were all about, something should be done in a hurry.

The 20-minute presentation, which only a handful of trustees stayed around to watch, attempted to show

Status quo cures nought

how professional people acted when given a chance to get together with other "pros" in their field on one of these professional outings.

Mrs. McMonagle wasn't too impressed, however. "It didn't excite me to see teachers putting up tents... or teaching choral music," she said. She didn't feel she could support those two activities under the heading of professional development.

A couple of trustees, the Rev. Craig Cribar of Newmarket, and Doreen Quirk of Markham, refused to acknowledge that there was really anything the matter.

Straight from pulpit

Cribar, shooting straight from the pulpit, said that, if anyone had ever been to a workshop before, they would know "that's precisely what they do," sing songs to get things rolling.

Later, at coffee break, he accused Mrs. McMonagle of taking a "cheap shot," but Mrs. McMonagle countered that Cribar had only watched five minutes of the slide presentation, while she had sat through it all. So, how would he know?

Cribar insisted he had stayed, too. Trustee Quirk said she wasn't "prepared to condemn professional development days on the basis of hearsay on a film." However, if Mrs. Quirk had stuck around to watch the "film," she wouldn't have had to fret about hearsay.

A little later on, just to show, once and for all, that nothing had changed, Vice-Chairman Donald Cousens brought up something called York Educational Forum, part of whose aim was "... to develop the best educational system" for York students. So that's what it's all about.

Image promotion again


And what is the first aim of this Forum? "To promote the image" of the board "in this community."

That business of images has always annoyed me, because, what is an image, anyway? It's a facade, a contrived bit of hokum to give people the impression that you are something you aren't.

I know the board doesn't mean it that way, but even worrying about anything so meaningless, leaves the impression they're not capable of dealing with something so real as education. If they want to present any sort of picture, or establish any kind of rapport with their fellow workers, they should do it through establishing a trust that is based on sound, thoughtful policies, intended less to impress, than to improve the over-all system.

So, it is because of such things that I find I have once more weakened in my resolve to be magnificently knowing and charitable in my reporting of the board's doings.

But, what the heck, there's always next year.



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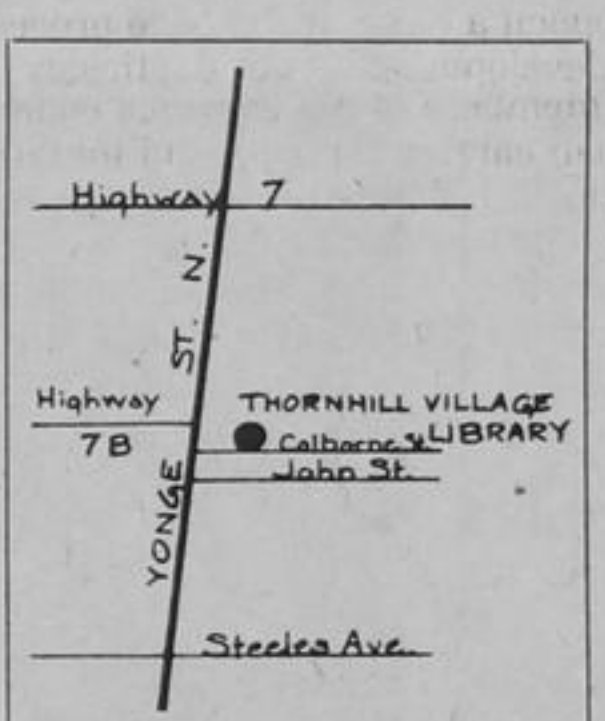
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sharon's sunshine

By Sharon Brain

The election is over and my record remains intact. I have never yet backed a winner. It shakes my faith in the electoral process. I've always been involved in politics. I come from a long line of political thinkers who believe that until you've argued the question of sewers over the morning's cornflakes, you haven't lived.

No family gathering ever passes without the liberals taking on the conservatives, or the radicals attacking the reactionaries.

It's our idea of family fun.

Then I spent a year as cleaning lady for a local developer. That would make anyone political.

I never yet backed winner

headquarters he had called for a ride. On to a polling station to scrutineer. As the votes for my candidate piled up, I began to feel a sense of accomplishment. Who knows how many of those votes I had delivered? We lost that poll.

I went to the reception for the workers. The moment I walked in the door, they announced my candidate was losing.

The only person there I recognized was convinced I was not me, but my mother-in-law.

Of, course, the names are the same. But it was disconcerting.

