

Editor's Mail

Sacrifice

Dear Editor:
I was disappointed to read in the April 20 issue of The Tribune that the Town of Whitechurch-Stouffville had turned down the request of the Christian Blind Mission for tax exemption.

This organization is a religious one, fulfilling the purpose for which Jesus came... "to heal the broken-hearted and recover sight for the blind."

It's popular in some quarters to disbelieve the miracles that Jesus performed but His servants in this the 20th century are performing miracles on His behalf with their surgery, medications and vitamins to cure and prevent blindness; volunteering their time and skill for a mere pittance.

It costs \$20 for a cataract operation and \$1 for medication to prevent blindness in two people. These services are free to the patients.

The self-sacrifice of these workers is amazing and done only with the reminder... "inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."

I'm reminded of the story of a reporter visiting a leper colony and on seeing a nurse bathing the open sores of a patient said to her: "I wouldn't do that for a million dollars." The nurse replied: "Neither would I."

Speaking for myself, (and possibly for many others), I politely request Council to reconsider its decision. I heartily approve of some of my tax dollars being used to assist this work.

Sincerely,
Donald Ward,
Glad Park Avenue,
Stouffville

Education Week

April 17-23



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The Tribune

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ROAMING AROUND

Canine therapy works

BY JIM THOMAS



Susie's eight years old; nine come September.

In human terms this puts her at 56, approaching 63.

No, I'm not talking about my mother-in-law. Unfortunately, (for her), I assume people know. Invariably, however, readers become confused. This is understandable since both bear the same first names.

They pose embarrassing questions like: "I didn't know you had an intense dislike for cats."

Did that new brand of flea powder work?

I bet your bark's worse than your bite? It's enough to split the family.

This week, I want to make it abundantly clear the Susie I'm talking about is our dog, a four-legged pooch Paul and Neil purchased at the Sales Barn for five dollars.

She's a fantastic pet, affectionate, warm, friendly; worth her weight in canine crunchies.

But like her owner, she does have her hang-ups. She dislikes changes in her itinerary. And that's what happened Thursday. I took her to Parkview Home.

While Susie's a few years short of retirement, I thought it a good idea that she see for herself how humans spend their senior years. But that wasn't my main reason for going. The staff, (Herb Diller and company), encourage doggie visits now and again. But up until Thursday, I'd always been too busy.

The decision was a spur of the moment thing.

"Why not?" I said to Jean, jumping up from the table, "Susie's not doing anything anyway. The change will do her good."

While Jean hadn't the foggiest idea what I was talking about, she nodded agreement anyway, feeling a noon-hour walk wouldn't do either of us any harm. Parkview Home, for those who don't

know, is on Rupert Avenue, only a few steps down the street. I've been there many times, but this was a brand new venture for Susie.

At first, she was hesitant to enter, sniffing out the welcome mat. Retaining an intense dislike for veterinary clinics, she just wanted to make sure.

We went directly to the office, not wanting to trespass on forbidden territory.

"Anywhere there's people," the pleasant receptionist replied. Susie wagged her thanks.

It's long been said that dogs are a form of therapy. I firmly believe this after my experience Thursday. The very sight of Susie and the lounge area came alive;

the hallways too.

With few exceptions, residents reached out to touch her, and she responded, nestling her nose in their hands.

"Nice doggie nice doggie," they repeated as we walked from chair to chair.

And the memories:

"We had a dog down on the farm something like her," recalled one lady, "a wonderful pet she was too."

"She's beautiful," replied another, "such a pretty face."

Two nurses came over to see what the 'conversation piece' was all about. Each administered affectionate pats on the head.

And Susie's tail wagged like a cymophore gone crazy.

Our 'tour of duty' took us down two halls, stopping off at rooms with familiar names on the doors.

Everywhere we went, the reception was the same, smiles, smiles and more smiles.

Susie smiled back.

"It was so kind of you to come," said a lady near the door, "bring Susie back soon, and you come too."

The message was clear. I'd been upstaged by a dog.

Susie was fairly bouncing as we left. Even far down the street, she still kept glancing back as if to say, "do we really have to go?"

