

regional viewpoint

By Jim Irving

"McMonagle can't spell, McMonagle can't spell." The words were shouted out with the kind of triumphant glee one would expect to hear from someone who had just come across a sauna bath in a snowstorm.

And the shouter? A woman of about 35, one of several parents who visited the York County board of education meeting last week to discuss the prospect of getting their children into an organized school program as soon as the kids were deemed old enough to carry their peanut butter and jam sandwiches to class without eating them on the way. The group then continued the discussion afterwards in the board lobby.

Allege rudeness

It was the contention of the parents — mostly women — that the reception they got at the meeting earlier in the evening when they put forth their proposal for a junior kindergarten in York schools, had been downright rude.

The board listened with reverent attentiveness when a motion was put before it to raise its own mileage rates from 10 cents to 18 cents a mile the delegation charged but it may as well have been on its coffee break when the parents put forth their own solemn proposal.

So maybe that's why the woman who discovered the alleged error in Markham Trustee Bob McMonagle's copy, felt she had to run around like the town crier, just before the flood.

We lash back

After all, if we're upset by anyone else in our daily scramblings, isn't it one of the rules that we lash back in whatever manner possible?

Kids learn that very early when their parents give them a swat just for being in the same room as them during moments of stress.

Then they get it further drummed into their heads—often quite literally—by uptight teachers, whose paranoia makes them feel that any child who laughs in the wrong place is conspiring to make fools of them.

So it really depends on where you sit in these things. Last week, the board wasn't all that reverent when the parents came to call. But then the parents didn't always make that much sense all the time either. For example, their spokesman, Mrs. Diana Lofsky, when asked where they would accommodate the junior kindergarten students, intimated it was simple enough. You just dump the grades sixers, as they don't need bathroom facilities — maybe they've discovered something the rest of us haven't — and put them in mobiles.

Equally obtuse

That was that. But later on in the evening, just to

Kindergarten attitudes

show it could be equally obtuse, the board made little effort to stick up for a motion put before it by Eric Baker of Richmond Hill, and Jim Corcoran of Woodbridge, once the combined teachers of York exercised their particular form of hysteria in the matter.

Baker had suggested they all take a good look at any possible "Mickey Mouse" courses being offered in the schools.

"This matter should be seen in the context of tides of educational change," the motion read. With the dropping of departmental exams, some students were tempted to select courses which offered the easiest credits.

"Now that emphasis is being placed on core subjects it is appropriate to withdraw any temptation to bypass them in search of easy substitutes," Baker said.

Teachers disagree

The teachers didn't see it that way, however. In a lengthy petition, bristling with righteous indignation, they attacked it as "insult" to their integrity, and urged all "responsible educators" to oppose it.

So, naturally the old school board, full of its usual firm conviction and spirit in such things, agreed to a watered-down version of the motion from Baker and Corcoran, deleting the words "Mickey Mouse" and bound to offend no one. After a quick review, the board will send it back, acknowledging nothing, and resolving to do exactly that about it as well.

Rejection is still the most powerful feeling among us, apparently.

The Thornhill parents felt rejected when the school board didn't welcome their proposal with bell-ringing enthusiasm.

They then spent the next half hour jumping up and down the board lobby telling everybody about it.

The school teachers, on the other hand, immediately mounted a petition when someone dared suggest they might be teaching the occasional course that even non-geniuses could pass.

Insecure people

Obviously there are a lot of insecure people around treating the destinies of today's children. So if the children seem to have more problems than ever, it's probably because both parents and teachers are too busy seeking their salvation (plus their own) and direction through organized groups and programs, instead of giving them the individual attention they all claim is so necessary.

I think that if I were a kid today, once I set out for my first day of school, whether it was junior kindergarten or kindergarten, I'd just keep on going.

Obviously both sides have too many problems to ever see things in an equal light.

Better to try to work things out on your own.

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SCHOOL YEAR - 1977 - 78
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1977

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sharon's sunshine

by Sharon Brain

There's nothing good about feeling dumb. I pay to go to school one evening a week and humiliate myself because I still can't count to ten in Spanish.

While I can't think of a time I might need that skill, I still can't do it.

So I end up feeling dumb. Stupid. Dense. Slow-witted.

When it's my turn to answer, my face goes red and my tongue refuses to budge from the roof of my mouth.

I always sit behind an eager student. I know that if the teacher points my way, this whiz kid will not be able to resist answering.

I mumble. I look at the floor. I know every salt mark on my winter boots after studying them every Monday for five straight weeks.

People who hear I am taking Spanish tell me that it is an easy language to learn.

They tell me the same thing about Bridge. Either someone's lying, or I'm dumb.

Macrame muddled

Once I tried to learn macrame. For those of you who do not dabble in handicrafts, that involves taking miles of perfectly good string and tying knots in it. You hang the finished product on the wall. When ever your husband wants a cord to tie down the trunk of the car, he looks at it longingly.

When I told people I was learning macrame, they said, "Oh, that's fun, and so easy."

For me, they were wrong on both counts.

It got to the point where I was going to hang either

Feeling dumb school nights

the cat, by accident, or myself, on purpose. So I gave it up.

