

Coyotes top mousers at Dunlap Observatory

by Art Robson

RICHMOND HILL — If you hear a plaintive howling around town when the moon is full, chances are it's just a rambunctious coyote on the David Dunlap Observatory's back forty.

There's deer there, too, and rabbits, grouse and all kinds of small varmints that make the woodlands on the Observatory property a natural wildlife park.

When we heard from Alex Smith, wildlife officer at the natural resources ministry's central region office here, that a dead wolf (traffic victim) had recently been found on Bayview Ave., just outside the Observatory fence, we were all excited.

Wolves right here in Richmond Hill? Darned right, podner
"Oh, yeas, they're quite common

around here," said Mr. Smith, quite casually.

"This one was in prime condition. They live off field mice and that bush and scrub on the Observatory property is an excellent environment for them."

Slobbering great wolves sinking their fangs into poor little meeces? Hardly cricket, old chap, and not what we'd expect from your average he-man type Canadian wolf.

How big are they?

"Not very," said Alex. "In eastern Canada we call them brush wolves, but out west they're known as coyotes."

"Livestock and deer are too big for them. They stick to mice and an occasional rabbit if they can catch one."

Coyotes, forsooth

Pooh. Coyotes. Hardly more than a fox. Who's ascaered of them. Better go have a look.

Well, sir the snow in that back forty at the Observatory is just criss-crossed in every which way with deer and rabbit tracks and paw marks which we took to be from our wily coyote friends.

Nary a thing

We tramped through the drifts for half an hour, but all we got for our pains was our galoshes full of snow. Never saw or heard a thing.

Of course, with a couple of cityslicker tenderfeet crashing around out there, we probably scared every wild thing in the area clear out of York County.

Ah, well, it was a beautiful sunny day and we got more fresh air and a appetite than we usually do in a whole week.

Bruce Hogg snapped some real derring-do pictures and we headed back to the dungeon—pooped.

Thar she--ah--goes

The Liberal's undercover wildlife reporter — in semi-Arctic gear — dramatically points out where a deer, coyote, rabbit, grouse or fieldmouse might be lurking in the David Dunlap Observatory back forty. He got his galoshes full of snow.



Photo by Hogg

Big Brother

When a boy needs a pal

RICHMOND HILL — While having Big Brother watching you is less than a pleasant experience in some parts of the world, in York Region right now, they'd like to see a few more Big Brothers on the scene.

Only, the Big Brothers wanted here watch over, they don't keep watch.

And one of them is Jack Marretta, 28, of Ruggles Ave., who signed up with the Big Brothers of York two-and-a-half-years ago, mostly because he had

There's a waiting list

AURORA — At present there are 27 fatherless boys on the waiting list for Big Brothers of York in the Richmond Hill-Thornhill area, according to Karen Watson, executive director.

She said they were looking for men, 18 years old and up, "who have the capacity to establish a warm and meaningful relationship with a fatherless boy."

The volunteers are asked to commit themselves for a weekly contact with their young charges for a minimum of a year. The matching process, including an interview to assess personalities and interests, the strengths of the volunteers and the needs of the boy, are conducted by one of the three counsellors.

Mothers are not charged any fee for the service, but are expected to cooperate with the agency.

The Big Brother doesn't assume any financial obligations, other than for incidentals during visits, plus a gift at Christmas and birthdays.

Mothers and volunteers interested in the movement, call 727-1251.

"some time on my hands", and for two or three days a week ever since, has played foster father to a 14-year-old boy.

"It suited my needs", Maretta said, admitting his motives weren't entirely altruistic. "I don't have any brothers", he added.

A grade six teacher at St. Peter's in Woodbridge, Maretta said he found it difficult meeting his future part-time charge for the first time.

Family of four

One of a family of four — two boys and two girls — the boy, whose name is Mark, wasn't too sure he wanted a Big Brother at the outset, but "it later worked out and he has since said he is happy with it."

Maretta said that the first time he took Mark, the youth sold him a raffle ticket.

