



Finding Florida

By Lynda Nykor

Can a family of five from a small town in Ontario drive to Florida and find happiness?

Well, yes. It requires a certain amount of stamina, a cast-iron stomach and a reasonably flexible nature. But it can be done.

Fortunately we found Murphy's Law wasn't in operation on this particular trip of ours.

(Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong.)

I've formulated a new one that covers the exigencies of a long trip with offspring.

Nykor's Law: None of the things you worried about will happen, but something you hadn't thought of will.

Our tin Lizzie, with its leaky rad, dicky transmission and its Hansel-and-Gretel-like tendency to leave a trail of oil behind it, cruised through the 3,213 miles with nary a whimper or a clang.

The kids were great in the car. We perfected a system that made them even better.

We got up at 6:30 on travelling mornings, bundled them into the car and took off.

The three of them slept for a couple of hours and when they woke up, we stopped for breakfast.

That way we got 100 miles of driving out of the way before they even knew about it.

Hit heat wave

We arrived in Orlando to a 90 degree plus heat wave. I'd forgotten such things existed.

We hadn't counted, tho', on taking along an Ontario virus that laid our daughter up with a sore throat and fever. Treatment cost a cool \$40.

We spent our week at a Day's Lodge where, for a mere \$21.88 a day, we had a three-room suite, daily maid service, and the use of a heated pool.

This is a terrific deal for anyone thinking of making the trip next year.

The suite has a kitchen with stove, frig and dish-washer, so you don't have to eat all meals in restaurants.

And that's where the cast-iron stomach comes in.

I'm convinced American restaurant food consists of two ingredients — recycled mattresses and plastic.

It really is bad in most places. The kids, of course, loved it. Thought they'd died and gone to junk-food heaven.

In fact, our overwhelming impression was of a not-quite-real Florida.

This was my first trip south, and I found it garish, steamy, strident, neon but, surprisingly, not wholly unpleasant.

Freeze-ups lash out in all directions, topless go-go palaces are sentried after dark by beckoning bosomy girls, billboards spring up like weeds from every patch of ground, and Disney World is just over the next rainbow.

Skimpy costumes

It's Fat City, with tourists from all over the continent parading overfed bodies in skimpy costumes they'd never dream of wearing in Dubuque or Parry Sound.

It's Through the Looking Glass. Clockwork oranges growing in roadside groves. Southern nights, with 1,001 tales.

But there's an undeniable vitality about the whole panorama.

You don't want to live there forever, but there's a rhythm about it that sets your feet to tapping time.

You leave with few regrets and the marvelous gift of summer in your head.

If April brings snow and cold weather we're going to think of it as a strange summer phenomenon.

If we'd stayed here instead of going south, we'd think of inclemency as more of a long, long winter.

You take home the palm at the end of the mind.

Thornhill plan speed needed

The Thornhill-Vaughan plan of development for 75,000 people and commerce in the Bathurst-Highway 7 area should now get speedy, favorable treatment from the Ontario municipal board.

This plan has been years in preparation. At last there is a prospect here of some cheaper homes and some major relief from crazy housing costs.

With controls in effect to keep rents from going wild, now is no time to fool around wasting time making endless little improvements to development plans.

Vaughan council is to be commended for going ahead this week with approval. Too much time has already been spent.

The only major objections are from the immediate neighborhood and against density. Really what the common good demands is in the other direction toward greater

density and more economy.

A pattern of automatic reaction against development has become obvious. It is a major cause of the housing crisis. It is helping to create the shortage of economy homes.

There is nothing wrong with density as long as it's low-rise, walk-up, below treetop level. And it has many advantages.

Essential development is hamstrung by fear of change and even by fear itself.

It's time local councils and provincial authorities paid less attention to neighborhood reaction and more attention to the needs of all the people.

Other local municipalities should be taking the same direction as Vaughan, when it comes to economy and density of housing. The sooner, the better.



"Now that's a sure sign the season is too long."

Letters

Dollar waste not on teachers

Dear editor, Thank you for your paper's continuing policy of honesty in reporting and editorial comment.

Your recent editorial on the increased public education budget in York Region was right on, and well received in this household.

Because of Richmond Hill Trustee Eric Baker's response to this editorial, I think he should be seriously considered as a contender for your 1977 Absurd Bird Award.

Trustee Baker's letter really got under my skin, primarily because I attended the public meeting when the budget was voted on and Baker was nowhere in sight.

He dis-franchised the taxpayers he represents. He was on holiday in Florida.

But let's review the contents of his letter:

Baker opens by complaining your editorial on budget might have helped his efforts to reduce the budget had you printed it before the budget vote.

