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Editorials

Council reluctant to listen to community on pond issue

Although public pressure is mounting it seems council is still reluctant to reverse its earlier decision to destroy Lehman's pond. One encouraging sign is that June Button, in whose ward the pond is located, has had a change of heart. It seems hard to believe that only two months ago, during the municipal elections, the constant refrain we kept hearing from the council hopefuls was that they would "listen to the people."

In the face of citizen opposition to bulldozing the pond and council's refusal to reconsider their decision, it would seem that

Will new library be well funded?

The 1977 library budget has now been finalized by library board and should be on the agenda for next Tuesday's council meeting. Now that the new library is finally underway, it will be interesting to see if council will grant enough money to provide the level of service that will be possible with the new facility.

The increase, asked for, although not horrendous, is fairly substantial, but then many of the higher costs are necessitated by the basic maintenance of the new building. It would not be particularly logical to put the board in a position where they would have to curtail services when we are about to finally have a building that can function properly as a library.

Reader calls police criticism 'nit-picking'

To the author of "Flashing lights unnecessary" Dear sir, Are subjects for your editorials becoming so scarce that you must subject your readers to the likes of the above title? (Feb. 3/77 issue)

The police are subjected to more than their share of criticism without this nit-picking. A few questions to the right people may give you some insight into basic police procedures. It appears that you didn't bother to do this before jumping headlong into your little story. Possibly, the following may help clear things up for you.

Firstly, a police officer has decided it is necessary to stop a motorist. The reason doesn't really matter. This being done, we have a potential hazard. Particularly with the slippery conditions you describe and nosy, inattentive drivers who may be passing. It seems to me that the flashing red lights should give other motorists plenty of warning that there is a potential danger and afford them an opportunity to adjust their driving to the necessary.

Secondly, if you had to stand on or very

30 years ago this week

Excerpts from the February 20, 1947 issue of The Tribune.

800 jam arena

Perfect weather conditions prevailed on Wednesday night for the Stouffville Lions Club winter jamboree in the arena, and nearly eight hundred jammed the place for the fun and skating.

Feature attraction were the four young ladies, members of the Toronto Skating Club who delighted the big crowd with an exhibition of figure skating.

Thirty members of the Lions Club were out in costume, portraying from a Roman gladiator to a Sing Sing inmate. Lion Ernie Button stole the show so far as the Lions were concerned; in his policeman's regalia. Lion Ernie acted as official race starter and gave the competitors a real send off with a round of blanks from his pistol. He was assisted by Lions Harold Spofford, Fred Button, Frank Riches and John Hammersley.

Dave Stoffer copped the cash prize for the oldest person on skates.

Times have changed

Passing a show room in one of Stouffville's spick-spoken car sales places the other day, the sight of a new car on exhibition caught the eye of passerby. However, the next day it was gone. "They don't stay long," said the dealer but we hope to get better service in a few months, and if you haven't received that new car order last year, don't worry for it may be here much sooner than you expect. A recent check with motor car manufacturers in Canada's motor capital reveals that it will be about 12 months from now before you'll be able to walk in any showroom and drive your new car away.

Defends police

Dear Sir, Reactions of disbelief were felt by me when I read your editorial about the unnecessary use of flashing lights.

In the beginning of your story you claim the use of these lights are potentially dangerous, then in a few paragraphs later you explain, "when seeing these lights many motorists slow down". Slowing down is obviously travelling much safer, especially in weather conditions you have already described.

The officer in question thought of his own personal safety and the safety of others when using the lights. Had you looked a little closer you would have noticed the police cruiser was white, I believe that's the same colour as snow.

The policeman who approaches a car with an unknown occupant does so at a risk to his life.

If I were a policeman, on a back street, alone late at night, I would certainly want others to witness what was going on in the event I needed assistance.

