



The Tribune



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Established 1888
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Published every Thursday at 54 Main St., Stouffville, Ont. Tel. 640-2100; Toronto phone 361-1680. Single copies 20c. Subscriptions \$10.00 per year in Canada, \$24.00 elsewhere. Member of Audit Bureau of Circulation, Canadian Community Newspapers Association and Ontario Weekly Newspapers Association. Second class mail registration number 0876.

The Tribune is one of the Inland Publishing Co. Limited group of suburban newspapers, which includes the Ajax/Whitby/Pickering News Advertiser, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Post, Etobicoke Gazette, Markham Economist and Sun, Newmarket/Aurora Era, Oakville Beaver, Oshawa This Week, and Mississauga News.

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Editorials

Mayor proves crowd-pleaser dumps tub in Lake Ontario

Mayor Gordon Ratcliff, by his virtuoso performance last week in the mayor's bath tub race at the CNE, once again displayed the keen political acumen that has kept him on top

in the dog-eat-dog hard-scrabble world of Stouffville politics.

Of all the mayors assembled there that day, and some from pretty large and powerful municipalities, our mayor was the only one with the intuitive sense, so necessary in political life, to immediately take stock of the situation and without hesitation to act accordingly.

Floating around out there in his tub, Mr. Ratcliff realized that those thousands of cheering fans were not interested in watching a bunch of bone-dry mayors zap across the finish line.

The mayor realized that if he failed to act, men, women and children alike would go away disappointed and perhaps further embittered against our political processes.

When he felt the right time had come, Mr. Ratcliff upset his bath tub, unflinchingly throwing himself into the frigid waters of Lake Ontario—alone and defenceless against the elements.

At whatever cost, the mayor was determined to stand by that motto that should be, but isn't always, the watchword of all politicians, "Always give the people what they want."

As a result of following his instincts it was Mr. Ratcliff, although he never even got close to, much less crossing, the finish line, who walked away the hero of the day.

It was his sterling deeds that were shown again—and again on the television news programs and that are talked about wherever groups gather to talk of daring exploits.

There is no doubt about it, Mayor Gordon Ratcliff stole the show, at the same time bringing renown to Whitchurch-Stouffville in our centennial year.

Letter to the editor

Appreciate support

Dear John,

On behalf of the fifteen players on the Ken May Midgets, we would like to thank all the parents and interested citizens of Stouffville who took the time to venture to Kitchener and support the team. Their fine performance, we feel, directly reflects the fine support they received, by far, the best given any team participating.

Special thanks to Mr. Gallamore, Mr. Dart, and Mrs. Jackson for their kind and generous assistance.

The OASA expounds the theory "play the game." When people show they care for how it's played, it's much easier to play it well.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
GERRY RATCLIFF
PETER SANDERSON
(coaches)



SUGAR AND SPICE

Golf is a silly game, and yet...

By BILL SMILEY

A GREAT many people look down their noses at the game of golf. Scornfully they ask: "How can an adult with a mind walk around a few acres of manicured pasture hitting a little ball with a long stick?"

And I am inclined to agree with them. It's a silly game and at least once a week I determine that I'm going to quit. But it's just about as easy to quit golf as it is to quit smoking.

It's a game that reduces strong men to tears of impotent rage and turns honest women into cheats who move their ball from a bad lie when nobody is looking.

Even the parlance of the game is ridiculous, combining terms from the butcher shop (hook, slice, shank) with those from an aviary (birdie, eagle) and those from a horror movie (bogey, scull).

It's an expensive game. Membership in a club can run from \$300 a year to \$5,000 or more. Even the basic equipment can easily run to \$500 for clubs, cart, bag, shoes.

Those who don't belong to a club can pay as you go, eight or 10 dollars a round, and add to that three \$2 balls lost in the bush and a couple of drinks in the club house and you're getting up around \$20 for four hours of muttering at a little ball, pursuing a little ball, and occasionally hitting that little ball so sweetly that nothing can quite compare with the feeling, and you are hooked all over again on this silliest of sports.

Come to think of it, golf isn't a sport, any more than chess is. It's more like a way of life. And there are a lot worse ways of life. For a teenager, once bitten by the bug, it's like a disease. But a kid who has played 27 or 36 holes of golf on a Saturday is not very likely to be out smashing windows in the local school on Saturday night. He's too pooped.

For the old-timer who plays nine holes every day with his foursome of cronies, it's a lot better life than sitting around the Legion Hall or the beverage room grousing about the government. He still has a challenge. He knows perfectly well that one of these days, if the wind is right, his arthritis isn't acting up, and the dam* club will connect with the dam* ball often enough, he can bring his score down equal to his age.

An 80-year-old can still play golf and enjoy it, but you don't see too many of them surf-boarding or parachute jumping.

