

**Woods and Wildlife**

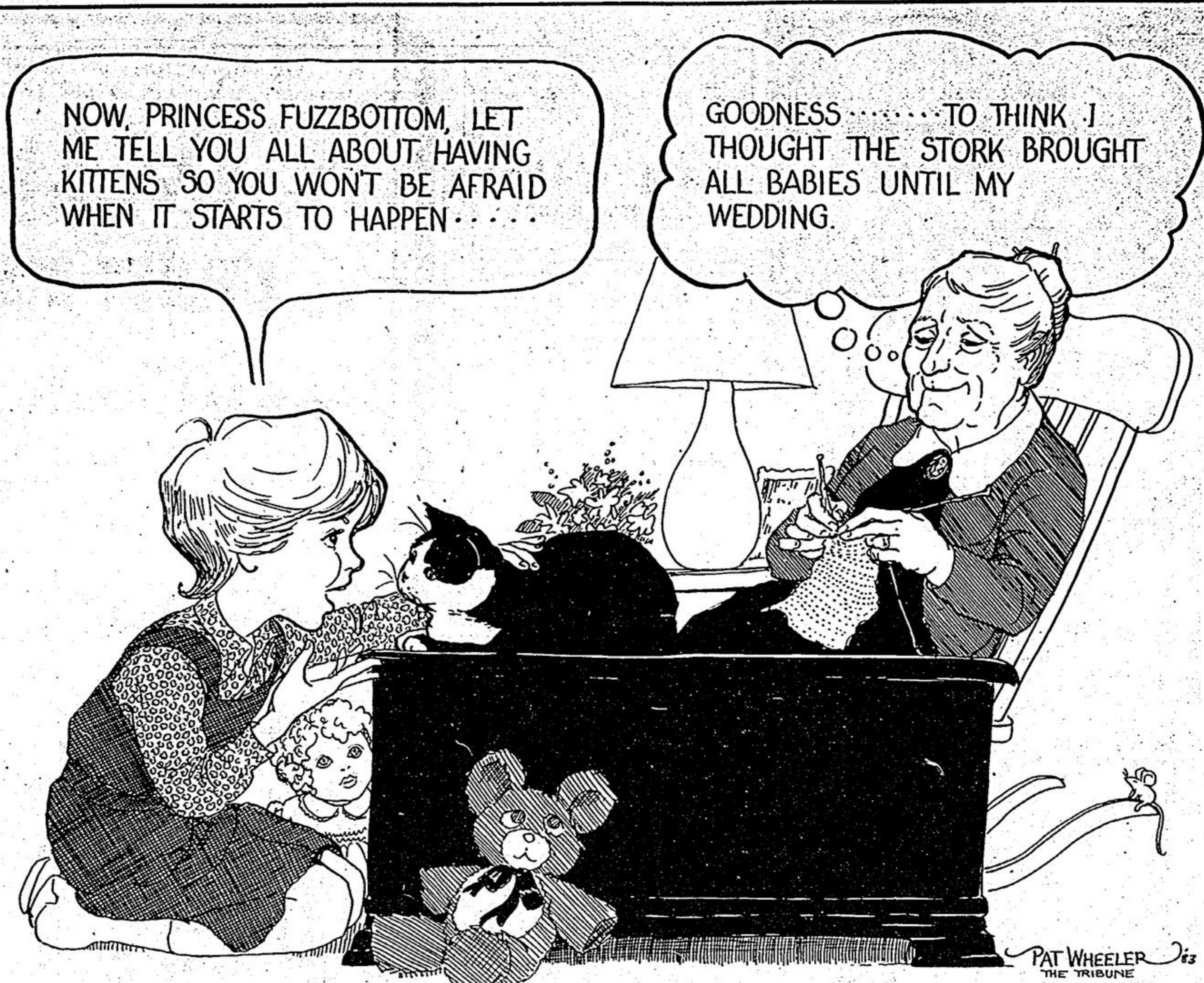
**Beauty in flight**

**BY RON REID**  
 Federation of Ontario Naturalists  
 Your garden may be silent and buried in white now, but next spring will once again bring out the green and the colourful splashes of blossoms. Mr. Robert Mitchell from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recently come up with some practical suggestions on how you can make next summer's garden an even more idyllic place, by creating plantings that will attract butterflies to your yard.

Most of us remember that the Monarch butterfly is attracted to milkweed, but that's hardly a popular addition to your garden. However, Mitchell points out that migrating Monarchs in the fall are especially fond of asters. A small black butterfly with white and orange spots, known as the Baltimore, is found only in association with a wetland plant called turtlehead. Common plants such as Queen Anne's lace and parsley are eaten by the Black Swallowtail. A more unusual diet is that of the Cabbage Butterfly, who delights in spider plants.

