



The Tribune

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Editorials Response magnificent

It seems everybody is heartily sick of the raging blizzards we have been suffering through this winter but we must admit that these trying conditions do seem to bring the best out in a lot of people.

A case in point, of course, is last week's storm which with its 115 kilometer per hour winds and white-outs brought traffic to a complete halt.

A goodly number of motorists, some from neighbouring communities and others from hundreds of miles away, were stranded in town.

The Legion generously opened up the hall as a temporary hostel while a small group of men and women members hustled up food and bedding for the guests.

Only a small number of Legion members

were actually involved but this was not due to a lack of willing helpers but because those initially involved felt they could handle the situation without dragging a lot of other people out into that horrendous storm.

We have especially kind words for the County Breaker club members who used their CB's to direct people to shelter at the Legion and to safety in the smaller hamlets as well.

The club also used snowmobiles to rescue motorists from their stranded cars and they found local accommodation for the motorists who were perhaps a bit too old to sleep comfortably on the floor at the Legion.

Many people place CBers in the same category as people who use Fuzzbusters and regard them as a group solely interested in getting away with driving at illegal and reckless speeds.

As far as the County Breakers are concerned, though, nothing could be further from the truth. Again and again, at accident scenes and in disastrous storms the CBers have proved themselves a responsible group with a sincere interest in providing aid in times of trouble.

Of course it is not just service club members who have risen to the occasion in these trying times. We have spoken with several people who reported getting stranded on some rural sideroad in the area. Invariably the drivers would go to the nearest house and it seems just as invariable that they were immediately invited in and given shelter for the night.

Not to mention the efforts made by police, school bus drivers and a host of others who were called upon to perform.

Without this responsive and helpful attitude winter in this climate would be unbearable.

Editor's mail

Human error pleases mom

Dear Sir:

Those decision makers at the school board who decided not to run the school buses last Friday have my gratitude for erring on the side of caution rather than taking a chance.

I, for one, would much rather my children did not risk discomfort, injury, or possibly worse in a school bus trying to get through a blizzard and white-outs.

ANN GRIFFITHS
 R.R. 3, Stouffville

Kids' stuff

Genie warned me not to be greedy

One day when I was at the beach, I found a bottle. The bottle was bright green. It shone like a diamond behind the rocks.

Carefully I picked it up and pulled out the cork. Inside was a tiny genie. In a puff of white smoke he floated out of the bottle. He started to grow! Soon he stood right in front of me. He said that I could have three wishes, but he warned me not to be greedy.

I sat down and thought. Finally I decided what I wanted to ask for. I asked for gold, diamonds and rubies.

The genie granted my wishes. I blinked and there before my eyes were the sparkling treasures.

