

Pool bylaws protect you

Cold fear should clutch the hearts of many local swimming pool owners at Thornhill Councillor Stan Daurio's remarks in Markham council Thursday.

That's if it's really true, as Daurio suggests, that many property owners are ignoring swimming pool building bylaws.

It's a good thing Daurio was a minority of one favoring the motion that failed to loosen up the town's regulations.

Swimming pools are yawning death traps for small family members or for neighborhood children. Such pools need to be locked off from house or street.

Councillor Daurio should inform himself of the information compiled when Markham's bylaw was prepared. He should also study the evidence from the inquest into

a deathly child's swimming pool and learn shortly before the bylaw was prepared.

People just don't understand the dangers of pools when they start to dream of relaxing in cool waters on hot summer days. They just don't think when they start in on a do-it-yourself backyard job.

That's why pool construction bylaws have to exist. They're to protect people from their own ignorance, Daurio being no exception.

Making a pool safe is a complex, technical matter. Residents owning pools, or building one, should make sure they have a municipal building permit to protect them from themselves.

If they haven't a permit they should run, not walk, to the local building inspector's office.



'SAM CHAPMAN is at it again! He's at it again! SAM CHAPMAN is at it again'

Chain, magnolia thriving

By Lynda Nykor

A few weeks ago a Liberal editorial suggested flowering trees and shrubs should be planted around the region.

The writer of that piece, presumably deep in the throes of the Gray February Betwixets, mentioned laburnums and magnolias.

Many of us, also in the lap of the G. F. B.s panted yes! yes!, and hallucinated wildly about soft sunshine, full-throated birdsong, and pastel blooms perfuming balmy air.

A Liberal reader, more stoic or less susceptible than the rest of us, wrote to say magnolias and laburnums wouldn't survive our harsh winters.

Native kinds

She suggested planting some of the hardier native species such as flowering crab.

Now, I've got nothing against our native trees, in their proper place, or time.

But gee whiz. Is a crab tree the stuff of February dreams? Maybe it's the name. A crab just doesn't grab, you know?

It doesn't do for you what mag-nole-yuh or la-burn-um do.

There are some magnificent magnolias in Thornhill. One mature specimen on John Street rings my chimes every spring when I drive past.

Laburnum too

I have a laburnum (also called a Golden Chain Tree — isn't that yummy?) in my back yard.

I'm not suggesting our reader was wrong in her assessment — there's every possibility she's right.

Thornhill is on the very edge of one of the climatic zones, so what succeeds here could conceivably end up a pile of dead twigs three or four miles to the north.

But there are ways of winter-protecting borderline-hardy trees and shrubs, and wouldn't it be super to try?

Or what about some hardy azaleas and rhododendrons?

Wouldn't the sight and sound of an apricot make you feel warm all over?

If you're as desperate as I am for warm weather and can't afford to wing away to St. Martinique, here's a less expensive alternative.

Jump into your jalopy this weekend and head for downtown Toronto.

Toronto tropics

Go directly to Allan's Gardens where you'll find a huge Edwardian domed greenhouse surrounded by several smaller greenhouses.

Plants from all the exotic jungly parts of the world are growing here. Many are in opulent bloom. Foliage plants twist and sprawl and drip in equatorial abandon.

The nicest little two-hour free vacation in the world!

And while we're still on the subject of flora, I'm delighted to note the Baker family of Vaughan has won the first round with Parkway Belt officials.

The Bakers own an 80-acre stand of maples where every spring maple sugar and syrup are produced. Thousands of schoolchildren are invited by the Bakers to visit every year.

Baker's tale

Mr. Baker tells them about the trees native to the area, trees that covered the entire landscape when the first Bakers came to Upper Canada as pioneers nearly two centuries ago.

Whole classes watch sap being wrung from the maples, and watch as it's boiled into sugar, right before their eyes.

For some of them it may be the only thing they've ever seen that doesn't include a cellophane wrapping as an integral part.

Replacing what my children still fondly remember as the "sugar bush farm" with hydro towers would be a sad and terrible thing.



sharon's sunshine

By Sharon Brain

THORNHILL — Everyone is fretting about the teeth of the seven-year-olds on the hockey rinks of Canada.

I'm more concerned about the health of the old timers who are on the ice at 11 o'clock at night.

I know a few of them. They come home from work too tired to exercise the tropical fish.

They settle into their easy chairs and it takes two hours of dinner, television and quiet before they start feeling human again.

And then the telephone rings.

