

Bitter pill won't go down any easier

It seems ironic, when whole communities larger than Sutton or Keswick cannot get schools approved in York Region, that the taxpayers are being asked to spend half a million dollars on a new police building in Georgina.

Regional council last week tried to make a bitter pill a bit easier to swallow by spreading the dose to the taxpayer over two years instead of one.

For the 174 mothers of children on the waiting list for Thornhill's only public day-care centre, this must seem ironic (it only has 50 places.)

If this police station is built, it might be said that never has so much money been spent to protect so few.

While there is a huge weekend population in Georgina in the summer months, the permanent population is one third that of

Thornhill where there is no police station.

The projected population of Georgina in the year 2001 is 36,000 compared with 134,000 for Markham and 130,500 for Vaughan where the police commission has announced no plans for police stations.

The region cannot afford, to be planning piecemeal or it may well find itself with the problems that the York County Board of Education inherited from its predecessors. Plenty of schools but in the wrong places.

If the York Regional Police's present accommodation in Georgina is inadequate, perhaps the commission might check with the school board to see if it has a building somewhere, at least until the plans can be put in the overall context of a regional official plan. That is what planning is for.



(Liberal Photo by Bruce Hogg)

Who says you couldn't see the eclipse in Richmond Hill?

Rhoda's encounter with Jamaica - Part 2

By RHODA MELINYSHYN

Cleveland is determined to give us maximum exposure that morning. Our next stop is the local meat market. The meat stalls, small concrete enclosures, are piled high with huge, red slabs of meat, presumably the final destination of several lively little goats nibbling grass in an enclosure outside. No refrigeration is in evidence.

As we await our driver, we make the acquaintance of a group of unemployed Jamaicans, who forthrightly decry socialism, the incursion of Cubans, and the price of gasoline. Their Jamaica of ten years ago is beloved, and they fear its deterioration. As we return to the jitney, the fishy odor of maturing conch shells lining a path, assaults our nostrils. Jamaica is truly an island of contrasts.

Just crossing the road in Montego Bay is an experience. The left-handed drive produces cars from out of nowhere, all driven seemingly at top speed. To stop, look, and listen is no help — by the time my directions are sorted out and it seems safe to venture forth, a new batch of vehicles is descending upon me, all from the wrong direction again. My mental processes refuse to budge and I remain rooted to the pavement.

The brochure says: "Take a leisurely one-hour trip on a 30-foot raft down the picturesque Martha Brae River, set in the luxuriant Queen of Spain's Valley." Walter and I do just that. The throne end of the raft seats the tourists — the raftsmen runs up and down the raft, guiding it through the rapids, and poling it as the water becomes deeper and slower. As we move along with the current, little boys wade out into the stream, selling miniature bamboo replicas of the raft. If one could just buy them all out. The guide tells us how bamboo, the fastest growing plant, shoots up two inches a day, points out the elephant plant on the banks with its large floppy leaves, shows us a banana tree with its drooping navel which ensures propagation when it falls to the soil.

At intervals along the tropical banks, enterprising vendors call out, earnestly exhorting us to enjoy the rest of the voyage with appropriate refreshment, namely a few stiff jiggers of rum.



RHODA MELINYSHYN

We recall the tale someone has told us about boot-leggers at the rum plants, who soak their clothing to the body every night before they leave, and strip on the way home, ringing every last drop of rum out for sale to interested purchasers. What tremendous flavor the finished product must have!

The raftsmen tells us how he has made the raft himself, lashing together bamboo poles from up in the mountains. The rafts are short-lived, becoming water-logged after four or five weeks. Our craft moves more slowly in the deepening river. As I relax in the cool breezes, I catch Walter gazing cautiously at his watch! I am afraid he will commandeer the pole next. He doesn't want to miss dinner. At the end of the trip, the rafts are hoisted onto trucks, and driven up to the headwaters for another voyage downstream.

Jamaica swings with rhythm and reggae. Every night we join 200 guests for the outdoor floor show at Club Guava on Chatham Beach. Such variety - from limbo and bamboo stick dancers, a velvet-throated lady called Myrna Lewis, local spoofs in which the good witch doctor triumphs by walking on broken bottles, to the finale at the end of the week, a Gong Show featuring anyone who so desires.

We cheer the Malvern entry to vic-

tory as Rudi and a guest give a touching rendition of "There's a Hole in the Bucket, dear Liza"! The band continues playing after the show so that guests can get up and shake a little themselves. For die-hards, the Club disco stays open into the wee hours.

We twinkle-toed Malvern's usually persevere till the last dog is hung, or Cleveland, the jitney driver, routs us out, declaring that he can no longer remember how his wife and seven children look.

