

# Markham Transit back to politics

Markham Transit started out as a political bus system. It ran buses past councillors' houses every few minutes and lost bags of money.

Three years ago, the system was overhauled and the ridership doubled.

Last year, the politicians took another look at the system and once again Thornhill residents will be stuck with bus routes that serve little more than the politician's dream of a grander Markham.

Every half hour, half the Markham Transit fleet seems to congregate at the Thornhill Community Centre but the vital job of getting students to secondary schools and colleges, the bread and butter of most transit systems, is being shoved into a back seat.

Thornhill residents are among the most complacent of taxpayers. They have not been upset by skyrocketing regional and school board taxes over the years.

So they are unlikely to rebel over the transit deficit going from \$4 to \$7 per capita as it probably will this year.

But they should rebel, especially when they realize that the system is serving only about one resident in 100 on a regular basis.

And that it supplements GO Transit and county board of education systems that also have contracts with the same private bus company to take different buses over the same streets.

We have nothing against free enterprise, but the same company is dipping three times into the same pocket — and it happens to be yours.

Markham Transit and GO

Transit are both operating buses on Bayview Avenue, the best route in town, which may cost them both a profitable route.

GO has taken advantage of a political opportunity provided by Richmond Hill, where its Bayview Route starts, to keep its service going and break the verbal commitment to Markham to discontinue it.

The problem is the basis of the study on which the decision to change the Markham service was made, was that GO Transit would be removing its buses from Bayview.

Markham Mayor Tony Roman says that if GO hurts Markham Transit on Bayview, representations will be made to have GO remove its service.

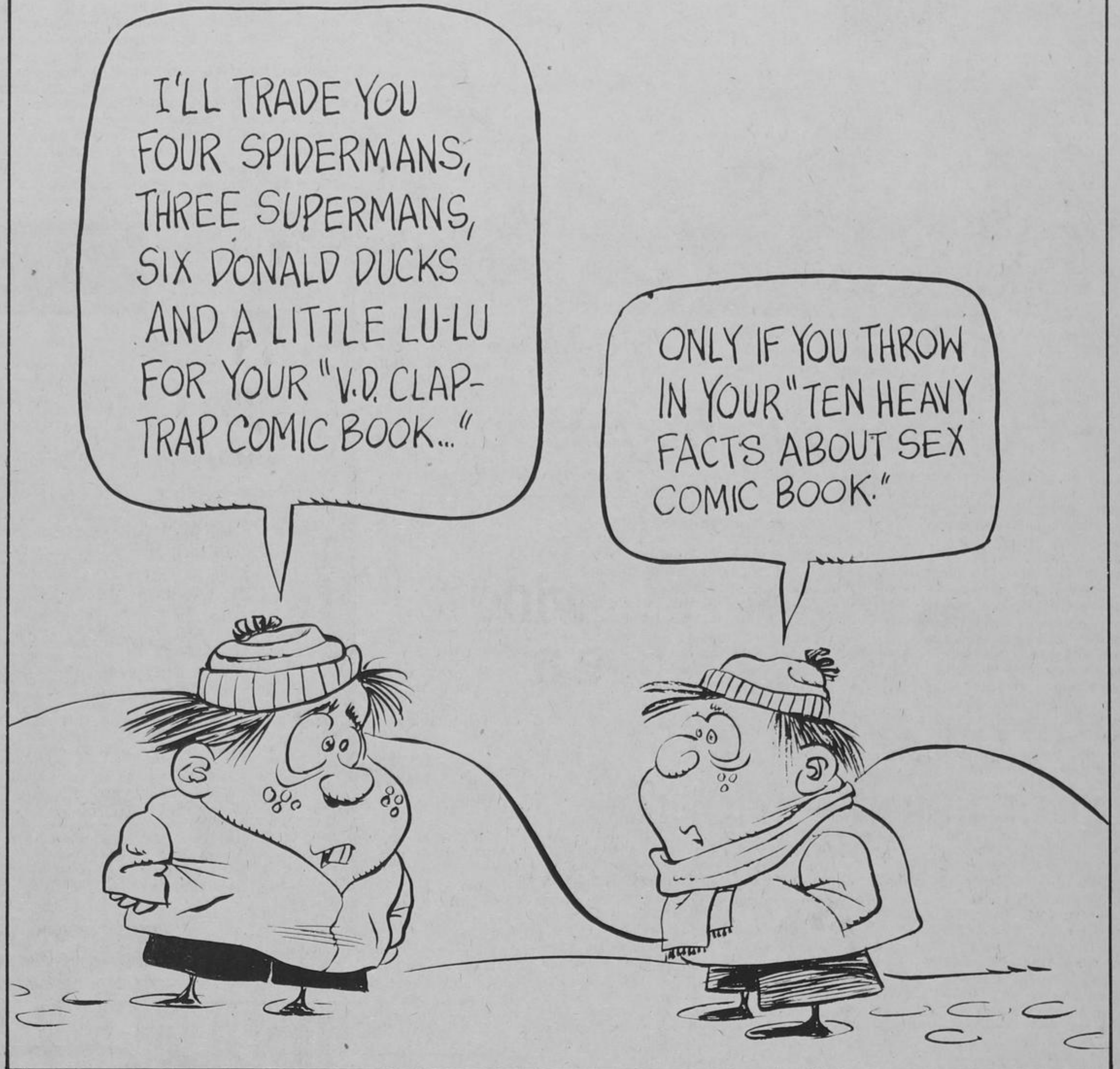
The sooner these meetings can be held the better.

