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Editorials

Complex not needed now

York Regional Council deferred action last week on a planning report concerning the location of an administrative complex for the region. The deferral was made without comment, mostly because the matter is highly controversial at this time.

Chairman Garfield Wright made it clear that a new regional complex was a top priority in his inaugural address earlier this week. The elected members of regional council however are a little skittish about the whole idea.

Depot success brings problems

Stouffville's recycling depot appears to be a victim of its own success. The depot is so busy that more volunteers are needed and a larger building will have to be found. Over 280 families have contributed to it in its short history.

And that is phenomenal in itself. The expectation was that the depot would develop a few dedicated followers, those who had some concern for recycling and the environment.

Instead the depot is attracting more and more new people each week. It seems that more people are willing to do something to reduce garbage output than anyone would have predicted.

The site now is temporary, but we hope that a permanent location with a proper building will be found soon. The depot has certainly outgrown its present location. Something must be done soon to encourage more people to use the depot, by finding a permanent site.

Renewal program promising

Approximately \$35,000 will likely be made available to the people of Whitchurch-Stouffville over the next three years under a provincial scheme called the Ontario Home Renewal Program.

It would provide money at low interest rates to some, and as outright grants to others, to complete major renovations on homes that are below acceptable standards.

It was designed to stop houses from being abandoned and the money will have to be used for major renovations that truly upgrade the house.

Charges later withdrawn

York Regional Police have made some mistakes recently in charging youngsters riding vehicles that are likely to become the rage this summer. They are called mopeds and they have been around for a number of years. They are especially popular in Europe.

Recent changes in provincial regulations make it legal for persons, 14 of age and over to ride the mopeds without license, insurance, helmet or driver's license.

Unfortunately, the police were not made aware of the new regulations. One young Stouffville youth was charged on all five parts

The fact is, the time is definitely not ripe for such a scheme when the region, faces large increases much of which will have to be paid from local assessment. In fact, for the foreseeable future, the region cannot afford a new administrative centre.

Therefore, the location (two sites were proposed in Richmond Hill and a third in Newmarket), is irrelevant at this time. Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Gordon Ratcliff hit the nail on the head when he said that the facility is unnecessary at this time.

The fact is that regional staff is working under very difficult conditions in the present Newmarket offices. The overcrowding is a serious problem there. Under the present setup, the region has not the resources to go into the construction of a new administrative building and still maintain other services, without a large increase in the regional levy.

The only answer may be something that Chairman Wright suggested at the last meeting, that the region be allowed a share of the sales tax. That would at least provide some relief to the hard-pressed homeowner who may see his taxes jump dramatically this year.

So far regional government has been tied to the provincial apron strings, dependent on transitional grants to lesson the impact on the home owner. Those grants will gradually peter out and the cost of regional government will continue to climb.

The only answer is to provide some form of income, such as the sales tax, to make York Region's administration economically viable.

