



The Tribune

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Editorials

Get Town moving again

The upcoming November municipal election in Whitchurch - Stouffville, is, above everything else, the ratepayers' opportunity to get the Town moving once again. There is no question but that the present council has been foot-dragging to a degree that has the municipality moving backward rather than forward; business has been severely hurt, and grumbling among progressive members of the community is widespread.

Building has reached a virtual standstill, and people continue to leave town because of lack of accommodation. While it is true that permits have been granted for a number of hundred thousand dollar homes in some rural areas, this is certainly not the answer to the problem of the urban centre.

Large paying commercial taxpayers, the

backbone of any community, are severely frustrated as council has continually shilly-shallied around any effort to increase the Town's tax base.

It is clearly evident that new blood is needed on council if the situation is to be turned around, and a host of new candidates are presenting themselves. With scarcely an exception, they are anxious to bring the backsliding to a halt and voters will have their chance next month to put them in office for this purpose.

Those who would maintain the status quo show a severe lack of municipal governing ability since a Town must either go backward or forward - it cannot stand still. Voters, by electing a new council have their chance to put the town on an upward track. Let 1988 be the end of our backsliding.

Explain assessment system

Councillor Jim Sanders' call for a public meeting on market value assessment and other related subjects makes sense.

For we believe as councillor Sanders believes—residents are seeking information. "A meeting would indicate who has the power to do certain things," he said. And we agree.

Many politicians, we contend, take the wrong slant on matters such as this. Because they understand it, they assume everyone else does. But most don't. For most taxpayers, it's the "bottom line" that counts—the amount of dollars they must pay. How that dollar figure is arrived at is as foreign as Swahili.

Is the tax differential between new homes and old a major issue? It is to those who feel many properties are assessed unfairly. But how many residents are we talking? Are there a dozen, one hundred, a thousand?

Council should call a meeting and find out. Requesting the Revenue Ministry "to study the various classes of properties to determine the degree of inequities in the assessment base within each class" (whatever that means), is, in our opinion, a quiet way of sweeping the problem under the rug.

Uncommitted being unfair

At this point in time (Oct. 13), three incumbent members of Whitchurch - Stouffville Council remain uncommitted.

Jim Doble (Ward 1), Bill McNailey (Ward 3) and June Button (Ward 5) had (up until Monday), refused to indicate, one way or another, if they would stand again.

This is grossly unfair; for those intending to run and those who would like to run. For, let's face it, even in the light of past mistakes, a sitting member has a better than average chance of being returned.

While there's undoubtedly irritation

within the ranks of committed candidates in Wards 3 and 5, it must be exasperation for the lone office seeker in Ward 1. Should he campaign or shouldn't he? That is the question with no answer until such time as he finds out who, if anyone, he's campaigning against.

We don't believe for a minute that the three incumbents haven't yet made up their minds. They have, but they haven't said.

The deadline date for nominations is Monday, Oct. 20. It shouldn't be necessary to wait that long.

Roaming Around

Thanksgiving day for ducks

By Jim Thomas



It was a day of thanksgiving at our house; a time of much-needed 'togetherness' that extended over the entire weekend. Everyone was home and we all sat down to dinner, Sunday evening, as a family; something that, unfortunately, doesn't happen often enough.

I don't know about your house, but at ours, we eat in shifts. While one's jumping up to go babysitting, another's sitting down after bowling. Guitar and piano lessons, paper collections, ballet school, phone calls and homework (to mention only a few), keep the confusion pot boiling continuously.

The end result is that anyone arriving a half-hour late, usually eats alone. However, if his timing's off, he may not eat at all. For our front hall's a high risk area. Get caught in the stampede and it's game over.

But there was none of this Sunday, not even the customary phone calls. We were together, all eight of us and it was great.

However, had a stranger entered our humble abode at precisely 6 p.m., he might

have wondered, and for good reason. For smack dab in the centre of the table was a delicious butter-ball turkey, just over eighteen pounds and done to a turn.

Twenty-one dollars and sixty-four cents, it cost.

