

The Tribune

JAMES THOMAS
Editor-In-Chief

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BARRE BEACOCK
Advertising Manager

EDITORIAL DEPT: Ed Schroeter, Jim Holt DISPLAY ADVERTISING DEPT: Lois Wideman, Marie Emmerson BUSINESS OFFICE: Joan Marshman, Dorsen Descon, Elleen Glover

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Editorials

We should be ashamed

Our Town should hang its head in shame.
July 1, Canada Day, Dominion Day, call it
what you like, passed us by without a single
act of organized recognition for what the
occasion's supposed to mean:

Not so in other communities — parades, fireworks, festivities galore. But in Whitchurch-Stouffville, nothing; a big fat zero.

Would you believe it, but not a single store here had a Canadian flag for sale, Saturday, and a tour of town, Sunday, revealed only four unfurled.

While it's true, most Canadians display about as much nationalistic pride as a wet sponge, they can become stimulated if something's organized on their behalf. You know like Al Eagleson arranging to have the Russians play Montreal at hockey in Maple Leaf Gardens; boy, that's great. We immediately break out of our cocoons and become very interested, even emotional. But on our own, no way. And Canada Day here was an example. Just another long weekend; a holiday.

So someone should have organized something — who?

The Recreation Committee (with a little prodding from Council), was the logical group. But if those members couldn't bring themselves to do it, then the challenge should have been tossed out to persons who could. We know of several who would have jumped at the chance if they'd been asked.

So far, all we've heard are excuses, and pretty lame ones at that. Too many other things going on; everybody goes away that weekend; no one wants to accept the responsibility and too little time to get something going, were a few of the alibis we heard. None, in our opinion is acceptable. We failed and failed badly.

Most, who've lived around here a few years can vividly recall some of the great Canada Day programs held in the Stouffville Park, Latcham Hall and the Arena. Activities were planned with everyone in mind — the children, teens, in-betweens and seniors. The much-touted Athlete of the Year Award was always a highlight of the event and it was not unusual to have upwards of two thousand people on hand for this presentation.

What's done is done, but we can't let it happen again.

We would suggest that early in the new year, a Special Events Committee be established by Council, a group of five community-minded individuals who will provide leadership in this regard — not just for Canada Day, but other occasions as well. This committee wouldn't be expected to do all the work but merely see that the work gets done. Otherwise, everyone sits back and nothing happens.

July 1 was a dreary, dull day in Town. It needn't have been and hopefully, it won't be

Fire(men)--says who?

Property-owners in the Ballantrae-Musselman's Lake area have been demanding improved fire protection for years. It's been a long time coming and it hasn't arrived yet, but it's getting closer.

The responsibility now rests with the residents themselves. Are there sufficient volunteers available to establish an auxiliary brigade?

We believe so, but before stating why, one important point must be made clear. This fire-fighting 'force' will in no way (if ever), be comparable in numbers to the unit based in Stouffville. In fact, for a start, it may be only

four to six persons strong. But it will at least be a start; an auxiliary service we feel is required.

And it doesn't necessarily have to be a brigade of fireMEN. Why not fireWOMEN?

As we understand it, their task will be to contain a blaze until additional help reaches the scene. For this (and other emergencies too), women can be just as efficient as men;

So step right up ladies and fill out a form.
A one hundred per cent female fire-fighting force might warrant a note in the Guinness Book of Records.



Orphaned raccoons curious but cautious

Look closely now, what do you see? It's a family of young raccoons, orphaned when their mother was accidentally killed. This unique picture was taken by Lois Wideman of The Tribune's advertising staff near her

home on 19th Avenue, R.R. 1, Unionville. The bables don't know it, but they're perfectly safe. Lois wouldn't 'shoot' a raccoon, large or small with anything but a camera.