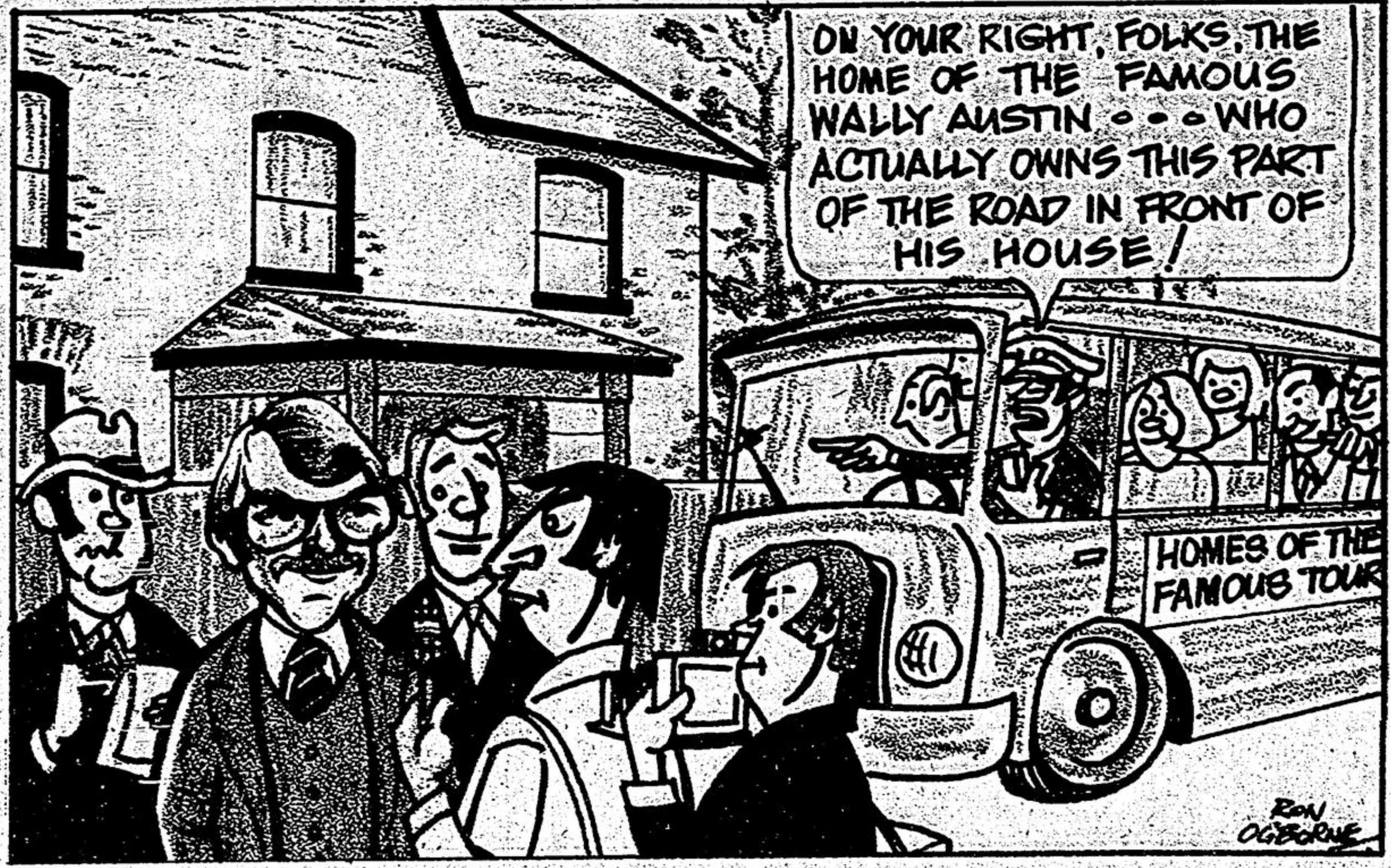
I was born in a house on Main St. 22 years ago. I consider myself a long-time resident.

If and when the police stop me I'll insist they turn their lights on, just to avoid being struck by someone who claims they didn't (see me).

WILLIAM T. KEEPING
 Stouffville.

P.S. Every time I turn around someone is downgrading the law enforcement system of this country. It's about time they were given praise for a job well done.

Editor's Note: We don't like to be picky but we feel it is our duty to point out to you that snow on the Main St. of Stouffville is rarely if ever white.



SUGAR AND SPICE

Smiley has the wintertime blues

By BILL SMILEY

AH, the little ironies of life. Had a letter from son Hugh the other day, complaining gently about the heat in Paraguay. Said it was between 90 and 100 in the shade every day and only decently livable at night.

Last night it was 30 below around this burg. And that's real temperature: Fahrenheit. Today it was about 20 below all day, and is heading for another 30-plus below as I write.

As of today, we've had 142 inches of snow. Migawd, that's just short of 12 feet, and winter just begun. Who says we aren't a hardy race? Or are we just stupid?

At the moment, I'm a little short of breath and temper. I've just come in from wrestling two cars to life, shovelling enough driveway to get them off the street, and hitting the side of the garage - another belt when I slipped sideways.

My garage is one of those ancient wooden structures in which those realistic car owners of the '20's and '30's used to jack up their Fords and Essexes and McLaughlin Buicks and leave them sensibly suspended for the winter.

A modern car, even an old battle-wagon like my 1967 Dodge, has about an inch and a half clearance on each side, if you want to put it in the garage. And I do. In the summer, the birds poop all over the windshield if I leave her out. In winter, Winter poops all over the whole thing with ice and snow if I leave her out. So I put her in.

But that clearance is pretty skinny. The two-by-four that supports the joist or whatever that supports the roof of my garage is no longer a two-by-four. My wife and daughter have no idea whether the car is four feet wide or six. Accordingly, that two-by-four is now about the thickness of six toothpicks, and any day the whole structure will cave in.

I have, for the moment, two cars. They are located in one garage, and directly behind it, one driveway just as long as a garage. This morning, the car in the garage, the 10-year-old, started like a rocket heading for Mars. The new one, the five-year-old, groaned twice, grunted once, and died. There I am, with one perky car humming merrily in the garage, and one great lump of cold, dead metal sitting right behind it. It's enough to make a saint swear. And I ain't no saint.

