

Editor's Mail

Education tax unfair

BY REG MACKAY

Around 1850, when the demand for schools became an issue, the question arose—how are we going to pay for them?

Since, in those days, there was no income tax, the only solution was to assess such costs against property. And it's remained this way to this day.

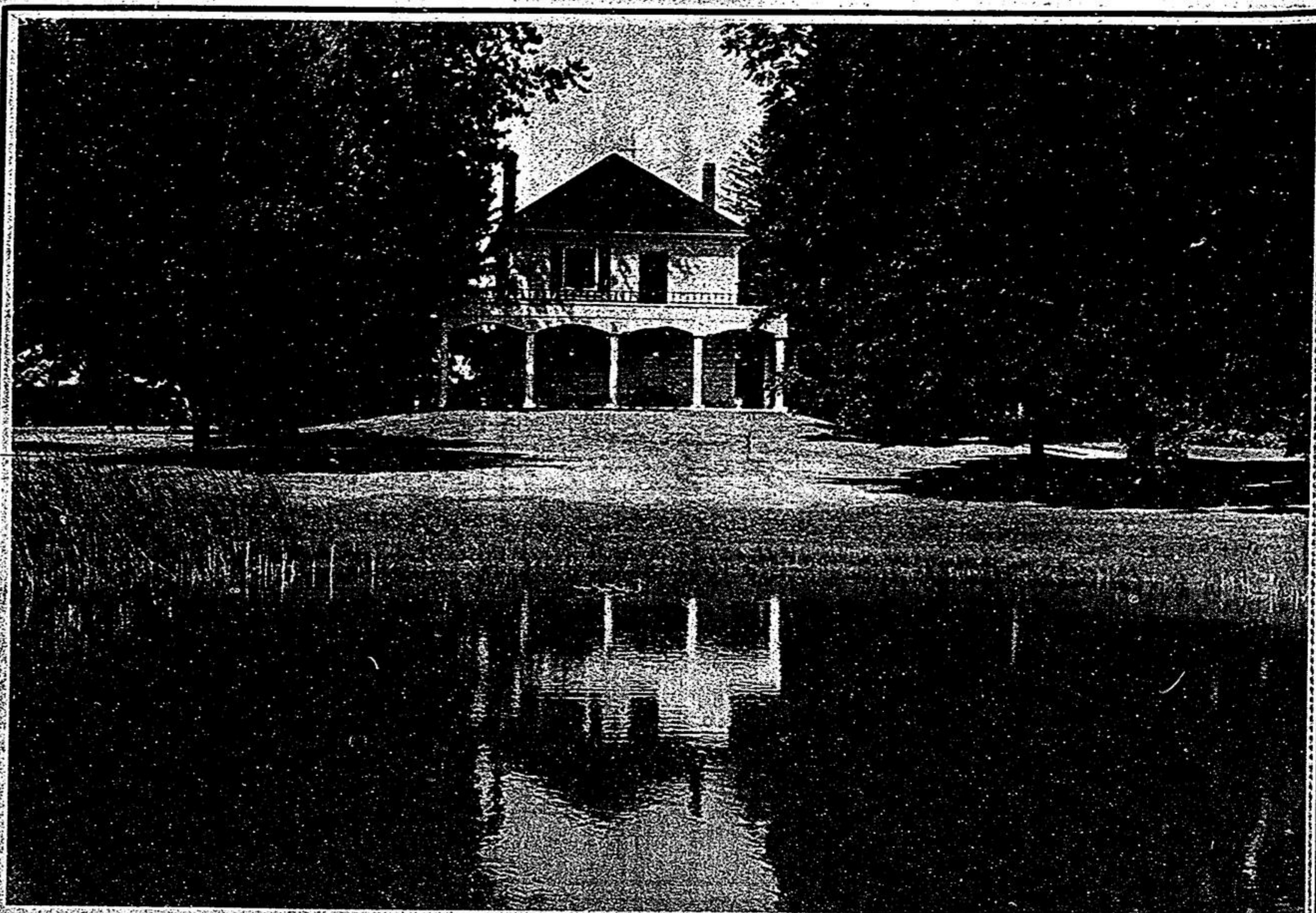
Education tax amounts to about two-thirds one's property tax. This means that, on a tax bill of \$900, education tax is \$600.