One of guys

Who is that calling? No one will

ever name names. It's always just one of the guys.

"One of the guys says they are playing hockey tonight," he says as he walks back into the living room and looks sadly at his easy chair.

"I hope you told them you weren't."

"Not exactly. I said I'd go if they didn't have enough for a game." When you're over 30 there are never players enough for a game. To have enough, there would need to be a new line waiting on the bench every time the old one had gone up and down the ice.

The retch test

You can tell how many guys

made it to the rink by the number of people who were sick. Fewer guys, more retching.

"I need the exercise," he says.

Hockey is not exercise. It is torture. Maybe Gordie Howe could still do it, but only for a lot of money.

The only reward these guys are going to get is pain the next morning.

But they think it must be good for them because it feels so terrible.

Hockey is the game where you have a stick not just to hit the puck with. It's also to lean on when you

think you are going to collapse.

Fight resting

In hockey you don't get to stand around unless there is a fight going on. But then there's a good chance the rest is going to hurt more than it helps.

You can also rest while you're taking your turn in goal, waiting to be smashed in the face with a small rubber rock.

Hockey is the game where your equipment bag weighs more than the desk you sit at all week.

Every oldtimer's team has one enthusiast who has just quit competitive hockey. He's the one

who skates around boarding or knocking down anyone on the other team who looks like he might be getting near the puck.

You can't always get onto his team.

Wives wait

Hockey is the sport where the wife waits up till you come home. She's not mad because you've been at the pub too long. She was sure the cardiac unit was going to call and say you needed your pajamas.

Hockey is not for oldtimers.

Oldtimers are over 25.

Guys play tonight



yesterdays

by mary dawson

A fireplace was used by early settlers for cooking and heating. After dark it was often the only source of light.

As the pioneers became better established more land was cleared for pasture and bears and wolves were killed off.

This made it possible to keep sheep. They provided clothing, food and tallow.

The tallow was used to make candles either by dipping or in molds.

Candles were a portable source of light that has been described as "merely disturbed darkness".

Better lamps

Coal oil could be distilled from coal. Coal oil lamps gave a much better light, but were too costly for the average home.

About 1860 it was discovered that wells could be dug or drilled and petroleum (from "petrus" meaning rock and "oleum" meaning oil) obtained.

Ontario's petroleum area, centred around Oil Springs and Petrolia. With one in Pennsylvania they competed for the honor of being the first to be developed.

At Petrolia in some cases the wells were free-flowing. Dikes had to be built around fields to hold the oil.

More than 100 teams were used to move the oil to Sarnia. A special plank road was built for their use.

A number of small distilleries were built. They eventually were phased out as the huge Imperial Oil Refinery was built at Sarnia.

15-cent fuel

By the barrel, kerosene or coal oil sold for 15c a gallon.

Most households bought a gallon of oil at the grocery or hardware store. There it was poured first into a wide-mouthed tin gallon measure and then into a spouted can through a funnel.

The cans came with a threaded cap for the top opening and for the spout. Often the spout cap was lost and a potato was pressed into use to cap the opening.

The cost was 25c a gallon. Now colored and scented lamp oil is sold for 89c a pint.

Lanterns were used for lighting at the barns to do the chores on dark winter mornings and evenings.

Pedestal and hanging lamps complete with decorated shades, graced the dining rooms and living rooms of the homes.

Plain glass lamps sat on brackets in front of a concave mirror to light the kitchens and halls. Glass lamps with round handles showed the way to bed.

Messy chore

Although these lamps were a much improved source of lighting, they had their drawbacks.

It was a messy, daily job to clean the

lamp chimneys, trim the wicks and fill the lamps.

This was a chore usually assigned to the oldest daughter. Many fires were caused by upset lamps.

Oil lamps were also used to provide street illumination. Richmond Hill had a Mr. Brownlee employed as a lamplighter in the 1880s and until the coming of electricity.

Whiter light

A bright white light was produced by an Aladdin lamp. This burned coal oil and used a cone-shaped mantel, introduced in the early part of this century.

The Coleman gasoline lamp which came along a little later also featured mantels and burned gasoline under pressure.

An earlier development was lighting by acetylene gas, manufactured by adding water to carbide powder. This was used in churches, halls and in the Dominion Hotel in Richmond Hill.

It also had its drawbacks. The generating plant at the rear of the Dominion went up with a bang on one occasion and was completely demolished.

First electricity

The first electricity in the area was

manufactured at a steam plant at Bond Lake to run the Metropolitan Railway cars along Yonge Street.