"How do you refuse?" he asked. They then went for a drive and a milk shake, "just to break the ice."

Since that time there have been quite a few shakes and drives, and occasionally a bit of cross-country skiing.

Interests differ

Although they differ in their interests — Maretta likes books and the theatre, while Mark is more interested in mechanical things, they are both "sedentary people," Maretta said, "and just like being together."

He said they seldom went to the movies, because there was "not much inter-relationship in movies."

Was that necessary?

"We tend to like talking," he said. What did they talk about?

"Everything in general," Maretta said.



JACK MARRETTA
... a boy's friend

He described Mark as "very personable and warm. He cares for people."

When their interests don't jell, "we work it out the best we can."

Other problems

There were other problems, of course, such as time and distance — Mark lived in Richmond Hill when they first got together — and also if they saw each other too much.

"Then we don't appreciate what we have," Maretta said.

He said that, although he and Mark and a fellow teacher went to Florida for Christmas, he and the boy and the latter's mother, who is separated, never go out together.

The child has to know that he's "something special," Maretta said.

Exchange gifts

Another way of displaying the special relationship between the two is through the exchange of gifts at Christmas. Maretta, although he's still trying to quit smoking, was presented with a cigarette lighter and cigarette kit.

For his present, Mark was given some money for his Florida trip.

What have the two got out of it all? According to Maretta, it's made him realize "a great number of things, such as the time parents have to invest in their kids."

As for Mark, "it's difficult to say. Maybe it's just the process of growing up . . ."

Anyway, "he looks forward to seeing me."

More skiing

This weekend they plan to take off for some cross-country skiing, with other weekends seeing them going for rides in the country, more cross-country skiing, walking and talking; the kind of thing that may go on for a few years yet.

And then again, "father and son" may go their separate ways in another year. If it ended then, would Maretta resume his parental role with someone else?

The bachelor school teacher thought the question over for a few seconds and then replied: "Yes — after a short rest."

When is deer not a deer?

RICHMOND HILL — Ever see a black and white moose, or a black and white deer?

People at the Ontario ministry of

natural resources thought they had once.

The ministry collects moose and deer hides from hunters and turns them over

to native Indian craftsmen.

Couple of years ago their collection included the hide from a Holstein cow! In last fall's moose and deer hunting

season, the ministry's central region office in Richmond Hill took in 750 hides.

But that doesn't mean they were killed right around here on Metro's doorstep.

Central region goes as far north as Midhurst, near Barrie, west almost to Owen Sound, south to Cambridge and east to Lindsay.

Alex Smith, fish and wildlife officer here, said some of the 750 hides would be taken in the Lindsay and Midhurst areas.

But most would have been turned in by local hunters returning from hunting trips in northern and northwestern Ontario.

Ontario record

Ministry figures indicate a total of 10,000 hides will be collected this season, a record for Ontario.

This does not represent the total number of animals taken since many hides are left in the bush or are thrown away.

The hide collection program was begun years ago by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. But the job became too big and natural resources took over.

The hides are tanned at the expense of the federal department of Indian affairs.

Then they are sold to Indian craftsmen who turn them into clothing such as mukluks, mitts, slippers and ornamental beaded jackets which are sold through retail outlets across Canada.

There is no deer season in York Region except a very short one for archers — bows and arrows only.

Man offers \$500 reward

RICHMOND HILL — A Richmond Hill man has offered a reward of \$500 to anyone who can supply information leading to a conviction in a hit-and-run case involving his daughter Jan. 20.

Police said that William McCord of Levedale Rd., made the offer after his daughter, Patricia, 18, was struck by a car on Levedale Rd., just three doors from her home, about 8 p.m., and left lying there.

The girl managed to get up, however, and make her way home. She was then taken to York Central Hospital by her mother, where she was treated for bruises and released.

The hit-and-run car was believed to have been a fast back, while a smaller, red, foreign car, was said to have been following closely behind, but kept on going after the accident.



