

# Garibaldi Public School Former teacher remembers

By Jessie Greig

The year was 1948 and as a two year "pro" I was totally and completely disillusioned. "If this is teaching," I often said to myself and family, "I've had it." A final rejection by a university, filled to capacity by returning servicemen, made teaching at Garibaldi my second choice. In August I signed the contract with the trustees but the signing brought only the resignation that I was settling for something that wasn't at the top of the list of my priorities.

September arrived and with a gnawing fear I arrived at the little red schoolhouse. Even that first day, a day of testing and parrying, I realized this was going to be different. When things ran smoothly during the first week I hoped above hope that this was not the calm before the storm. During the second week the children and I began to warm to each other and I acknowledged to myself this was different from my first two years. The teacher who had preceded me, Garnet Gray, had been a scholar and a gentleman and these qualities had rubbed off on his pupils. Evidence of this was reflected in their workmanship and their courtesy. Once more my zeal surfaced; I was in love with the job that had called me so strongly during my own school years. There was nothing for me to do but plunge into the work and give my very best.

Nostalgia has plagued me since last fall when I first learned of the impending reunion. Thirty-seven years have elapsed but I remember very clearly names like Nettie and Charlie Farrow with whom I boarded, Walter and Lily Hope, Taylors, Reamans, McGuckins, Bacons, Hewletts, Jeffersons, Hoovers, Irwins, Mitchells and Hoods.

Dreams and reveries have transported me back in time. I can still hear the words, music and the recitations that went with the Christmas concerts that traditionally were a part of the little red schoolhouse. How we worked to co-ordinate the program, learn our lines, and prepare the make-shift stage. Everyone wanted a part and everyone threw himself into the long hours of practice with humour and zest. (After all it was better than doing Mathematics!) Bob Hoover even stayed after school to scrub the stage and I have pictures to prove it. We wrote and prepared adaptations of The Bird's Christmas Carol, Little Women and Wind In The Willows. Who will ever forget Bob Heritage as Mr. Toad of Toad Hall or the natural inborn talent in music of the Taylors, (Darlene, Dick and Glenda), or the McGuckins (Clare, Jean, Gloria, Gerald and Ray)?

When, at last, the magical moment of presentation arrived and cars and sleighs pulled up to the door, excitement mounted as the classroom became jammed with people. Three nervous groups existed—parents who wished their child or children to excel, children trying to remember lines and straighten pig-tails and me, the teacher. I hope I never revealed it but I was more frightened than anyone. After all didn't my reputation hang on how well the kids did? Now older and wiser I

know that it mattered not if a note was missed or a line was muffed. What counted was that we had done our very best and Santa would arrive and reward us anyway. We could all go home and sleep well because Christmas was over but the music, love and pride in our work lingered on.

One Christmas program was very special. The Toronto Evening Telegram sent a reporter and photographer to cover the final day of practice and the concert itself. Everything in life should be a learning experience and that day we learned much about the media. To make the story colorful and to embellish the event, they photographed the children crossing a stile and labelled it the "Trials of Attending School in Winter." Certainly the snow was deeper there than on the ploughed road. Hence, we learned that what we see and hear isn't always the way it really is. It was a good lesson to learn and one not to be forgotten soon.

During my years 1948 to 1953, we inaugurated an Education Week Enterprise disguised by the title Daffodil Tea. Here too, we experienced the same success as we sang and recited and displayed our books and art.

It was these concerts that provided us with a projector, a stove, record player, a kitchen cupboard, dishes and soup to warm us during the long winter days.

Noon-hour was always fun. Baseball, skating and outdoor sports easily filled the time and if the game exceeded the hour limit it was simply termed Physical Education. Rainy, cold days were fun too as we would gather around the piano while Glenda played and we sang.

Who will ever forget our expeditions to the bush in the early spring and fall to view the wild-flowers and migrating birds? It was at this time the children became the teacher and I the "town girl", the pupil. I have never forgotten your lessons and as I walk the numerous nature trails, I remember the joy of my first hepatica and red-wing blackbird.

In the early fifties the Hewletts, Kennedys and all the others came with tractors and bulldozers and leveled the grounds while the ladies painted and planted. Truly, it was a landscaping job of which the community could be proud.

One autumn day three years ago, I drove out to the Second Line and parked in front of the school. Memories flooded over me. I could see Lloyd and Alvin directing the rhythm band; the home-made music stands, and the happy faces. I could hear the clear tenor from Dick and Clare as Bernice and Jean; Barb and Darlene supplied the alto while other beautiful voices lifted the melody of "I Go To The Garden Alone". I remembered Dorothy's fresh strawberries and cream in June and the beautiful silver platter and cutlery (Daffodil pattern) that so many of you gave me when at last it was time for me to move on.

