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Editorials

Higher dog tag fees answer to soaring costs

Some people might feel that our society is going to the dogs. The dog problem was discussed at some length at a recent council meeting.

The consensus was that increased dog tag fees would be necessary to offset the cost of canine control.

There is no real way of knowing whether the provincial Ministry of the Environment is stalling until after the upcoming elections before releasing the information. But if the decision goes against the town, that would seem a likely possibility. At least it raises some unpleasant suspicions.

If there really is something potentially dangerous about the dump's location (and we feel that there is), it makes it all the more imperative for a speedy decision.

Mr. Newman, the people of Stouffville are waiting for an answer.

canine control. Since Kennel Inn of Aurora received the contract to handle canine control duties for Whitechurch - Stouffville, 6,000 miles have been logged by the patrol vehicle.

Kennel Inn also handles the service for Aurora and King. Neither of these two municipalities could compare with Whitechurch - Stouffville both in miles travelled by the canine control officers and the number of dogs picked up.

In other words, the cost of patrolling this area is considerable. In our opinion, which appears to be shared by a number of members of council, the canine control service should be self-sustaining. One way of doing that is by raising the fee for dogs tags.

The other way is to levy heavy fines on people who allow their dogs to run loose and cause a disturbance for neighbors, as well as outright destruction. Ripped garbage bags with the contents spilled out on the ground is mute testimony to the way people allow their dogs to run free.

There is no excuse for that. It is patently unfair for people who do not own dogs to be subsidizing the canine control service through their taxes.

Council should act quickly to raise dog tag fees and impose heavy fines on those dog-owners thoughtless enough to allow their animals to run free. It is the only fair thing to do.

Dump decision is long over-due

Sixteen and a half weeks have now passed since the conclusion of the Environmental Hearing Board hearings on the Highway 48 dump site. Enough time has passed, we feel, for a decision to have been reached.

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GO Transit service need is finally recognized

GO Transit service from Stouffville to Toronto would certainly be welcomed by the people in this area. The announcement recently by Premier William Davis of establishment of the service, may be viewed suspiciously by those who feel that election promises are a dime-a-dozen.

But, rather than think of it as a cynical political gimmick, we should see it as a promise and commitment from the premier of Ontario. After the election, if Mr. Davis happens to be returned to office, the government should be pressed and pressed hard on making good.

A full-blown commuter service, with frequent runs, could certainly go a long way in persuading people to leave their cars at home. The present once-a-day commuter and in-

