



# The Tribune

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## Editorials

### Report proved us wrong

We were wrong.  
When the Stouffville Arena was taken over by the Town, we predicted terrible financial repercussions—an operational deficit that would pose a hardship on every taxpayer in this municipality.  
We had (and still have) little faith in government-operated projects as opposed to private programs.  
The old board, responsible to a few hundred shareholders, pinched pennies like you wouldn't believe. We doubted its successors would do the same, since any loss incurred would be absorbed by a broader base.  
After all, what's a few misspent thousands with a tax levy of close to \$4 million?  
How wrong we were. Waste, even extravagance we had anticipated, hasn't oc-

curred; quite the opposite, if we read the '78 financial report correctly. Ten thousand dollars under the established budget—quite a feat, with signs pointing to an equally productive year in '79.  
With a debenture figure of \$14,600 removed from expenditure totals, the anticipated deficit is something like \$3,500.  
We should be so fortunate.  
Rink manager, Don 'Joe' Lewis and the board are to be commended. They proved us wrong. However, we don't intend to let them off the hook completely. We still contend that a Community Centre is not a seasonal facility that operates at capacity from October through April and remains virtually empty, May through September. For the good of the Town (and the taxpayers), organized programs should be non-stop all year round.

### An education alternative

The Christian school idea's not dead in Stouffville; very much alive, in fact. So alive, we're certain that, eventually, it will become a reality.  
For the sake of those parents, obviously dissatisfied with the public system, we'd like to see this new program proceed. It would provide a cross-section of residents with an alternative.  
But how viable financially? That's the question we've been asking ever since the proposal was first introduced. Without government subsidy, the cost could be prohibitive. The present steering committee will undoubtedly have this information available when the subject is re-introduced on a broader scale.

What's so wrong with the system as it stands to-day?  
Academically, very little.  
Morally, everything. Even teachers admit this, and we believe it. This, as we understand it, is the cause of many parents' concern. And rightly so.  
We firmly believe the separate school system has the right approach. A combination of both; and it's paying off. A Stouffville Christian school will likely follow a similar line of instruction—the development of a "whole" person, not just a part.  
Ten years ago, we would never admitted such a system is necessary.  
To-day, we do, and we wish this committee every success.

### Cutbacks in new schools

A segment of parents in the Unionville area are putting pressure on the York County Board of Education (and the Provincial Government) for a high school in that community.  
They don't stand a chance; not in two years; five years, maybe never. Nor should they, not while facilities five to seven miles away are little more than half filled.  
This business of building schools is a whole new ball game to-day; far different from the construction spree of the fifties and sixties.  
Once burned, twice wary as the saying goes. The Ministry of Education has learned its lesson and isn't about to get caught again.

Markham Dist. High School is taxed to the limit.  
Bayview Secondary and Richmond Hill High, on the other hand, have space to spare. So Unionville students must be bused five miles west instead of three miles east. We see no unbearable sacrifice in that.  
This business about belonging to a "neighborhood" school is poppycock. Kids to-day are continually switching locations, not only from one "neighborhood" to another, but one province to another. They adjust quickly. But not so the parents, and therein lies the problem.  
It's the parents who are resentful. The students, (at least the ones we've talked to), couldn't care less.



"Nancy? ..... Why sure, I remember you"



### Sugar and Spice

## All money-lenders should be shot

By Bill Smiley

Recently, I've been teaching that perennial favorite, The Merchant of Venice, by one Will Shakespeare. It's a light, romantic comedy, but through the pretty speeches and comic complications runs an iron and an irony that almost steals the play every time it is read or performed: the story of Shylock the money-lender and his insistence on his pound of flesh.  
That word and that phrase have become part of our language. You may have heard someone say, "He's a regular Shylock," or "He always wants his pound of flesh." They are synonyms of a merciless greed, hatred, and desire for revenge.  
For those who have forgotten the plot, or haven't read or seen the play, I'll give a pocket synopsis.  
A rich merchant is approached by his best friend, a young man who has squandered all his money, including a goodly sum the merchant has lent him. The young fellow wants his friend to lend him another sum, about \$35,000, so that he can get himself all duded up and marry a wealthy heiress, upon which he will return all the money he owes. For friendship's sake, the rich merchant says, "No problem. All my cash is tied up in ships at sea with rich cargoes, but my credit is excellent. Go borrow the money and I'll back your note." Or words to that effect. I am Will Smiley, not Will Shakespeare.  
So the young blade goes to a notorious money-lender, Shylock, who agrees to lend him the money for three months. Usually, he charges more interest than Household Finance, but this time he won't charge any. The plot thickens.  
In a few sneering asides, we learn that Shylock hates the rich merchant. He has reasons. The merchant has spat upon him, spurned him, called him dog, and hurt him

badly in the pocketbook by lending money interest-free. Shylock can stand the spitting and the names, but he turns purple when he thinks someone is lending money with no interest when he could be copping 40 per cent.  
He sees his chance. Sure, he'll lend the young spender the money, interest-free, provided the merchant will sign a bond: that if the money is not repaid by a certain date, Shylock may take a pound of flesh from any part of the merchant's body.  
It's all a joke, of course. As Shylock points out, a pound of human flesh is not worth as much as a pound of veal, or even a pound of hamburger. (This was before inflation. I wouldn't bet on it nowadays.)  
The rich merchant agrees, airily. After all, his ships will be in with their rich cargoes a whole month before the bond is due. And nobody would take a pound of flesh.  
(Shhh! We in the audience know that Shylock will take a pound of flesh from the heart area, and that the laws of the city will back him up, if the bond is signed in quadruplicate.)  
Well, well. It is rumored on the stock exchange that the rich merchant's ships have all been lost at sea, and he is bankrupt.  
Big trial scene. The law upholds Shylock's claim. Old Shy is whetting a big carving knife on his boot. The rich merchant stands, breast bared. It's as good as the old melodrama, with the heroine tied to the railway tracks by the villain, and the train fast approaching.  
Smart young lawyer to the rescue. Shylock may take his pound of flesh; but not one drop of blood, not one ninth of an ounce more or less than pound, or his own life, and all his property, is forfeit. Try that one on the next pig you kill.  
Now Shylock was stumped. (An old cricket term, chaps.) And that—Will