Could that school experience be a second choice? No, indeed. Those five years were the happiest of my life—the years I loved most of all during my teaching career. My second choice was the best after all.

# Region tax hike

Whitchurch-Stouffville tax payers face an additional \$14.73 in taxes on a home assessed at \$30,000 as their portion of a 12.8 per cent regional tax increase in 1985.

That's how much more its going to cost to support a budget approved Thursday at Regional Council that may exceed \$100 million.

The actual levy increase was a whopping 19.7 per cent, but its affect on the taxpayers was cushioned by assessment increase (on new homes and businesses) of 6.9 per cent for the past

year. This leaves \$27.6 million to be picked up through property taxes.

In 1984, Whitchurch-Stouffville taxpayers paid \$165.05 in Regional taxes on a home assessed at \$30,000. In 1985, the bill will increase to \$179.

Key expenditures in 1985 are \$21,770,000 to accommodate the police budget and \$8,656,000 for engineering. Both came under keen scrutiny at committee meetings from Aurora Mayor Dick Ilingworth, although his pleas fell on deaf ears.

"We're looking at a \$100 tax increase

when we add in schools," said Mr. Ilingworth. "I think what we are asking the taxpayer to pay is completely unacceptable."

Mr. Ilingworth attacked the engineering budget asking that it be cut to 1984 expenditures

of \$7 million. He also asked what the hiring of 30 additional police officers in October was going to do for his municipality as no new patrols in Aurora will be created.

Mr. Ilingworth suggested allocating a portion of the

lot levy account to roads in an effort to reduce property taxes. However, Regional Chairman Eldred King pointed out that the money in the account was never intended for that purpose.

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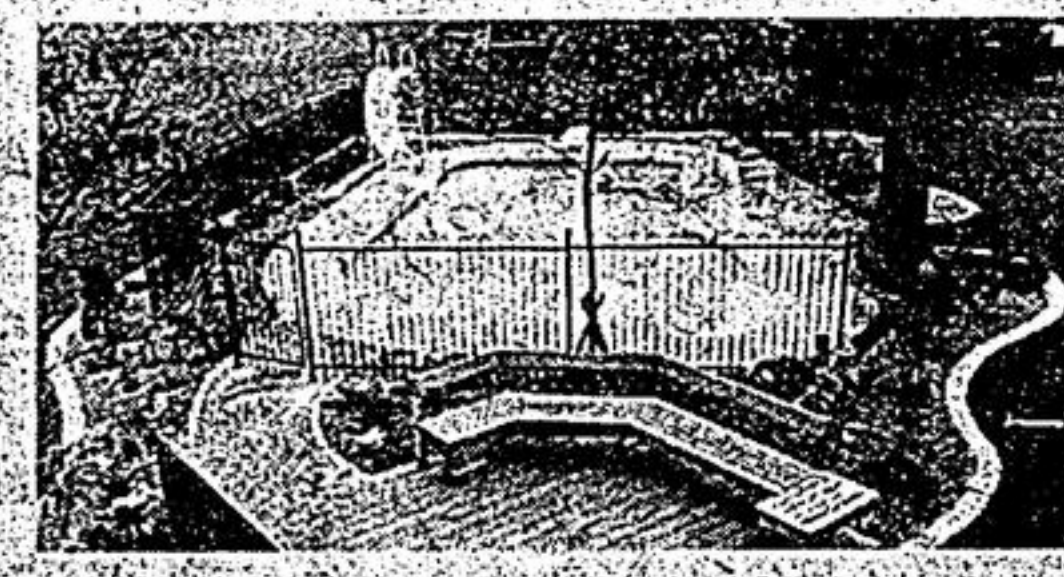
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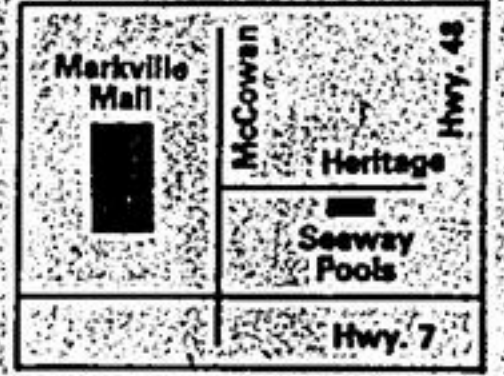


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