Pretty brash for a trustee who wasn't even at the meeting to vote... also Hogwash!

During the preliminary budget meetings, Trustee Baker was riding his own private white budget horse.

He was unwilling to support the small group of trustees who were earnestly trying to tie the increased budget to inflation rate.

Instead he introduced his own motion proposing a small cut, thus confusing many of the new board members. His motion died because no one seconded it.

When the time came to vote on the budget, the White Knight was nowhere to be found.

We later learned he had ridden into the Florida sun the previous week on a month's holidays, gently strumming a

new version of a familiar melody called "Baker Fiddles in Florida While York Region Taxpayers Burn!"

Trustee Baker's next statement, about teacher salaries being \$25 million in 1973 and close to \$50 million in 1977, needs some thinking about.

He neglects to reflect on the fact that in 1976 about 60 per cent of the total budget was spent teaching students and that 10 years ago, a small local board of education spent closer to 80 per cent of the total budget on teaching kids.

Could the difference be due to the increased cost of regional education administration?

As a taxpayer and parent, I differ from Baker in my educational priorities.

I really don't care about administrative needs that have been starved because more than half the total budget is being spent in the classroom.

That is my first priority on spending. Every other item on the budget should be justified as a student support item.

Why doesn't Baker closely examine the remaining 40 per cent of the total budget?

I still fail to understand how the \$2.5 million administrative centre, paid for directly from the local taxpayers pockets, helps one student in York Region who is sitting in a drafty portable, being transported by bus out of his community, or is on a waiting list for a special education program.

But then I understand Baker has no first hand information, since he doesn't have children in the system.

Like most taxpayers, I wish teachers would work for \$10,000 a year, that policemen would accept less, and that OHIP would limit doctors' incomes.

I also wish bread was 10 cents a loaf and eggs 15 cents a dozen.

The reality of the matter is that we pay what the marketplace demands... and the teacher's marketplace, like eggs and bread, is not a local one.

We compete provincially for sincere and talented people. Baker would do us a service if he worked diligently to ensure the system employs only good teachers.

The 1976 board was able to appoint a few full time teacher evaluators for the first time since establishment of a regional board of education.

Baker must know that if we want to attract good teachers we have two things we can offer. Salary and working conditions.

Working conditions include two vital factors — class size and staff relations.

As a user of the system, I can report my daughter attends an overcrowded school and has overcrowded classes.

Let's face it... York Region has yet to make the Honor Roll in staff relations.

But since Baker is not a user of the system, surely as a politician, he should remember that in 1974, York Region had a bitter teacher strike and the contentious issues were class size and salary.

Is he purposely fanning the embers of this discontent to start a smoke screen for the hiring of a professional negotiator?

We can all rest assured the fees of a professional negotiator will not be at parity with local salaries and will, in fact, boggle our minds and once again our pocketbooks.

Is Baker hoping taxpayers won't remember that the 1976 board of education approved a \$40,000 a year job for a new administrative position whose job description included the respon-

sibility for negotiating? Could I suggest Baker consider evaluating the competency of our highly paid administrators?

There is no doubt we are being overtaxed for education. But the place to tighten up is not where students will suffer.

Tightening up must be done in the administration of the system if we are to realize any tax relief.

In my opinion there are too many administrators charged to the instructional line of the budget. These people never come in contact with a student.

We have too many 'consultants' like Master Teachers and Special Ed consultants whose job descriptions makes it impossible to be responsible and accountable although many are

genuinely capable of providing this to the system.

The line authority practised by the public school administration of York Region is wasteful of professionals' time and expertise.

It is, at best, an out-dated management style.

I sat on the board for two years. I know how difficult it is to penetrate the members who oppose change because it's change.

But it would sure help the users of the system and the taxpayers who pick up the tab, if Baker would remember God gave us all two eyes, two ears and one mouth, and expected we would use them in that ratio.

(MRS.) CHRIS McMONAGLE, 51 Colonsay Rd., Thornhill, Ont.



yesterdays

by mary dawson

Although the name still lives in a new development south of Steeles Avenue, the pioneer community of Edgeley from Steeles north to Highway 7, disappeared in the early 1960's under the tracks of the CNR marshalling yards.

Writing in The Liberal in 1953 Mrs. R. Stuart commented that the panorama of Edgeley and communities' history has many threads, but all, save a few, are of the same basic pattern.

Life was at first very primitive. The hardships endured by the settlers almost defy description.

Except for small settlements along the Great Lakes and adjacent waterways, the whole province was an unbroken wilderness.

This bushland had to be cleared away before they could build their homes and ultimately the community.

Land not cheap

Land was either free or very cheap, she recorded. By the year 1794 lots of 200 acres each had been indicated in Vaughan.