In my opinion, the logical place for this expense to be assessed is on income. The previous provincial government recognized this to the extent of granting up to \$500 for each senior citizen to subsidize his/her property tax.

Up to age 65, regardless of income, this cost is a burden to a great number of people.

I feel education costs should be assessed against income only. Income tax may go up but property tax will come down, thus distributing the cost among those most able to pay.

I hope the present government will undertake a study of the whole system with a view of making education costs more equitable.



The Timbers' family home ---rural reflections

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Editorial

Who's being protected?

Residents in the Stouffer Street-Thicketwood Boulevard area of Stouffville, (and beyond), are understandably upset over a judge's decision to ban publication of evidence related to a case dating back to (and get this) December, 1983.

The judge feels that "because of the sexual nature of the evidence," it would be unwise to further publicize the facts.

We say this is wrong, just as we say the court's handling of the case has been wrong. The matter's been allowed to drag on too long, increasing public speculation that a cover-up is underway.

And no wonder. The charges, including that of contributing to juvenile delinquency, were laid back in January 1984, nineteen months ago. Several adjournments have followed, including the latest to March 4, 1986. This means, if the case goes ahead as proposed, two years and two months will have elapsed since the crime allegedly occurred. We're not about to believe it's taken the Crown all this time to build a case.

We firmly believe the identity of the children should be protected, indeed, if this is possible in a town our size. Regardless, they shouldn't be subjected to further embarrassment and humiliation. But protection of the accused is another story. While long since moved from the community, their names are as fresh in the minds of people as if the charges had been laid yesterday.

Residents here aren't morbidly curious. They're anxiously concerned. Some moved from the city to quiet little Stouffville, to escape this sort of thing. If it can happen once, it can happen again. Also, there may be another side to this story. The accused are indeed innocent until proven guilty. Perhaps they'll be proven innocent. The public has a right to know what the defense has to say as well as the Crown.

We feel the publication ban should be lifted. We believe, however, the names of the youthful witnesses should be protected. The judge's order should end there. Anything less is only grist for the rumor mill. And that's bad.

We can do better

The annual Terry Fox Marathon of Hope in Whitechurch-Stouffville, (and elsewhere across Canada), is Sunday, Sept. 15.

While Terry Fox himself ignited a flame of enthusiasm here, even to the holding of a candlelight service at the Town Square, the six-mile marathon has not been well supported.

In dollars, yes, we've done well, better than most communities our size. But in numbers of participants, the turnout's been poor. We can do better.

Terry Fox was a hero to all ages, particularly teens. But teen participation in the Walk/Run has been strangely lacking. Organizers are hopeful this will change.

An appeal is being made through the schools, all schools, in Whitechurch-Stouffville, in an effort to encourage more young people to become involved. Herein, we believe, lies the secret: If principals and staff teachers take up the torch, we're sure the students will follow. Let's hope.

In previous years, the Don Anderson's, the Jack Watson's, and the Terri Surman's have carried the load, raising in excess of six thousand dollars. We'd rather see this figure collected by six hundred people rather than sixty in other words, total community cooperation. We've done it before, with other projects. The Terry Fox Marathon of Hope is no less important.

Discuss hospital site

The building of a hospital is one thing. The location of a hospital is another. To some, both are equally important.

To arbitrarily switch sites, months before starting construction, has irritated many supporters. There have even been threats of withholding donations and pledges.

Undoubtedly, the hospital board has looked into the matter carefully. Regardless, this is a people project. A property, particularly a donated property, should not be suddenly abandoned for

the sake of convenience.

Board members, although obviously convinced the Hwy. 48 site is best, have agreed to discuss the issue at a public meeting, Sept. 15, in the Markham council chambers, Buttonville. This is a wise decision. Our choice of sites is unchanged. We favor the original property north of Hwy. 7 on the Ninth Line. The public discussion may convince us otherwise. Regardless, people will be given an opportunity to have their say.

ROAMING AROUND



Easy police pickings

BY JIM THOMAS

About two months ago, a Stouffville resident wrote a Letter to the Editor, (this editor), objecting to speed limitations on the 9th Concession of Markham. He objected to the fact an area between 17th and 19th Avenues is posted at 60 kilometers per hour, but increases to 70 kph from 17th Avenue south.