Hydro came to this area early (about 1910).

It was then known as Niagara power, it being generated by water power at Niagara and transmitted by wires to this area.

This provided an excellent source of light for homes, businesses and streets and has been steadily improved.

Although some fires are still caused by faulty wiring, overloaded circuits, etc., introduction of hydro electric power has cut down considerably on the number of destructive conflagrations.

Gilmor's invective

By Wooburn Thomson

It was interesting to compare local MLA Alf Stong's article on Declining Standards in Education with PC nomination candidate Kerry Gilmor's reply.

Tacked on to Ryerson's Walter Pitman's charismatic word-play on TV, and Education Minister Tom Well's commitment to "beef up the system", also on TV, it is all rather depressing. Pretty much the first third of Gilmor's letter consisted of unsubstantiated invective: "misleading", "scare tactics", "twisted facts", "unfair", and "repulsive" are sample words.

His frustration was understandable; for ultimately he found he had to agree with Stong that standards "had" fallen.

His justification was that more people were achieving the lower standards that previously achieved the higher ones.

Whether that's good or bad, it's undoubtedly a fact. (One must hope it isn't true of medicine.)

Several of Gilmor's statements call for comment. However, let me take just one: "In 1961 only the elite in both academic and in economical social status were allowed access to a university education."

It's insulting

If we take "elite" in its popular meaning that membership in a group depends on something "beyond" one's own effort and determination, then such a statement is both misleading



The guest spot

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

and insulting.

To describe the modest standing needed in the few high school subjects then required for university entrance as being beyond the capabilities of all but an elite group, is an insult to the capabilities of the then Canadian school population.

As for any denial of access to "all" who didn't have an "economical social status" (if that means what I think it means), Gilmor isn't presenting the facts.

For decade after decade, thousands upon thousands of students who were willing to "work their way through", did just that.

And such students took their work seriously. In fact the hard work of those self-starters contributed, ironically, to the good name of the university degree, that today attracts so many who are neither prepared to work to go to university, nor prepared to work once they get there.

Throughout most of the 'fifties and 'sixties, when I was on a university staff, enabling funds available for our department to use at its discretion, were seldom exhausted.

Today's trouble

A trouble today is we are constantly bombarded with assessments of the situation by those who have scant qualifications for doing so.

I would suggest Gilmor read the general assessment of Prof. Harry Johnson (Globe and Mail Feb. 19) who is one of the two or three most distinguished economists and scholars of international stature that Canada has so far produced.

It seems likely that insofar as the granting of university admissions, or the entering of degrees "cease" to be a consequence of competence (no matter who pays for university costs or how wide its "doors are thrown open") we will sustain neither the value of the university as a source of knowledge, nor the prospects of those who attend it, nor the quality of life in the society in which it plays such an important role.

Finally, if you will allow me to make a positive, if perhaps unpopular suggestion, it would be this:

Ultimately, what happens in and to a university depends upon what happens "not" in high school but in the elementary school.

One function of the elementary school (lacking a supportive family setting) is to equip potential university students

with three capabilities: first, to want to learn; second, to know how to learn; and third, to be self-starters.

Teaching mystery

The ability to equip a student is an art. It isn't necessarily a product of teachers' college or of fashionable textbooks. It doesn't necessarily involve the amassing of academic degrees.

Teachers who acquire this art of an outstanding degree should be provided with routes to the most senior pay categories in the school system.

For a society where the possession of a university degree has increased in importance at pretty much the same rate as the rate at which standards of those same university degrees have decreased, and in a society where exploding bureaucracies and the distrust of senior authorities have made competent discrimination increasingly suspect, the adequate reward and effective recruitment of those teachers who possess this vital art will be difficult.

But before we strangle ourselves in an Ad Populum web of rigid mass standards, we should at least realize what we are doing.

(Wooburn Thomson of 120 Major Mackenzie Dr. is a 27-year resident of Richmond Hill. Now inactive for health reasons, he formerly taught at the graduate school of business administration at the University of Toronto. — Editor.

Letters

Tight abortion policy questioned

Dear editor: Your article "York Central abortions are concern" which appeared March 2 has left me confused.

Barry Hayes, chairman of the board at York Central Hospital, states "the hospital is very concerned about abortion".

It is also stated the hospital performed 186 abortions and has a tight abortion policy.

There appears to be a contradiction in these statements since the provincial average of abortion is only 20 abortions for 100 live births.

Perhaps the hospital would do well to take another look at its "tight" abortion policy in the hope of reducing the number of abortions performed.

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