I stroked her nose and ears, praising her for minding her manners. That, in all honesty, was my worst fear. That she might have an 'accident'. It's been known to happen, you know, even with the most 'regulated' of pets.

But not this time. Susie was on her best behavior.

Yes, we ARE going back. In fact, with management's okay, I hope to make it a regular routine.

Therapy, they say. That's for sure — for guests as well as hosts. A thanks and a woof from both of us.

Editor's Mail

Support

Dear Editor:

A noticed a sign on the front door of Orchard Park School that read "Education Week is Every Week".

To me, this sounded like the policy of your newspaper. I've never seen a media that promotes education the way The Tribune does.

I'm particularly appreciative of your 'Teacher Feature'. You make these very important people seem so human — the way the children, (I hope), see them and parents should see them.

Keep up the fantastic job. For me, Wednesday is the best day of my week.

Sincerely,
(Mrs.) Nancy Carillo,
Iroquois Drive,
Ballantrae

Editorials

Get back to the basics

Education spending's out of control. We said that last year. We're beginning to sound like a broken record.

And so does the Board as members continually pass the buck to the province for its shortfall in funding.

Perhaps, just perhaps, the Region of York received exactly what it deserved. Queen's Park, by its recent horrendous tax hike, isn't operating out of a bottomless barrel either.

It too is experiencing a shortfall in funds.

With respect to education, trustees have a tiger by the tail. The only way to control it is to shoot it. And this is what the board must do — shoot down all extravagant projects and cut extracurricular spending to the bare bone.

We're not talking pennies here. We're talking 272 million dollars, an increase of \$38 1/2 million over 1987 or almost eleven per cent.

Inflation remains at four per cent; most salary increases too. Costs in other areas, education included, should not outstrip inflation. When it does, taxpayers suffer.

What's the solution?

Both the Board and the Ministry are trying to be all things to all people. They must stop catering to minorities. Have politicians got the guts? We doubt it, otherwise they'd do it.

We suggest they try these recommendations on for size.

Scrap French Immersion. It's a frill. Those parents who want it, should pay for it.

Halt construction of lavish schools, Taj Mahals like Unionville High.

Combine public and separate schools. There are communities where one is only a stones-throw from the other.

Return to the six-area system. The

more areas, the more money it takes to operate them.

Stop bowing to parental whims that sees students transported out of the Region for selected subjects.

Stop building schools and adding portables until all area sites are filled.

Scrap summer school. Students wishing to upgrade marks should do so by private instruction.

Scrap public-sponsored day-care. Leave this service to private enterprise.

Cancel all Professional Development Days. Teachers and students time could be better spent in the classroom.

Make teacher retirement mandatory at age fifty-five.

Scrap the public-sponsored gifted schools. Parents who feel their children require advanced instruction, should pay for it.

We could go on.

If ever there was a time to 'get back to the basics', that time is now.

The pendulum has swung too far. Let's return to fiscal sanity in education and ignore the bleatings of those who insist on nothing but the best; before they break the bank.

Spotlight

Whitechurch-Stouffville's 'family of schools' recently concluded the most successful Education Week ever.

Those schools that 'dared to dream', opened their doors to large audiences. Appreciative parents filled classrooms and gymnasiums to capacity.

The focus here was strictly local — in the Library, at the Rec. Centre, Parkview Village, individual schools and churches. It worked. Parents loved it. Participants enjoyed it.

Education Week was indeed an education. It made the medicine of a \$270,000,000 budget much easier to swallow.



Province honors volunteers in ceremony at McMichael Gallery, Kleinburg

Forty-nine volunteers, nominated by fifteen local organizations, were honored by the Ministry of Citizenship and the Ministry of Culture and Communications at a ceremony, April 18 at McMichael Gallery, Kleinburg. Included were members of the Markham and District Historical Society. Shown here are (left to right) — Mac Keith, (for Walter Hope); Ernie Caruthers, Murray Grove, Hon. Gerry Phillips, Ministry of Culture and Communications; Nelson Smith, Murray Reesor, and Dorothy Reesor. Each volunteer received a trillium-shaped bronze, silver and goldtone lapel pin and a personalized certificate.