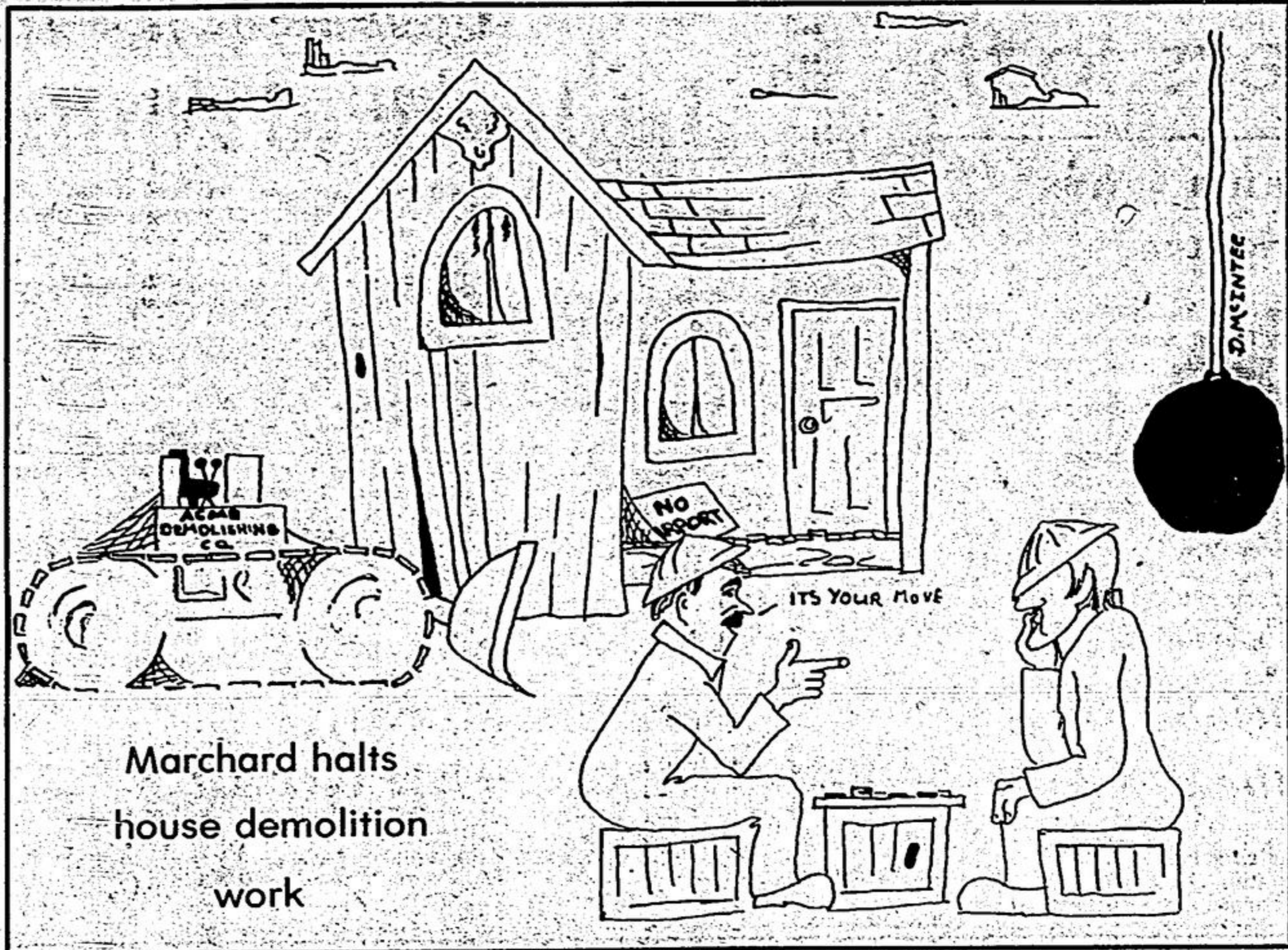
requent Gray Coach bus service will never do that.

The transit concept is sound and the need real. The government, whether Progressive Conservative or Liberal, should be pushed and prodded into making such a regular service a reality.

Bible thought for the week

From The Living Bible
 Lord, you are my refuge! Don't let me down! Save me from my enemies, for you are just! Rescue me! Bend down your ear and listen to my plea and save me. Be to me a great protecting Rock, where I am always welcome, safe from all attacks. For you have issued the order to save me. Rescue me, O God, from these unjust and cruel men. O Lord, you alone are my hope. I've trusted you from childhood. Yes, you have been with me from birth and have helped me constantly — no wonder I am always praising you!

Psalms 71:1-6



Marchard halts house demolition work



SUGAR AND SPICE

War prisoners reunion not for Bill

By BILL SMILEY

A friend brought to my notice a news story the day he wanted my opinion of its contents. The story was headed: Former War Prisoners Hold Prairie Reunion. It stated that more than 500 former prisoners of war from Britain, the United States and Canada gathered at Moose Jaw recently for a 30th reunion.

The rest of the story was a little nauseating. The reunion was held in "an atmosphere not unlike the prison camps they survived in wartime." There was barbed wire, a bazooka, two machine-guns, a German flag, people dressed up in German uniforms, and caricatures of war-time German officers.

I gave my reaction to my friend: "A bunch of middle-aged boys clinging to the only real thing that ever happened to them."

That sounds harsh, at first glance, if it's possible to glance at something and hear it. But it satisfied my friend.

"It's incredible," he said. "I too would like to see some of my old friends from prison camp, but to talk, not to play games."

I agreed. I would like to see some of my old friends from prison camp. For about half an hour. Not for a three-day reunion, with wives tagging along.

And perhaps this is why I don't attend the annual reunion of former prisoners-of-war, though I am invited every year.

And I guess I'm not the only one. There were 500 at this reunion, from three countries. Where are all the others? There were 10,000 airmen in the camp I was in, only one of many.

