



Ballot blues

By Lynda Nykor

By now, last Thursday's election has been analyzed, re-analyzed and commented on to a fare-thee-well. Nevertheless, here are a few random comments tossed in from this corner. What struck me most forcibly, as it did a lot of other people, was the amount of money expended. It cost approximately 15 million dollars for the PC's to gain seven seats. That's over two million per seat! And still the Conservatives lost more than they gained, plucking defeat from the jaws of victory in just six weeks. By exchanging the NDP for the Liberals as the official opposition Davis has guaranteed himself a tougher fight the next time around.

Up hill fight

The NDP has had to overcome resistance to its policies step by inching step in this province. As a second party, they still had to fight hard for every little gain, every iota of public acceptance. The Liberals as opposition party, however, are a reasonable and acceptable alternative to most people. This election proved that, if it didn't demonstrate anything else. Next election, if they do any kind of job at all in the legislature, the Liberals could roll up all of the soft Conservative vote and find their party in power for the first time in decades in Ontario. There wasn't a great deal of danger of the NDP doing that.

Red machine

Davis's campaign strategists sadly underestimated Ontario's Red Machine. By directing most of their attacks at the NDP, and in fact by expending most of their energies on attack instead of on presenting policies, they allowed the Liberals to waltz to victory in 34 ridings. Those nasty TV messages about the NDP in British Columbia boomeranged, and picked off Conservatives after they'd clobbered the New Democrats. This riding of York Centre is certainly sitting pretty, especially in terms of the future. It's been solidly, faithfully Liberal through several federal and provincial elections. If the Liberals do come to power in the province the riding can expect to be nicely taken care of.

NDP lacking

What continues to surprise me here is the lack, in election after election, of a really credible NDP candidate. The NDP's main strength is in Metro Toronto, and since this area becomes more urbanized all the time, it would seem logical for that party to put in some serious work here. Mind you, their efforts in the riding to the east of us only succeeded for 18 months. Dr. Charles Godfrey was dumped in Durham West, one of the few incumbents to lose a seat in this election. All things considered, Alf Stong must be a happy man right now, looking at both his own and his party's rising fortunes. Our Robert-Redford look-alike member from York Centre has nowhere to go but up. And neither, it would seem, have Ontario's Liberals.

Backyard pool checks needed

The tragic drowning Thursday of a little child in a Richmond Hill swimming pool should at least remind everyone in southern York Region of the great danger backyard pools present. This is the second pool tragedy in the town this year, the last one being the drowning of the fire department's popular mascot Blaze. Two children drowned also in pools in Markham in recent years. What makes these pools dangerous is that they receive almost no municipal policing. Regulations tend to be little enforced for political reasons. The reasons for this last death

haven't yet been established by inquest proceedings. But in the previous drowning of the dog, the pool involved must have been equally dangerous to any wandering child. Property owners get mad when they find their pools must be secured by fences, gates and walls. Pools must be fenced even from those within the house. Unknowingly voters tend to test the courage of the town council, as is happening even now in Markham. Citizens and councils should take great care before loosening pool safety bylaws. And above all, the bylaws must be actively enforced.



"Thirty-love"

Letters

Unfit attitude on tennis bubble

Dear editor: On Monday evening, June 6, certain members of council disclosed an attitude that is unfit for the town of Richmond Hill. This attitude of "it's all right as long as it's not in our area" is in reference to the vote on whether the bubble over the tennis court in the Richvale area is fine, although it was not acceptable to the Crosby area. It was interesting to note the mayor and the two councillors from the Richvale area opposed the "bubble" but those councillors who do not live (represent) in the area had voted for the approval of imposing this "bubble" in the Richvale area.

They had previously turned down the proposal of the "bubble" over a tennis court in their area. Dump it into Richvale appears to be their attitude, and pay no attention to the residents who live by the park. A park that is in an R2 zoned area is appropriate under the approved bylaws. There is no provision for recreation facilities nor commercial enterprises and we think that such a bylaw should be honored. Only the two councillors who opposed the "bubble" over the tennis courts expressed their deep concern on the local residents' objections. ROBERT MARQUIS, 46 Roosevelt Dr., Thornhill, Ont.