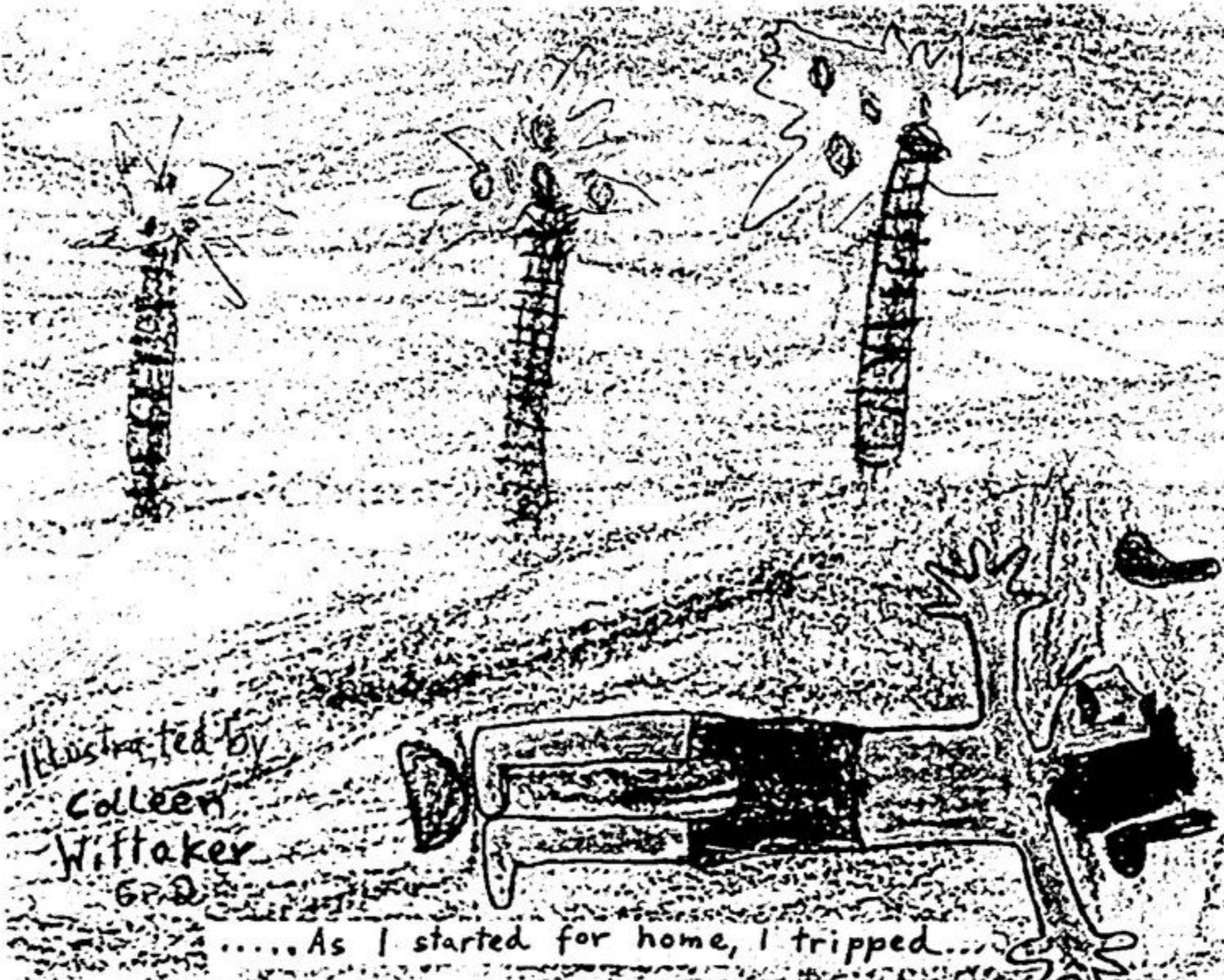
I started at the shining rubies and sparkling diamonds. Running to treasure, I started to fill my pockets. Quickly I dropped the rubies into my hat and filled my shoes too. The pieces of gold I stuffed into my socks.

As I started running for home, I tripped over a hidden rock. The rubies tumbled out of my hand and the diamonds rolled from my pockets.

Two holes were torn in my socks. The gold dropped into the soft sand. I lay on the sand and started to cry. Behind me I heard the genie laugh and say,

"I warned you not to be too greedy."

This story was written by Mrs. Robbins grade 2 class at Orchard Park P.S.



Illustrated by
 Colleen
 Willaker
 6-2-78

He goes anywhere I go

I was in a rocket, ready to take off. 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1- Blasst off. Here I am in orbit.

It is scary up here. There's the milky way, the big dipper and the little dipper. I see Orion's belt. Well, there's my destination. I will see you when I land - bing bing crash bang.

Well, here I am at Mars. There's a Martian. He looks funny. He is green and

has two pieces of string on his square head. He is looking right at - HELP ME! - Good thinking Fido! We have no time to lose, let's hurry into the rocket and take off home.

I forgot to tell you about my dog. His name is Fido. He goes anywhere I go.

Mike is a grade 4 student at Whitchurch Highland.