DINE ROYALLY

We dine royally at Malvern on a covered patio overlooking the pool and a profusion of palms, banana, aloe, fragrant pimento, and breadfruit trees. The talented cooks conjure up a delicious combination of Jamaican and North American foods. We feast on fresh fruit, red pea and pumpkin soups, lobster, curried goat or lamb, red snapper, fried plantain, cho-cho (like squash), callaloo (like spinach), breadfruit, and a national dish - saltfish and ackee, a yellow-fleshed vegetable cooked with salted codfish from Newfoundland.

Our favorite food is the Jamaican patty, a highly seasoned meat filling enclosed in pastry. (McDonald's please copy), which we can buy at road-side stands.

Jamaicans of all ages look deceptively young - with nary a paunch in sight. The fresh fruit and fish diet must be responsible. And waste is a word foreign to their very nature and circumstance.

On his rounds one day, Cleveland suddenly stops the jitney, leaps out, and retrieves a ripe coconut which has fallen to the ground from a nearby palm tree. According to him, his family's next meal will be a dish with shredded coconut, peas and rice.

As the Old Oakbank Oracle says: "If music be the food of lovers, then Jamaica is for gourmet!"

Winning this trip for two enabled me to give my husband Walter a very special anniversary present. Everyone should take a Walter with them when they go vacationing. He is irrepressible, gregarious, fun-loving, and always in hot water. Since he is the father of my four children, I tend to be biased in his favor.

SEA URCHIN
Our adventures began the first day after our arrival as we prepared to offer our bodies as sacrifices to the sun god, on the local beach. Walter was snorkeling a short distance from shore, while I lay half dozing on my towel. A sudden commotion in the water made me look up. Of course, it was Walter. He had inadvertently stepped on a sea urchin, a creature with sharp little needles all over its body. He did not look too happy, as seven or eight of the spines were protruding from the sole of his foot.

Suddenly a 6'4" figure unfolded itself from a spot on the beach. This very unlikely-looking angel of mercy introduced himself as Angus; we had fallen into the hands of a Canadian police instructor from the Ontario Police College, every inch a friend indeed, as we soon discovered.

He rushed up to the Club Guava desk, where we were informed that the best solution to the problem was to "widdle" on the affected area. Since no one felt so inclined, and the spines were in a rather awkward spot, we were handed a bottle of ammonia, which was also supposed to do the trick.

Angus kindly offered us the use of his room, and before we knew it, Walter was lying, wet sandy bathing suit and all, across a bed, foot up, a rum punch in hand to allay his pain (and fears) as Angus prepared to "operate". The bottle of ammonia did little to help, as the spines had worked themselves in rapidly, so our rescuer next dripped a melting candle over the heel. While it hardened, we became better acquainted over a few more rum punches, as Angus regaled us with tales of his life in uniform.

The hardened wax, when finally removed, pulled out a few spines with it, and Angus was prepared to tackle the remainder with a razor blade, when Walter inexplicably demurred. We would wait till we returned to Malvern, he said firmly, where Rhoda had some tweezers and a needle. Although the morning had gone by, we had missed a half day of sun, and Walter's right foot was somewhat incapacitated, we felt good. Making friends is part of holiday fun.

(Next week. Part 3)



yesterdays
By MARY DAWSON

How fire department looked in 1927

An annual report on the fire protection in Richmond Hill, made by the Canadian Fire Underwriters' Association was published in The Liberal on March 17, 1927.

At that time the brigade was composed of 19 volunteers, all of them employed locally. Up until then only 12 volunteers had worked in the village.

The brigade had just been reorganized under a new chief, H.J. Mills, who provided equipment for most of the volunteers in his rose-growing greenhouses.

The report recommended that the brigade strength be increased to at least 20 men and that arrangements be made to have two of them sleep in the fire hall.

The fire hall was then located in the Lorne Block (now the Guaranty Trust Building) at the corner of Yonge and Arnold

Streets, a location described in the report as "convenient".

However it was stated that the brick-veneered building, which also housed a grocery store and a courtroom (in the former council chamber on the second floor) was unsuitable for a fire hall.

It was also stated that the enclosure in which hose was dried was only half the standard height.

A fire hall it was claimed should be built of brick, stone or concrete and detached. It should have sleeping accommodation and a hose drying tower of sufficient height to give 55 feet below the suspenders.

The pumphouse, located at the Mill Pond, was criticized because an engineer was not in continuous attendance. The report also recommended installation of a 2 1/2 gallon fire extinguisher and three pairs

of sand for internal protection of that building.

The report was also critical of the newly added motor combination truck, claiming that it was of low power and equipped with a pump of small capacity.

The alarms were sounded manually on a bell at the public school about 100 yards south of the fire hall.