The 60 kph zone is, of course, easy pickings for police if and when they decide to stop playing at being bat-boys for the Blue Jays and do an honest day's work.

Form of protest

The writer urged motorists to fire off a few epistles to Mayor Carole Bell and Company as a form of protest. Not that he really expected the complaints would do any good. Have you ever heard of speed limits being raised? I haven't. Regardless, there are times when even politicians recognize something as stupid as a 60 kph speed zone in an area frequented only by errant raccoons and slow-moving groundhogs.

Congratulations

I wish to take this opportunity to thank The Tribune and your sister newspaper, The Economist and Sun and the Canadian Tire Stores of Markham and Stouffville for sponsorship of the Markham-Stouffville Golf Tournament.

While not a participant in the tournament itself, I am a strong supporter of the Hospital project. The event's \$14,000 contribution is an excellent form of community cooperation. I congratulate you all.

Grant Taylor,
 Millard Street,
 Stouffville

So what did I do? Nothing, even though I probably travel that route more often than anyone for two reasons. The Ninth Line is my old stamping grounds. That's where I used to live. It's also less of a hazard. I detest driving Hwy. 48.

Now, I also detest the Ninth Line. I was stopped for speeding, (93 kph the radar said), Wed., Aug. 21, the first day of a two-week vacation. What a way to start a holiday!

The cop caught me cold, but I came very close to not stopping. I thought his wave was only a gesture of good morning. No such luck.

Ruffled his feathers

Sure, I protested, a song and dance he'd probably heard a thousand times before. But he listened, even agreed with me. It should be 80 kph and not 60, he said. Out of the kindness of his heart, he reduced my speed from 93 to 75, so I wouldn't lose any points.

But my reluctance to stop talking almost cost me a bundle. When I informed the officer I intended to take my protest to court, (and he'd better be there), it ruffled his feathers. He threatened to change the speed reading back to 93. He claimed I was "only wanting to embarrass him," which was the farthest thing from my mind. It's the Town of Markham I want to embarrass, not the constable. He's only doing his job. Anyway, he relented and the 75 kph figure stands.

Residents have complained

But why the 60 kph in an area's that's as rural as a wagon trail to the back fifty? The officer explained that many motorists take advantage of the road's open space and hit speeds up to 120. It seems there are extremes in both directions.

But I suspect home-owners have complained. Nothing spurs politicians to action quicker than ratepayer complaints, especially in an election year. The fact a few dozen drivers up in Stouffville get nipped for dollars and points doesn't really matter. Verbal votes don't count.

But forgetting police and politics, I'm on the side of safety, even the safety of errant raccoons and groundhogs. From now on, I'll be sticking to the 60 kph speed limit, even if it kills me.



Praises softball program



The Whitechurch-Stouffville House League softball season concludes with a tournament this Saturday. It's been a successful summer as indicated by a letter from a satisfied parent. Beneficiaries, she says, are

boys and girls like seven-year-old Jenny Carpenter of Churchill Drive, Musselman's Lake, a T-Ball player with Country Stop Restaurant/Balantrac.

—Jim Thomas

Dear Editor:

With softball house league competition now concluded, except for the year-end tournament this Saturday, I wish to express my personal appreciation to team coaches, managers, umpires and league officials for the excellent way the organization was operated this season.

While I cannot speak for all teams, the sportsmanship I witnessed in every park this summer was most gratifying. It would seem that 'fun' has returned to softball in Whitechurch-Stouffville rather than the 'win-at-all-costs' desire that sometimes creeps into competition.

The coaching was marvellous. These men and women, all volunteers, came out to the games (often without supper) night after night all season long. I can't believe such dedication.

Further, there seems to be an improved attitude on the part of spectators; no more name-calling or uncomplimentary remarks that often marred games in the past. Parents are finally growing up, and it's rubbing off on their sons and daughters.

Again, to the above mentioned people, my thanks. You've made it a wonderful summer for our daughter, a summer she'll never forget. She can hardly wait till next year.

Sincerely,
 Cathy Ireson,
 R.R. 3, Stouffville