

## Region housing priorities bad

The region sent a lawyer and a planner to an Ontario municipal board hearing last week to fight against the potential addition of 79 people to Markham's burgeoning population.

The argument was that Markham had too large a share already of the region's development in rural areas.

Yet last year in Kleinburg, a village in the rural area in the region's scheme of things, a development that might well have added 3,000 people to the town of Vaughan was before the OMB. The region was nowhere to be seen.

Lawyer Robert Macaulay was able to argue for his client Milani and Milani that the proposed development was not a regional concern.

The lawyer for the Kleinburg ratepayers asked where was the missing region? A good question indeed, since the proposed

improvements in trunk services would be a regional responsibility.

The lack of a regional opinion on one side or the other smacks of irresponsibility.

Regional governments were set up, or so we were told at the time, to cope with powerful forces, particularly the pressure for growth, that local governments could not handle.

Instead, when powerful forces clash in Kleinburg, the region ducks. But let someone try to build 22 more houses or drive eight miles per hour over the speed limit and the region has a team of trained specialists to put them in their place.

The regional solicitor even says he was sent to fight a case in court for four days over whether a particular piece of paper had to be produced with a land severance.

His bosses should get their priorities sorted out.



## Thornlea Secondary horrors

By Lynda Nykor

On any given day you can stand on a corner in Thornhill and take a quick survey with guaranteed results.

Talk to the first 10 people who pass by about Thornlea Secondary. Eight of them are sure to have horror stories of ruined youth to tell.

Even the school's staff admits it's rather free-wheeling system isn't right for every child.

But memories of years of stultifying boredom in the public school system when I was a kid incline me to support it.

If it enriches even one kid in 20 and raises his or her horizons above the mundane, it earns its place in the community.

### In the jungle

I also recognize it isn't for everyone, and I've got a son who's the perfect illustration of this.

All the school has done for him is to turn him into a budding horticulturist.

He seems to spend most of his time in "the jungle," a plant-lined sanctum sanctorum incidentally known for its stimulating poker games.

When you can get him to discuss it seriously, he professes to be offended by the "slackness" of the system.

My daughter, on the other hand, is doing fairly well there.

### Unconventional

Some of the unconventional goings-on even manage to shake up some of her preconceived notions.

Yesterday she came home in high dudgeon about her math class.

The teacher had told the class the acceptable answer to any problem would be the one the majority arrived at.

"Fortunately," she muttered as she paced the kitchen floor, "the majority's been right so far."

I have to admit my first reaction was somewhat Pavlovian.

(My God, the man is a dunderhead. The school is a disaster.)

Then I thought about it.

It occurred to me the teacher had really forced at least this one student to do some thinking about the very nature of mathematics, about its immutability, its logic.

And he'd done it without the kind of dogmatic insistence that kids either react against or ignore.

### Wheels turning

I could see the wheels turning in my daughter's head, and knew she'd suddenly been put in a new position.

She was now the defender and definer of this subject, and wasn't waiting for someone to be this for her.

Not a bad stance for any teacher to provoke in a 14-year-old mind.

So I accepted that quite happily, though she's still busy sorting it out.

In the same week we also had a discussion about the Thornlea cafeteria.

Popsicles, my children inform me, cost 20 cents at school.

Across the road at the Becker's store the same item sells for 7 cents.

This is going to keep kids from hanging around the plazas?

### Brothers parents

And this sight, of teenagers congregating in shopping plazas when they should be in school, is one of the things that incenses parents and gives schools like Thornlea a bad reputation.

How many passers-by know the reasons for it may be purely economic?

You'd think a school that can stimulate kids to use their brains would know they'd be smart enough to cross the street if there was a clear 13 cents profit in it.

You'd also think they'd blush at charging 25 cents for a fresh apple, or a half-pint of milk.

The majority of math students will figure out apples are \$3 a dozen, and milk \$1 a quart, a bit of a rip-off in any system.



## Letters Watch Maple dump hearing

Dear editor:  
Garbage was a big issue a couple of years ago and many of your readers may think that the problem has gone away. "Not so".

The Environmental Assessment Board is in the middle of its longest hearing in its history in Maple.

It is about to decide on the proposals from a number of owners and garbage haulers concerning the 600-acre site proposed for that village.

This would be the largest dump in Canada, would have a "life" of up to 35 years.

It would produce an incredible number of trucks travelling through the southern part of York Region, hauling in garbage from Metro and many of the surrounding areas.