Many of the common trees are also attractive to butterflies while they are in bloom. The early lilacs attract emerging Tiger Swallowtails, and then black and yellow beauties can be found later in the season associating with tulip trees, wild cherries, and ash. The Viceroy butterfly, with striking V-shaped white slashes on its back, often uses either black willow or pussy willow. Wild cherry supports the large Cecropia moth, while the fragile green Lune moth prefers hickory, walnut, or sweetgum.

Many plants are attractive to a wide variety of moths and butterflies, and can be planted easily. Among these are shrubs such as blueberry, sumac, butterfly bush, and sweet pepperbush, as well as annuals such as larkspur, single petunias, 4 o'clocks, marigold, and zinnia. So when you search through the seed catalogue this winter, keep in mind the ability of some flowers to serve as feeding stations for our colourful winged insects to doubly enhance the beauty of your yard.



**NEWS ITEM: Introduce sex education into school system**

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**ROAMING AROUND**  
**Faces look familiar**  
 By JIM THOMAS

I'm continually confusing faces and names; and for a weekly newspaper editor, this is an unpardonable sin. For I'm supposed to know everyone—everyone I've ever met. Believe me, I don't, in fact, attaching a name to a face is a weakness I can't overcome.

It's embarrassing, especially in a crowd. By the end of a social evening, my shins are black and blue from well-placed kicks administered by wife Jean; and for good reason. For I'm continually calling some guy Jack when it should be Joe and some girl Mary when it should be Sarah.

After twenty-two years of marital togetherness, she's wise to my ways. Before we enter a room, whether they be her friends or mine, she issues a warning: "If you're not absolutely sure, don't call them anything—better to be safe than sorry". And, generally speaking, her advice works well—when in doubt, leave them out. However, seldom an occasion goes by that I don't waver from this pre-set path, much to my regret. For me, at least, sticking one's foot in one's mouth is no physical impossibility. I've had plenty of practice.

It happens, even while driving down the road. "Hey, there's Sam Smith," I'll say, blasting the horn at an unsuspecting motorist just ahead. "It is not," Jean

replies as the disturbed driver shakes his fist in disgust. It's the same when the kids are along. "Who you wavin' at," Mary-Lynn will ask. "Don't you know? That's Wendy across the street", I answer. "What," she responds between giggles, "I know Mrs Thompson and she sure doesn't look like that". Whoops, goofed again.

When folks come in to renew their subscriptions; I'm continually put on the spot. Many of them tell how they've been faithful subscribers for over fifty years and their parents before that. They talk about the weather, the "good old days", the town and the paper, but never once do they give a hint as to who they are or where they live. When the time comes to write out a receipt, I'm stuck. So I tactfully ask: "What's the proper spelling for your first name?" They invariably reply—John—J-O-H-N. Then I ask: "How do you spell your last name?" To which they will likely answer—Jones—J-O-N-E-S. Thus enlightened, I respond: "Why sure, I know you, your farm's up the sixth concession, near the Vandorf Road". To which he's just as apt to reply: "Nope, I'm on the fifth concession, near the Bloomington Road".

Sometimes, I just can't win. However, it's self-satisfying to know

others occasionally make the same mistake.

Like Saturday afternoon. I attended a Golden Wedding Anniversary in the Community Centre at Victoria Square. My purpose for being there was to take a photo of the honored couple. However, as I waited in the reception hall, I heard the strains of beautiful music coming from another part of the building, so I ventured in and took a seat.

Minutes later, the master of ceremonies rose to announce the arrival of the riding's Member of Parliament, and to my surprise, I saw him staring in my direction.

I began shaking my head furiously, indicating I was neither Sinclair Stevens nor Bill Hodgson.

"Then you must be a representative," he continued.

Again, I indicated "no".

At this point, I fully expected the M.C. to question what I was doing therein the first place, but he declined to go that far. Since I wasn't carrying my camera, most concluded I'd just come in out of the cold.

So you see, others can get hung up on the same identification problem that's plagued me all my life.

The solution, as I see it, is for everyone to wear a name tag—like a dog.

**Editorials**

**School system's bridging the gap**

This spring, the Board of Education's new Family Life and Sex Education Course will be introduced to elementary and secondary school students in Whitechurch-Stouffville and elsewhere across York Region.

Most parents seem to feel the instruction, (obviously lacking in many homes), is long overdue. And we agree. However, its effectiveness can be ascertained only through personal observations within a classroom setting. A year from now, teachers and parents alike, will all be a little wiser as to the success of the program.