Of course, it's an evil game. I've heard it rumored that there is sometimes betting involved, especially among the older guys, sometimes staggering wagers of as much as a nickel a hole.

And then, of course, it's a dangerous game, physically, emotionally and psychologically. You can be thumped on the head by a golf ball travelling about 300 miles a hour.

You can be struck by lightning right at the top of your backswing, if it's storming. Some golfers have gone into sand-traps and never been seen again.

Emotionally, it can turn a calm college professor, the epitome of reason, into a raging maniac who is capable of throwing all his clubs into a water hazard and stalking from the course, purple-eared. I have seen one of the sweetest-natured chaps I've ever known, after hitting the ball three yards three times in a row, put his foot in the middle of a perfectly good four wood, bend it double, and hurl the crippled club deep into the nearest woods. I have heard a poised young matron, a regular church-goer, using language on the golf course that would curdle the blood of a drunken Danish seaman.

And if the game doesn't scar you physically and/or emotionally, it will probably destroy you psychologically.

There are 40 people watching as you take your three practice swings, each one a marvel of symmetry, a machine that is grooved and oiled.

You step up to the ball and hit it 60 yards straight up and 20 feet ahead of you. Or right over the fence on to the road. Or straight into the woods. While the gallery snickers discreetly and you desperately try to grin nonchalantly.

It can get worse. Your wife, whom you can outdrive by 60 yards, steps up and hits a beauty right down the middle, and then gives you one of those looks. Marriages may be made in heaven, but they can become unmade on a golf course.

Golfers do have a couple of things going for them. For one thing, they're extremely generous. They'll tell you, without charge, what is wrong with your backswing, your downswing, your stance, your grip and the kind of balls you are using.

For another, they're tough. They wouldn't think of walking to church in the rain, but they'll play 18 holes in a torrent. On sultry summer days when people are dropping with heat stroke, and on cold fall days when people are huddled by the fireplace, the golfers are out there, hacking and hewing around the course.

Well, there you are. The game is silly; expensive, evil, and dangerous. Golfers run the risk of being scarred for life in one or more ways and should be locked up for their own safety. I'm definitely going to quit.

And yet... And yet... The other day I had three good drives. Tuesday my putting was improving. Wednesday I'd have had a birdie if I hadn't hit the tree. Yesterday I was chipping well.

I think maybe I'll give her one more go. It's all got to come together one day. Surely.

30 years ago this week

Excerpts from the September 4, 1947 issue of The Tribune.

Farm hand absconds

Like a thief in the night Albert Denardo, employed by Mr. William Smith, Gormley farmer, folded up suddenly and left for parts unknown. He was supposed to be taking in the exhibition on Monday, but he never returned, and later it was discovered that he had taken a wrist watch valued at \$35, and a signet ring valued at \$15. Further, he had pried open a strong box in the home expecting to find money or other valuables, but was disappointed in this effort.

A strange thing in connection with the man is that Denardo was well-liked by the Smiths. He was an excellent worker, seldom left the farm, and when he did, it is now recalled that he always wore dark glasses. He never wore glasses about the farm, however.

Constable Clarence Wideman is investigating. He located a torn up letter giving the name of a person in Sault Ste Marie which may prove of help in locating the missing man.

Denardo was secured by Mr. Smith through the office of the Farm Service Force on the 28th of July, and from the first day, the new farm hand proved efficient and most agreeable about the place.

Thieves rob theatre

Ransacking the Stanley Theatre over the weekend in search of money, thieves found the hidden cash drawer with about \$20 in silver but they overlooked \$200 hidden in a brown envelope, and which no doubt was the object of their search.

Manager Bob Bone had been leaving the receipts in the theatre, but he will not do so any more. Evidently persons who were familiar with what is done with the theatre receipts were in on the robbery, and if finger prints were taken this could ultimately be proven.

The thieves disturbed everything in the place in their search for money, and when they came upon the cash drawer with the silver, concluded that the main receipts were not in the building, and they departed through the main entrance where they forced their way in.

Perfect turmoil

Stouffville residents, or many of them, were thrown into a perfect turmoil last Thursday, when a road construction gang descended upon the town, and in a few hours transformed our macadam top roadway, extending through the whole village, into a veritable gravel road.

A rush was made to the office of the reeve, only to find that this official was quite unaware of what was going on. However, he promptly contacted the county road engineer in Toronto and was assured by him that the job being done by the Toronto and York Road Commission would prove entirely satisfactory within a period of two or three weeks, when the oil applied to the surface before the small stone was laid, had a chance to penetrate to the surface.