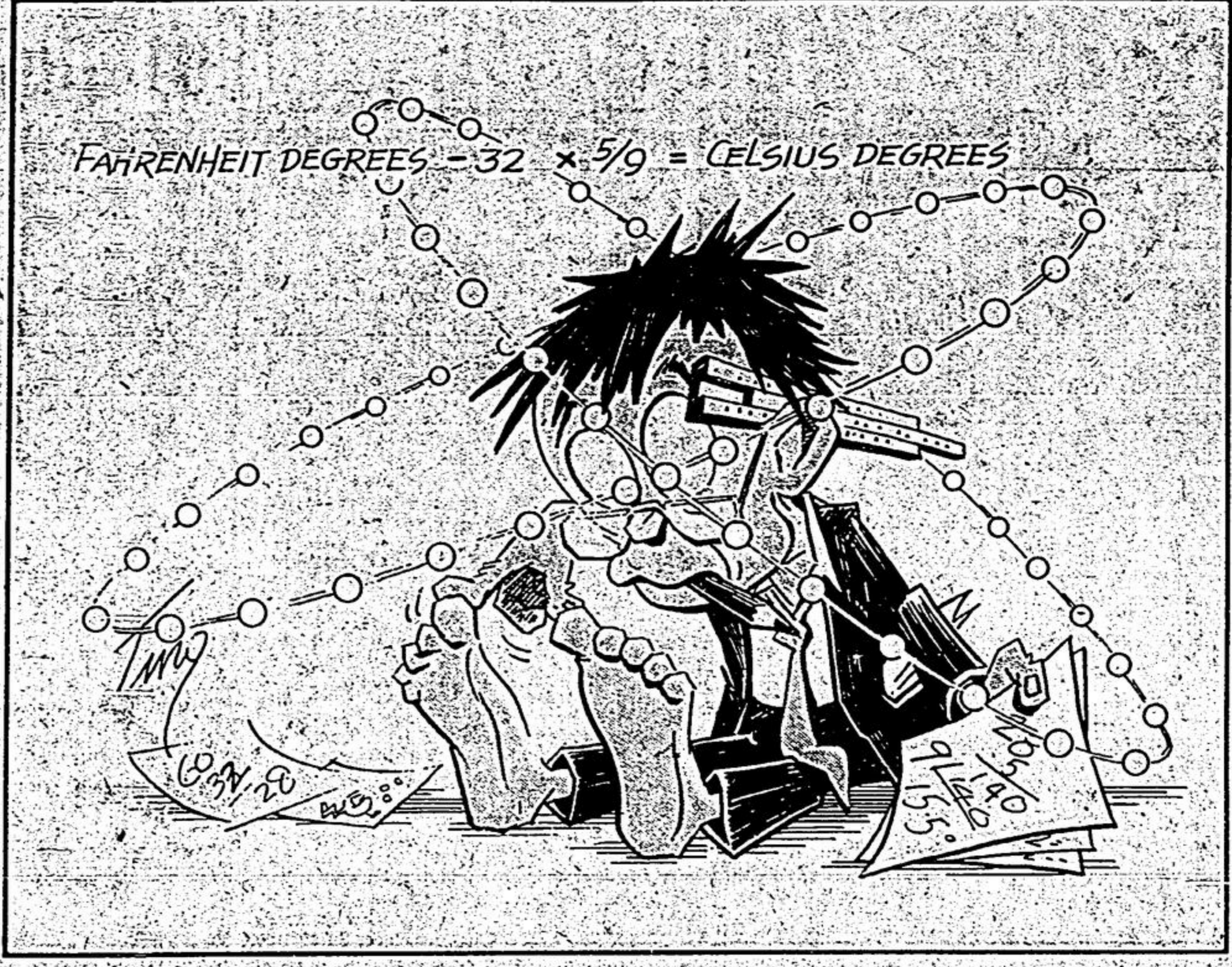
Until such a change is made in how the region is financed, the already hard-pressed taxpayers cannot afford a regional administrative centre. We hope members of the regional council also get that message.

The scheme looks like a good one. If carefully monitored, it could be an incentive to people to fix up their homes. While few people on council would say so, the Musselman's Lake area would be a natural for this kind of program.

We hope that the program will be initiated as soon as possible. New housing seems to be increasingly hard to come by at prices people can afford and this kind of incentive is surely needed.

of the regulations that were recently changed. The charges were hastily withdrawn when the police were informed of the changes. At any rate no harm was done, but one moped dealer was hopping mad over the misunderstanding.

He felt betrayed after telling his customers that helmets, licenses and insurance are not needed. We hope the police receive their copy of the recent amendments because the machines are likely to be very common this summer after the recent rule changes.



Thirty years ago this week

Exerpts from the Tribune from April 5, 1945. Humble Thanks

Certain savage tribes had a practice of drinking the blood of their enemies in the belief that they would thereby increase their prowess in battle. And we would be virtually doing the same thing if we gloated over the defeat of the Germans and celebrated the Victory in a drunken orgy of rejoicing. Rather, we should be humbly thankful....

Dogs Chained
 Dogs are forbidden to run at large and it is a good thing to see that so many dog owners are obeying the by-law....
 Quiet Good Friday
 Good Friday was a quiet holiday in Stouffville as usual yet there was plenty of travel on the main highways, and a great number of city people came out to enjoy a quiet day in the country!