Certainly, if there were any fears concerning the content of the course, these were allayed at the public meeting in Orchard Park School, Wednesday night. Principal John Hincks provided such an in-depth explanation of the program, there was little left to be said, or asked. Mr Hincks had obviously done his "homework" and it showed. His "grass

roots" approach to the subject seemed to satisfy just about everyone.

If some adults view this trend towards sex education in schools, with alarm, it's all because such instruction is now "required", by the Ministry of Education and by the Board. This bothers many people. They detest being "told" what to do. Unfortunately, when such isn't the case, things of necessity seldom get done.

Also, those children now attending our elementary and secondary schools are, for the most part, products of parents who lacked the same education the system now plans to impart. This tends to raise questions like: "It wasn't necessary in my day, so why is it needed now?" Would that we could turn back the clock.

Regardless, at this stage, no one's in a position to assess the success (or failure) of the program. We must give it a chance. Twelve months from now, we'll be able to judge it better.

**Vote is meaningless**

The Concerned Citizens' Committee is (at last word), planning to place the landfill site issue to a vote of the people. The ballot will be published in The Tribune of Feb. 2.

This newspaper stands opposed to a negotiated settlement. We favor a decision by the Assessment Appeal Board and (hopefully), the closing of the dump, June 30, 1983, as ordered by the Environment Ministry last April.

How the ballot will be worded is a matter of conjecture. However, at this point in time, we don't feel it matters. The

Council seems determined that a negotiated settlement (on Town terms), is the right way to go. Even without citizens' support, it's unlikely they'll change their stand.

So what will the plebiscite prove? It will only widen the rift between the Citizens' Group and Council and leave the Environment Ministry laughing.

Whitechurch-Stouffville needs no more egg on its face: We've been "smeared" enough now—from coast to coast. Pitting the people against a Council that's resolute in its purpose, is no way to solve our problems.

**Window on Wildlife**

**Nature's paper-makers**

By Art Briggs-Jude

Among the many features of the winter-wooded landscape, none stands out more noticeably than the large gray nests of the wasp family. And, because of their size and placement along the forest edge and borders, they can often be spotted from a good distance away. Some seasons, they seem to be almost everywhere you roam. Old-timers often remarked that the distance these structures were fastened above the ground, gave a clue as to what depth of snow we could expect that winter. Hopefully, this is just an old wives' tale, because most of the wasp nests I've noticed this year are up in the trees somewhere in the neighborhood of 30 feet.

By far the greatest majority of these oblong fixtures were fashioned by Vespa maculata, commonly called the Bald-faced hornet. And these equally testy yellow-jackets were actually the first and original paper-makers. Long before the ancient Egyptians were fabricating a rough web of Papyrus fibres, these insects were already collecting bits of weather-worn wood and chewing them into a pulp they mixed with their saliva. The resulting products used to build their nests is surprisingly similar to some of the cheaper packing material used in today's industries. But their discovery of paper-making, great that it was, was almost equalled when they found out that the hexagonal-shaped cell allowed the maximum use of limited space. Thus, their food and brood chambers, like those of the honey bee, could be enclosed in a much smaller structure than if they had used any other shape for those individual cells.

Whenever we come in close contact with one of these big gray wasp nests, even in winter, a slight feeling of apprehension usually comes over us. Maybe it's triggered by some long-past event associated with these belligerent bugs, or even fostered by some oft-repeated tale. But whatever the reason, the feeling sometimes persists. Really though, there should be no fear of attack, even in a winter as mild as this one. For, with the approach of cold weather, all members of the colony die, except a few fertilized females or queens, which hibernate in the litter on the ground. The nest then is empty.

The first time I remember having a close encounter with an active nest of these hornets was when I discovered one as I moved a long fruit ladder up among the branches of an old plum tree. Some-

thing akin to the sharp tine of a hay fork hit me on the side of the neck and I dropped off the ladder like I'd just been shot. And it's a good thing I retreated as fast as I did because the angry horde raised another welt on my hand before I could vacate the area. On another occasion, John Skjeberdis, our Lithuanian hired man, inadvertently spiked a paper nest of yellow-jackets as we picked up loose hay with the horse and dray. I finally stopped the horse one field away, but John carried on well into the next pasture before he felt he was safe from his stinging antagonists.

But basically, the various members of the wasp and hornet family, are highly beneficial. They devour tremendous numbers of harmful flies, grasshoppers and caterpillars, including the pupae of the screw worm fly that sucks the blood from nestling bluebirds. They also are very important pollinators of various plants and trees. In fact, some field crops such as red clover, could not successfully reproduce if it were not for the presence of wasps and wild bees during the flowering season. So, unless these winged stingers build a nest too close to house and home, or interfere with your outdoor activity, leave them 'bee'.