Next Tuesday, March 8, at 8 p.m. in the hall of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church is the time for citizen to meet the Environmental Assessment Board members and express their feelings about this huge and threatening development.

Please come out and speak up.  
JOHN BECKER,  
Box 873, Maple, Ont.

## Humane complaint old

Dear editor,  
I write in response to the letter by Dr. M. S. Hillar in your Feb. 2 edition, in which he states he complained to the Toronto Humane Society about neglect to some horses, and his complaint, he states, was ignored.

Enquiries have been made into this serious allegation. The facts are this complaint and the incident that produced it occurred in 1962 — some 15 years ago.

In any event, the matter was outside

the jurisdiction of the Toronto Humane Society. It should have been made to the Ontario Humane Society, whose responsibility it was.

If Dr. Hillar, or any of your readers, have complaints of neglect or abuse of animals, they should be addressed to the undersigned, where they will promptly and properly be investigated.

G. D. HEPWORTH,  
Chief Inspector,  
Ontario Humane Society,  
8064 Yonge St.,  
Thornhill, Ont.

## Challenges MLA Stong

Dear editor:  
Since the public sometimes has a short memory and recollection of the article may be vague by the time we are facing each other in an election battle, I would appreciate the opportunity to challenge Alf Stong the Liberal MPP on his recent report.

As you know I am a candidate for the Progressive Conservative York Centre provincial nomination next month. As such I feel some response to his comments are timely now.

Alf Stong seems to be adopting some of his leader's tactics of late. Stuart Smith has a great habit of throwing out comments which are misleading and downright dangerous.

Now Mr. Stong does the same thing. He is attempting to use scare tactics to undermine the public's confidence in the Ontario education system.

He has twisted facts and taken phrases out of context from the recent Interface Report by Stevenson and Kellough. I personally find this repulsive and unfair to the public.

It is most unfair for someone in political office or a position of trust and respect such as a member of the legislature of Ontario, to attack our public institutions.

The Ontario educational system is among the finest in the world. It is used as the basis of study and evaluation by educators near and far.

Sure the government of Bill Davis has made mistakes. The government of Bill Davis has been responsible enough to recognize those mistakes and has taken

steps to correct them.

In the 1960s the educators said we needed more freedom in our educational system. The Progressive Conservative government acted on that advice.

Students drifted away from the traditional core curriculum. A great number of parents made sure their children stayed with the three "R"s. But many didn't.

As a result Tom Wells, the education minister, has acted to restore the compulsory core curriculum.

Today we are educating more students, for longer periods of time than ever before.

A University or community college education is within the reach of everyone.

Our institutions have undergone unprecedented expansion. While many jurisdictions are experiencing shortages in such key professions as nursing, medicine, dentistry, teaching, engineering, etc. — no such shortage exists in Ontario.

What about Mr. Stong's comments and claims that students coming out of high school are not what they used to be.

I think if you look back through the letters and literature of our history you will find the same comment has been made about every generation coming along.

An Ottawa University study claims students entering their school are inferior to the class of 1961. In 1961 only

## Pupils guinea pigs again?

Dear editor:  
It's great to be a citizen again. But after three years' immersion in education in York County, it's impossible to simply forget it.

So the other day I tried to find out what the new board was doing about its policy on research in schools.

I called the board office for a copy of the one-page draft. The director's office flatly refused to provide me with one.

Was it secret to parents like the research projects themselves, I asked?

No, the new board had a policy that only let certain people see it, I was told.

Horse feathers. I was one of the trustees who wrote those policies.

We wanted the public to know what we were doing and tell us about it! Well this board doesn't, I was told.

Further chats with Chairman Craig Cribar and several other trustees confirmed it.

My own trustee, Harry Bowes slipped a hot photostat of this semi-secret elitist document into my mailbox in a plain brown wrapper.

I locked myself in the bathroom to read it.

Lo and behold I saw why they had it under wraps!

They've left out the bit about parents giving consent before their children are used as guinea pigs in research projects!

If we didn't even know that bit was left out, we might sit quietly at home trusting and expecting to be consulted until some night at the dinner table when our children happened to drop



Joy Horton  
... bathroom secrecy

what they'd been quizzed about at school concerning their fears, heat rash, sex life, family hang-ups, religious beliefs or finances.

Then we'd find out it was someone's "research project."

In the bad old days, a great many "teacher testers" were playing amateur psychologist, so the province passed a tough new policy.