Shakespeare knew his law. He was continually involved in litigation, like many a playwright. A great (to me) line in one of his plays goes, "Let's hang all the lawyers."  
Anyway. The whole thing got me thinking of usury. This was once an honest term meaning interest on money loaned. It has since come to mean charging excessive interest on money loaned. A dirty business.  
In Elizabethan England, usury was a crime, and heavily punished. Right up to the death penalty, depending on whom you knew, in the right circles.  
And I began thinking about usury, in its pejorative (that means namecalling) sense, in our society today. Is it shameful to be a usurer? Is usury something to be hidden under the rug? Are there any penalties for usury? Answer: no.  
Our modern usurers are not even ashamed of what they do. They advertise it in all the media.  
They run all the way from our banks, among our most respected institutions, down to our finance companies, so called, among our less respected institutions, all the way to the hood in Montreal who will lend you money at 100 per cent interest, and break your knees with a baseball bat if you don't pay up.  
Try borrowing \$20,000 from Ann Murray, who touts for a Canadian bank, with no interest. Her look would shrivel your gizzard. Try borrowing from a "finance company" without pledging your grand-mother's bones for fertilizer in case you can't meet the deadline.  
We are surrounded by usurers, sucking the blood out of us. Maybe Shakespeare was right. Line up all the bank managers in Canada, shoot them quietly, and burn the presidents of banks and finance companies at the stake. I'd enjoy that.



### Winter loses its grip

Following a cold hard winter, there's a touch of spring in the air that's making itself felt in melting snow and flowing streams. Breaking free from the icy grip of sub-zero temperatures is a section of Duffin Creek, south of the Ninth Line of Pickering. Ed Schroeter

### Window on Wildlife



## Year of "The Great Gray Owl"

By Art Briggs-Jude

Suddenly, the cold weather was of secondary importance for the big owl was there. Perched upright on a stout limb overhanging a snow covered waterway, was the object of our quest—a Great Gray Owl. And as had happened many times before, this sighting had been another case of where persistence paid off. That afternoon for example, we had started out with high hopes. Two of these sporadic migrants had been observed all the previous week by two Hydro surveyors at Grafton near Lake Ontario. It was easy to pinpoint the area, for the orange-marked stakes were clearly visible, and foot prints in the snow showed where the men had been working. But that's all we found, and after searching the neighboring woodlands thoroughly, had to settle for some pictures of ice formations along the lakeshore.  
Leaving this location east of Cobourg, we travelled west past Port Hope to Willow Beach. For it was in this Particular bird sanctuary, another of these large owls had been sighted. By this time, the afternoon, like our hopes was beginning to fade, especially after we had searched for some distance along a wooded trail with negative results. At a small bridge crossing the mouth of a frozen stream, my wife and our naturalist guide for the day paused, while my curiosity took me over the span and some distance ahead. Here it was possible to get a better view up the course of the snow-covered creek without leaving the trail. Almost immediately I called

them to come up and join me, for the big owl was already in the focus of my binoculars.  
After studying the ash-colored creature for a time from a distance, it was decided I should try and stalk the owl for a photo. So while they headed back to bring the van around, I started across the snowy marshland bordering the streambed. There was no appreciable cover to conceal my approach, so it was simply a case of moving up slowly within range and without startling the long-tailed predator. Most Great Gray Owls I had been told are relatively fearless birds, so it was quite frustrating to come within closeup camera range, then have the bird fly a short distance away. After several of these frontal approaches failed, it was obvious if a picture was to be obtained, a new tactic would have to be employed. During these airborne escapades, it was apparent the owl was not only concerned with my presence, but also intent on picking up a meal enroute. Often, instead of flying directly to a nearby perch, it would swoop low over the snowy hummocks, searching it seemed for mice or other such prey. Here, I thought, was an angle that might help me get this big bird on film.  
At the edge of some small thorn trees, I crouched low and began squeaking on the back of my hand, imitating the sounds of a mouse. Sure enough, the owl was at once interested, and instead of moving away, it lifted and flew directly towards me. Now alas. I couldn't focus the zoom lense fast enough as

the great gray bird with the nearly five foot wingspan bore down on me. In fact I had visions of becoming part of its meal, so close did it come and with such deceptive speed. Frantically I ducked and luckily the owl's vision gave it a true reading, for after it swept overhead, it continued back in the direction I had just come.  
I looked at its distant perch and while undecided whether to follow it further, was surprised to see yet another Great Gray Owl skimming over the landscape ahead. Here indeed was a chance to study these big round headed birds first hand, whether I got pictures or not. The remarkably large facial discs surrounding the bright lemon-yellow eyes and the apparent lack of any noticeable neck were features that stood out. Even in flight, the shortness of the neck gave the bird a stubby appearance. Other exhibited airborne traits were the ponderous wing beat with the long fluctuating tail strung out behind. Once I saw the hush-winged predator use its feet to move along a horizontal log. Probably this slow deliberate action was the reason the Northern Indians called this owl Nuhl-Tuhl meaning "The heavy walker".  
Since the first local reporting of a Great Gray Owl in this newspaper in January, there have been numerous sightings in nearby counties. Pickering has had two reports, Clairville one, Grafton, as mentioned two, and Peterborough, no less than seventeen.