



Life and death in Thornhill

By Lynda Nykor

Death, like a number of other abstractions, is sometimes in the eye of the beholder.

At least that's the way it struck me when I heard about memorial services being held for Thornhill.

Some of us see the eventuality of joining Metro as the certain death of a particular way of life.

Some of us welcome it with open arms. And then some of us wonder what the fuss is all about. I'm not sure which of these categories I fit into.

There was a local storm about this very proposition in 1971.

At that time it seemed worth fighting against, and vigorously.

Lot of change

In six years, though, this area has undergone a lot of change.

Its density gets higher all the time, and that fact alone will change the atmosphere of a place from semi-rural to semi-urban.

Nobody knows everybody else in town anymore.

Thornhill has also gotten to be a pretty expensive place to live in during those intervening years.

We pay a fortune for hydro and water.

Of course, if we joined Metro our taxes would probably go up, but by how much?

That cost might be considerably offset by lower transportation costs. Since many of us work in Toronto, that's a consideration.

We don't have an annual fair, or a binder twine festival or a founder's day. Aren't we just a convenient bedroom suburb, a place on the map that's close enough to Toronto to house its workers?

Look out your window at the number of For Sale signs on your street. I think you'd have to agree this has become a very transient area.

It's a temporary stopping place for the upwardly mobile.

Our advantages

But then several things occur to me to push me toward the other side of the coin.

Would we have the fantastic library system we have now if we joined?

With all due respect to the North York Library System, there's no comparison.

Thornhill has always had a great recreation and sports program, and a lot of hard-working people who've kept it going.

I have a feeling that kind of thing could get lost in the larger shuffle.

If we had to trade Tony Roman for Mel Lastman, I think we'd be the losers.

Maybe a large part of the equation, though, is just our hearty dislike of change.

Bigness fear

I can't help but think a big part of our reluctance isn't just a plain ordinary fear of bigness.

Big cities scare us these days. But think of places like London and Paris and Madrid.

They've been there and been big for a long time. People even live in those places and like it.

Big cities aren't all bad. Only some big cities are, and we don't have to settle for being one of those.

I end up thinking the prospect of joining Metro has a certain ring of inevitability about it.

And if it happens, I'm prepared to relax and enjoy it.

Tennis bubble to fair site

The proposal to put an inflatable winter tennis bubble over several courts at Crosby Park leads Richmond Hill town council to very dubious ground.

There are two principles which must be safeguarded before any such thing should even be considered.

Firstly, there is so very little public park space in the built-up area between Bayview Avenue and Bathurst Street that not a square inch should be lost.

Secondly, no public park land in this area should be given over to any private or exclusive operator. The land must be kept for non-profit community use.

The trouble with this proposal is that for the winter months it puts what amounts to almost a four-storey object close to the size of an arena on one of the few remaining open spaces in the urban area of the town.

It cuts down the permanent open space when such space is already short in the developed area.

Any such enclosures or buildings added to the town's recreation facilities should really go on new public open space created further out from the town centre.

Such a tent-like structure might be very useful on the new spring fair site if a bubble were suitable for exhibits and kept in place each year for the second week of May. It could even make it possible to move the fair to the new site at a much earlier date.

It would be fine to have a place for indoor winter tennis if there are enough players who want it.

If private operators are to provide these facilities, they should find their own land for it.

If the town is going to provide indoor tennis, the new fair site east of Bayview Avenue should be given first consideration.



Letters Family Y day needs push

Dear editor: On behalf of York Region Family "Y" may I thank you for the generous publicity you have always accorded us in your newspaper.

The most recent example was of course the excellent photograph in the April 13 issue of the hand-applied quilt which will be won by some lucky ticket holder at the annual Treasure and Trivia Sale and Luncheon at Richmond Hill Lions Hall on May 4.

However, for the further enlightenment of your readers, and to clarify the details in the lines accompanying the picture, may I point out the quilt is not a child's quilt, but a full size (72"x90").

This Victorian Album work of art was designed, embroidered, and assembled by Edith Burnfield, a member of the board, with the actual quilting being

done by the local church group.

Proceeds from the sale of tickets, available from "Y" members and "Y" headquarters on Dunlop Street, will go to support the programs and activities conducted by the "Y" in the community and throughout the region.