Alarms were also telephoned to the public exchange where the operator retransmitted them to the chief and to a dwelling or garage near the school where someone was always available to sound the alarm.

The recommendation was for reinstallation of a bell at the fire hall with a circuit closing device on the clapper which would activate an alarm at the pumphouse.

It was required that a town bylaw report that buildings within the fire limit be constructed only of solid brick, stone or concrete with roofs of incombustible material.

But there was no bylaw regulating the storage of inflammables or explosives.

The report followed an inspection in which the fire alarm was sounded on the school bell at 11:16 a.m.

The fire chief arrived at the hall a minute and a half later.

The motor truck was run out 30 seconds later and had water at 42 pounds pressure issuing from a line of 200 feet attached to the hydrant at the corner of Yonge and Arnold Streets at 11:20. Thirteen brigade members responded.

Although it was noted a large number of buildings were of frame or brick-veneer construction throughout the village and wooden shingled roofs were common, the fire hazard was not pronounced because the buildings were not congested.

please keep in mind that there will be a lucky draw soon and your sponsor sheets will need to be turned in.

The lucky bowler will win \$500 cash and the lucky sponsor will win \$100 cash.

All sheets must be into the Big Brother office by March 23, 1979 in order to qualify for the lucky draw.

Be sure that yours is in so that you do not miss out.

Thank you once again to all who participated.

Jim Glover,
Bowler for a Boy
Chairman, 1979

Letter

Big Brothers thank bowlers

On behalf of Big Brothers of York, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported us on our celebrity day for our "Bowl for a Boy" on February 17.

With the many people participating, this day proved to be very successful.

Approximately 160 people came out to bowl and the total amount of money raised was \$12,000.

To these people, a special thank you for your hard work on our behalf. For all who are still collecting their pledges and those awaiting to have pledges collected,

LIBERAL SPRINKLINGS

The wheel won this confrontation

By RON WALLACE
Liberal Editor

When it was sitting in the office parking lot, people would sneer at it. When it was going down a street, other drivers would turn corners to avoid it. When it went over 50 miles per hour, it would shudder and say "hey, cut that way!"

That's the way it was with my beautiful car for a few days last month after it was the victim of a freak traffic collision.

Of all the people who have heard this story, not one has responded, "really?"

Most of them would say, "Sure, sure, Wallace. Can't you dream up something a little better than that?" Many just grunted an inaudible "uh huh" and left to find more scintillating conversation.

But, so help me, my car was involved in a head-on collision with a wheel. The wheel won.

I was driving to North Bay one recent Saturday morning. The weather; the roads; the conditions;

everything was perfect.

Since I had been in Stouffville before I planned to leave, I went up the east side of Lake Simcoe Highway 48, 12 and 169 to Washago, then grabbed Highway 11 to North Bay.

I and my car came to a sudden halt at South River.

TRANSPOITS
I was about half a mile away from the edge of the village, when I saw four transport trucks enter the highway. Two went north, and two headed south.

The second southbounder unloaded the wheel. The black object entered my lane and I had nowhere to go. Crunch, and in a flash, I kissed goodbye to my front end and my hood. Glass and plastic spewed upon the road, and I — still wondering what the hell happened — headed for a snowbank.

Meanwhile, the truck driver just kept on truckin'. He had no idea anything was wrong until another motorist stopped him about a mile down the road.

While the car looked like hell, it still worked, so I drove to North Bay, spending all my time planning how to get to my destination without having to make a left turn — since all the left turn signal equipment had been mashed into a pot of porridge.

When I spent all day Sunday wondering if I could handle the trip home... through a blizzard that lasted from Huntsville to Highway 89. The car really didn't like that treatment at all, and on several occasions, I thought it was going to spit its hood off.

With all the paperwork involved, and other incidentals, it was a week before I could get my poor, sore, injured automobile fixed.

And during that time, I saw facial expressions from other drivers, the likes I have never seen before.

"Stay away from that car, Martha, look what the jerk has done already."

THANKS, SYD
Finally, the parts were ready, the

operating table repaired, and my car entered the hospital.

In this case — Town Auto Body in Richmond Hill.

Body shops are not places where I care to spend a lot of time, frankly, but with people like Syd Hayes handling your problems, the pain is lessened considerably.

He wrote the estimates, sympathized at the right times, offered coffee, phoned me when it was necessary, and handled the whole thing with a true air of professionalism.

And five days later, he delivered to me my new "bionic" Oldsmobile, with all its new parts, and new paint. And to Dave and Dorothy, also necessary to the success of my week without my car, thank you very much.

Oh, by the way, I can't verify any of this story. After I was hit, and before the Ontario Provincial Police could finish their investigation, someone came along and stole the wheel.

