

Opinion



lynda's lashes

Ho hum election

By Lynda Nykor

I thought the provincial election campaign would keep me in column material for the next few weeks.

It seems to have sunk into the doldrums, though. (The campaign, that is.)

No blazing new issues have popped up. The candidates in this neck of the woods seem to still be testing the water with their big toes.

Even election signs are just beginning to make a few appearances on front lawns.

Nobody's knocked on my door to solicit my vote. (There can't be too many Ron Morans on the provincial scene.)

No propaganda has arrived with the mail.

Maybe it's a case of no news is good news.

We can't be too badly off if there isn't any fervor around about anything.

Swimming pools

So I guess it's time to talk of shoes and ships and sailing wax. Or how about swimming pools?

A number of people in the area are upset about the new bylaw requiring fencing with no direct access to pools from the house.

They feel a drowning could occur while a rescuer wastes time trying to unlock the gate to the fence.

The fencing around our pool has been moved a couple of times already.

When we had small children in the house it was fenced separately. The yard was additionally fenced.

A couple of years ago we changed the fencing to allow direct access from one door of the house.

Now we're waiting to find out whether it'll have to go back the way it was.

Personally, I'm inclined, though not by a large margin, to side with the bylaw, if it also includes a stipulation the property has to be additionally fenced off.

If there's even one person stupid enough to have both a swimming pool and small children and not fence off a separate play area, then I guess the law has to be there to provide the common sense.

Hunter liberation

Though I don't hold any very strong brief for people who shoot guns, I do have a stab of empathy for Ms. Pilcher.

She's the lady who was turned down for membership by the York Central Hunters and Anglers.

When things like that happen and there's no sensible reason for them, you can get very angry.

As I discovered last week when I finally went out to buy a car.

My husband and I decided between us that though this was a family facility, I would be the actual purchaser.

I signed the offer to purchase, and I'm going to be making the payments.

Sales chauvinism

During and after the negotiations the salesman insisted on addressing all of his comments to my husband.

He shook his hand and congratulated him when the deal was finalized (with my signature.)

I pointed out my objection to this a couple of times, in a non-obstreperous way. But they fell on deaf ears.

The next day he called my husband at work to make enquiries about some detail of the transaction.

Only when my husband insisted he hadn't in fact bought a car were the inquiries finally directed to me.

I ended up wishing I'd taken my business elsewhere. I would have if I hadn't already signed on the dotted line.

Even if it had cost me a couple of hundred dollars more, I think my dignity was worth at least that much.

We would help Old Manse fund

Time is running short for the old Presbyterian manse building on Yonge Street in the old village area of Richmond Hill.

It's only a matter of weeks, or at most a few months, before it's torn down, if it isn't moved and saved.

The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority today is expected to finalize its offer of a site for the building at Pioneer Village, Jane Street and Steeles Avenue.

But \$5,000 appears to be needed to pay moving costs.

This manse for many years in the last century served a wide area of what is now southern York Region. The area included much of today's towns of Markham, Richmond Hill, Vaughan and King.

So it's important to the people of a wide area, not just Richmond Hill and Thornhill.

Also not so well known is the fact Pioneer Village extends into Vaughan Town

in York Region. In fact, if the manse goes near the village church, it will be right beside the place where visitors catch the horse and wagon ride to visit the displays at the restored barn standing in Vaughan.

Other York Region buildings are already in Pioneer Village, making it a very special place to people here.

In a feature report in this newspaper several years ago, unofficial local architect historian Napier Simpson, Jr., of Thornhill told of the historic architectural importance of the old Presbyterian manse.

It's an 1845 example of a special kind of 19th century plank construction.

The manse should be moved and saved. Any group or organization starting a fund drive will have the support and co-operation of this newspaper in public communication.



"This is it...we're going the way of the dinosaur...EX-STINKED."



parliament hill

By Sinclair Stevens, MP (PC — York Simcoe)

York Simcoe residents have given Confederation a resounding vote of confidence.

Despite the negative rumblings of the national press, and despite recent sabre-rattling in Quebec City, fully 77 per cent of those responding to a questionnaire prepared by my office believe Canada will weather its present

Confederacy solid here

difficulties and survive — intact — into the next generation.

Eight hundred seventy-five respondents (of 1,135 responding) said they believed Canada would resolve its regional differences and remain united.

In contrast, 23 per cent, or 260 respondents, said they feared the country may break up within 25 years.

Adamant locally

Local residents were even more

adamant in their assessment of the issue.

Eighty-four per cent blamed the federal government's bilingualism program for weakening national unity. Approximately 95 per cent of those queried believe that the majority of Quebecers, as well as the majority of English Canadians, wish to see Quebec remain in Confederation.

