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Editorials

Project offers a challenge

It's impressive. The 531-home development proposed for two golf course areas between Woodbine and Warden Avenues, is the most positive project to come before Whitchurch-Stouffville Planning Board in two years.

This satellite community, envisioned by the Toronto Firefighters' Club when they first purchased the property, represents a challenge to local planners. We trust the Town will accept it as such and deal with it in an affirmative manner.

It was obvious from last week's presentation, proponents of this plan had done their homework. Their's is a vision that, with the co-operation of the municipality, can become a reality.

And why not? In our opinion, a brand new 'village' in a country setting is ideal, particularly this one where most of the requirements will be self-contained.

With Whitchurch-Highlands School less than 60 per cent capacity, there's accommodation for at least 200 students there. If necessary, a new school site can be made available within the development, one of the

speakers explained. Fire protection? The firemen will establish their own station, provide their own truck and operate it as a volunteer unit.

Recreation? Facilities already there, will be retained and expanded as needed.

Services? A communal water system is planned with individual septic tanks. Warden Avenue, Woodbine Avenue and Hwy. 404 as well as the Stouffville-Gormley Road will provide excellent exits and entrances to the site.

Shopping? Service stores fronting on Woodbine Avenue or established in the hamlet of Bethesda could provide day to day requirements. Vandorf General Store is only a mile to the north and for other needs, Stouffville is just six miles to the east.

While it is agreed that Whitchurch-Stouffville should be a slow growth municipality, little or no growth is what we're experiencing at the present time. Dulverton developers appear content to play the waiting game, but the Town can wait no longer. The firefighters club should be encouraged to proceed. It's an opportunity for them and for us that warrants a positive approach.

Comeback for lawn-bowlers

It was indeed heartening to visit the Stouffville Lawn Bowling Club, Saturday, and see the greens filled to capacity. The event was the annual Crossen Tournament, first organized in 1966 but dropped last year due to inadequate facilities.

Both have made a 'come back' and Saturday's hosts, Fred and Eleanor Crossen are as much responsible for the improved appearance of the grounds as anyone.

They, however, would be the first to admit that re-organization of the club was a co-operative effort—a few key people putting their heads together in a determined bid to keep the activity going. The result is amazing.

Aided by a \$4,100 federal government-sponsored New Horizon's Grant, the club has put these funds to good use, returning the site

to an immaculate state that each member can point to with pride.

As far back as most folks can remember, lawn bowling has been an important part of the town's recreation program. On at least a half-dozen occasions, Stouffville's name appears in the record book at both provincial and national levels of competition. These accomplishments have been duly earned and should not be forgotten.

But clubs, all clubs, experience peaks and valleys. The unfortunate thing is, it's easier to drop down and out than it is to climb back. Stouffville's lawn bowlers appear determined to keep a good thing going here and if Saturday's success is any indication, the sport is back in business to stay.



"Your energy conservation policy is fine, Councillor Sanders sir, but I find it difficult cleaning the municipal office after dark"

Roaming Around

Hippo poo sure helps petunias

By Jim Thomas



I like to think we have the greenest grass in Stouffville. In the front yard anyway.

No, it's not that we've installed an underground irrigation system. The truth is, we've used the sprinkler less this summer than any other; three or four times at the most.

The secret, if I may call it that, is based (I think) on three things. First, a heavy application of fertilizer around the 24th of May. I really poured it on; too much in some places, leaving tiny burned out brown patches. However, apart from this, it worked wonders, growth like I've never seen before.

While the flat part of our lawn has never proved a problem, a hill, just in front of the house, usually looks more like the Sahara Desert come mid-July. But not this year. It's every bit as thick and green as the rest, due in part to the 7-7 'feeding' I gave it back in May.

The second thing I'm doing differently is not cutting the grass too short. I've raised the mower two full notches so it merely trims the top. In this way, the lawn's not fighting for survival during prolonged hot spells. Mind you, we're cutting it twice as often but with five able bodies (including my wife), willing (?) to share this chore, no one's overworked.

Not to be overlooked is the residue from

Neil and Mary-Lynn's ducks. The 'wash water' is so richly polluted by 'Donald' and 'Daffy' it would grow hair on a billiard ball. Neil distributes it generously wherever he thinks it's needed; then jumps back to watch the result. The response is amazing, putting Jack's beanstock to shame.

So, all in all, things are going (and growing) quite well this summer; except in one very important area. Our flowers are (or were) a disaster.

First off, we were late getting them in and second, we used all the fertilizer on the lawn with little left over for the pots and planters. The petunias, marigolds and geraniums were growing nowhere; barely alive in fact.

My wife tried everything, even quiet words of encouragement every night and morning, without success.

Being the impatient type, I was for ripping the whole works out and starting again from scratch, but that all seemed kind of cruel. Where there's life, there's hope, she pleaded.