Apart from certain lots held as "clergy reserve" most of the land was granted to officers of the Queen's Rangers.

It was from them that a number of the original farmers bought their farms.

Others received a grant of 200 acres on the understanding they would clear a certain acreage in a specified time.

Their sons also received 200 acres on reaching 21 years and their daughters a similar grant when they married.

In some cases the land remained in the ownership of the families for six, to eight generations — for example, the Stong, Smith, Puterbaugh, Hoover and Keffer families.

Land inflation

It is interesting to note that one 200-acre lot was purchased in 1827 for five pounds.

Five years later, it sold for 500 pounds. In 1854 1,000 pounds was paid for the east half or 100 acres.

The final selling price to the CNR is not known, but was probably 100 to 200 times the 1854 price.

By the year 1805 the farms were all taken up, Mrs. Stuart wrote.

Then the sturdy pioneers began the onerous task of clearing the land, compromising with the Indians, trading bears, tapping maples, building houses and barns, spinning yarn and weaving cloth.

Slowly the little settlement was transformed. About 30 acres were all

the settler could clear in his first three years.

It was several years before the clearing yielded sufficient crops for the support of a family.

Used shortcut

To cut down and root out trees required years of labor.

Thus our first farmers sometimes found it necessary to "ring" the trees so that they died.

This enabled the sun to reach the

ground. Seeds could be planted among the girdled tree trunks.

Their farming implements were of the simplest; a hoe with which they broke the ground, a scythe to cut the grain and a flail to thresh it. They had few cattle or horses.

All in all, their life was one of privation, hardship and toil, patiently born in order that their children and their children's children for generation after generation might have a better life than they had.

Richvale parents have Hobson's school choice

By Sheila Robb RICHMOND HILL — Parents of school age children affected by the Ross Doan overcrowding situation will have, effectively, Hobson's Choice if Trustee Bob Houghton's motion at the York County board of education last week, is approved.

Trustee Houghton suggested, among other things, that parents should have the choice of sending their children to Sixteenth Avenue school, east of Yonge Street, or Ross Doan or Weldrick Road, on the west side.

He said they should be encouraged to decide in favor of Sixteenth Avenue.

Schools differ

If they are given the choice, the parents will have two very different schools to consider.

Ross Doan in most cases is walkable on a good day. All the families affected by proposed boundary changes live on the west side of Yonge Street.

To get to Sixteenth Avenue their children must be transported by bus. Some will spend up to half an hour on the bus each way.

French advantage

Ross Doan offers an optional French program from Grade 1. Sixteenth Avenue pupils start French in Grade 4.

Brian Robinson, principal of Sixteenth Avenue has said there would have to be a substantial increase in



The guest spot

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

will be losing out at Sixteenth Avenue, they will not consider it an acceptable alternative.

When you are hungry and are presented with chalk and cheese, you go for the cheese.

Common sense indicates a good marketing strategy, a business-like approach to the whole question, could make Sixteenth Avenue a most attractive answer to the overcrowding issue.

Money shortage

Schools Superintendent Walter Wilms protested there is not enough money to do that.

He said parents who feel strongly in favor of Ross Doan should decide to send their children to it.

If all the parents involved continue to see only disadvantages in the Sixteenth Avenue solution, they will inevitably opt for Ross Doan.

This action will aggravate Ross Doan's overcrowding and the result can only be a hard and fast school board ruling on the boundary.

If parents will not voluntarily force Sixteenth Avenue, they may be forced to accept it.

That's Hobson's Choice.

(Mrs. Robb of 11 Plaisance Rd., a teacher, has one child attending Ross Doan school and another starting school in September. — Editor)



Chris McMonagle... waste administrative

Bunker full of bunk

Dear editor, After reading Judy Bunker's letter of March 30 about being computerized at York Central, I was really disturbed to think anyone could find so many faults with our hospital.

I've been there four times, twice for a short stay and twice for two weeks. I enjoyed grand treatment at all times.

The meals were good. The doctors and nurses all were "super".

I think everyone should be very proud we have such a dedicated hospital full of the best doctors and nurses, and to have all this available at all times in our community.

I think Mrs. Bunker should try a big hospital in Toronto and see how her number comes up.

(MRS.) MARGARET MURRAY, Maple, Ont.

Water resources threatened

Dear editor, We are writing this letter to express our view on the North American Water and Power Alliance (known as NAWAPA).

Few people know about this project because it isn't official yet. We believe people should be informed

about it, for it will involve all Canadian citizens in a decision about our water. Would you help? People will probably be left in the dark!

BETH SHADOFF, LORIE BROOSHOOFT, 39 Rockport Cres., Richmond Hill, Ont.