So what? Nothing so strange about that, you say. Such was the setting in many a home.

Agreed. But not every wife and mother, as frugal as ours, would spend that kind of money on a turkey while two plump ducks waddle about the backyard.

Yes, that's the way it was, and is, a pair of pet ducks and no one with enough nerve to ruffle a feather let alone lop off a head.

"Donald" and "Daffy", like everything else that quacks and barks around our place, came from the Sales Barn.

Both were kind of homely at the start, a sombre jenny-wren brown with no outstanding markings to catch the eye. Then, just last month, "Donald" went through a startling change. He (we think he's a he), shed his

outer coat, revealing an inner plumage comparable to a peacock. His mate (we think she's a she), remains much the same, drab but beautiful.

They require little care, a feeding every day; fresh water every other day.

They're excellent watch (ducks), sounding off at the approach of any stranger, be it on four legs or two. Neighbors' cats take turns patrolling the perimeter of the pen. So far, none has dared venture inside. On a couple of occasions, we've been aroused in the middle of the night by loud flapping and quacking. Even skunks and coons, it seems, give their boudoir a wide berth.

On the practical side, then, "Donald" and "Daffy" have earned their keep. But more than that, they're a source of daily enjoyment, strutting their stuff like two kings in a castle.

So Thanksgiving to us was two ducks in a pen, not on a platter. And something tells me, that was their preference too.

Window on Wildlife

Witness to nature unspoiled

By Art Briggs-Jude



There's nothing quite like a northern Ontario river in the early hours of an autumn morning. Your light canoe buoyed along on the crest of the sweeping current asks only for the occasional thrust of your paddle to keep its bow in trim. And as you knife through rising mists and slip past stunted silhouettes of former forest monarchs, the sounds of your surroundings come wafting over the water. Yet these are not harsh tones, but rather introductory intonations of the wildlife in that area. The "awk" of a great blue heron as it lifts from a sand spit in the river bend, and the hushed whistle of ducks already airborne gives an added dimension to the wilderness landscape.

From the highest point of a nearby pine ridge, a single wolf howls a protest at your approach, letting its drawn out call echo along the rocky bluffs. Then its silence for awhile, save for the hollow "plip plop" of water running off your paddle blade. The wolf