This finding suggests that, in the minds of many Canadians at least, the responsibility for the unity crisis rests with those calling the shots in Ottawa and Quebec City.

The poll was included in a constituency letter and was sent to every household in the riding. In each case the respondents were given two alternative answers.

Their responses

Their response to the six questions was as follows:

(1) Looking back, I feel the federal government's bilingualism program has: Strengthened national unity — 16.1 per cent said it had, while 83.9 per cent felt it had weakened national unity.

(2) Looking ahead, I believe that over the next 25 years: Canada will remain united and resolve its regional differences — 77 per cent said yes; 23 per cent believe separatist feelings will

increase and may lead to the break-up of Confederation.

(3) The key to a united Canada is: A firmer, more centralized federal system — 44 per cent chose this answer, while 56 per cent hoped for a more flexible and decentralized federal government.

(4) I believe the majority of the people of Quebec wish to: Remain in Canada — 94.5 per cent. Separate from Confederation — 5.5 per cent.

(5) I believe the majority of English Canadians wish to see Quebec: Remain in Canada — 96 per cent. Separate from Canada — 3.4 per cent.

(6) For Quebec to remain in Canada, I feel that it should: Be treated as an equal partner in Confederation — treated the same as every other province — 86.7 per cent. Be given special status within Confederation to meet its special needs — 13.3 per cent.

Key to unity

A few respondents wrote that the key to national unity is more understanding on both sides of the issue. Another suggested the real debate on Confederation will be left for our children or possibly our grandchildren.

To these, and to all those who took the time and trouble to respond on a vital

issue, my sincere thanks.

The York Simcoe findings appear to reflect views across English speaking Canada. While we were in the Yukon last month, we circulated the same questionnaire.

Answers were similar although a little stronger on some points. For example, 87 per cent in the Yukon hoped for a more flexible and decentralized federal government compared to 56 per cent here.

That is natural with the Yukon being so far from Ottawa. Ninety-seven per cent in the Yukon felt bilingualism had weakened national unity.

letters...

Letters to the editor are welcome and should be addressed to The Editor, The Liberal, PO Box 390, Richmond Hill, Ont., L4C 4Y6. The writer's full name and address must be included, and telephone number if it is unlisted. Unsigned letters cannot be considered for publication. The Liberal reserves the right to edit all contributions.

Letters

'Y' volunteers deserve thanks

Dear editor:

The Family "Y" Treasure and Trivia Sale is over. As this year's compliments are due all the hard-working volunteers responsible for the many hours of food preparation in their homes and at the Lions Hall.

Over 300 luncheon patrons were served by efficient dining room volunteers. Had we not run out of food, I suppose that number would be considerably higher (or until we ran out of energy!).

Our apologies to those who were turned away.

Thanks from Help

Dear editor:

On behalf of the board of directors, staff and volunteers of Help, I would like to express sincere thanks to your newspaper for the publicity given our recent book sale.

The sale was a great success again this year, thanks to the efforts of many people; and the proceeds will enable us to continue serving the community.

Many thanks again for your co-operation.

ELVA WILLIAMS
Secretary
132 Woodbridge Ave.
Woodbridge, Ont.

It was a privilege for me to be a part of a team of dependable, careful workers during this fund raising event. Thanks are due to all.

(MRS.) ADELE DOWNEY,
442 Bent Cres.,
Richmond Hill, Ont.



interpreting the news

By Tom Gale

I was quite disturbed by Dorothy Turner's letter last week calling me misinformed concerning the Paxton inquest and its recommendations.

Disturbed, not only because Mrs. Turner did not attend the inquest, not only because she never saw fit to speak to me before writing the letter, but because, when I called her to find where she got the information "York Central Hospital was absolved of blame for Mrs. Paxton's death 'before' The Liberal went to press", she answered, "I read it in The (Toronto) Star."

"You mean if it's in The Star it must be true?" I asked.

"Of course", was her reply.

As a matter of fact, Star reporter

You are an editor

Went Norris, who covered the inquest, went home after the jury was charged, and was not present when its recommendations were made!

He tells me he got the information for the April 30 story (headlined "Richmond Hill hospital cleared by inquest in asthmatic's death") by calling — not the coroner — but Stuart Paxton, husband of the deceased.

Moreover, he said he was sure his story did not begin with "York Central Hospital in Richmond Hill was exonerated yesterday..." (as it ran) but was rather a simple account of the jury's recommendations as told to him by Mr. Paxton.

Star York-Durham editor Pat Williams was unable to find the original story, or supply the name of the person responsible for the somewhat

misleading headline and lead paragraph.

Now, there are several important points underlying all this.