WINDOW ON WILDLIFE

Slithering serpents make people shiver

By ART BRIGGS-JUDE

To the average person, a snake is a slimy repulsive creature. It's the lowest form of slithering reptile, and one that should be feared, avoided, and if possible killed. This built in apprehension is quite understandable. During the course of history, fact and fiction about snakes has become so entwined, that any separation today is hard to come by. To prove a point, I'll mention several of the common stories concerning snakes, and although they've been proven untrue, a large percentage of people will still cling to these old beliefs.

First of all, snakes are not slimy. But unless you handle one, you'll have to take the word of those who have. They'll tell you they are really smooth and glossy. And about that flicking tongue; the forked stinger of the legendary serpent. Well it's not a stinger, but rather a harmless sense organ used in smelling. In fact all snakes, poisonous or not have these tongues. Then of course there's the ancient tale about milk snakes sucking the milk from a cow's udder. I thought that one had gone down with the Titanic, but judging from a recent conversation overheard at the sales barn, it's still being bandied about. This story it seemed had so much merit, they even named the species milk snake because of its cow-killed exploits. But alas, if the farmer who shed the so-called culprit had taken the time to open up the dead snake's gullet, he'd have found rather than traces of milk, the remains of rats and mice. The dairyman had in reality, eliminated a better mousetrap than many of the cats in his barn.

A few years ago, when I was a Rover

Skipper in St. Catharines, I wanted to make sure my scout crew were familiar with all the various snakes in Ontario. Part of the program involved making a temporary snake collection to study and then release. One of the first specimens taken emphasized in short order, the absolute fear some people have in regard to snakes. Returning from a fishing expedition to the rapids of the lower Niagara River, I spotted a really large milk snake stretched on a rock-ledge sunning himself. Now if you've ever lived in that area, or been down in the gorge, you probably have heard that its rugged terrain was the last stronghold of the Diamond back rattlesnake in Ontario. My companion and neighbour must have known this too, for when I asked him to hold my fishing rod while I reached up and deftly took the snake off the rock, he gasped and disappeared up the trail. Later as I walked across the Niagara Parkway towards the car, with the big wriggler cradled inconspicuously inside my windbreaker, several groups of tourists got up and left their picnic lunches. I was only then did I notice several feet of the reptile were dangling from the waistband of my jacket.

Incidentally, this same 40-inch mottled beauty, caused a bit of a stir around our own premises, two days before it was to be released. During their short stay with us, the various snakes were housed in specially constructed boxes in a walk-in space under our side verandah. Somehow after one of the instruction periods, the lid on this particular snake box was not positioned correctly. As a result the milk snake squeezed out, climbed

the stone foundation, slipped through a hole in the screen, and dropped down on the cellar floor. Early the following afternoon, the Hydro man entered the basement to read the meter. A rustling sound amongst some wood in a corner caused him to swing the beam of his flashlight in that direction. He passed my wife on the landing taking three steps at a time.

Actually all snakes are quite the escape artists. Once I was called to the General Hospital to identify a fat crossbanded snake, that two young boys had captured along the banks of the old Welland Canal. Unfortunately this disturbed reptile had nipped one of the youngsters and there was some distress that it was a poisonous species. Having satisfied all concerned it was a harmless water snake, we prevailed on the staff to let us take it and release it in the country.

That evening a photographer friend of mine was picking me up so I could show him where to get some pictures of nesting bluebirds. The photo trip was almost cancelled right then, when I told him what was in the flat box I was carrying. However, after much persuasion he was finally convinced the box was escape-proof. A short while later we were travelling down the winding road towards Rockway in his small English car, remarking on the different birds that crossed our route. As we swept around one curve, I glanced down at the wooden box held firmly on my lap. Through the screen, I could see the container was empty, the big banded snake was gone. I tried to break the news gently to my friend, by suggesting we pull over to the

side of the road for a break, but he sensed what had happened. He immediately put the Austin into a violent braking manoeuvre that reminded me of a crash landing I once experienced in England during the war. After the dust settled, I called to my driver who was some distance down the road, and informed him the snake was not hurt. In fact it was resting quite comfortably under his front seat. To further reassure him, I picked up the three foot escapee and taking it into a nearby field, released it beside a rush-fringed pond. Needless to say, we continued the trip in a somewhat more sombre mood.

But apart from such harmless happenings, there are plenty of fabled tales pertaining to our native snakes. Many of these fictions were brought here by people of other countries, whose warmer climates foster the development of many kinds of deadly snakes. Contrary to such belief however, there are no water moccasins or copperheads in this land of the trillium. And no snakes that hypnotize their prey, or that can outrun a horse. In fact our only adder or sand viper is in reality a harmless hog-nosed snake.

The fact that we do have one poisonous species, the Massasauga rattler casts a shadow on all the other harmless snakes we may encounter. It's too bad more people who cottage and camp doesn't take the time to read up on these beneficial and most interesting members of their wildlife community. It would at least spare some creatures in nature's scheme, and at best influence their own children with the true facts about snakes. Let them live.