SUGAR AND SPICE

Salute to a Canadian author

By BILL SMILEY

Rather belatedly, I'm reading Hugh Garner's autobiographical *One Damn Thing After Another*, and thoroughly enjoying it.

There are two types of people to whom this book would appeal: those who are interested in the rather mysterious worlds of the professional writer and the publisher, and those who are interested in the reminiscences of a robust and prickly personality who has done a lot of living in sixty-odd years.

It is far from Garner's best book. It is repetitious and padded inexcusably with articles he has written and a speech he has made. There is nothing of the grace and strength of his magnificent short stories or the solid skill of his good novels.

But that's as it should be. He is writing about Hugh Garner, the man, as well as Hugh Garner the writer, and nobody knows better than he that, while the latter may be on the way to becoming a Canadian literary giant, the former has feet of clay, if not putty.

Garner makes it quite clear that he is far from being an admirable person, in the usual sense. He gets drunk at, or arrives drunk at, formidably serious events. He tells people to do impossible biological things to themselves.

As he tells it, he is the sort of guy you would never invite to a second party at your place, because he would likely have insulted someone at the first party. Or, if you invited him to a party as the guest of honor, he'd probably get into a beer parlor and forget all about it, leaving you, his host, with egg on your face when the "distinguished author" failed to show.

Despite the somewhat dim light in which Garner often shows himself, he makes it perfectly clear that he admires himself very much. Out of the book comes a good, strong, healthy ego, which is fine. Every real writer must have this belief in himself, or he turns

into a door-mat for editors and publishers. And somewhere along the line, as you read this book, you begin to share Garner's opinion of himself.

In most of us, however sedate our lives, there lurks a hidden rebel, a wild non-conformist, a teller-off of the boss, a fighter for hopeless causes.

Garner has been, and is, all of these things, and we can enjoy ourselves, vicariously, by identifying with his colorful battleful life.

Hugh Garner has been fighting battles all his life, and a less doughty fighter would long since have been buried physically, socially, and perhaps spiritually.

As a kid, he fought the obloquy and occasional humiliation of the very poor in a Toronto slum, and emerged from it tough and chip-on-shoulder.

As a youth, he dropped out of school and ran head-on into the Depression. He bummed all over North America, riding freights, seeing country, working at many things, and storing a great fund of experience for his future fiction.

He learned earlier the frustration of a proletariat facing the establishment and this led to a suspicion of, and disillusionment with, authority, which he has retained all his life.

He fought as a volunteer in the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. This is probably the 1st gallant crusade in the history of war, when thousands of young idealists from many nations left home to battle fascism. Most of them were scorped and derided as "reds" in their own countries.

Yet Garner was clear-headed enough to realize that the Communists were using the volunteers as dupes, and he was never sucked in.

Again a fight loomed, when Canada

declared war on Germany. Garner joined up, in the army, right away. His "red" background was against him, so he switched to the navy, and spent a number of dangerous, tumultuous and hilarious years before his discharge as a chief petty officer (he certainly wasn't officer material!).

Then came the biggest battle of all, trying to become a professional writer in Canada. At the time, he had about as much chance as he would have had if he'd chosen to run for king of England.

Doggedly, he fought stupid editors, timid publishers, and the great apathy of the Canadian reader, sustained only by his own sublime and certain conviction that his stuff was Good.

It was a long, pitched battle, with many a skirmish, the occasional rout, and the just-occasional victory. But he won.

At his best, Hugh Garner is one of the best short story writers in the English language, with a grasp of the feelings and motives of "ordinary" people that is wholly credible.

His novels are above average, a couple of them excellent, notably "Cabbagetown".

Where most of us can identify with Garner is in his scorn for the petty, the bureaucratic, the timid, the phoney.

He is somewhat like a "naughty" baby who pulls that cat's tail, knocks over the delicate table with the Spode figurine on it, and sits up looking around to make sure everybody is taking notice.

If Canada were the sort of country which erects statues of its writers, heaven forbid, Garner would be sculpted in solid stone, with a fiendish grin on his face, a chip on each shoulder, and his right arm outflung, the middle finger of that hand raised erectly in the universal gesture.



