

## What is saved shows the worth of fire fighters

When fires as catastrophic as the two in Richmond Hill on the weekend break out, you judge the calibre of fire fighters not by what was destroyed, but by what was saved.

Richmond Hill, its full-time force and its volunteers, were joined by fire fighters from Markham, Vaughan and Aurora Friday night to battle one of the largest fires seen around these parts for quite a while.

They lost the building which housed a lumber company and hardware store. It was, for all intents and purposes, lost before fire fighters arrived on the scene.

But to view the area after the fire was out brings the sudden realization of what they accomplished during that multi-alarm fire.

Because right beside the lumber company is a concrete

plant to the west and a house to the east.

When the flames were finally extinguished, the adjacent buildings stood, virtually untouched by the fire.

Fire fighters call it "containing a blaze". And that's what they did Friday night.

When a fire reaches the intensity of Friday's inferno, there's little anyone can do to knock it down. But there's plenty that can be done to keep it in one place.

And judging by the nearness of the adjacent buildings, fire fighters were taking no nonsense from a blaze that could have caused twice as much damage.

Well done, Richmond Hill, and well done, too, Vaughan, Markham and Aurora.

We have always maintained firefighting techniques in York are second to none, and fire fighters keep on proving it.

## Thornhill city plan still has problems

Thornhill-Vaughan is not a planner's dream. So said Vaughan's chief administrative officer last week.

The plan that sets the population goal of 75,000 for the Vaughan side of Thornhill is a document of compromise. Despite years of consultation between citizens, developers and council, plus many months of meetings with other agencies to get problems ironed out before the document was "engraved in stone," there are still many problems.

Parks for one. The parks consultant for the plan must have looked at the golf courses and the parkway belt and felt a minimum would be needed. Since then, the parkway belt has shrunk to a utility core and the golf courses have come under a real threat of development.

The lack of phasing policies raises a serious question about who will control the pace of development. The low housing density rules out economy and rental homes.

But the biggest problem is raised by traffic. All agencies agree on the necessity of moving large numbers of future Thornhill

residents north and south.

But they cannot agree on how to do it. As a result there is no clear direction in the plan on public transit to the city.

Instead they are adding a vague policy that Vaughan will try to have people living in the planning area who are working in the town.

Since Vaughan's industrial area is made up mostly of warehouses where people work at or near minimum wages, such a policy can be little more than a dream.

There is only one east-west road connecting the industrial and residential areas in the plan. If such a policy were to be taken seriously, the arterial road system would have to change. Large amounts of money would have to be spent on public housing.

It would make more sense, and perhaps be cheaper in the long run, to provide an expanded public transit system to the city and promise it in the plan.

Old Thornhill residents have been getting to work that way since 1898, so the newcomers might as well join the crowd.

## Letters

### Restaurant owner thanks columnist

Dear editor:

I was pleased to see in last week's Liberal an article by dining out columnist Norman H. Matthews describing his dinner at the Elkhorn Restaurant and Tavern.

As I am the owner of the Elkhorn it gave me great pleasure to read Mr. Matthews' kind words about my business establishment.

Through you, let me express my thanks to him.

I have not had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Matthews, but I would like him to know that his kind words made my day.

I hope he would come in again and give me the opportunity of thanking him personally for his thoughtful kindness to a businessman in Richmond Hill.

ANGELO ELIAS,  
10300 Yonge St.,  
Richmond Hill, Ont.

### Rose awards attract over 100 entries

As the chairman of the beautification awards program (The Liberal's Second Annual Rose Awards) I would like to take this moment to express my thanks to all the people of Richmond Hill who participated in the awards program and helped to make it a huge success.

We had a total of 123 nominations. Of these, eight were duplications and 11 were

duplications, leaving 109 properties in Richmond Hill qualifying for awards.

I would also like to thank The Liberal for running the awards program.

The Town of Richmond Hill and the Chamber of Commerce for sponsoring the awards.

The Horticultural Society for judging of the

nominations.

A list of the winners will be published in The Liberal within the next two weeks.