(Photo by Hogg)

Mother and Child

Mother and child creating together is the most popular program operated by the parks and recreation department at Richvale Community Centre. Here, Rita Hinkel and her 17-month-old

daughter Carla, join their creative talents to create — well, something. It's fun for both anyway. The class operates four mornings a week.

The Liberal Section C
community news

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Kindergarten registration

Correspondent
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OAK RIDGES — The annual registration for the 1977 kindergarten class will be held at the Oak Ridges Public School on Feb. 8 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m.

To be eligible, the children must be five years old on or before Dec. 31, 1977. Proof of age is required at the time of registration.

Hockey in full swing

The Oak Ridges in-house hockey team has played two games so far and won both. They shut out Jefferson Public School 16 to 0, and were victors at Lake Wilcox 13 to 1. They still have two games left to play.

The winners of three out of four games will play in the Richmond Hill Winter Carnival at the Mill Pond on Feb. 5.

Orators to speak up

Students in the junior Grades 4, 5, and 6 are getting ready for the public speaking contest to be held at Oak Ridges Public School on Feb. 10 at 9:30 a.m. At this time, they will be competing for the best boy and the best girl in each class.

From these will be chosen a representative of the school who will compete at the Area II Public Speaking Contest to be held at the Orchard Park Public School in Stouffville on Feb. 14.

Valentine's dance

It seems like we just got Christmas over with, and now it is time for Valentine's Day.

The Bond Lake Skating Club is having a dance on Feb. 12 at Bond Lake Arena in the Lion's Den. Tickets are

oak ridges
lake wilcox

\$10. per couple and are available from Mabel Murphy at 773-5897 or Pat LaRiviere at 773-5201. The music will be provided by disc-jockey Wayne Joyce. There will be a buffet and door and spot prizes.

St. John's Anglican Church

This Saturday, St. John's will be hosting the parish of Georgina (Sutton and Sibbald's Point) in a day-long quiet day. The rector will be conducting several of the sessions. The A.C.W. will provide the refreshments for the coffee breaks and for the luncheon.

On Sunday, Rev. Gerber will be officiating at the baptism at St. James in Sutton of the second child of Bob and Ella McPhee, formerly of St. John's.

Mr. Michael White, of Jefferson Side Rd., will be the preacher at the 10:30 a.m. service at St. John's. Mr. Les Eliot of Oak Ridges will be conducting.

The annual vestry meeting will be held in the Upper Room at St. John's on Monday evening at 8 p.m.

1st Oak Ridges Cubs

The 1st Oak Ridges Cub Pack, under the leadership of Mrs. Shirley Huntley and with the assistance of Miss Carolyn Robbins, will be attending the Ice Follies this Saturday.

Some of the boys are busy preparing for the York Summit district hobby show to be held later in February at Hillcrest Mall.

Group to meet on Wednesdays

KING CITY — The Good Morning Group meets Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. in the Anglican church, Keele Street, King City.

Future meetings planned are:

Feb. 2, open meeting; Feb. 9, Mike Exall of Seneca College speaks on Everything You Wanted To Know (on cross country skiing);

Feb. 16, mini-auction; Feb. 23, Penny Tyndale of Richmond Hill Family Services, talks on Parent-Child Relationships.

king city

Homeowners association invites public to meet

KING CITY — The King City Homeowners Association is looking for new members and invites service and special interest groups, as well as the general public, to attend the first annual meeting.

"It's a misconception that the association is only for new residents of those with problems," said an association notice.

Purpose of the group, according to its constitution, is "to maintain and improve the quality of life in the King City area and to foster communication between the ratepayers and civic officials to ensure responsive government."

Representatives attend council meetings and study regional papers. Periodic newsletters keep all members informed on current issues and councillors are invited to address meetings.

The association also holds social events for its members.

The annual meeting will be held Jan. 26, 8 p.m., at All Saints Anglican Church Hall. Mayor Margaret Britnell will address the group on the future direction of King Township.

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