On April 21, 22 and 23, the quilt will be on display at Hillcrest Mall in order that shoppers may view it, and purchase tickets prior to the May 4 draw.

In addition, all donations of saleable items and baked goods for this spring event will be gratefully received and pick-up, if necessary, may be arranged by calling me at 884-7178.

PHYLLIS MILLER, Ways, means chairman, York Region Family "Y", 16 Gamble Sideroad, Richmond Hill, Ont.

Bring superb film back

Dear editor, April 5, the Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce in association with Kinnear Pontiac Buick presented a film study on human relations that was — in a word — superb.

However, despite prominent advertising in your paper, the turnout was disappointingly small.

Our chamber of commerce has become very active and visible in recent weeks and the current executive are to be commended for their innovative efforts to be of service to our community.

Most notable of these efforts, perhaps, are:

a) the chamber's industrial liaison committee which is working with the municipality to improve communications and improve the dialogue over the needs and concerns of business relative to those of the other basic in-

terest groups in town; and b) the film study of April 5 into why members of one age and socio-economic group feel, think and say the things they do about members of another age and socio-economic group.

"What you are is where you were — When" represents a timely, relevant message to all of us, no matter what our position or interest for it speaks directly to the problems of communication and awareness of ourselves in respect of others, problems that appear to be so prevalent at this time.

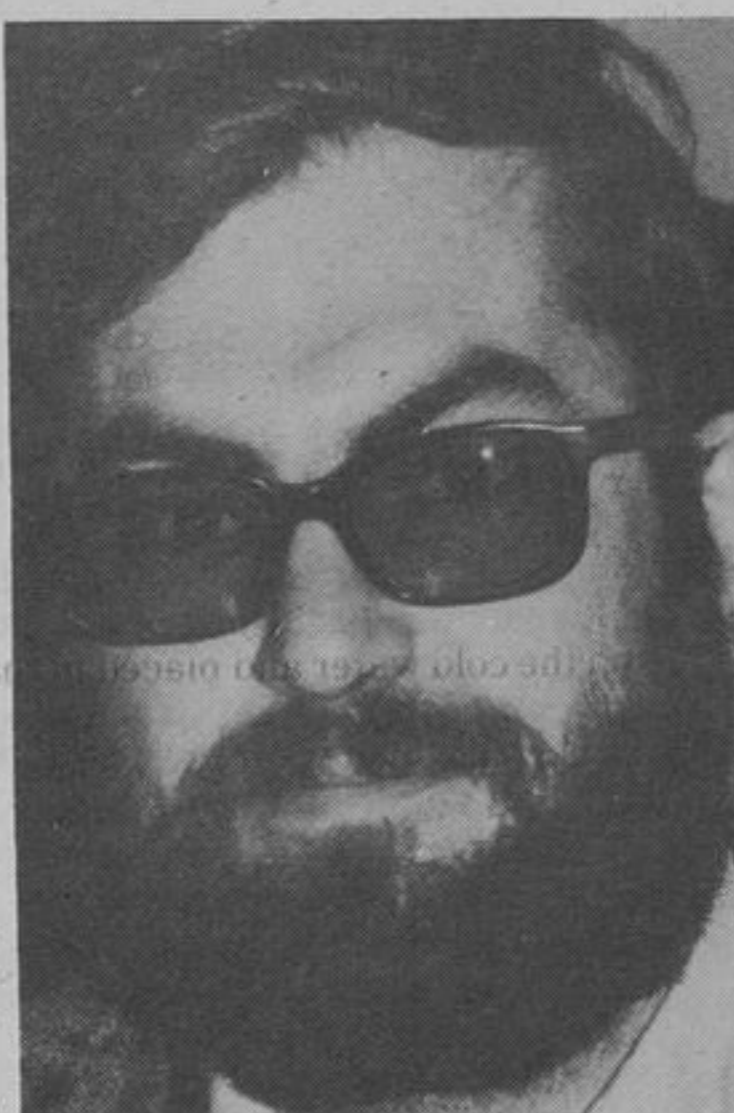
The film is fascinating — very informative, outrageously funny at times, always interesting.

Those of us who saw it wanted to see it again, to have friends, wives, sons, daughters, and employees see it.

