

## regional viewpoint

By Jim Irving

I don't know if it's from the constant nip in the air — as opposed to the one in the bars after work — the shenanigans of the prime minister's wife, or just the general headiness we all experienced when the Blue Jays won their first game, but the silly season is definitely upon us.

And making it official were the teachers of York County, who trooped into a program meeting of York County board of education last week to inform them once more the sky was falling.

The sky this time was the one covering the works of one Mr. William Shakespeare — oh what a fall was there — which apparently faced the possibility of being scrubbed out, because of existing board legislation giving them the power to veto any literary work making "undue" use of obscenities, explicit sex, etc.

The Merchant of Venice, for example, the teachers felt could be considered anti-semitic. As if people haven't been thinking that for years. Also, explicit sexual passages in Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet et al,

# Teachers' silly season

made them fair game for the policy, they said.

## Who's sillier?

The program committee, of course, was quick to agree they had a point and would take the matter to the board as soon as the winter hibernation was over.

I don't know who is sillier, the teachers for bringing the matter up, or the trustees for even giving them a hearing. Besides, wasn't that all settled last year when former Trustee Donald Sim's motion on the matter was passed?

Undue was a good word, Sim said when questioned about its use, perfectly acceptable in many legal definitions to state a situation. The teachers should be able to decide.

Shakespeare is without a doubt the greatest playwright who ever lived, yet in defending him, all the teachers could say was that his works have "proved to be a valuable educational experience." Such passion.

## Definitely violent

While his works definitely contain their share of

violence, Shakespeare doesn't linger over obscenities and blasphemies to make his point, as do many of our modern writers, whose one big purpose seems to be to preserve their works in excrement.

Also the perpetrators of the violence often endure as much agony before as afterwards. Either way, they pay.

Witness Lady Macbeth as she and Macbeth plot Duncan's death: "I have given suck and know how tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me; I would, while it was smiling in my face, have plucked my nipple from its boneless gums, and dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you have done to this."

## Listen to her

Now listen to her after the deed is done as, steadily growing madder, she washes her hands over and over: "Out, out damned spot! Out, I say! . . . What! These hands ne'er be clean?"

Macbeth as he contemplates the same killing: ". . . his virtues will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against the deep damnation of his taking; and

pity . . . shall blow the horrid deed in every eye. . . . And then: ". . . I have done the deed. Didst' thou not hear a noise? . . . Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep. . . ."

Now witness this little tid-bit of vulgarity and violence from A Clockwork Orange, a book few, if any of the '75-'76 board members read, but still approved.

## Modern violence

A running jargon helps relieve some of the violence: "This big fat bastard took off his tunic and you could viddy he had a real big starry pot on him. . . you could viddy like patches of dried sweat on his shirt under his arms, and you could get the von of like earwax from him as he came close. Then he clenched his stinking red rooker and let me have it right in the belly. . . and then I wanted to sick up the gluey pie I'd had before the start of the evening. . . There were real oozhassy animal type vecks among them, one with his nose all ate away and his rot open like a big, black hole, one that was lying on the floor. . . and all like slime dribbling all the time out of his rot, and one that had done all cal in his pantalones. . ."

## Inventing causes

Maybe both the teachers and the board can sit down together some time and read Mr. S. from start to finish, so they can quit running around inventing causes where there aren't any.

Leave that to such as the publisher of Penthouse and his pals. Right now they are arguing that the government's action in stopping their magazine at the border is preventing all avid Canadian readers from having access to the world's best writing.

However, judging from the issue they refer to, what they're defending would seem to be strictly oral.

## sharon's sunshine

By Sharon Brain

THORNHILL — Once upon a time, junk mail was brought by characters wearing unmarked shoulder bags who looked like they were only a few deliveries away from the afternoon's gay romp with a bottle of Canadian sherry.

But now my mail person delivers both the ads and the letters. I can't tell the junk from the real thing. True, usually the envelopes with the postal code are the ones from people I don't know, or wish to. Only the advertisers and billing departments care enough to look it up.

Perhaps I shouldn't complain. It's not as if my own mail is all that great.

## Some good things

It can be tolerable when someone in the house has a birthday, and the Christmas Card Avalanche is quite exhilarating.

Or there is the occasional thank-you note from Aunt Alice, who doesn't know that manners are no longer in style.

But most of the time, the mail that is really mine is like the mail that is really yours. Bills.

And the rest of the stuff that jams my mailbox, and then my garbage can is junk.

I got one the other day from a real estate company. It began:

"One of the penalties of living in a lovely house in a fine neighborhood is that people are always wanting to buy it. If you are interested in selling . . ."

If this is such a fine house, in such a fine neighborhood, why would I want to move?

Where else could I go that wouldn't be lowering my standards?

Though I wouldn't mind selling the house. Not really.

Especially since I only rent it.

But if the place is that lovely, why do I keep getting all those circulars about fertilizing my lawn and fixing my eavestroughs and asphaltting my driveway?

## Free magazines

We also get a lot of free magazines, the ones sent to "selected homes in better neighborhoods."

I don't know why they waste magazine that delights in telling how to hammer nails into baked potatoes on someone who only goes into the kitchen to water the plants.

Other magazines tell us how we can go out and enjoy Toronto's nightlife and fine restaurants.

We would have to sell the house we don't own before we could afford to live like that.

Unless there is a tie-in there with the credit companies who keep offering to loan us \$500 any time we pick up the telephone and call.

Smacks of conspiracy to me.

## Nobody wins

Rumor has it you can ask your mail person to stop delivering the stuff that doesn't have your name on it.

But I really don't think the post office cares that much about me.

After all, they're the people who raised the rates to 12 cents just after I bought one hundred 10 cent stamps.

Rumor also has it that the raise was necessary to

# Can't tell mail person from the junk man now

off-set the rising cost of storing our mail for a week.

I try to fight junk mail by putting it all back in the postage-paid return envelope they so thoughtfully provide.

I then mail it all back to them.

I'm trying to confuse them.

There is one thing I find reassuring about unsolicited mail.

In these strange times, when 'gigantic' means slightly bigger than small, and 'improved' means a new package, it's nice to find an accurate label.

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