



Moving a wall or two would make it great

By SHARON BRAIN
I was taking my once-a-week drive down the nicest street in Thornhill last Wednesday when it happened.

Our family may never be the same. But let me begin at the beginning. First of all the nicest street in Thornhill is just that because of all the cunning little houses, all the white picket fences, all the window boxes, all the secret backyards.

It has remarkably little traffic, and most of the cars that drive along it go very slowly because the drivers and passengers are looking at each place in turn and oohing and ahing, too pleased with what they see to speed carelessly along.

For my money, the only thing that this street lacks is me. The present residents may not feel the lack all that keenly, but I do.

AND THEN.....
And that's where the problem began. Because last Wednesday, there appeared on this exact street, An Opening, An Opportunity.

Or to be concise, a For Sale sign. I braked to a stop, seriously startling the car that was following me. Oblivious to the honking, I sat and stared.

I couldn't believe I could be that lucky. I memorized the phone number on the sign and rushed off home chanting it under my breath.

The agent was out to lunch. I don't know how she could eat at a time like that.

I waited for her call and paced the floor smoking cigarettes and generally indulging in all the trade marks of nervous anticipation.

The phone rang. "Hello, Mrs Brain?"

I didn't correct her, although I had specified the radical without — the -r 'Ms'. when talking to the receptionist. Maybe this street had something against feminists. I was taking no chances.

She gave me the details. One of these was the price.

FASTING FOREVER
If we gave up holidays, dinners and newspapers for the next 30 years, we could manage it easily.

"When can I see it?"

Five minutes later, I met her on the doorstep.

We cased the outside. The house was newly painted. The lawn was healthy. The lot was charming, albeit rather hot-

dog shaped. Unfortunately the driveway between the house and fence was too narrow for our car, but no matter.

So was the garage it led to. Out behind the garage was a small white building with horseshoes over the door. I opened it gingerly, expecting to find someone sitting there reading the Eaton's catalogue.

Empty. A tool shed now. But no wonder the bathroom looked to be a recent addition.

Inside, the house was built for people of limited stature. I could touch the ceiling of the living room with the palm of my hand, of the bathroom with my elbow.

One entered the cellar through a trap door in the front bedroom.

ARIOT TO FIX
"I've been moving a lot of walls in my head," said the real estate agent.

Cerebral walls are very simple to move. Plaster ones are a touch more trouble.

"This place would be a riot to fix up," she added.

Some people are easily amused. We parted company. I went home and sketched floor plans, moved walls, lifted roofs put on additions.

By five o'clock, I knew the house had great potential. It needed my touch to bring it to such of pitch of perfection, Chataleine would do a cover story.

"Two hands and chisel make this shack a palace," the headline would read.

That night I met the man in the family at the subway and drove him right to the house.

NOT BIG ENOUGH
He refused to see its potential. "It's not big enough for two people," he said.

He was blind to the addition I had drafted on that afternoon.

"Who's going to do all the work?"

What work? Is tearing off the back end and rebuilding work?"

"We don't need a house?"

That's un-Canadian. Everyone needs a house.

We will start speaking again soon, I'm sure.

But that day would come a lot faster if one of you would call the real estate agent and buy that house.

If it were sold, we could hardly argue about buying it.

And it's not a bad price, really. Not when you consider the window boxes across the road.

Letters

Federal politicians ignoring real problems that face us, he says

It warms the heart when one thinks of the number of excellent books on local Canadian History — beginning with pioneer times.

These are valuable, for they were our grandfathers of over a century ago — our own flesh and blood.

Many of the things they accomplished seem almost unbelievable — the human endurance required in order to survive.

My people came to Canada after the Napoleonic wars when in the aftermath a depression had set in in the U.K.

My wife's people came as a result of the Highland Clearances — in Sutherland, and the Selkirk Settlers landing at Fort Churchill on the Hudson Bay and all that.

Many of the homes in this fair land could supply stories of similar high drama.

I remember Dr. J. Scott, Veterinarian of Maple, telling of the quarantine island in the St. Lawrence River where many would-be immigrants of a century ago lie buried.

But our concern is Canada today. The televising of the

actions of our highest court in the land is a devastating shock to all of us.

For many of us, our acquaintance with the Courts of Law may be a Magistrate's Court.

To attend one, it is understood that one must be on their best behaviour — "Silence in the Court".

But at Ottawa, the behaviour, to quote one newscaster on the radio is "a Kindergarten School of smart-alecks".

Apparently we were not to see Parliament as it really is, since some were reported running around to fill empty seats "on camera".

It also seems to be a tradition that sounds are permitted which resemble a thundering herd of elephants.

No one seems to address the chair, except the one who is trying to make a speech.

Who is responsible to keep order in that place? Has it come to the time when a quid of "bouncers" should give the old

heave-ho to Members who have no courtesy and do not know how to behave?

There are some things the Canadian public should not have to accept with the explanation that this is old tradition.

This is why I believe the TV broadcasts should continue; let us see some dignity for a change; not the manoeuvrings of organized gang warfare.

But I almost forgot something. There is to be an election in a year or a year and a half's time.

It is time to get a pepped-up campaign of smear tactics rolling.

However, he who throws mud gets his hands dirty. So much for political tradition.

Incidentally, currently appeals are being made to industry for better levels of production.

The people of Canada are sadly short changed when it is clear the real work of Parliament is at a standstill.

Does anyone really care about such vital themes as unemployment, inflation, jobs — people's lives being ruined?

Or is the talk mostly window-dressing, posturing? Perhaps filibustering is fun to a very few — but it is utter nonsense to the Canadian public.