Breakfast for ten

By Jason Lamure

The situation at the breakfast table was outrageous.

Eight young children helping themselves to whatever they could grab hold of in the kitchen.

One sweet young child ran up to his father as he emerged from the doorway and threw his gooey little arms around his dad's right leg, ruining Dad's best suit.

"Billy!" thundered Dad as he received a milk-sodden Cheerio in the eye.

Dad picked his way through toppling milk containers, flying cookies, smelly diapers, mouldy processed cheese and grimy apple cores.

He finally made it to the door and the safety of the car.

He was halfway to work before he realized it was Saturday.

Jason is a grade 9 student at SDSS

... About this Anderson Intergalactic Haulage application ...

Well, we think more study is needed before we make a decision on the terminal.



Famous Case of the Vanishing Beard

By John Montgomery

One rather disconcerting aspect of working on a weekly newspaper is that if you really blow something, sooner or later, everybody in town is going to know about it.

This is especially true when the incident appears to some few persons, usually those individuals with questionable taste in humour, as being uproariously funny.

Such is the famous case of Ed Macdonald and the vanishing beard. The only reason I am divulging this most embarrassing story is, as I have already mentioned, because almost everybody already knows about it.

I partially spilled the beans last month in the interview with Centennial Committee Chairman Keith Sutherland. Keith, I suspect on purpose, put me in a rather difficult position.

I asked him to tell me of any funny incidents from the centennial and, laughing heartily throughout, he recounted the rather sad tale of the editor of the local paper who went over to this guy's house to take some pictures of the guy shaving off his beard in order to have the mandatory clean start for the Centennial Beard Growing Contest.

I remonstrated that this was hardly a funny story and urged him to take the question a little more seriously and come up with something fit for publication.

Keith just sat chuckling as more details came to mind. "No, to be honest," he said, a sure indication he was being less than honest, "that is the only one I can think of - and there must be thousands," he concluded, theatrically rolling his eyes heavenward.

Of course I was in a spot. I finally resolved I had to use the anecdote, as it was the only one I could get.

So, having already divulged an abbreviated account, I might as well tell all.

Ed Macdonald, as everybody knows, is a not very tall and not very thin teacher from Orchard Park who at that time had a magnificent animal growth of black beard. To say that Ed's beard was merely luxurious is to shamefully underestimate it.

There were tremendous photographic possibilities in images of Ed's rotund face contorted this way and that to accept the razor, the black beard bristling with shaving cream, and the unheun remnants of beard taking on ever more bizarre shapes.

There I was, perched uncomfortably on the bathroom vanity in a triangular corner bordered by the sink, the wall and the bathroom mirror.

Ed was in de rigueur black t-shirt, deliberately and carefully shaving as two wide-eyed little children gawped in at the door at daddy being photographed while shaving.

My entire weight was perched on one point of one buttock as I tried to balance myself while holding the camera in one hand the flash in the other.

The pictures were coming very fast. Ed would delicately pinch his nose with stubby forefinger and thumb, haul his head back and have a tug at his moustache. I snapped pictures of three-quarter moustaches, half moustaches and infinitesimal fractions of moustaches, all at close range.

Then I took pictures of faces half clean-shaven and half ferociously bearded and so on, even a few arty shots in the mirror, until there was nothing left.

Just as Ed was scraping away the last remnants of persistent bristle, I came to frame number 22 on what I believed to be a 20 picture roll of film. With an almost intuitive grasp of the situation I immediately concluded that something was not right.

The something turned out to be no film in the camera. There was, of course, no going back as by this time Ed's face was smooth as a baby's bum. Other than a few nose hairs, he was barett.

Ed laughed and laughed. Jim Doble (now councillor Jim) dropped by and he laughed and laughed. I didn't laugh.

Of course the story spread like wildfire and even now, some 10 months later, there are still some people around town who never fail to mention it when we meet.



