



The Tribune

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Editorials

Town mayor retires a winner

Following eight rewarding years on Whitchurch-Stouffville Council, including six years as mayor, Gordon Ratcliff is calling it quits.

He will not seek re-election in November. Many will look on this as the mayor's only mistake; that he should have defended the position he's served so well.

However, comment of this kind comes too late. Mayor Ratcliff's already made up his mind and we doubt if persuasion by any ratepayer or this newspaper, will change it.

It's common practice at such times, for the media within a municipality, to cite the accomplishments of an individual nearing the end of his (or her) political career. We find this difficult, however. For it is not what

Gordon Ratcliff did that will be remembered here, but what he was — not a politician, but a friend.

Despite the pressing problems of the Town's highest office, Mayor Ratcliff's personality never changed. He would make decisions, but he would make no enemies, something that can be said of few people in politics.

Gordon Ratcliff's decision to step down at the end of the current year, is his own; not prompted out of fear of being beaten, but rather, a desire to see someone else have a chance.

It was Mayor Ratcliff himself who put it well when he said: "I gave it the best I had". No one could ask more.

He's a "take-charge guy"

Every wail of the Town fire alarm doesn't denote "the real thing".

On many occasions, there's no fire at all, but this doesn't lessen the urgency of each call. Motor vehicle collisions, drownings, heart attacks; a multitude of emergencies demand instant response.

For a fire department that depends 100 per cent on volunteers, the Whitchurch-Stouffville unit stands second to none. We know this better than anyone; we've been chasing the red truck around town more than 25 years.

While reacting to emergency situations in the shortest possible time is important, accomplishing something upon arrival is more important still. This separates the experienced from the inexperienced; the men from the boys.

Early Thursday morning, we attended a multi-vehicle collision at the intersection of Woodbine Avenue and the Stouffville-Gormley Road. All the injured except one had been admitted to hospital. One driver was still trapped in his car. That's when we observed the proficiency of a Whitchurch-Stouffville fireman — George Wilson.

While he'd be the last to proclaim his own importance, (more likely down-play it), it's an accepted fact that, on calls of this kind, George is "a take-charge guy".

We say so, because we've watched him react to life-and-death situations in a manner that only comes with years on the job. Witnesses to Thursday's tragedy will know what we mean.

Gov't to be commended

The Davis Government is to be commended for its prompt action in dealing with the transportation strike in Metro. Despite the foot-dragging of the NDP, something which certainly did not enhance their image, the Government of Premier Davis, acted with correctness and despatch, supported by the Liberals.

This strike against the public could have dragged on for weeks, bringing chaos, inconvenience and hardship to thousands. Once upon a time strikes involved only capital and labor. Now a large percentage are a direct measure taken by labor against the public. Such action cannot be tolerated.

These walkouts, slowdowns, workings to rule and the currently popular rotating strikes cause inconvenience and even danger to ordinary people. They are a move directed against publicly-owned enterprises, that is, against the public collectively. There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, anytime.

Metro's populace in general will certainly say, "amen" to the Government's action. However, unions will continue to get away

with these outbreaks until we bring our thinking up to date on the subject of union power and people's rights.

A champion

Last week, this newspaper gave Front Page publicity to a story of courage and dedication on the part of a Stouffville Juvenile fastball player.

The news item revealed how Brad Steel, a 1st baseman with the club, played one game and part of another, impeded by two broken bones in one foot. The information attracted the attention of many people.

The important thing here, is the fact that to win an Ontario Title, regardless of the sport, requires "something extra". That "extra" ingredient was borne out in this 18 year old's refusal to quit even when, medically speaking, he should have been in hospital. That's the ingredient of a true champion.



"Please Lord!"

Roaming Around



Strange things happen in church

By Jim Thomas

Church sanctuaries are sacred and, for the most part, are treated with utmost respect. This is the way it should be. However, too solemn a type service can have its drawbacks. Folks tend to be easily distracted when something out of the ordinary occurs. You've seen it and so have I.

For example, a child cries and all heads turn. A loud sneeze; the same reaction. A deep snore; everybody hears.

Why do people react in this manner? Do they think the minute a person steps inside a chapel, all human frailties are forgiven. Would that they were.

There are ministers, I know, who can tell some of the most hair-raising stories; exceptional happenings one would never dream possible. Over the years, I've made mental notes of a few.

It was an evening harvest-home service and the pulpit was banked with every kind of fruit and vegetable imaginable. The congregation, unusually large, was full of thankfulness, for the blessings provided. During the prayer of thanksgiving, a little boy, possibly bored by the proceedings, slipped out of his seat and toddled up to the front. After checking the array of produce, he selected one to his liking and gave it a pull. Suddenly, an avalanche of pumpkins, like huge yellow boulders, began rolling down both aisles, thumping and bumping until they reached the back. What happened to the boy? The pastor couldn't remember, but apparently he survived.

Then there was the opera-type soloist whose voice fairly lifted the church rafters. On a particular Sunday morning, she selected the well-known hymn, "Bless This House". About half-way through, the vibrations shook loose a sparrow's nest, tucked "safely" away in the ceiling. Straw, feathers, twigs and eggs plummeted straight down, landing squarely

on her head. The solo and the service ended abruptly.