A couple of other items emerged from the news story. Guess where the chaps were entertained? In the officers' mess at Moose Jaw.

Secondly, it was the first reunion of POW's in 30 years to be held outside Toronto.

What does this suggest? To me, a little clique of Toronto-based ex-officers who have kept the thing going, for who knows what adolescent satisfaction.

Whatever you may have heard or read elsewhere, prisoners of war who were officers didn't suffer all that much, I know. I was there.

We were not required to work in factories or mines or on farms as were "other ranks." I know of no Canadian officer who starved to death, though grub was mighty slim in the last few months.

Perhaps, one in 1,000 was beaten up for some misdemeanor. I was one of them, and it was my own fault.

It was no bed of roses, and I don't minimize the skill and daring of those who tried to escape, but, looking back, it was all juvenile and Boy Scoutish; lookouts, secret passwords, disguises, caving-in tunnels, interminable planning, and end results about as dramatic as one degree Celsius.

There was suffering, of course, but it was not beatings and torture and starvation, not for Canadians. It was not physical, but psychological.

As far as military discipline went, most of the bodies had far more freedom than they had had on their units. But there was the simple fact that you were in jail, and somebody would shoot you if you tried to get out (quite the opposite to modern Canadian jails).

And there was the great feeling of waste, of knowing that the best years of your life were going down the drain, while other young men were kissing girls and drinking beer and staying up all night and doing all the other foolish things young men do.

There was boredom and monotony and stagnation and frustration and a little lurking fear that the latrine rumors might be true — that Hitler had ordered the SS to eliminate all P.O.W.'s when Germany faced ultimate defeat.

But there were compensations. There was a tremendous sense of oneness against the enemy. There was the fascinating meeting of different ideas and cultures, a great and almost immediate education in itself.

Throw into one room the following; a young actor from the London stage, a kid from a prairie farm, a Glasgow toughie, a Dublin hooligan, an Australian sheep farmer, a Welsh poet, a Rhodesian schoolboy, a Norwegian railworker. That's a bare sample.

Toss in an American from California and a West Indian singing calypsos and a Belgian

bookmaker and a Polish count and a few other assorted odds and sods, and you had a typical group — at least in my camp.

I wonder where they all are? Most of them, certainly, are a long way from Moose Jaw and a small group from Toronto whose members can afford to fly to a convention and try to recapture something that is gone forever.

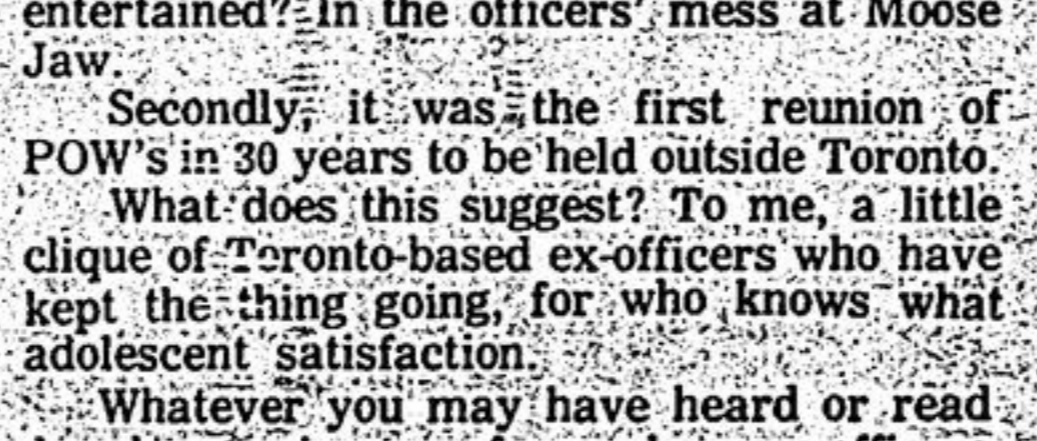
For the same reason, I have stopped going to reunions of old fighter pilots. I went to a couple. Enjoyed them. But there is a tendency to maudlinism, exaggeration and downright lying about long-gone days. These pot-bellied, blad, wife-ridden, right-leaning, class-conscious, middle-aged poops are my old comrades? No way.

