

# Opinion

Send your letters to the editor to 9 Heritage Rd., Markham, L3P 1M3 or fax them to 294-1533

## Volunteer spirit could flourish

The leaner, meaner style of government could give rise to some positive after-effects. Minister of Community and Social Services Dave Tsubouchi told the Toronto media that if welfare recipients are feeling the pinch after recent cutbacks, they may have to rely on family and friends to help them get by.

It's a small-town way of thinking which has been gradually lost as governments took a more custodial role throughout the last half of this century.

Now as we prepare for a new millenium, governments at all levels are react-



Viewpoint

Paula Growell

ing to the shortage of tax funds by reducing their responsibility for people they had been supporting.

Protests against government cutbacks, especially at the provincial level, have been violent.

The people who have relied on government support are feeling desperate and scoff at the minister's solution

But Tsubouchi's idea is like a seed which has sprouted

One local volunteer organization reports that baby boomers, who have never been active in the community, are giving unpaid help as a way to fulfill themselves.

Early retirement for middle-class boomers gives them the time - and the relative youth - to contribute in a meaningful way to a variety of volunteer organizations. Because they see the potential need for their services, they're coming forward to offer them.

There has always been a need for community

activists. Little league, scouting and guiding movements are constantly recruiting new parents to take on leadership roles. This will never change. But at least these organizations can recruit the parents of their members, with the trump card that a lack of volunteers could shut down their child's club.

Service clubs, church groups and other organizations don't have such a card.

They must rely on the genuine ambition of residents. Perhaps service organizations should promote their hand-up projects to attract new volunteers.

## 'Three cheers for coaches': Dad

Dear Editor,  
As most summertime local sports come to a close it's interesting and fruitful as parents to reflect on the nature of the contribution many minor league coaches make to the development of our little ones. With daughters, 7 and 10 playing in the local soccer league I've had the good fortune to witness, week after week, the way in which our coaches go well beyond the sport, to teach the kids about life in ways they're sure to encounter in the future.

The real upside for advancement and preparation, I'd argue, are the skills the coach is passing on that will put them in a better position to cope with life's real, often serious, curve balls, end-runs and "it's just not fair" situations.

As a soccer dad this past few years in York Region I've observed first hand a few coaches, among many I'm sure, who are masters at this. The point is twofold, know how to assess and applaud a coach who, for a hour or two a week, has the charge of your budding star and secondly, appreciate where teaching the sport skills starts and stops

and instruction of the more important life skills begin. The distinction will carry forward with your young star forever.

Three cheers for the coach(es).

James S. Quance  
Richmond Hill



## 'Too little too late' on morality

Dear Editor,  
I am inclined to differ with Andrew Mair in his opinion that "municipalities shouldn't legislate morality" (Sept. 16). His reasoning was that lap-dancing is an issue that affects very few people since dancers do not make up a large part of our work force.

It would appear to the writer that in the same context Mair would favour "liberating" prostitution which is a minority in our population.

As citizens, we look to our government not only

for governance to maintain law and order, but also for leadership for the betterment of our economic, cultural and social well-being, as well as the advancement of moral standard.

It is to be regretted that our governments, federal, provincial and municipal, have done too little and too late to legislate morality. Otherwise for one we would have fewer single mothers

K.L. Man  
Stouffville

## Is the monarchy safe?

Walt Whitman, the American poet, said one of the wisest things about animals I ever read.

I think I could turn and live with animals

They are so placid and self-contained

I often think of Whitman's words when I'm lined up like a sheep at a cash register getting ready to pay for something I don't really need, or when I find myself enmeshed like a maze rat in the twice-a-day March of Chrome that constitutes what we so laughably call "rush-hour" traffic.

It doesn't rush and it's seldom over an hour.

Animals don't have to worry about earthly stupidities like that. Deer browse. Robins look for nice fat earthworms. Rabbits nibble and crickets chirp. They did it when we pink and hairless interlopers hunched naked and shivering in caves and they do it today when we sit draped in polyester and hunched over computer terminals and steering wheels.

Animals just mind their own business. Except when we humans horn in.

Take the case of the Beast of Bodwin Moor.

For decades now, Britons living in the southwest corner of England have muttered about the strange goings on in the Moor, a desolate area not far from Cornwall.

People had "seen things". Strange things. Things not normally seen in the docile and bucolic environs of gentle England.

Farmers spoke of unearthly screeches in the night. Disappearing pets. Huge shadows flashing through the underbrush. Shadows that looked like well-cats.

But massive cats. Cats as big as mountain lions or panthers.

### The Tribune

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Arthur Black

Finally, last spring — conclusive proof. A pair of hikers stumbled across a large feline skull with two prominent fangs in the mud of a river bank on the edge of Bodwin Moor.

They identified the skull, all right. It belonged to a black leopard.

But it was the presence of a cockroach egg case inside the skull that revealed the Beast of Bodwin Moor to be a hoax. If the sensational British tabloids were shaken by the revelation, it didn't show. But then, they had other things to worry about.

The croaking raven of London Tower, for instance.

That's croaking as in dead, defunct, bereft of life. Just like the Monty Python parrot. The raven, named Charlie, was killed by a hungry police sniffer dog. That's when the tabloids got hold of the story — and reminded their readers what Charlie's death meant.

Charlie, you see, was a member of the elite raven platoon that's been guarding London tower for the past 335 years — by appointment of His Majesty King Charles II.

Legend has it that the monarchy will crumble if the ravens ever leave the tower.

And now there are only five left.

And the Queen is reduced to charging admission to tourists and Diana's running around with rock stars and Charles is caught in 8 bioglossies, skinny dipping in Portugal...