In some communities, it's still common for churches to close down for a few weeks during the summer. This is fine as long as a thorough search of the sanctuary is completed before it re-opens. At one country location, a skunk made its presence felt in the choir loft; at another, a wasp's nest was discovered (too late) in the organ and at still another, a pair of bats terrorized the congregation.

Most churches keep their front doors closed during the service; for good reason.

Dogs have been known to come wandering in and one minister (again, in the country), will never forget the Sunday a pig ambled up the aisle.

Just about every church has had at least one catastrophe during the taking of the offering; you know the kind, where the plate suddenly tips and all the loose change falls through the register.

Fate, it seems, deals more harshly with Sunday-go-to-meetin' men than women, mostly, I guess, because the poor husband's continually harassed by his wife to get up; get

dressed and get to church on time. Mismatched socks, shoes and even suits are common among males, myself included.

The worst, however, was six Sundays ago. It was a joint summer service between the Uniteds and the Presbyterians in the Presbyterian Church. As usual, we squeaked in the back as the minister was arriving at the front. Hardly had I time to catch my breath when the usher requested I assist him with the offering. I told him I would.

It was stifling that day, so I took off my coat during the first hymn. When the call came for the "collection", I was ready — so I thought. However, I soon realized that, in my haste, I had pulled on my pants but neglected to put on my belt.

While pastor Carder delivered the offertory prayer, I could feel them slipping — inch by inch towards the floor. "What if —?" The very thought raised great beads of perspiration on my brow.

Once relieved of the plate, I plunged both hands into the pockets so I wouldn't trip over the cuffs — and reached my seat safely. Saints be praised!

The Fourth Quarter

Never too old to learn

By Leslie Holbrook

"In five years it is estimated that there will be 50,000 teachers without jobs in Canada," writes fellow columnist Bruce Whitestone in The Daily Gleaner, Fredericton.

"One of the possible alternatives is that people will use schools for adult training, that older people will return to schools in later life for expanded education in all kinds of areas. Education, which costs Canadians \$17.5 billion a year, will have to be put to more practical use as our usual school-age population continues to decline."

Continuing education for older folk already is available in many universities, colleges and schools. Each fall, more and more educational institutions are recognizing this new "market" for employment of teachers and fuller use of costly buildings and facilities.

Special recognition is given to seniors in many cases. Tuition fees either are waived completely or are greatly reduced — in some cases covering only the school's added expense for supplies and transportation.

For example, my wife and I are signed up for a University of Guelph course on symphonic music. Lectures are interspersed with trips to hear performances of four different symphony orchestras. All we pay is that portion of fees required for concert tickets and transportation — and that portion is modest and seems a bargain.

"When we stop learning, we stop living," says Dr. Bette Stephenson, Ontario's new Minister of Education. Keep on really living by getting into a course to your taste, likely being offered somewhere nearby. You are almost certain to find something to suit you; instruction runs all the way from antique furniture evaluation to welding — not quite from A to Z.

Perhaps you should consider going back to school on a more extensive basis — perhaps (but not necessarily) working towards a degree. Many oldsters are doing this in colleges across the land. South of the border, well-known singer Pearl Bailey is "fulfilling a lifelong ambition at the age of 60". She has gone back to school (Georgetown University). "The joy of learning is so wonderful," she enthused. When someone suggested she was starting late in life, she laughed (as did a

number of listening younger students who have trouble keeping up with her) and countered "Honey, I say there ain't no such thing as a senior citizen. I don't use that word no-how".

Pearl says she is going to write a book titled "Don't Tell Me You're Too Old, Honey, It's Tough But It's Fun!"

In addition to her courses at Georgetown (philosophy, French, Islamic religion and Egyptian art) she herself teaches drama at Duke Ellington high school nearby.

"Education should never end, no matter what our age or circumstances," says writer Kenneth Bagnall.

If you live in a community where college or school facilities are not readily available, he suggests you organize a group for study and discussion with members themselves leading the group on a rotating basis.

This has an advantage all its own, bringing people together, not only to listen to an instructor, but to each other, sharing ideas and exchanging viewpoints.

Send comments and questions (long, stamped, addressed envelope for reply) to — The Tribune, c/o P.O. Box 1506, Guelph, Ont. N1H 6N9.

Editor's Mail

Wonderful day

Dear Editor:
Thanks to the publicity provided by your paper, I attended the Mennonite-sponsored festival at Black Creek Pioneer Village, Saturday and took along three of our children.

Next to a day at Markham Fair, it was the most satisfying and enjoyable outing any of us had ever experienced. We came home loaded down with enough home-made bread, pies and buns to last us til Christmas.

Apart from the buys, however, it was an 'education', something the family will never forget. We won't let them, because we're going back next year.

Henry Hall,
Stouffer Street,
Stouffville.



Big booties to fill for '78 baby champ at Markham Fair

A highlight of Markham Fair again this year will be the Baby Show, Sat., Sept. 30 beginning at 10 a.m. On the left is the winner in 1976, Dean Norman Spang, son of Dianne (holding him) and Rick Spang, formerly of Stouffville and now of Oshawa. On the right is



Melanie Harman, the champion in 1977. She is the daughter of Hiram and Darlene Harman, formerly of Stouffville and now of Campbellford. With Melanie is the '77 Queen of the Fair, Dianne Reid.

— Jim Thomas.