The lawn ornaments and certificates will be presented to the winners in September.

Thank you again for your co-operation.

DINO SALVATORI  
Chairman  
Awards program committee.



### regional viewpoint

By Jim Irving

"Well, did you have a good vacation?" one of the men in the office said to me Monday when he saw me.

Having spent the last two weeks experiencing the heady power of an editor at one of our sister (brother?) papers — you can't be too careful these days — it was a bit of a blow to find out someone thought I'd been away on a mere vacation.

After all anyone can have holidays, but how many people get the chance to walk into a strange office — staff of three — go straight through to the back, sit down in a big chair, put their feet up on the desk, wait for somebody to come, and then to do the whole thing all over again because nobody noticed them come in?

However, after two or three trips the length of the building, it was reassuring to finally have the receptionist look up from her desk and say: "If it's the laundromat you want, sir, it's next door."

### FASCINATING JOB

I've always been fascinated by the role of editor, ever since those days so long ago when Edward G. Robinson used to snarl out of the side of his mouth — it had to be the side with that cigar taking up the rest — as Steve Wilson of The Illustrated Press.

I used to crouch right down beside the radio and picture that big city room,



### queen's park

By Alf Stong  
MLA York Centre

The development of tourism in Ontario has contributed quite substantially to our province's economy.

It is, in fact, one of our largest employers and our second biggest industry. Last year, it produced \$2.8 billion in revenue and employed 200,000 people.

Without question, it is one of our greatest sources of foreign currency. In 1976, some 20,775,000 tourists from the United States visited Ontario, spending in the neighborhood of \$750,000,000.

Visitors from all other countries totalled 885,000 and spent a further \$290,000,000.

The tourist industry is vital to the economy of Ontario, but it has recently been losing ground.

For a number of years now, the total number of visitors choosing this province for a vacation-land has been steadily decreasing.

Over the same period, the number of Ontarians seeking a sunny southern climate, or taking advantage of charter flights abroad has increased.

This has meant that the growth rate of tourism revenues in Ontario has declined steadily since 1974.

DISASTROUS YEAR  
This trend was particularly noticeable in 1976.

A number of factors made this a somewhat disastrous year for Ontario tourism: the Montreal Olympics, the U.S. bicentennial celebrations and the U.S. presidential election, the energy crisis, confusion regarding sizes of U.S. and Canadian gallons of gasoline, the exchange rate on the dollar, negative publicity regarding mercury pollution of some of our lakes, and the general economic slump.

Many tourist facility operators throughout the province looked forward

## Was it holiday or power play?

with all the guys sitting around with their hats on their heads, press cards in the hat bands, and world weary looks on their faces that said they'd heard it all before, but it would be kind of fun to go out and hear it once again, and maybe this time, it would come out right.

Or maybe that came later. Right then, I knew they led a pretty exciting life; there was nothing mundane about being a newspaperman.

You were always around the biggest stories when they broke. You got into all the games and the fights for free: you always had a dreamy looking blonde on each arm — and sometimes on your back — and you were always welcomed at the biggest night clubs, because the owner liked your stuff.

### ANOTHER WORLD

And that was only the reporters. Being an editor, such as Edward G. opened another world.

There you were, barking out orders, telling the mayor to hold the line, (while you finished the sports page) solving the latest crime, as the police still sought to identify the victim from some prints that had been sand-papered over a couple of times, cracking out hard-hitting editorials against corruption in high places, while the town's leading hit man waited in a car across the street from the paper for the first edition to roll off the press to see if you told all.

He had his orders, if you did. That's why you stayed in for lunch that day.

to 1977 for a return to increased valuable tourist dollars. So far the prospects are not very good.

For some reason, the slump in tourism is continuing.

In the first quarter of this year, the number of non-residents visiting Ontario decreased by some 8 per cent, compared with the first quarter of 1976 — which had itself been a poor year for tourism in the province.

### DIFFICULT PROBLEM

On the other hand, the number of Ontarians choosing to travel outside the country has continued to increase at an average rate of 8.5 per cent for every first quarter since 1974.