WINDOW ON WILDLIFE

Winged weasel

By ART BRIGGS-JUDE

While driving along the Bethesda sideroad this past week, I noticed a robin-sized bird perched on the overhead wires. Being in no great hurry, I eased my vehicle over to the side and focused the field glasses on the long-tailed avian.

As I suspected, it turned out to be a shrike, an interesting songbird, that oddly enough is also a predator.

That this sinister flyer is much feared by other songsters was soon evidenced when a small flock of wintering goldfinches appeared. In a flash of black and white plumage, the shrike sped hawk-like into the undulating formation, and came within an eyelash of downing one of the small seed-eaters. After this unsuccessful sorty it returned to perch and scan the landscape for the next unsuspecting target.

When the bird returned to the wire, it gave me an added chance to closely study some of its features. From the overall gray and black appearance, I could see it was a mature bird, for last summers young are predominantly brown at this season. The black face mask stopping just in front of the eye, and the light flecking on the gray sides and flanks, told me it was a northern shrike. And just to make sure, I checked the lower bill. Sure enough it was lighter in colour than the black-notched upper mandible.

Incidentally, its this heavy hooked beak that serves as the bird's deadly weapon. In many instances, it uses it to strike its victim a stunning blow to the back of the head, or on other occasions to simply grab its prey in a vise-like grip. For the feet of this peculiar predator are very weak in comparison to other small flesh-eaters, and except for perching, play no part in the actual capture.

Unlike the true raptors then, that hold their prey with their claws while they tear and devour it, the shrike has to rely on other means. Thus we see Nature endowing this species with a unique method to overcome its weakness. Utilizing any nearby thorn, twist of barbed wire, or small suitable twig-fork, the shrike impales its quarry in much the same fashion as a butcher hangs his meat. Little wonder then, that this bold flyer is known by the popular name of butcher bird.

Actually there are two species of butcher bird that can be observed locally. The northern shrike, the larger of the two, comes to us only during the winter season, from its home in the far boreal forest. And because of its winter residence here, its prey consists of

mice and small birds. The loggerhead shrike on the other hand, is a summer resident in these parts, and as such adds many large insects such as beetles and grasshoppers to its predatory diet.

At first glance, shrikes somewhat resemble mockingbirds, with their gray bodies, black wings and tails. Closer observation will reveal that while the mockingbird is a slim trim fellow, with fine lines, the butcher bird is heavy set with a black mask like a bandit. Another tip to help you identify this sinister songbird from afar, is its habit of holding its tail horizontal when perched and quite often flicking it.

A few years ago I was watching a flock of cedar waxwings as they fed in a clump of highbush cranberry. To my surprise, a shrike dove into the startled group and flattened one of the crested birds. I ran over to where the downed berry-eater lay while the bold assailant, showing no fear, perched nearby waiting for me to leave.

On another occasion, while walking through an old orchard, I spotted a butcher bird perched on a dead limb above a brush pile. Its attention seemed to be drawn to this clump of cuttings, so I decided to wait a bit and see what the bird was up to. Presently it darted down and began hovering over the pile, moving from one edge to the other. The ground was frozen with a light dusting of snow and soon I was able to make out a mouse scurrying around under the outer edge of the clump. As long as the little rodent stayed under that protective cover he was safe, so the shrike was trying to scare him out in the open.

It was then I noticed a freshly impaled meadow mouse on the wire fence beside me, so it sure looked like these scare tactics had already been successful. But if the shrike had procured one cache of food, why was it so keen on taking a second victim? From these and other observations in the past, it seems to me these beady-eyed birds do on occasion kill for a pastime. When they do display this trait like their counterparts in the animal kingdom, they could in effect be called winged weasels.

Moving from my observation place behind the trunk of an old apple tree, I walked towards the brush pile. The determined shrike, relinquishing its attack, flew along the fence row to perch in protest a few posts away. Stepping on one side of the brushpile, I watched the little fat mouse scramble out and crossing the snow-patched ground, disappear under a stack of old baskets.