Sugar and Spice

Teaching has its rewards

_By Bill Smiley__

Each man and woman has a way of marking off the years. With some it's birth-days. With farmers it's getting the crops in. With fishermen it's hauling out the old tub for the winter, after the last catch. With golfers it's getting in one final round before the snow flies. And so on.

With teachers, it's struggling through to the end of June without going around the bend. I've just made it for the nineteenth time, and, at time of writing, still have most of my marbles, though I can't say the same for some of my colleagues. They get queerer and queerer every year.

But it is only with the silliest and most sentimental that the end of the school year brings tears, a feeling of loss, a pang of sorrow. Most of us walk out at the end of June and never really care whether we ever reenter the old sausage factory.

At approximately the same time many mothers are giving a great sigh of resignation, looking fearfully at the summer ahead, when they'll have to cope with their kids twenty-four hours a day, most teachers are giving a mighty sigh of relief because they don't have to cope with those same kids at all for two entire months.

It's not that teachers dislike kids. Perhaps a few do, but they usually wind up in the looney-bin, or slashing their wrists in the bathtub.

On the contrary, most teachers have a basic liking of young people and show them, often, more tolerance and understanding than the kids' own parents do. They'll bend over backwards to listen to problems, suggest solutions and try to motivate the youngsters.

But there comes a point, a sort of sticking point, where even the most benevolent of teachers runs across a kid who would drive his own mother screaming up the wall. And often One of my younger colleagues is still nursing a cracked rib incurred after breaking up a fight in the cafeteria and chasing one of the boys involved half a mile to the local park, all in the line of duty. He does not love and cherish that kid.

Almost every year, when a teacher is in daily contact with approximately 180 teenagers, with their sexual repressions, their hang-ups, their broken homes, their depressions, there are three or four kids he or she can barely tolerate.

These few bad apples are what make teaching a very arduous profession. They are a daily source of irritation with their bad language, bad habits and bad manners.

But every job has its unpleasant aspects, and if you can't cope with a few rotten kids, you should get a job where you have a rotten boss or rotten customers, or rotten pay.

We read recently of high schools in the big cities, where teaching has become something like running the gauntlet of physical and verbal violence. This occurs not only in "inner-city" schools, with their masses of poor kids from broken homes and immigrant kids disjointed by a different culture and language, but also from suburban middle-class schools whose students are over-privileged, also come from broken homes, have too much money, and are extremely materialistic, like their parents. They look on teachers as something like an orange, to be sucked dry and thrown away, like the peel.

Not for me. I couldn't hack that. I'd quit. I'm no dedicated martyr. I don't want a punch-up with three druggies forty years younger. I don't want my tires slashed or my female staff assaulted. I am basically a peaceable coward.

Our school is not like that, and I guess that's why I've hung in here so long. When I

started, I had offers to teach journalism at a community college, to do public relations work, to teach at a university. But I began to grow too fond of the teenagers and backed away from these offers. I'm not sorry.

I'm no Mr. Chips. I'm not a great teacher.

But I do enjoy teenagers, with their curiosity, their sensitivity, their sense of humour, their developing selves, even their flashes of anger, and always their honesty.

End of term comes, and even the little turkeys in Grade 9 who bedevilled you with their giggling or their yapping or their giddiness all year become lovable because you know they're gone for two months. And you get a nice tie from one shy little girl, and a nice card thrust through your letter-slot by another who has walked eight blocks to do it, and a muttered, "Havea goodsummersir" from the worst spalpeen in the class, and it all makes some kind of sense.

And at commencement night, you suddenly discover that those lumpy girls in levis
and work boots, in jeans and sneakers, are
really beautiful young women with bosoms
and golden arms and flashing eyes. That those
lazy, surly, unkempt louts you tried to pound
some English into for ten months are elegant,
witty young men, with a shirt and tie on, who
have twice the ease and poise and knowledge
you had yourself at that age.
And then there's the ego thing. A guy

lurches up to you in a bar and insists, eight times, that, "Youra bess teacher I ever had." I go down town in July to get a paper or buy some milk, get home three hours later.