Firstly, fact "never" act on something as fast simply because you read it in a single newspaper. For example, the final Toronto Sun story on the inquest began:

"60-year-old Celestine Paxton might have survived an attack of asthma had a doctor skilled in inserting a breathing tube been present when she collapsed."

The Sun was only present for half the inquest, obtaining the results from the coroner!

Another example. In The Star April 27 a story headlined "Plan said adequate for bigger Markham" repeatedly puts the target population of that municipality at 556,000 by the year 2000.

This figure is in fact the projection for the entire region of York.

Now, as much as I would like to say the press in North America is a pillar of truth, a defender of freedom, and a righter of wrongs, this is simply not the case.

The press' is people. Nothing more, and nothing less. We're subject to all human failings; we make mistakes, factual, moral, even spiritual mistakes.

And readers must understand this. We are no better or worse than the world about which we write.

That we are dedicated to the ideals that we are, makes me proud to call myself a journalist.

But that the public expects us to be free of human failings I find deeply disturbing.

regional viewpoint

By Jim Irving

I've been sitting here for some time wondering just what to write on; try paper, you dope, I can hear the voices saying.

Or maybe I should say I've been trying to decide what subject to write on. Should I review the latest six-act tragedy — no intermissions — of the school board; Markham's fight for more seats on York Regional council — they already have too many; the provincial election — the time of the year when our elected representatives finally get to meet their constituents; or should I just pretend life isn't really all that absurd and write about something serious?

I finally decided, I was better off serious as it is, so I had better stick to our local politicians, in this case members of York County board of education. After you've had a good cry over their antics, you can relax and

enjoy them from your sobbing position on the floor.

But that might be too traumatic, so I'll only pick on a couple of them.

Promotes image

Take the Rev. Donald Cousens of Markham for example. Mr. Cousens is a very earnest man, constantly concerned the board appear as one great body of diligence and wisdom. Not through any hard-fought pieces of legislation, or other grim slugging — "by their fruits ye shall know them" — but instead through such bits of sleight of hand as promoting an "image."

Or, as in his latest bit of hokum — honest hokum, mind you, but still hokum — an attempt be made to improve board meetings through "trustee self-evaluation."

After all these years, Mr. Cousens has discovered the trustees don't always agree on things. As a result, he feels they should drop all other matters 10 minutes before adjournment of their

committee of the whole in camera meeting "to analyze and assess the processes of the board meeting."

Secret thrashing

The in camera meetings are staged prior to the board's regular session, which is supposed to start at 8 p.m. However, as one who has often waited up to 30 minutes or more past the regular starting time, while the board members thrashed away in secret, I can see where Mr. Cousen's — and the rest of the board's — greatest problem, is going to be in trying to decide when they're 10 minutes away from the end of the meeting.

Once they resolve that, they can be one with the resolution, which will no doubt end up in a study, or another meeting. That way, it will be on the records when the board has wound up another year of gagging with the conclusion even more millions are going to be needed the following year.

And no one will question the mover's sincerity — his common sense, maybe — but not his sincerity, which is all part of this image business, anyway.

But then, common sense never was the board's strong point. Nor does it seem to fit in anywhere.

Slippery approval

Over in the research department, they are about to embark on a project — approved by the board without discussion — which will eventually show that children who always get little rewards for doing their tasks, eventually become turned off by those bribes and lose interest altogether.

Also: "... a truly engaging interest retains a young student's interest regardless of whether the teacher praises, informs or ignores the kids."

Apparently, all this is a great revelation to everyone. When I talked to

Brian Burnham of the board's research office, implying in my not-too-subtle fashion that continued studies in the matter seemed a bit ridiculous, he hung up on me.

Bangs receiver

"You obviously don't understand," he said. "Goodbye," he said. banging down the phone in a manner designed to catch the tip of his Fu Manchu moustache in the cradle.

So I did.

Dr. David W. Reid, a pleasant man from Aurora, and instigator of the project, obviously had more faith in it than Mr. Burnham, because he answered my questions politely and informatively, even though I wound up telling him I still couldn't see the point of it all.

When I was a child, teachers used the strap to deal with anything beyond their emotional ken. Now they apply the

results of various studies.

Textbook corrupts

Dealing with pattern patterns — if that's the term — is still as much an intuitive thing as it is an intellectual thing. And always going by the text book does as much to corrupt the teacher as the pupil.

That's why I more and more question the value of research projects in the schools, despite the sincerity and dedication of their followers.

But maybe Mr. Burnham unintentionally summed up such procedures on another night when we happened to leave a board meeting together.

Referring to some of the shenanigans earlier, he shook his head wearily and said: "Well, b... s... baffles brains." Maybe we're not so far apart, after all.