Other meetings should be held to decide whether the school board or the municipality should provide a service to get high school students to school. Duplication should not be necessary.

But there is one decision that Markham can make on its own. That is not to run empty buses past councillors' houses.

The town is trying to provide an expensive service to people who have not asked for it, in residential areas with population densities far too low to support a transit system and where surveys by the residents have shown there are almost as many cars as there are adults.

The question remains. Why was the town not aware of these facts before it launched its feeder bus service, especially when it paid outside consultants approximately \$20,000 to design the system?



## NEWS ITEM: Students in York study sex comics in school

By BOB RICE

### What it cost 20 years ago

# French program we pay for it

Last May, the York Board of Education committed itself to offering a core program of French instruction to all its students beginning in Grade 1.

Under Ministry guidelines, this basic program of 40 minutes of French per day will allow students to accumulate 1,200 hours by the end of Grade 10 and give them the minimum level of facility.

The idea was to extend the program and integrate it into years currently using 20-minute periods. Those beginning in Grade 5 would also get 40 minutes and if they wished to pursue French studies to Grade 13, they'd still be able to reach the 1,200-hour plateau.

So what do all these grades and minutes and hours mean?

Not a lot until you look at the cost of the program. Bearing in mind there are more than financial implications, it is costing the board approximately \$800,000 for this year's French instruction alone.

The fact it opted for 40 minutes per day instead of 20 means it qualified for more provincial grants.

So far, it has gone through a rigorous process of hiring some extra teachers, training others to teach French, getting proper

curriculum aids and materials and scheduling necessary timetables for teachers and students.

So when there were rumors the level of grants from the province for French could change, it's no wonder the board sought some guidance from the Ministry.

On November 14 the board asked the Chairman to get assurance from Queen's Park that the grant level would be maintained to reach the board's goals for the French program.

In her reply, Education Minister Bette Stephenson was a little vague at best: "... It would be imprudent to declare that the present level of grant support for any particular program would be maintained regardless of future developments.

"I appreciate learning of the board's concern and I assure you that the Ministry is cognizant of and sympathetic to the budget planning needs of the board."

In essence, the board is playing for high stakes and doesn't know if it should cash in its chips.

But maybe it doesn't matter — we all know who's going to be paying for French lessons for some time to come.

By BOB RICE

I'll be the first to admit that I will never understand the mysteries of economics.

People refer to 'the good ol' days' and fondly recall prices for this and that item that bring tears to the eyes of the modern buyer.

On the other side of the fence sit the moneylords who point out that we now make much more money than did our contemporaries in days gone by and it is only natural for the price of goods to escalate with our incomes.

To be perfectly honest with you, I have to agree with the economists and yet... I sure wouldn't mind having a go at some of the goodies that were offered, say 10 or 20 years ago at the then prevailing prices.

GOING BACK

Keeping in mind that we are where we are... and nuthin' is goin' to change that... I thought that it might be fun to take a look at some items for sale in Richmond Hill on this date in 1968 and way, way back in '58. Crying towels ready? Here we go.

In a quarter page ad in the January 18, 1968, edition of The Liberal, Morley's Foodland (used to be north of Arnold Street on the east side of Yonge) featured round steak or rump roasts for 89 cents a pound (ouch).

The IGA at Bayview and Markham Road was selling Grade "A" Chickens for 37 cents a pound (Eeek) and a dozen Grade "A" Large eggs for 45 cents (Aaarg).

Canadian Tire's ad took up half a page and included a gallon of windshield anti-freeze for 88 cents (Yikes) and you could also stock up on a supply of fuses at three for 18 cents (Yowee).

On the real estate page I found a three-bedroom bungalow in North Thornhill featuring a 71 x 304 foot treed lot, separate living and dining rooms, family size kitchen, panelled rec room and attached garage listed at \$21,700. (Orgggg) and, if that isn't enough, the whole place carried for \$76.94 (Eeehah).

To be honest with you though, the same paper carried an ad for the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce announcing the fact that their savings account paid an interest of four-and-a-half per cent.

I deliberately started with the figures from 1968 because I thought that the prices from '58 might be too much of a shock for you... and me!

TWENTY YEARS

The Liberal published January 16, 1958, bold headline which proclaimed "... TOWN PLANS FOR WATER

PURIFICATION PLANT". Ken Tomlin was our mayor back then and an interesting little item (also on page one) led with "... Townships Not Notified — Jail Farms To Be Sold" ... sound familiar?