The climax

Finally the candidate arrived. I knew I should leave. The jinx would perhaps be lifted while there was still time. I have never seen everyone jumping up and down and congratulating a winner. I hoped this was the night.

Things got quieter and quieter. The evening grew late.

The candidate looked around. He glanced at me. I felt at that moment he knew who was responsible. Sighing in resignation he ascended the platform, gathered his wife and children about him and told us what a wonderful, hard working group we were.

Hope at 4 a.m.

He was still hopeful. The last polls were not in. Someone started "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow". It was too high and the voices petered out on the chorus.

When you're losing, nothing goes right. I got my coat. Maybe those last votes would put him over the top.

But I knew they would be bad news if I was still there.

It was snowing. A man agreed to help push my car. At home, they had news of the other contests. One person I voted for had won. That had been a three-way race for two seats.

I went to bed.

The democratic process is not always joyful.

Street sloshing

So this local election found me once again sloshing up and down a street in Thornhill to knock on doors and ask people if they needed any help to get out and vote.

I was one of those people who arrived on your doorstep just as you were sitting down to dinner after fighting the traffic all the way home from work.

I gave you my name and told you who I supported. Then I asked if you needed a ride or a babysitter. I was cold and wet and scared stiff.

Some of you were very nice. You smiled and held your dog away from my frozen toes.

Some of you were fairly rude and merely watched as your dog latched on to the hem of my coat.

Some of you were encouraging and told me you had already voted for my candidate.

Some of you said you wouldn't vote for that so-and-so under any circumstances.

I thought most of these replies were acceptable. But I believed you when you all said you were going to the polls. You were just waiting until the husband or wife or kids or cat got home.

Was it something I said that made you change your mind? Because you closed the door and stayed away from the polls in droves.

Fifth columnist

Next I went to drive some voters. On the way home, a man told me why he hadn't voted for the man whose

yesterdays

by mary dawson

If you have wondered why so many roads in this area contain jogs, E. A. James answered the question in The Liberal in 1926.

Where concession roads and sideroads cross, there are many cases in York County where the sideroad jogs a few feet or a few rods.

For the township of Markham the base line was Yonge Street for north-south roads and Steeles Avenue for east-west roads. Both extended, without jogs, through the township.

The other north-south roads in the township reveal few intersection jogs.

But it is a different story when one examines the sideroads. They were laid out differently.

Drew John Street

To locate John Street, the first sideroad in Concession 1, a distance of 6,600 feet was measured north along Yonge from Steeles Avenue.

A stake was planted every quarter of a mile to mark the lots.

The stake for the northwest corner of the fifth lot was the south-east corner of the sideroad and Yonge Street.

The same method was used to mark all the other sideroads in the township's first concession.

Surveyed Bayview

Then Concession 2 (Bayview) was surveyed. A stake was planted 6,600 feet from the township line with north York. This marked the first sideroad. Similar stakes were planted at similar intervals to the northern limit of the township.

When the sideroads were run and chopped clear they should have been in line — but they weren't.

The same care had not been exercised in chaining Concessions 1 and 2 (Yonge and Bayview).

Why so many roads jog

Surveyors differed

While both were supposed to be staked at intervals of 6,600 feet or multiples, thereof, one or both were something else.

The two surveys were done by different surveyors. Assuming that the Yonge Street survey, done by Augustus Jones, assisted by the York Rangers in 1793 is correct, if we travel east along Highway 7 we find that Bayview's measurement fell short.

Leslie Street's measurement was not quite as short. Woodbine's measurement was nearer the mark.

Concession 5's measurement was exactly the same as Yonge Street's.

Other municipalities

Much the same thing happened in Vaughan, King, Whitchurch and East Gwillimbury. Etobicoke has five different surveys. Scarborough has two and Georgina one.

An interesting jogging may be seen on the CNR line near Agincourt.

In this part of Scarborough township, the concession roads run east and west and the sideroads north and south.

The original railway engineers secured maps of the township.

Drew rail line

Working in England they located their line on a strip of land half off Lot 27 and half off Lot 28. This took land at the side of farms and didn't divide property.

When the surveys for the railway were made, however, it was found the lot lines jogged.

Every mile and a quarter you will still find a sharp curve where the railway's right-of-way in one concession joins the right-of-way in the next concession.

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The report points out how more realistic standards could significantly reduce home mortgage payments, and indicates that adoption of such standards would in some areas lead to more economical use of land, energy savings, reduced pressure on agricultural land, and greater feasibility for public transit.

If you would like a leaflet summarizing the main features of the suggested new standards, write to:

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