Then, three Sundays ago, we paid our once-a-year visit to the Metro Zoo. Following a three-hour tour of the place, the kids insisted on spending the last of their weekly allowances in the souvenir shop. I gladly agreed, being a trifle foot-sore and weary

after the trek. While slumped in a semi-conscious state on a nearby bench, I saw them — rows and rows of neatly packaged little bags that read "Zoopoo".

"Zoopoo," I muttered to myself, "what in heaven's name is that?" With my curiosity overcoming my drowsiness, I dragged myself closer to the display; donned my glasses and started checking out the ingredients. The description was simple, just plain old animal excrement or manure as we used to call it down on the farm.

But this stuff wasn't old; exceedingly fresh as a matter of fact, so fresh, the kids refused to give it space on the seat. Nor was it plain — there was zebra, elephant, rhinoceros, lion, tiger, antelope, mountain goat, polar bear, you name it. The "Zoopoo" I selected was hippopotamus. A bagful for one dollar.

With one hand holding her nose and the other grasping the bag, my wife sprinkled the contents inside each container, then stood back. Lucky. One whiff and the petunias did an about-face; the marigolds spread their leaves and the geraniums turned a crimson red. In the three weeks since, they've literally 'exploded' into bloom, instant success for a dollar. Certainly cheaper than buying a hippo, and a whole lot safer.

Window on Wildlife

Bitterns usually camera shy

By Art Briggs-Jude



The half gray light of early morning gradually brightened giving some promise of later sunshine. From an unseen perch a noisy kingfisher launched himself in a direct flight across the still waters of the pond to take up a fishing position on top of an old post along the bank. In a nearby flooded willow, a red-winged blackbird stretched his gold and scarlet epaulets as he called to his secreted mate in the neighbourhood shrubbery. But apart from these sights and sounds and the occasional "twaaaang" of a bullfrog, the morning marshland was still. An hour passed, and then another ... It seemed my quest would have to wait for some future date.

We had set up this blind several days beforehand, after watching our winged subject periodically return to the same area. The hide itself was a rustic affair of old burlap sacking fastened to three light cedar poles forming a small teepee. The tripod-based camera poked out through an opening in the one side, while the photographer sat on an inverted pail, scanning the surroundings. From such cramped quarters, we had decided was our best chance of getting a picture of this elusive bog hunter who had foiled all our previous attempts.

The first indication an American Bittern was on our property was the "pumper-lunk" sounds emitting from the marshy area last spring. Yet for us to sash around in these wetlands would serve no useful purpose and would in all likelihood cause this unique wader to leave the place. So we scanned the marsh-grass from a distant highland, catching only an occasional glimpse of the

pumping vocalist. And the mystery of a successful nesting continued into late summer when only one bird was ever sighted. This spring the activity in the marsh resembled last year's episode. But then several weeks ago we noticed a bittern fly up from the pond near the house.

When these sightings continued almost

Editor's Mail

Neglected

Dear Mr. Thomas:
 Since no one else has written the newspaper on this matter, I've taken it on myself to do so.

I was most heartened to see The Tribune's coverage of the Whitchurch-Highlands' Grade 8 graduation. The pictures and accompanying story were excellent.

Because of its location, Highlands School doesn't always receive the publicity I feel it deserves. I'm not blaming your newspaper. Being situated "in the middle of nowhere", there's no real community attachment. The school is ignored by everyone—except the parents.

While we have no children attending right now, I'm looking forward to the day when we do. We think it's a good school, having lived down the reputation it once had.

Once again, thanks for your coverage. You made a lot of friends.

(Mrs.) Jane Meredith,
 RR 1, Gormley.

and sometimes involved more than one bittern at a time, we decided to walk around the waterway and possibly obtain a picture. However, the big birds retired to the thickest parts and remained inconspicuous. Only once did we have any hope of catching one on film. My wife spotted this striped brown individual standing statue-like just inside the alder tangles so I eased forward to get an unobstructed view. But the skitterish bird would have none of this and left hurriedly with a spectacle of thrashing wings and dangling legs.

Inside the blind, I reached up to undo the side curtain in preparation to leave. My hand however never released the burlap for at that instant the bittern arrived. He dropped into the shallows about thirty feet away and for the next little while I was treated to all the antics these big bog hunters perform while foraging for food. Mostly his movements were very slow and deliberate, the exceptions being when he made a lightning fast jab with his javelin-like beak. And all the while the shutter clicked, the long-legged wader moved nonchalantly closer and closer. Suddenly a chilling thought crossed my mind. What if the bittern, now only several yards away, decided my sparkling eye in the burlap hole was a dragonfly or some other food source? And as such, directed that unerring spear at my head? Fortunately, the bird reasoned there was something more than food on the other side of that flimsy curtain and took off. Somewhat relieved, I realized I had met the old bog hunter at close quarters; yes, almost too close for comfort.



"Petunia Tree" blooms at Farmer Jack's

Carolyn Pritchard, the manager of Farmer Jack's vegetable and flower stand on Kennedy Road, waters their "Petunia Tree." Farmer Jack Burrows designed a

special metal stand which holds about 20 pots of petunias. The stand and flowers cost about \$400.00.

Ed Schroeter