Old lady sore as a boil. "Where in the

world have you been?" Respond, "Ah, all the kids are home from university, and they want to tell me all about themselves and their problems."

It's tough but it has its rewards

It's tough, but it has its rewards.

Window on Wildlife

Purple Martins-a challenge By Art Briggs-Jude.

Among the 50 known species of birds that accept man-made structures for nesting sites, only one is sociable enough to share its premises with others of its kind. Of course we sometimes see a starling and a house sparrow occuping opposite corners of a large multiroomed birdhouse, but then again these are two different species of birds: The only true colony nester when it comes to an apartmenttype birdhouse, is the Purple Martin. This large blue-black swallow is found in summer, in most parts of southern Canada, throughout the United States and Mexico. And while we say most parts of these places mentioned, there are some areas like New York, and Boston where they are unexplainably absent. Then too there are other local sections of many counties that cannot boast of having a single nesting pair, despite concentrated

efforts to entice them. My own personal experience in trying to attract Purple Martins to a birdhouse goes back 20 years. At that time we were living in an old three storey brick home in St. Catharines. It was a tall structure, in fact the only higher building was the steeple of Westminster Church across the street. The roof of this century house had a flat balcony on top complete with a wrought iron railing. It was a great place to view the surrounding city, annual air show, or hawk migrations. Often when we were up there we would see Purple Martins flying about, so it seemed like a natural place to erect a martin house. Made from a wooden packing box, it contained eight . correctly-sized sections, supported on a 12foot pole. Well, the martins looked in at it and the starlings and sparrows accepted it. This despite all my efforts to discourage these latter pests. Each spring the battle over the nest-box would continue, even though I kept the holes plugged until the big swallows arrived from the south. The Martins never did nest there and eventually we moved to another location out closer to the Welland Canal.

This acre lot spanning a brush covered ravine with a creek at the bottom, seemed a good setting for a martin house. Having once again whet my appetite to the possibility of attracting these desirable birds, I decided to build a colony house that had a few extra features the Martins might find hard to resist. Such a design is put out by the Dept. of Agriculture, Washington D.C. It incorporates an air-cooled central shaft for ventilation, wide shelves under the 2½ inch holes, for perching and sunning, and a good overhang above for wet weather protection.

According to literature, this house, coupled with a well-chosen location would offer the best chance of attracting Purple Martins. Not only that, but a relative in Thorold had put up such a house and was rewarded with Martins the first year. The following spring up went the new martin house. It was purposely put on a 25-foot pole part way down the hillside, so the swooping birds would have lots of free-flight space.

The Martins came, warbled, chirrupped, and left. This went on for four years, while I did my best to keep the sections clear and

open by evicting the starlings and sparrows that arrived almost daily. Finally, a friend told me he had Martins right up near his home and suggested I move my birdhouse up the hill. A new steel pole, a new mounting base, added up to four more years of frustration, with only occasional visits from these mosquito-eating flyers. And all this in an area where some six blocks away, a fellow had a huge house full of Martins that flew over

Then in 1970, we moved to Gormley, and you guessed it, the Martin house came along. The fields behind our home were all farm country, a great area for Martins I thought, so up went the repainted house. Again they came, looked it over and left without nesting. Once a Crested Flycatcher used one section for a nursery but other than that, it was the same old sparrow, starling routine. Occasionally, in the late summer, a flock of migrating Martins would arrive for a short visit, but finding no one home they would move on, leaving me with but a brief vision of

what a Martin colony was really like.

On Saturday morning, however, this all changed, for, we were wakened by the rich chirrup gurgling sound of Purple Martins near the house. It was then I saw two pair of these hitherto elusive swallows carrying nesting material to the martin house on the hill. I wanted to stand up and cheer for it had finally happened. Instead, I just lay there watching and listening to that sweet warbling sound and then, smiling inwardly, I went back to sleep.