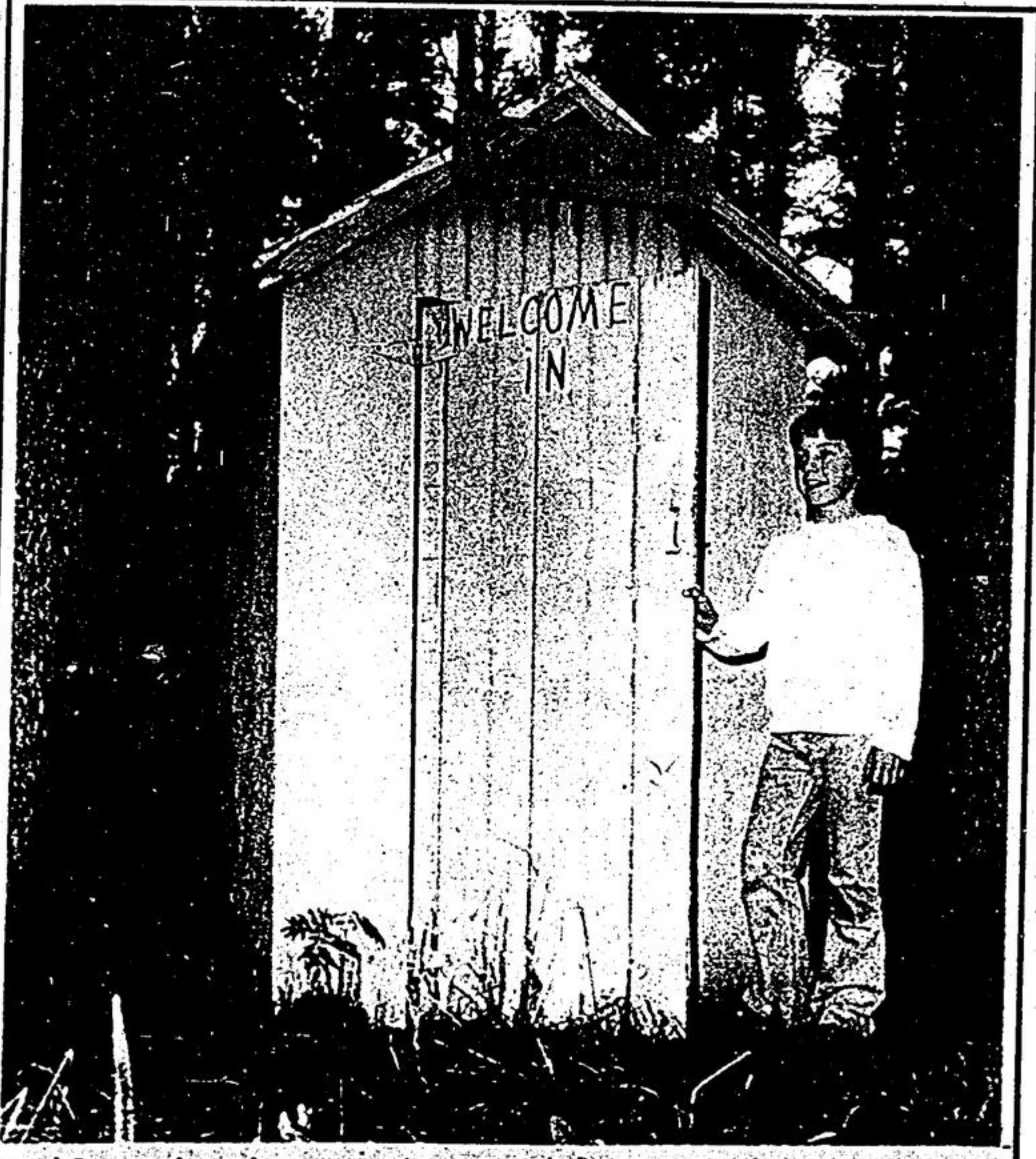
begins again but its howl is lost in the excited honking of a flock of geese. From our mid-stream position, the white-cheeked Canadas are an unseen voice moving low over the marshland beyond the tree-fringed river.

But the ever-moving river carries you on as it has many such craft from the earliest of times. Indian, trapper, Couer-de-Bois, lumberman; all travelled these water routes in days gone by. Some say the Archie Belaney, or Grey Owl as he was better known, spent some time on this river while he formulated a plan to rehabilitate the beaver. Certainly, the quietness of the surroundings would give anyone uninterrupted concentration. His visits though must have been in summer or early autumn.

For the mighty Mississagi River can change her moods to meet the different seasons. Evidence along the shoreline shows the wrath it can inflict when riled by the melting winter. Trees piled high with debris and sandbanks scared from the rushing force

of last spring's flood. In fact so great was the volume of water during that peak period, the town of Iron Bridge many miles to the south was literally cut in two. And the Trans-Canada highway at that point was closed due to the high water swirling around the bridge abutments.

But such things as highways and the civilized centres they link up are furthest from your mind. Only the bleached remains of some rotting boat and the rust-coated chain of a long gone logboom give any indication other persons from outside were ever here. Yet the signs of the wildlife inhabitants are everywhere. You see them in the well-used slide of an otter family; the heavy pad print of a hunting bear; the huge bird tracks of the sandhill cranes. And because they're where they are, you like to think these signs will continue to be pressed into the moist shoreline sand, long after the marks of man have rotted and been etched away.



'Guest' outhouse served a purpose at auction sale

The secluded outhouse, even in the country, is almost a thing of the past. But one for "visitors only" is even more rare. Unusual or not, it served its purpose.

Saturday, at an auction sale on the property of Mrs. Les Ogdan, north of Island Lake. Twelve year old George Lacoste accepts the "welcome" posted on the door.

—Jim Thomas.