Robert Marquis dumped on Richvale

Thornhill block parents say thanks

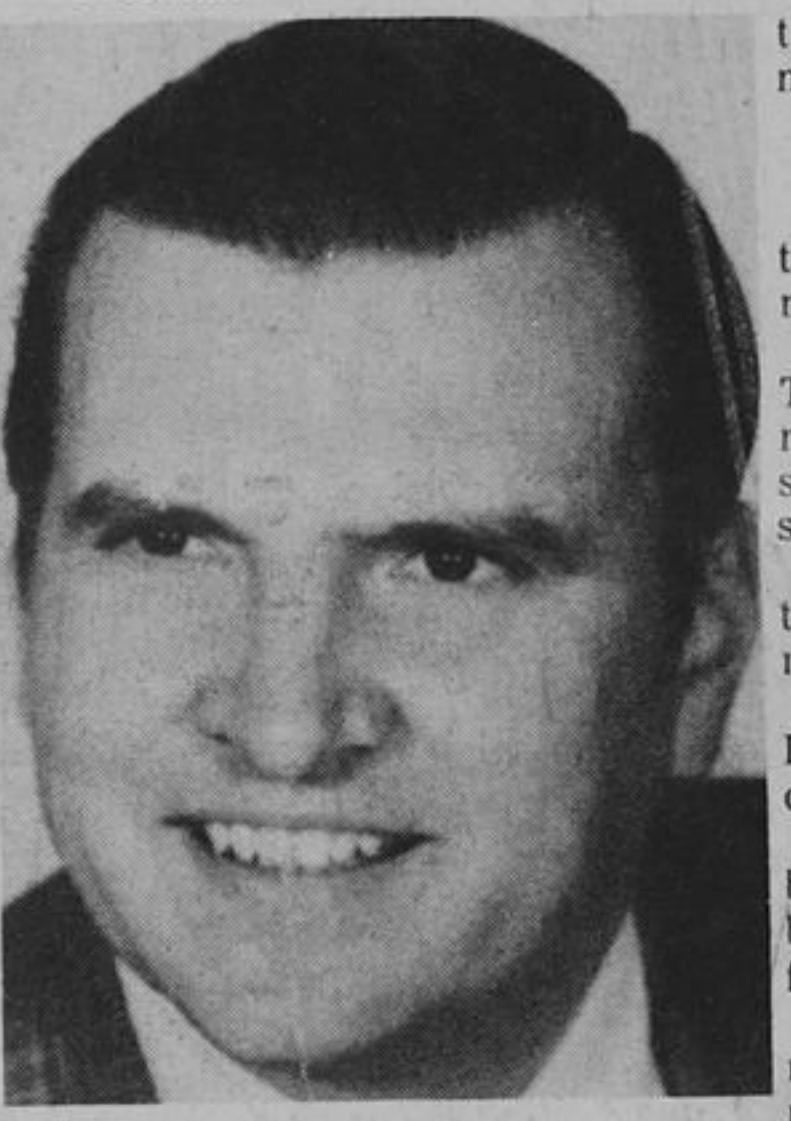
Dear editor: The executive and members of the central committee of the Thornhill Block Parent program wish to thank you, your correspondents and your photographers for the more than generous coverage given to us in your paper since our inauguration. We now have more than 600 block parents homes in the Thornhill area. This is still far from our goal, but our strength is steadily increasing. HELEN STRICKLAND, Publicity director, 70 Johnson Ave., Thornhill, Ont.

Trustee offers to quit

Dear editor: The special in camera meeting of the York County board of education trustees held Monday night, May 30, vividly illustrates the dangers of a public body meeting in secret. A trustee is supposed to treat information gained at such meetings in confidence. But there comes a time when it becomes hypocritical to remain silent, and irresponsible to the taxpaying public who rely on a trustee to be open and honest with them. To date, the board has not seen fit to report to the public that a majority of trustees at an in camera board meeting have given a property worth from between \$50,000-100,000 to a municipality for the princely sum of \$10. Had the board sold the building at fair market value, it would have had funds perhaps to introduce junior kindergartens to the system, or perhaps to resolve the problem at Bayview-Fairways where children soak in perspiration in hot, stuffy classrooms designed for air-conditioning which was never installed because there was no money. Surely the public has the right to know of the gift by its regional board of education, supported by the taxpayers of the region, to a local municipality of such a valuable piece of property. There was no insistence it be retained permanently for public use in the future, nor that the board be compensated by an equivalent in land for school purposes in the future. Monday night's in camera meeting approved the actions of staff in withholding information from trustees concerning an Anti-Inflation Board rollback of some teachers' salaries which now requires renegotiation of the