This would indicate the problem is more serious than simply a matter of a year during which a number of special and interesting activities took place outside Ontario.

Our tourist industry has to cope with a reputation for being overpriced. In fact, our costs are higher.

For example, the interest costs on funds used to build a motel in Canada would be approximately 11 per cent, compared with 7 per cent in the United States.

This would increase overhead costs from the outset. Minimum hourly wages are also higher here, making operating costs greater. Our property tax system places many motels at a competitive disadvantage.

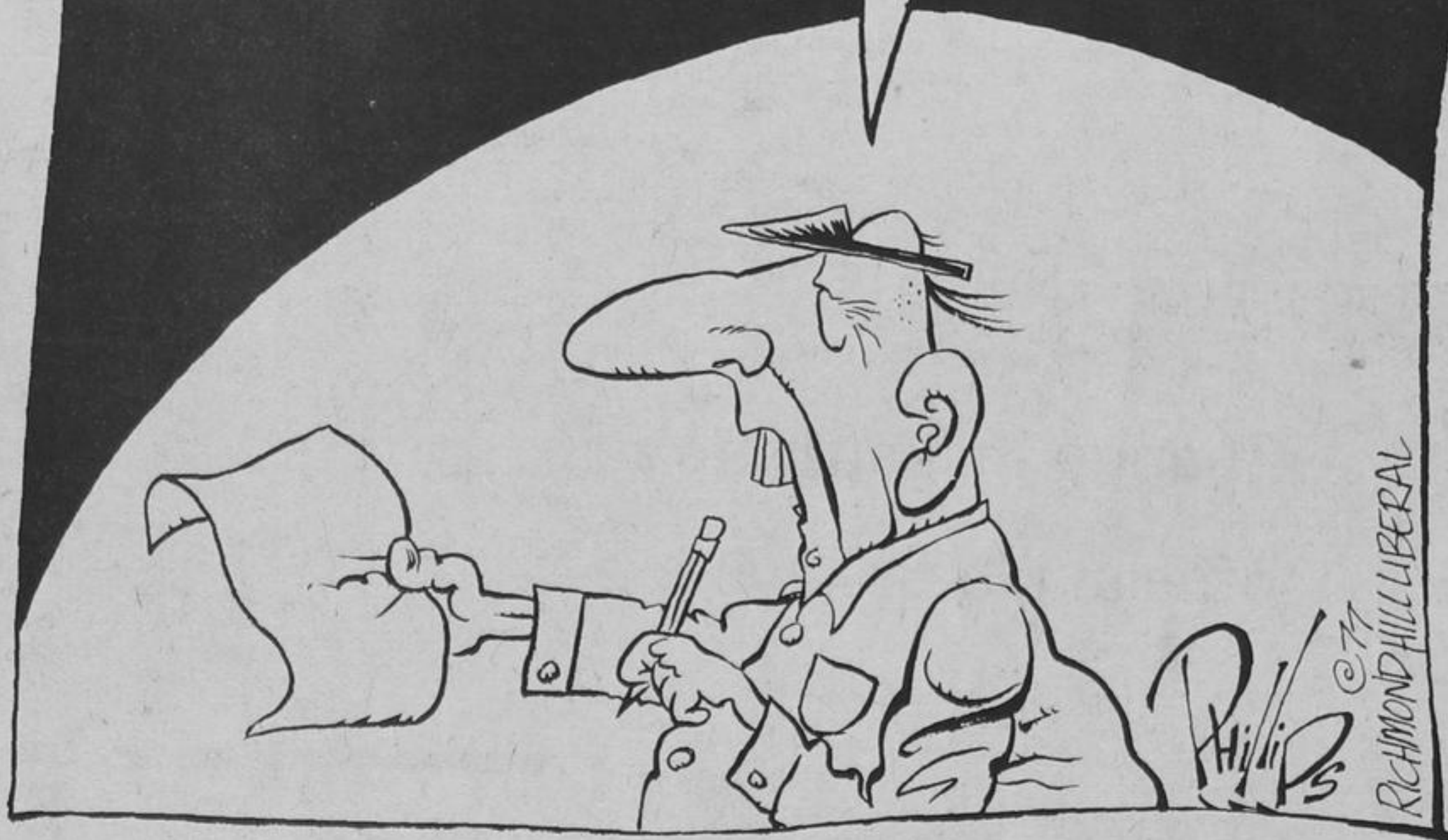
Finally, some businesses simply are not honouring the exchange rate, which at present is favourable to American visitors.