We wanted the citizens of Richmond Hill to see it, to have another chance as it were. And, I understand that it may be possible.

If enough people were to contact the chamber of commerce expressing a desire to see the film, a repeat showing could probably be arranged.

By the way of thanking the chamber for their effort, may I suggest that Messrs. Dave Barrow, 884-1551, Glen Waugh, 884-9105, John Lawrence, 884-1138 or Peter Kinnear, 884-4481 be deluged with calls asking that "What



Robert Higgs... few used chance

you are is where you were — When" be shown again at the Blue Flame Room, 500 Elgin Mills Road. ROBERT HIGGS, 10,265 Yonge St., Richmond Hill, Ont.

Resignation leaves family centre gap

Dear editor: I'm writing in regard to the resignation of Mario Bartoletti, director of the Markham Family Life Centre.

As if this community agency hasn't had enough woes, with its annual scratching for funds from an often reluctant council, not to mention a stingy Conservative government at Queen's Park.

Now the centre is faced with the job of filling the gap left by the loss of a very dynamic and effective leader in the person of Bartoletti.

I am concerned about rumors this agency might close down.

The excellent reputation the Markham Family Life Centre has earned in assisting families in crisis, and in parent-student education, will be lost if the concerned citizens of Markham fail to express their desire that the centre's work continue.

Family life needs our support now!

(MRS.) DAPHNE McNEILL, 44 Kirk Dr., Thornhill, Ontario.

Save stuff for Goodwill Services man

Dear editor, It's garbage day in Richmond Hill and I'm appalled at the terrible waste.

Sofas, chairs, stoves, televisions, etc. are all put out for the garbage man to collect.

These items, and others, are all badly needed by Goodwill Services.

In the Goodwill workshops furniture and electrical appliances will be repaired and sold in their many stores.

A great way to help the handicapped to become self sufficient.

So, please, just pick up the 'phone and call Goodwill Services — the truck is in the Richmond Hill area every Wednesday.

Can you think of a better way to help pollution problems?

(MRS.) PAMELA MUELLER, 200 Cedar Ave., Richmond Hill, Ont.



queen's park

By Alf Stong (L-York Centre)

TORONTO — The government has announced a judicial inquiry will be held into the matter of the exemption from payment of \$660,000 in land speculation tax granted to Ronto Development Co. of Willowdale.

When this question was discussed in the public accounts committee last December, the then minister of revenue admitted the decision to grant the exemption might have been based on insufficient information.

It had been his understanding the company was in serious financial trouble. 2,300 housing units under construction would not have been completed had the exemption not been made when the company sold land near Brantford to George Wimpey (Canada) Ltd. for \$12 million.

Opposition members argued Ronto was apparently speculating, and proceeded part way with the project only to avoid the tax.

\$660,000 exemption judicial inquiry set

The minister admitted the cabinet decision was based on a report from his staff, on the sole basis of a letter from Toronto lawyer Eddie Goodman.

Recently the public accounts committee decided the best way to clear up doubts about the tax exemption was to refer the matter to a select committee for a full investigation.

However, the committee was subsequently technically dissolved, pending the re-opening of the legislature.

The government has indicated a judicial inquiry is considered to be the best forum for a full investigation into the tax exemption and the question of whether or not any undue or inappropriate influence was brought to bear.

At the end of March, the Ontario Nurses Association released a report "Let us Take Care - A report to the people of Ontario".

This portrayed the province's hospital system as being wasteful and misused by both doctors and the public.

The minister of health has indicated he will direct government consultants to meet the administrators of seven Metro Toronto hospitals cited in the report, to ensure the waste and misuse described by the nurses is ended.

However, the ministry has no immediate solution to the problem.

A nurse at Etobicoke General has been fired after criticizing the hospital. The minister has declined to intervene in this matter, saying the customary grievance procedure should be followed, because a collective bargaining agreement is in effect.

The minister of consumer and commercial relations has announced a one-man inquiry into whether aluminum wiring is a fire hazard is to be conducted to answer "questions in the public mind as to the reliability and safety of this type of wired electrical circuit".