monetary part of the teachers' contract with the board. (It is interesting to note that while the Anti-Inflation Board was able to identify the teachers receiving more than \$2,400, it has thus far been unable to identify members of senior staff and Admin 16 who likewise received more than \$2,400.) The chairman of the board has since accepted full responsibility for not advising all of the trustees at the in camera or public meetings of the board on May 24. Monday night the full story was revealed of how staff, the chairman of the board and one other trustee went blithely on without getting approval from the board or even telling other trustees what was happening. How then could anyone vote approval of such clandestine operations? Yet such approval was asked for and given at Monday night's meeting. In addition, the board decided to instruct the chairman of this year's negotiating team and the chairman of last year's negotiating team (whose function expired last year) to meet with teachers' representatives to renegotiate the monetary part of last year's contracts. Then what purpose do I and my other colleagues on this year's teams serve in continuing as negotiators? For some time there have been behind the scenes machinations and manoeuvrings relating to the composition of the board's negotiating teams. This unseemly conduct in secret must stop. Bill Monroe has rightfully gained my respect and admiration for the manner he has conducted negotiations for the

board. I have nothing but praise and compliments for the other members of the team. Therefore I remain adamant in my position that it is wrong for the board to interpose another trustee into the negotiation process at this late stage. If my resignation from the team will cause my fellow trustees to sit back and reflect upon what they are doing to negotiations at this late date, then I am prepared to hand in my resignation and have so advised Trustee Monroe that it will be available in the next few days. JOHN STEPHENS, QC, Trustee, YCBE, (Separate school rep.) 17 Marie Ct., Thornhill.



John Stephens slams board secrecy

Dog murderers shouldn't be licensed

By Elizabeth Harrison

Faithful pals

A murder was committed in King City on Monday, June 6, 1977, and the police aren't doing anything about it. Wait — before you run to your telephones to scream about the taxes you're paying, and the inefficiency of the police, let me finish my story. The police aren't arresting anyone because this murder was committed legally. It's covered by a bylaw. It's not that our police force didn't try to find a loophole — they did. They spent an hour looking for one. But they were also defeated, defenseless and upset. One of them owns a dog too. Yes, the victim was a dog, Prince — majestic as his name, a beautiful, obedient, gentle black "lab". Apparently there is a farmer on King Vaughan Road who has been losing chickens. To a dog... he says. We have a dog — a collie named Duffy. Prince and Duffy were mated in the sense she was his constant companion.

He called for her every morning without fail. They'd see the children off on the school bus, and then, their responsibilities ended until 3:30, they'd start their day together. If it was hot, a swim in the pond across the street, or maybe just a walk — through the bush. Lord knows there's enough bush around here for them to wander through. But Duffy was always on our front porch when we got home from work — and Prince didn't miss too many suppers either. Until Monday night. He didn't come home. Tuesday night, Mel Weldrick, Princes' owner, telephoned me. Was my little dog at home? Yes she was. She'd been home all day.

Shot Prince

Well, he said, it might be a good idea



A topical column of opinion by our readers. Submissions should be no more than 800 words, typed preferably. If I kept her there for a while — they'd shot Prince. Who'd shot Prince? The "farmer" who'd been losing chickens. And why couldn't the police do anything about it? Because that farmer is protected by law. Fine I say! Terrific! If a farmer is losing poultry, he must be able to protect his poultry. And if a dog is killing his chickens — he should be able to shoot that dog, after fair warning is given to the dog's

owners, without recrimination. However, the entire crime within this crime is we think the farmer shot the wrong dog. You see, he doesn't need hard evidence to shoot a dog. He doesn't have to see the dog entering or leaving his chicken coop. He doesn't have to see a dog with a chicken in its mouth before he pulls the trigger. All he has to see is a dog crossing his property — on the way back from a swim or a walk in the bush — just walking across the corner of his property, nowhere near his chicken coop. But because he "has" a chicken coop, and the dog is "anywhere" on his property, he can pull the trigger. And commit murder... legally. The saddest part of this story is that no one — not even the farmer who shot him, can say positively it was Prince who was killing his chickens.

It could have been a number of other dogs in the area. Or it could have been a fox. Since no real evidence is needed in a case like this, or was found, the only way we'll find out it was Prince or not is if the farmer keeps losing chickens now Prince is dead. And since the law is worded the way it is, he may shoot any dog and every dog that he sights on his property — guilty or not. There are a number of dogs on King Vaughan Rd. and in the area that may be shot in the coming months. This man has threatened to shoot any dog that sets foot on his property. And perhaps only because they wanted to swim, or walk through the bush, or do whatever it is dogs like to do. Responsible too. Let the farmer be protected. Let him protect his poultry. Let him build a dog-proof, fox-proof chicken coop. Let him tell us our dog is on his

property, so we can tell her right from wrong as far as chickens go. Let the law protect dog owners too. Let the farmer need positive identification on a dog. Not just — "I've lost chickens and there's a dog — Bang!". We buried Prince on Wednesday June 8, but we didn't bury our fears, that another dog, any other dog, would be next. And we didn't bury our bitterness. Bitterness of the man who calls himself a farmer — with an inviting unprotected chicken coop. And bitterness for the law which will allow countless more dogs to be legally shot, half a mile from a chicken coop or a barn, because they were on the same property as livestock or poultry. My God, half a mile away... (Mrs. Harrison is a resident of 2350 King Vaughan Rd., RR 1, King City, Ont.)