My memories of prison camp and fighter-piloting are far more fun than meeting some red-faced paunch who roars over the nose from the bar: "Hey, yeah! Aren't you Jack? Jack Wiley? Yeah! We were at Sagan together. (I was at Barth). Wanna tame the wife."

All "the wife" wants is, not to meet me, but to be sure that George is on his feet for the final evening's ball, at which she will peer, with her sad, crumpled 50-year old face, at all the other sad, crumpled 50-year old ladies and wonder what the hell the kids are up to while she's hoofing it up in Moose Jaw.

I told a little of this to my friend. He understood. He was a German officer with Rommel, badly wounded in North Africa, spent three years in a U.S. prison camp, and is now a Canadian citizen.

Where are the snobs of yesteryear?



'Man in Black'

By TED WILCOX

When my friend the book representative lent me his autographed copy of "Man in Black" Johnny Cash's story "in his own words" I must confess that I was less than enthusiastic.

My only firm knowledge of Johnny Cash were through his songs "A Boy Named Sue" and "Ring of Fire." My brother and I used to dry dishes in the kitchen after lunch and listen to the latter song, among others, on the radio.

I fell into a burning ring of fire, I went down, down, down, and the flames grew higher. And it burns, burns, burns, that ring of fire.

The song never excited any great enthusiasm in me, and "A Boy Named Sue" always seemed one of kind, in a negative kind of way. Country music itself, to me, was someone singing nasally about "my bleedin' heart."

I strongly expected the book to be nothing less than hokey.

But, out of an innate sense of politeness, I read the first chapter. I liked it.

The second one was good too, as was the third — and the fourth. Now I have finished the book, and found the whole thing entertaining along with being on occasions, shall we say, "inspiring."

For one thing, there are not too many people who have lived the kind of life Johnny Cash has.

As a boy, he worked in cotton fields with his family in Arkansas and at night listened to the country and gospel music coming over the radio. He dreamed of entering the music world himself some day.

He finally realized his dream, became a star and commenced taking amphetamines as a means of staying alert and confident during his appearances. After a while, however, the combinations of "uppers" along with alcohol and "downers" just about, literally, killed Johnny Cash.

In a 1966 photograph in the book, he looks roughly like the kind of person you might expect to walk into the Savannah, Georgia men's room at midnight (I've been there): the sort of man mothers warn their daughters about.

Another picture, however, taken in 1974, shows a big, hulking, healthy and happy man.

Something had happened to Cash in the meantime.

The book centres on that "something", carrying through the theme of his Christian faith from his boyhood to the present.

I hate to say it, but in many ways the most interesting parts dealt with his lowest down-and-out days. His pill habit caused him to cancel whole tours, wreck his first marriage and do things like going out in the desert with his jeep at night and start rolling down a dark hillside with no brakes or lights on.

He was, in short, nutsy, and had enough money to wreck scores of cars, hotel rooms and guitars.

"Some people think I used to be tough and now I'm soft," Cash wrote. "The opposite is true. I used to be weaker and more vulnerable, erratic, unpredictable and even unapproachable by most."

The Cash of those days became a legend in the bars and nightclubs of Nashville and each tripped-out escapade became another "Cash story."

Trouble was, he was miserable and nearly killed himself many times over. The crisis came to a head when he was put in jail for his seventh "one night stand", this time in Lafayette, Georgia.

The sheriff, Ralph Jones, was a longtime fan of Johnny Cash's and was brokenhearted at having to lock him up. In the morning, Jones had Cash come upstairs, and gave him back his money and his pills.