This type of wiring was widely used during the 1960s, when the price of copper rose sharply.



queen's park

By William Hodgson (PC - York North)

TORONTO — When a family receives a financial blow out of the blue — perhaps in the form of unemployment, a serious injury which interrupts work or the death of the breadwinner or breadwinners — that family has to rearrange its finances or has to undergo some choices in its style of living.

They simply don't have the amount of money which is required to continue living in the same way to which they had become accustomed.

The same basic approach applies to government in the "long" term, though many people seem to regard government as the prime maker of wealth.

Except through taxing powers, the only way in which government can develop money is through borrowing.

Government cannot create money except in the sense of printing more. But such printing does not really reflect the wealth of Canada.

Main watchdog

In that sense, government has to exercise more restraint and has to provide the means to watch how money is spent. At the provincial government level, the provincial auditor is the main watchdog over government spending.

The whole idea is to get real value for each tax dollar. While this ideal is practical and sensible, sometimes the process becomes so complex and

New legislation will strengthen auditor

complicated that funds of some branches of government ministries do not receive the careful scrutiny necessary.

Or the sheer size of government makes the watchdog job impossible as to go beyond the staff strength of the Provincial Auditor.

Change coming

This entire situation is about to change. As outlined in the throne speech, an Audit Act was introduced last week by Provincial Treasurer Darcy McKeough.

The new legislation aims to strengthen the role and responsibility of the provincial auditor in the following ways:

1) Crown agencies and crown-controlled corporations now must submit their audited statements and background papers to the provincial auditor.

2) The auditor will have the authority to check the authenticity of various forms of social assistance, which makes up 70 per cent of provincial government spending.

3) An even more important assignment for the Auditor is to comment on the economy and efficiency of public spending.

3) An even more important assignment for the Auditor is to comment on the economy and efficiency of public spending and to measure the real

effectiveness of ministry programs.

4) Improving the independence of the auditor will bring the office under the supervision of the legislature.

What does all this mean for the taxpayer? Consider two examples.

Suppose a school board required money for major renovations of an elementary school and suppose after the job was completed, some extra money was left over from the job.

That money could be put to other uses.

Not under the new bill. Money designated for a specific task goes to that job and not some other use.

Thus, the auditor can comment upon the "due regard for economy and efficiency" of each ministry.

Calling tenders

Another example of the practicality of these financial procedures could relate to tendering for certain goods. A purchase made with no open tendering may prove more costly than through a system of open competition.

Public spending is at the heart of a strong democratic system. To improve the system and to ensure the people's faith in that system, public spending must be checked and controlled constantly.

"I think you will find the new Audit Act the most comprehensive in Canada at the moment", said Provincial Auditor Norman Scott.

We have this week released a policy paper outlining the position of our party in the field of small business — a sector which has been given little assistance by the provincial government.

The problems and needs of small and large businesses are not the same. Small business is flexible, able to adapt quickly to changes in the market, possesses great potential for technological and other innovation, and employs between 50 per cent and 60 per cent of all Canadians.

It is labor-intensive and can create new jobs much more quickly and cheaply than capital-intensive industries.

We believe a legislative commitment to small business should be undertaken — similar to the U.S. federal government commitment.

The lack of managerial expertise and entrepreneurial spirit have had serious results for the viability of small

business. We have proposed the establishment of entrepreneurial advisory centres, to be funded by the government and administered by the private sector.

Shortage of capital also severely restricts the start-up and expansion of small business.

We propose allowance of a full tax deduction against other income for investment in venture capital corporations for small business start-ups and expansions by both corporations and individuals, and provision for government sharing of losses actually experienced by financial institutions on loans provided to small business.

At present, the burden of payroll taxes to pay the increasing costs of social welfare programs falls most heavily on small firms.

There are no income compensating public policies to offset this drain on profits, which in turn restricts capital formation and therefore the ability to

finance growth.

We have proposed government payment of payroll taxes for each additional worker employed by a firm in a given year, up to a net gain in manpower of 10 persons, for a three-year period. Corporate tax costs of small businesses should be lowered to ensure their ability to develop internally-generated sources of equity capital.

The forgivable succession duty on small family business corporations could be extended to apply to businesses where shares are owned by more than one family.

We also believe Ontario should undertake a preferential purchasing policy for small business.

It should be possible to set a target of 40 per cent of all government contracts and subcontracts to be awarded to small business within a three-year period.