regional viewpoint

By Jim Irving

Over-protected souls sadden

It is a typical afternoon in the little village of Richmond Hill. Young mothers in 20-foot-long cars line up in front of the schools to drive their children the six or so blocks home; later on they follow slowly behind in those same big cars as the children go from house to house on their daily paper routes. Down the street, a stern-jawed citizen tucks up a poster on a pole announcing a meeting of non-smokers to drive all smokers out of public places and perhaps the country, if the turnout is big enough. In the park, a health food addict, who looks as if he couldn't make it down hill without help, munches on his rapid-looking lunch of raw carrots and lettuce, leaving bits of both in his beard, as he slowly leafs through yet another tract guaranteeing instant Nirvana,

while priming himself for his next save-the-world lecture. Rodent taboos. From the local news station comes word a sugar substitute called saccharin can cause you cancer, and now joins a long list of taboos in this line, including cigarettes, barbecues and other pleasures, since given up by rabbits and other rodents. A letter to a Metro paper makes a plea of sorts for cordoned off areas in the subway, so passengers won't be contaminated by their fellow riders. No one should be exposed to the odors given off by others, the writer says. Homes on various town streets carry signs bearing the legend: Block Parents. Now small children skipping happily down the street free of care, can question their lack of concern and learn to glance nervously behind in the manner of a citizen of Detroit or

Chicago, or even Toronto when the area thugs are out on weekend passes and are anxious to see if they haven't lost their touch, before reporting back to the warden. On the election front, an area politician rules out any sort of competition in the schools in favor of something called "co-operative activity." Competition, apparently, is bad for the tyke psyche. Aridity spreads. In the sports world, a golf ball manufacturer announces he has perfected a ball that will correct slices and hooks; just right for the Sunday duffer. You, too, can be Jack Nicklaus for 150 yards or so. Meanwhile at home dozing before the TV set, a sugar-coated voice — saccharin now being taboo — kindly entreats us to wear our seat belts when we're driving and our hard hats when

working atop a steel girder someplace. Who knows how much the government-sponsored TV ads cost, but as they're being done for our protection, how dare we protest? And so it goes. In order to live, apparently, we must give up all forms of life, swathing ourselves in mummy's ultraviolet light for your protection... horrible. I tore the glasses from their antiseptic of soul and body. It's all done for us. It's all done to save us from ourselves by people indulging their own fears, their feelings of guilt, their contempt for anyone who doesn't operate in the same neurotic (and protective) fashion as they do; by people who are either unaware, or have completely forgotten that endless protective measures and taboos only bring on anarchy. Rebel tendencies. I don't smoke, but I sometimes feel

like taking it up, just so I can blow smoke in the face of that pious and fanatical body that would forbid me from indulging in my habit. Childish? I know. But that's the way one becomes when people to you around wanting to play benefactor to your own life. In his book, "Travels with Charley," John Steinbeck tells of the time he checked into a motel and ran into an illustration of another kind of protectiveness designed to keep you squirming. "In the bathroom two water tumblers were sealed in cellophane sacks with the words: 'These glasses are sterilized for your protection.' Across the toilet seat a strip of paper bore the message: 'This seat has been sterilized with ultraviolet light for your protection...' Everyone was protecting me and it was horrible: I tore the glasses from their

covers. I violated the toilet-seat with my foot. I poured half a tumbler of vodka and drank it and then another and I was utterly miserable and nothing was good anywhere... I remember an old Arab in North Africa, a man whose hands had never felt water. He gave me mint tea in a glass so coated with use that it was opaque, but he handed me companionship, and the tea was wonderful because of it. And without any protection my teeth didn't fall out, nor did running sores develop. I began to formulate a new law describing the relationship of protection to dependency. A sad soul can kill you quicker, far quicker, than a germ. Maybe somebody should take those sterilized seat strips and wrap them all around the sad souls instead. Not only would we be protected from them for awhile, but it could be quite a spectacle watching them trying to get out of the way once the seals were broken.