The Richmond Theatre advertised the showing of "Odongo" with Rhonda Fleming and Macdonald Carey (EX-CITEMENT... Sweeping from Kenya to the Congo) which was to be followed the next week by "Miracle In The Rain" starring Jane Wyman and Van Johnson.

At Arnold Farms (now Knob Hill at Highway 7 and Woodbine) they sold side bacon at 59 cents a pound (Yorkkks) but Grade "A" Large eggs were still 45 cents a dozen as they were ten years later.

Birrell Motors (now Wilson-Niblett) had a bit of a gimmick for used car buyers, selling the vehicles by the pound.

You might be interested in a '56 Oldsmobile '88' at 60 cents per pound (Wulla, wulla) or how about a -54 Caddy for 51 cents per (Uhoowee).

Back again to Morley's Foodland and if you like salads you might wish to buy Iceberg Lettuce at two heads for 29 cents (Guyoojee) or you may want to go to the Red & White at Bayview Plaza for 50 pounds of potatoes for \$1.59

(Eeeyahoo).

Enough... I can't take any more of it! I think I've done enough damage for the time being. I shudder at the thought of leaving the office now to get into my \$9,000 car, tank up for \$1.02 a gallon and heading for the supermarket to purchase our weekly groceries.

Maybe... if I'm nice and quiet... nobody will notice if I just go and sit in the corner until everyone leaves.

Then I can sneak out the back door and hitchhike home and lock myself in with some water and the bags of goodies that I took from the children at Hallowe'en. I could save a bundle on razor blades for not having to shave, keep myself warm by burning my old copies of National Geographic in the fireplace and amuse myself by humming old Wayne Newton songs.

When the good weather arrives I could come out of hiding and decide whether I should rejoin the rest of you or maybe move to Frobisher Bay and join the Inuit.

Hmmm... I wonder how much they charge for a good sled dog up there or would they laugh if I brought along my poodle?

The ol' Millpond Philosopher once said... "there are still bargains around. The Liberal's per copy price in 20 years has increased only a dime."

## LIBERAL SPRINKLINGS

### Living in isolation a mistake

By RON WALLACE  
Liberal Editor

Sometimes, in order to get away from it all, I go too far.

Not in distance, but in effort. This weekend was a case in point. The idea is simple — put your cares behind you, let your fantasies lead you, then, go, go, go.

My fantasy is Jean Claude Killy... so I went skiing.

Downhill. Alpine. There is no other kind.

Some may talk about cross country skiing — some may even think downhill skiers are insufferable — but I know better.

A cross country skier is merely an alpine skier desiring to get out. A cross country skier is in purgatory, waiting for promotion to alpine heaven.

A cross country skier (I saw it happen) tries to sneak into chair lift lines to ski down a hill.

My pals Len Greenwood of

Stouffville and Ron Willerton of Oshawa, called me last week and said they had a great deal on a chalet near the hamlet of Moonstone (about 18 miles north of Barrie).

We took enough food and drink to survive the weekend (three weekends actually), but ignored the one link we had to civilization — a portable radio.

The chalet, while equipped with several necessities like mattresses, stove and fridge, lacked a telephone.

Unless you owned property in the neighborhood, you'd never find this place. In fact, by the time we left it Sunday afternoon, snow had all but covered it.

The problem to which I refer was leaving the chalet to return to this area. Had a radio been available, we would have stayed, knowing full well it was too dangerous to drive.

But we didn't know what the snowstorm had done to the roads; we didn't know Highway 400 was

closed; we didn't know Highway 27 was impassable; and that's probably why we made it home.

We made our way along the 400 extension to the main highway north of Barrie, then headed south, slowly, but nevertheless moving.

We were at the Dunlop Street interchange when the traffic ground (or slid) to a screeching halt. And that's where it stayed.

It was like a miracle that the "next exit" was spitting distance from the passenger's window, so we exited.

Then, and only then, did we bother to turn on the car radio.

And CKEY says: "Highway 400 south of Barrie is closed due to poor visibility and several accidents in the area; Highway 27, north of 89 has been closed, and other roads in the Barrie area are treacherous. The only southbound route open is Highway 11..."

And six million drivers heard that. Then the guy at CKEY says: "It's

hard to believe that kind of weather is happening as I sit here on the 25th floor at 1 Yonge Street, with the sun shining brightly on the CN Tower."

As we inched our way to Pain-swick, we found it hard to believe, too. Snow, wind, ice, chaos, everything, indicated we'd be lucky to get home in one piece.

But we did, although it wasn't really necessary. Had we packed a little radio, we would have been able to use the excuse that everything north of Barrie was socked in and we'd need at least one more day to get home.

Never mind... maybe next time. Yes, the skiing was simply fantastic.

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If you haven't seen the Craven Collection of antique cars at Hillcrest Mall yet, treat yourself to a preview on Page D-1 of your Liberal this week, then treat yourself to a trip to Hillcrest. The cars are incredible.

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