

Comment

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Confusion reigns over announcement

We are still playing the wait-and-see game with the new education funding formula.

John Snobelen, the Ontario Minister of Education, announced on Monday massive changes to the education system in Ontario.

He said he will be cutting the number of boards, and crippling the current power base that trustees enjoy.

He also said the funding for education will not be coming from the property tax rolls. Instead, Snobelen expects revenues to come from business, income tax and provincial grants.

"We're going to focus on the classroom," he stated in his address in Toronto, Monday.

But what the new changes mean to you have yet to be disclosed. Will taxes go up?

Will they stay the same, or will they drop? What happens to those boards with huge deficits?

How will smaller communities like ours manage with a representative (potentially) from a larger centre? What kind of service will we receive?

These are just a few questions that spring to mind.

Trustees will be making far less,

those that survive.

What will the standard curriculum announced be like?

What reliance will the

government place on the parent councils to take up the slack left by fewer trustees?

The plan may be in place,

but we think it will be ages before we can even begin the contemplate the ramifications.

Wait and see.



Inconvenience of highway noise deserves a tax break

If I had a dollar for every time I've written a story about noise I'd be able to retire to a quiet place.

Take it from one who knows: Noise, garbage and the safety of children make up the NIMBY agenda.

I didn't have much use for Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) types until the provincial government announced plans to run a highway through my family's backyard. My letter to the province read something like this:

Dear Province:

I want the route for Hwy 407 changed. Don't get me wrong, I've got nothing against highways, providing, one doesn't touch my life. Sorry guys, but I'm not going to sit idle while you murder my farm. If I don't speak up I'll wake up to find your 407 sitting smack dab in the middle of my West 100. I can't believe you'd do this to me.

There are lots of places you can put your highway. Run it through Bill Reid's farm. He's a Tory. A heck of a nice fellow. He'd get a kick out of watching the traffic. As for me, I don't need it. I don't want it and I don't like it. So stop it.

XOXO
Joannie

Last week, I wrote another NIMBY story. I like NIMBIES. Since life starts at home, we should protect our backyards.

About 30 Vandorf residents have filed an official noise complaint against Hwy 404, claiming noise from the provincial highway is making life difficult.

Christopher Dymond of Executive Drive said he wakes to the drone of traffic and it carries on night and day. In Vandorf, you're in the country but you can't hear a



bird sing. The only time the residents can't hear the 404 is when the train whistle blows.

The province has been told noise affects comfort, use and enjoyment of property, not to

Resolution 310 may be a bit of a problem

It's 1997 and fame continues to elude me.

The latest venture to pique my interest is broadcasting. This is because a) I am a broad and b) I could win \$1,000 if I turn out to be one of the National Institute of Broadcasting's Best New Voices.

If I don't win an award, I can pay the NIB to take courses which may (or may not) make me a household name in Barrie.

The more usual route would be to get a real job and that's something I'm seriously considering. (New Year's Resolution #310 - get a real job). There are, however, a few nebulous reasons I haven't yet embraced this course of action. For instance, my qualifications are a bit behind the times.

When I worked in an office, I keyboarded letters and memoranda on a sweet, old fashioned typewriter before the verb 'to keyboard' was invented. Typewriters, for those too young to remember them, were machines

without screens, into which you placed maybe five pieces of paper, each separated from its neighbor by a sheet of messy, inky carbon. Once you had anchored everything in place by means of a metal bar, you bashed the keys with gusto, thus transferring the gibberish in your notebook directly onto the page.

The highway will always be there but it's only fair to take steps to eliminate or limit the

effects of noise on communities beside the 404. If the province won't muffle the noise then property taxes should be lowered.

I support the 32 residents who have filed individual appeals to the province's Assessment Review Board, requesting that their 1997 taxes be lowered if the noise isn't muffled.

While the process appears to make no concession for noise, in a number of cases taxpayers have successfully argued before the board that noise is a valid basis

for reducing assessed value. And in some countries, noise is a big deal. In Finland, noise protection is based on law. Before a new road is built, research work has to be done to prove that the traffic on the possible new road will not produce too much noise for the nearby residential areas. No new residential areas may be planned before its proved peaceful enough. Like the Finns, the residents of Vandorf appreciate the quality of life.

My hat goes off to them.

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Employers also require proficiency in mysterious-sounding disciplines like Excel, Word Perfect, Lotus 1, 2, 3 or Windows. It's no good pointing out that your Mac had Windows before your potential boss was out of diapers. If it's not IBM, it doesn't count.

All this wouldn't be so bad if I were a team player, another prerequisite for the job market du jour. As it is, I may qualify to start a franchise (but you need money for that), be a building superintendent (I'd have to leave home), or stuff envelopes, assemble jewellery or staple books together and earn up to \$1,500 a week in my own front room.

The experts tell you that talent alone is not enough. What you have to do is market yourself, which is like selling, which is what I used to do and gave up because I was so bad at it. Whatever happened to Being Discovered?

This weekend I'm going to buy a lottery ticket.

machine, the copies came out wet and had to be draped over desks and chairs to dry. Every time someone opened the door, the resulting breeze would blow your work onto the floor, where it would get smudged and crumpled and you would be obliged to start all over again.

Today's human resources (personnel) departments don't give a toss about your ability to hang copies out to dry, but they do require you to be PC literate. PC stands for personal computer. I have a personal computer, but because it's made by Macintosh and not IBM or a clone thereof, I am somehow considered PC illiterate.

And when you used the copying

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