At present the value of the Canadian dollar is the lowest since the Depression.

It would seem that economists think matters will not improve for three to five years, if then.

In the meantime, taxes will continually rise — inevitable.

Still Canada has tremendous potential. Our people are made up of many tongues and origins. They bring the old world charm with them. They are

fascinating, loveable. We need the spirit of a Lester Pearson to take us into a happy future; yet when he was alive, that was not to be.

God save the Queen, But what can save Canada?

Rev. B. F. Andrew Maple.

Get your life in shape. SunLife OF CANADA

For the past several months it has been my personal interest to try to discover some of the things that have built this nation, Canada.

To say that one is a Canadian, I find, is something that many people receive with respect in many parts of the world.

Immediately one supposes that Canadians have behaved themselves rather well in the past wherever their duties called them.

Therefore we must not let this high image down, but do something to maintain that ideal.

About a couple of years ago, the Hon. Donald McEachen, when initiating a program of studies in Canadian history in the U.K., did something to give that project a send-off in grand style.

Of course, the high dignitaries of that country at the start of negotiations rejected the proposal with well-known British dignity.

Not to be outdone, he replied that "we own a hunk of that Castle, (Edinburgh)": one square yard, I believe, was the tradition.

He was right and he got his ceiling.

Roxxie barks story approval

Thank you for the front-page treatment (photograph and write-up) given me in your issue of November 2.

It was a refreshing change for one who, as a Dalmatian, has hitherto been dogged by rather spotty luck.

I am, of course, very happy to be part of Richmond Hill's fire department, with my own truck (License K-9), and to help combat muscular dystrophy.

There is, however, no truth in the unworthy allegation that a major reason for my happy tailwagery is the increased availability of fire hydrants.

However, one imperfection in your coverage of the story makes me demur, or paws, in giving complete approval, namely, the description of myself as a "Dalmation", incorrect for someone whose origin was Dalmatia, now part of Yugoslavia.

Would you, Mr. Editor, like to be called "Canadian"? Somebody has to bone up on his/her spelling.

I send you this letter by the hand of an anonymous collar, as no one would find it other than incredible that a dog would be able to deliver his own mail.

Operating a typewriter, well, that's no problem.

Most pedigree dogs run true to type, and you can certainly expect a fire hall dog to do asbestos he can.

Roxxie, Richmond Hill Fire Department

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TOWN OF RICHMOND HILL

NOTICE
TO ALL INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF RICHMOND HILL ENTITLED TO DIRECT TAXES FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT PURPOSES

I am in receipt of a list supplied to me by the Assessment Commissioner under Section 23 of The Assessment Act, R.S.O. 1970, as amended, which shows the school support of every inhabitant who is entitled to direct taxes for school support purposes. The list was publicly posted in my office on the 26th day of October, 1977.

You are hereby requested to examine the list for any errors or omissions in my office at the Municipal Offices, 10266 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill.

The last day for the filing of applications for the revision of the list is November 11th, 1977, as required pursuant to Section 516 (2h) of The Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1970 as amended. I shall attend at my office on the 26th day of October, 1977, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. for the revision of the list and shall continue to do so from day to day, except Saturday and Sunday, until all applications filed on or before November 11th, 1977, have been disposed of.

C. David Weldon, Clerk,
Town of Richmond Hill,
10266 Yonge Street,
Richmond Hill, Ontario,
884-8101
October 26, 1977

We have lost control of our tax dollars

Your issue for Wednesday, November 2, has three items which I would wish to place, in relation to each other, before the people of Richmond Hill, and then to draw a conclusion which calls for action.

1. The very clear letter from Mayor Schiller defending the Town Administration from certain ill-considered attacks on its financial operations.

2. The factual letter from the Town Treasurer offering corrections to one particular such attack.

3. The news report of the meeting of York County Board of Education detailing the almost incredibly irresponsible behaviour over the decision to give away the Alexander Muir School property for \$10.

Mayor Schiller's letter shows three facts:

1. His Administration appears to have performed well in dealing with high costs and keeping taxes reasonably in line.

2. His Administration has control over, and spends only, 35 cents of

each tax dollar levied. 3. Regional Government and County School Boards demand and spend respectively 12.5 cents and 52.5 cents of each tax dollar levied.

I reiterate the comment, made in a letter which you published in August, that in our current system of local government there is neither an elected nor an administrative body whose duty it is to evaluate the relative social values and money costs of the different tasks carried out by the various local government bodies.

This is very poor democracy and very bad business.

I personally feel no confidence at all that 52.5 cents of each tax dollar I pay is being spent by a Board which displays such lack of control and bad manners and is so utterly irresponsible as the facts revealed in your report would indicate.

I should feel a lot more confidence if the Richmond Hill Town Government, which is known and accessible to us all, were the authority

to which all local tax-spending bodies had to submit and justify their demands for their share of my tax dollar.

There has been no increase in the assessment of my house over the last four years, but the tax demanded has increased by 43 per cent.

This cannot be justified by the general rise in prices. There is no authority to which I can go to get a justification for this increase; it has, in fact, never been calculated nor decided at all.

It just "happened" — as the result of simple addition in the Treasurer's Department of the "demands" made by other "outside" bodies over which the Treasurer and all the Richmond Hill taxpayers have neither authority nor control.

I hope that our representative in the Ontario Legislature will give this matter his consideration and seek to remedy a state of affairs which is clearly unbusinesslike, undemocratic and unsatisfactory.

Ronald Perry, Oak Ridges

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