It requires that only professional psychologists can test students and only after receiving written consent from the parents.

But here in York County, despite the new law, we're still in the bad old days. The director does not like parental consent and spoke against it repeatedly because it "slows things up" and anyway "Sam knows best".

He even has his own definition of what is, and what isn't, dabbling into our children's psyches which sneaks around the provincial law.

We all remember last year when over 1,000 students were to be subjected to a humiliating and degrading questionnaire and follow-up therapy in a scuba tank for their personal fears and anxieties by a "teacher-tester".

Well this was one that the director approved without telling anyone.

The trustees stopped it only after it was well under way when they accidentally heard about it.

We were told that it in no way involved psychology or mental health.

Well the old board didn't buy that argument. But the director apparently didn't give up.

Just a month ago I understand he recommended the very same project to the new trustees, still without parental permission involved.

What they did about it we really don't know because they discussed it in secret. So what pray does the director have up his sleeve for us next?

The old board finally passed a law that the director had to show a brief summary of planned research projects (never the questionnaires or details).

So as a trustee I saw summaries.

The select groups of citizens who are permitted to see the proposed new policy, and maybe even some new trustees, may not know much about the secret part, so may not twig to what's missing — parent's rights and responsibilities!

So I'm in a pretty pickle. I'm holding a semi-secret paper that denies me my rights, possibly even borders on illegality. I'm not allowed to comment publicly about it because I'm not



Kerry Gilmor  
... Ont. schools fine

the elite in both academic and in economical social status were allowed access to a university education.

Through the 1960's expansion of existing schools and creation of new universities across this province combined with a progressive student aid system. University doors were thrown open to countless thousands who were previously denied.

This naturally meant the over-all academic standing of the university class was lowered. No longer, though, is it just an elitist institution.

Today your average student, who may blossom academically later in life, is given the opportunity of higher education.

I challenge Mr. Stong to assume the role he was elected to. He should be attempting to restore public confidence.

He should be involving teachers, students and parents in the process of education so collectively we can make what is already a good system even better.

It is easy to wreck a Cadillac, but it takes many to build one.

KERRY GILMOR,  
67 Richmond St.,  
Richmond Hill, Ont.

## Jr. kindergarten since 1940's

By Kathy Love

Your front page article of February 16 "Jr. Kindergarten issue lives on" prompted me to re-evaluate the previous articles, letters, etc. concerning this situation.

This is a topic I personally feel very strongly about. After speaking to Mrs. Diana Lofsky, a concerned, involved but overburdened citizen, it appears that individual effort is to be the only solution.

What concerns me most is the condescending attitude of what appears to be the majority of our elected trustees.

One statement by Margaret Coburn of King that she "had more people speaking against junior kindergartens than for them", should inspire the parents of King to stand up and be counted.

Perhaps these people feel they are facing a small handful of individuals who will be easily quashed.

I was not on the original committee which was accorded such a poor reception by our board of education. But I wish now I had been.

### My experience

I have first hand personal experience of just how beneficial a junior kindergarten program can be and of the



The guest spot  
A topical column of opinion by our readers. Submissions should be no more than 800 words, typed preferably.

healthy, happy attitude toward school demonstrated by a four-year-old currently enrolled.

The issue here can't be whether or not a child would benefit, as programs such as this have been in effect for many years in every area but our own.

It is a personal decision to enrol a child of age or not. I spoke to the York, Toronto, Scarborough, Etobicoke and North York board offices regarding the length of time the individual programs had been operating and found four years to be the minimum.

The Toronto board instigated its first in the 1940s. In every case they had been enthusiastically received and had shown good feedback within a short time.

The early childhood education department of the North York board of education, headed by Mary Scanlan, believes firmly in the benefits and would be only too happy to show classroom facilities and curriculum details to those involved.

Particularly interesting is the success the York County separate school board has enjoyed the past two years.

This represents the same geographical area essentially, neighbours' children and similar economic circumstances.

### Pupil decline

I was referred through these contacts to individuals in the business offices of the ministry of education who mentioned the problem of declining enrolments in much of our area.

Surely the possibility of a revenue producing potential can at least be investigated thoroughly.

Obviously what is required is a show of hands from concerned people from every area in York Region. This is not a fad topic for discussion, it is an established fact and should be treated as such.

Mrs. Love resides at 73 Laverock Ave. in Richmond Hill. — Editor