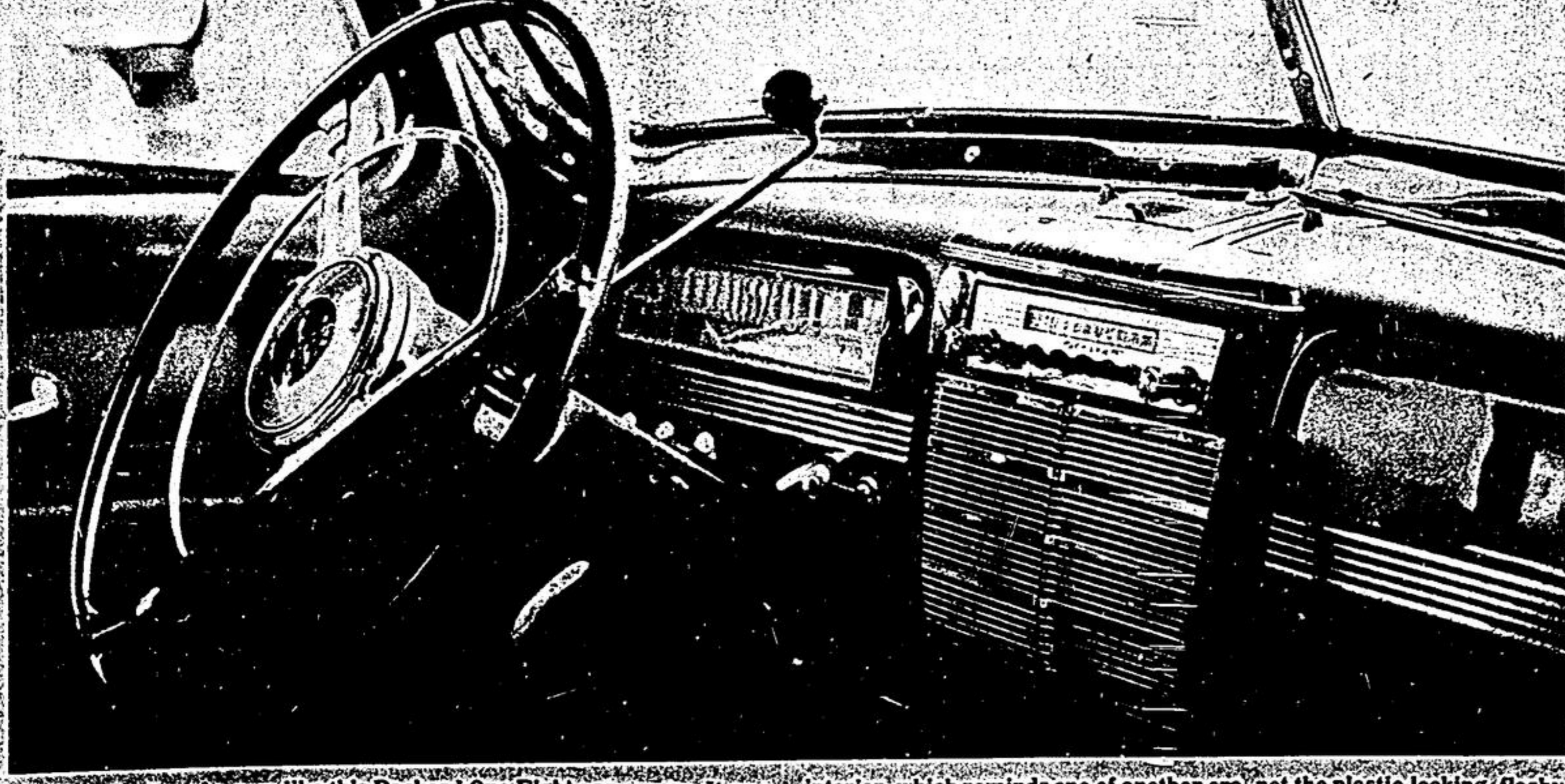
"Do with your life whatever you want to," he told him. "Just remember, you got the free will to either kill yourself, or save yourself."

And it was at that time that Cash decided to do the latter. He went home and holed up in his bedroom for 40 days while becoming "unhabeituated" to amphetamines. Friends and family watched over him during the time and kept him away from his "bennies."

What makes the book as a whole worthwhile is that it's all true. There isn't an ounce of discernible phoniness.

Country music fans, I suppose, would enjoy some behind-the-scenes incidents involving Elvis Presley, Charlie Pride and other "biggies."

Altogether, I've decided that my book representative friend is pushing a good product.



They don't make cars like this Packard One Eighty any more. It was one of the cars featured at the Whitechurch-Stouffville Museum Aug. 17 in the Antique and Classic Car Show. There was a certain elegance to the interior, which reminds one of another era, not the plastic-looking, flashy dashboard appointments of the present generation of autos. — John Montgomery.