VIEWPOINT

School system reflects society

By DON BERNARD

What is really the matter with our education system?

With all the talk of teacher discontent and students that are only one step above illiteracy, what is the real difficulty facing our school system?

The answers to these questions are not simple. However it is possible to identify certain areas where the school system is falling down. Part of the answer appears to be in the whole purpose and function of a school system.

There was a time when education was viewed primarily in a utilitarian way, with no pretensions of trying to scale the heights of creativity and innovation. Children learned the so called 3R's and other odds and ends that were tacked on for good measure.

English language study, mathematics and science were seen as relatively important with studies in the social sciences seem to be secondary. Reading, Riting and Rithmatic, those were all a man and woman needed.

And to some extent that was true. Education was seen as vocational training. Inculcate certain skills in the students and they would be able to do all right. That was the old concept.

As the 20th Century progressed, with quantum increases in the complexities of life, the old concept, seemed to be swept away as well. Yes, it would take new approaches to deal with the issues that face modern man.

Instead of teaching skills, the school had a responsibility to help students become well-adjusted members of a complex and rapidly changing society. In that respect, the school system was somehow supposed to make sense out of a society that could not make very good sense of itself.

Instead of teaching sure, known skills, teachers became mediators between a

number of competing value systems. The absolutes were gradually being lost. Now other subjects, once considered superfluous, became as important in the curriculum as the standard 3R's.

Even the methods of teaching the standard subjects changed dramatically. So called, "new math" replaced rote learning, characteristic of an earlier era. In language studies, students were encouraged to express themselves, without strict adherence to grammatical limitations.

In other words, even the "3R's" were transformed according to the supposed needs of our society and the development of the individual. The theory was that students allowed certain freedom of expression and presented with methods to work out problems, will be better off in a changing society.

This theory however has never adequately been put into practice. And that is where the rub comes. The school system is caught, I believe, in the same bind. It must cater to the individual as much as to the skill.

This is further re-inforced by a new independence on the part of young people that was unheard of in past generations. This emphasis on the individual has created a generation of super-egos, which are semi-illiterate and don't know it.

That fact has been well-publicized because of comments by university teachers to the effect that their students can't write sentences properly, or add or multiply simple numbers. The crisis also reflects the general lack of values implicit in the school system.

The public schools in Ontario have been decidedly protestant and maintained Christian ideals. The Education Act still requires teachers to maintain certain moral and ethical examples and actively encourage them in the students.

In other words the founders of our system realized that teaching methods and skills could not be done in a moral or spiritual vacuum. Values are an integral part of life. A school system without coherent sense of values has no direction and cannot possibly prove fruitful in the long run.

If people are searching for the problems in our school system, it may be constructive to look at what the schools are trying to do. If schools are to create strong individualists, then our society is doomed, but if it applies standards of conduct, based on the Biblical concept of Christian commitment and service, then our society will be strong and flourish.

It is this lack of commitment in the system, that has prompted certain groups to start their own schools. It may be the only alternative to Christians who see only chaos in the public schools. The Separate School system was created because Roman Catholics realized that education and ethical training are intertwined, and cannot be separated as secular society would have us to believe.

From this perspective, things can only get worse. But it is this lack of direction based on equality of ideas which has doomed our school system. What is right? What should be taught?

These questions are less easy to answer than they have ever been. It is ironic that in a world where the need for a simple message is greatest in our day, that the school system is moving closer and closer toward chaos.

It may be that Christian people will have to demand their own school system so that the principals of love, peace, chastity and self-sacrifice (basic to those who follow Christ) are integrated with the 3R's. It may be the only way for our children to escape the disintegration of our school system and the growing lawlessness in our society.



Lonely and naked, the tree appears in the late winter. Not adorned with snow, but empty, waiting for the warmer weather, that brings renewed life and leaves to cover its nakedness. Empty, but strong, it stands,

holding itself against the wind that moves it to and fro. In majesty, it stands, the tree, the symbol of never falling hope.

John Montgomery