But then I think of how lucky I am, compared to our ancestors. I have an oil furnace that is practically supporting the entire province of Alberta, but at least I don't have to cut wood all summer to stay warm all winter. I have a wife who wants to drive the car that is working, the one in the garage, when the one behind it won't start, but at least I don't have to hang her washing out in this weather and have it turn into instant white boards, as I used to have to do for my mother back around 'ough-34.

I'm a school teacher, in my spare time. But I don't have to trudge two miles to the school, with snow to my navel, light the fire in the old box-stove, and sit there shuddering with cold until the students arrive. I just get to

WINDOW ON WILDLIFE

Jack-rabbits not always native here

By ART BRIGGS JUDE

Under the fluffy surface, the snow was hard from previous winds. The dog ran over this unseen crust with ease, sniffing and snorting at every mark in the new snow. Only on occasion did she flounder; where a hedge-row or fence-line had lessened the winds firming effect. It was in such places I was glad to have the snowshoes, for judging from the protruding posts, there was more than a three foot buildup of the white blanket. My webbed trail crossed an open field, followed a row of naked trees, then cut into an old corn patch. Although only the odd sign of corn was visible, other signs nearby proved to be of greater interest.

At a place where some of the dried stalks showed above the white surface, my dog discovered a large hole in the snow bank. It was the workings of a jack-rabbit, digging down to feed on some of the hidden cobs. I looked carefully at the animals track, where the dog had not disturbed it, and whistled softly. For this track was a dandy, an exceptionally large track, even when I allowed for some fluffy surface distortion. I glanced up just in time to see a huge long-eared hare explode from the snow in front of the dog; the chase was on.

It's hard to believe that the European Hare or 'jack-rabbit' as we know it, was not always a part of our native fauna. Even harder to accept is the fact that all the multitudes of jacks seen in southern Ontario over the past 65 years are the result of one or two pairs of imports. But this is indeed true. The story though really begins at Brantford.

In 1912, at the Bow Park Farm on the Grand River, the manager, a German immigrant, brought several young European Hares out from Danzig. Like many old country people he probably longed for some of the old familiar ties. Whether this was behind his thinking or if he had ideas on marketing the animals, no one really knows. At any rate, hares being hares, and long noted for their incredible wildness, his new stock grew and became so hard to handle he finally gave them the run of the property. That winter they crossed over the river ice and went wild.

The jack-rabbit's appearance in Brant and neighbouring counties was at first welcomed by sportsmen and farmers alike. Its presence filled a void in the open countryside providing meat and sport during the long winter season. But as these big bunnies increased and spread during the following years, the boon for the hunter became a bust for the farmer. Young orchards, seedlings and berry patches were girdled and destroyed, tender plants were nipped off with disastrous results. A mad hare was on the march and the farmers called for help.

Invitations were sent out to hunters and sportsmen's groups to come and shoot the ravaging rabbits. Soon, caravans of cars and bus-loads of nimrods were leaving St. Catharines, Hamilton, and Toronto. Their destination, the outlying areas near Wainfleet, Cayuga, Hagersville, Paris and Orangeville. The old method of hunting the thickets and woodlots for cottontails and snowshoe rabbits was changed. Now lines of men spaced gunshot distance apart (or closer) pushed across the open fields and croplands, while others spread out and waited in advance at the next concession road. The term 'jack drive' was born. In this region, local groups from Markham, Stouffville, and Uxbridge joined the legions of hunters across southern Ontario

school as best I can, and the students don't arrive at all. Half of them come by bus and the buses can't get through the storm. Half of the remaining half look out the window, say to hell with it, tell their mothers they have the flu, and roll over and go back to sleep.

Oh, she was rugged, in those old days, in a winter like this, with home-made insulation and red-hot stove-pipes. No wonder many of the old-timers never got out of their long johns from October to May. That's why we moderns feel the cold so much. We don't have a half-inch of personal insulation, made up of sweat and skin and dirt, under the underwear.

What really baffles me is why the very first settlers of Canada stayed here, after experiencing one winter. Things must have been pretty rotten, back in France and England and Ireland, to make them tough it out in this "few arpents of snow," as Voltaire dismissed it so casually.

And what completely stymies me is that the first white settlers found anybody alive in this country, when they first arrived. I simply cannot understand how the Indians survived a winter like this.

You think your arthritis is bad, Aunt Mabel. How would you like to live on corn and sex, in a tepee or a longhouse, for five months, with a little smoky fire burning on the floor, and 12 feet of snow outside. And no television!

Do you realize your great-grandfather, when grub got low, probably had to walk eight or 10 miles to the nearest store, and home with a sack of flour on his shoulder and a package of tea in his pocket?

On the worst of days, I can battle my way four blocks to the supermarket and come home laden with grapes and oranges and fresh meat, and if I've had a big day on the stock market, even a pound of coffee.

Oh, we have it soft, soft, compared with them. Tomorrow morning I may be as surly as my grandfather was, if the car won't start. But tonight, I'm going to eat a gourmet dinner (stew, I looked in the pot), and sit in my warm house watching, in living color, a movie about the South Seas. What a rotten spoiled lot we are!