But not without that old, familiar, dumb feeling.

Dumb is how you feel when you're taking pictures. After you've irritated everyone by making them pose, after you snap the picture, after they've all moved away, someone points out that you left the lens cover on.

Dumb is how you feel when you write the magazine seething with righteous indignation because they haven't sent you the last three issues.

Then you find their cheque, unmailed, in last season's coat.

\$4 a pound

Running out of gas is dumb.

So is paying four dollars a pound for coffee, or thinking you can water the hanging plants while standing on the rocking chair, or believing that the kitten is finally trained well enough to be allowed on the white shag rug.

Dumb is believing the building contractor when he says, "It won't cost you a penny over..."

Dumb is thinking you can convince your credit card company that you don't owe them 33c interest, your mother that you are getting enough sleep, or your children that they'll thank you one day for not spoiling them.

Are you a person who thinks of yourself as mature, intelligent, and capable, though occasionally you act, or feel slightly slow-witted?

Me too.
Unos, dos, tres, cuatro...

yesterdays

by mary dawson

by Mary Dawson

"When a farmer eats, he eats. When a Pennsylvania German farmer eats, he eats for two," it was said in the early days of the Pennsylvania German settlements in Vaughan and Markham Townships. With the combination of a natural appetite and the appetite created by the stupendous task of clearing and tilling the land, it was a necessity as well as a pleasure for the daily table to create under its load of hearty and appetizing dishes, Mrs. Raymond Stuart wrote in The Liberal in 1964.

She pointed out that often the pioneer housewives could not secure the ingredients called for in their treasured recipes which had been handed down from generation to generation, but had to develop their own recipes to use the plainer foods which were available in creating tasty dishes. These recipes again are treasured by their descendants and include:

Nourishing dish

Schnitz un Knepp, a hearty and nourishing dish made with apples boiled with ham and served piping hot with dumplings; Boova Schenkel (boys' legs), a form of beef stew with a potato mixture wrapped in dough, cooked in the stew and served with a bread sauce; rivel soup; fastnachts; streusel; kuschen; shoo-fly pie; schnitzel meat; pigs' knuckles; sauerkraut with dumplings and many more "Dutch" dishes. Along with these on the "groaning board"

Pennsylvania Germans ate!

would have been found stewed chicken, gravy, sausages, mashed potatoes, beans, peas, beets, corn off the cob, egg salad, cole slaw, mixed relish, pickled cabbage, applesauce, an assortment of canned fruits, large sweet rolls, pies, cakes, doughnuts, nuts, cheeses and gallons of cider.

Traditionally the Pennsylvania German housewife would set her table with no less than seven sweets and seven soups.

Baked goodness

In the winter the baked goods would be prepared in a brick oven beside the kitchen fireplace. In the summer, to keep the house temperature as low as possible, the housewife would use her outdoor bake oven, a good example of which may be seen at Black Creek Pioneer Village. Such ovens were stuffed with logs which were ignited. When the fire had died down to a bed of coals, they would be raked and distributed evenly over the base of the oven and baking could be begun, the pans being inserted and removed with a long handled, wide-bladed "paddle".

Also helping to make "Dutch" cooking deservedly famous was the judicious use of herbs and each pioneer home would have its own herb garden, the products of which would be dried and stored to add their piquant flavor to the pots and pans as the family's meals were prepared. Such plots would contain beds of sage, caraway, dill, thyme, catnip, mint, savory, rosemary, majoram, etc.

People problems can be serious problems.

This is what Ontario is doing to help solve them in advance.

Recently arrangements were made for a group of Indian children to attend the public school in a northern Ontario town. The principal of the school in the town was aware that Indian children sometimes had a rough time at the hands of other students, and to try to forestall this kind of situation, he called in a Human Rights Commission counsellor to talk to the other children. The counsellor asked the children if any of them had ever moved to a new school, and what they thought it would feel like if they were the strangers. In this way he helped them understand how the Indian children would be feeling when they arrived, and the integration proceeded relatively smoothly.

Our job is to help bring people together and encourage healthier relationships among all groups.


If you would like more information or assistance, contact the Human Rights Commission at any of the following addresses:

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| HAMILTON 1 West Avenue South Postal Zone: L8N 2R9 Telephone: 527-2951 | KENORA 808 Robertson Street Postal Zone: P9N 1X9 Telephone: 468-3128 | PETERBOROUGH 267 Stewart St Postal Zone: K9J 3M8 Telephone: 743-0361 |
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Community counselling is one of the major roles of your Ontario Human Rights Commission. We hold seminars and discussions with police in areas where there are communication barriers between them and minority groups, to help relieve tension and promote mutual understanding. We attend meetings of immigrants and native-born minority groups to explain to them both their rights under the legislation and their responsibilities as citizens of this Province.

We also help bring people into contact with local agencies like home-and-school groups, community and government agencies, and churches, which are available to help but which many people don't even know exist. Wherever there's a difficulty based on race, language, colour or creed, the Human Rights Commission is available to generate discussion and motivate people to develop understanding and respect for the other's point of view.

Ontario Human Rights Commission
Ministry of Labour
Bette Stephenson, M.D., Minister



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