### LOCAL COMPETITION

We must also bear in mind the fact we are actually in competition with other provinces for the tourist business of our own residents, since Ontarians themselves are the target of many advertising programmes.

The people of the province are especially desirable visitors. They tend

I'M WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR!! HOW DO YOU SPELL ANONYMOUS?..



sharon's sunshine

## I faced Panama robbers

BY SHARON BRAIN

I'm back.

I saw five countries in 22 days. And the strain of eating every meal out, of never getting near a stove, of never being allowed to make my own bed, of having someone else scrub out the tub — well.

It was tough.

I originally meant to give you several columns on the delights of South and Central America. I even took notes about each country as we travelled.

But then two charming, but somewhat aggressive men decided to relieve us of our watches, wallets, money, books and camera in Panama City.

And because they can't get The Liberal down there, they thought they'd better take the notebook as well.

At least I think that's what they said when they demanded the bag it was in. But since they were speaking Spanish, it was a little hard to be sure.

### FACED KNIFE

The fact they had a very large and very shiny knife made it fairly easy for us to understand whatever it was they wanted was exactly what we were going to let them have.

So one column will be all you get.

Favorite city: Rio de Janeiro. The natives have a saying that in six days God made the world, and on the seventh He rested by making Rio!

I spent my days on Copacabana Beach trying to ignore my husband trying to ignore the bikinis.

We both failed abysmally.

### SKIN GLORE

It is the only place I have ever been where I felt over-dressed in a one-piece suit. I never realized the human body has that much displayable skin.

There are other sights worth seeing in Rio, but only women are out looking at them.

Closest call: Caracas, Venezuela. Slept in one morning, and had to put off the cable car trip up the mountain that rises above the city.

Next morning saw in the papers that 61 people, most of them tourists with children, spent the night dangling high above the mountain side in the first breakdown of the system in 20 years.

Worst weather: Santiago. Very Chile. Should have been forewarned by the number of people on our flight carrying ski-boots.

But I've never before been forced to come to grips with what causes the seasons. There's more to it than just the equator.

At least it didn't snow in the city. Would have ruined my sandals.

### OVER ANDES

Most spectacular sight: Flying over the Andes on a sunny morning.

Best meal: A hotdog covered with green peppers and onions at the race track in Rio. Weiner was bright red. Refused to ponder the reason.

Worst slums: a draw. I would love to give the award to Panama, but my choice would be purely personal. (See Paragraph 4.)

Every city has its slums. They run up the sides of the hills that surround the cities, or spring up on vacant lots right next door to a new apartment building.

From a ways off, in a moving car, with the windows closed, they are almost picturesque.

But up close, these are one-room hovels with no water, sewage, or roads.

### BRUTAL POVERTY

They are made of discarded building scraps. Beneath their tin roofs are huge families growing up in brutal poverty.

Most governments have given these squatters access to electricity. So they now have refrigerators, lights, and television.

And squalor. Most expensive city: Caracas. I never saw a pair of shoes cheaper than \$50.

But gas was only 25 cents a gallon. Of course, only the rich drive cars, while everyone needs shoes.

Most humiliating moment: Santo Domingo. After three weeks of Spanish, I asked for an ashtray with a degree of confidence approaching cockiness. The waiter nodded and brought the salt and pepper.

Best flight: The one from Santo Domingo to Toronto.

It's always nice to come home, especially to a place where the poor are rich, and the guys who's robbing you speaks your language, and it doesn't cost \$1.00 to get your socks washed and ironed, and the climate is hot and cold, not just wet and dry, and you're not the richest person on the bus or the poorest person in the hotel.

It's easier.

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