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Comment & Opinions

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EDITORIAL

Resurrect gallery

The closure of the Latcham Gallery has left a formidable void in our community. For 20 years, it was the sole permanent facility for exhibitions by York Region artists. The gallery, in its day, has housed some of the nation's finest artists.

However, when it comes to slicing the government pie, culture is often the last piece served. In addition, when that pie has to be made smaller, culture is often a key ingredient that is left out.

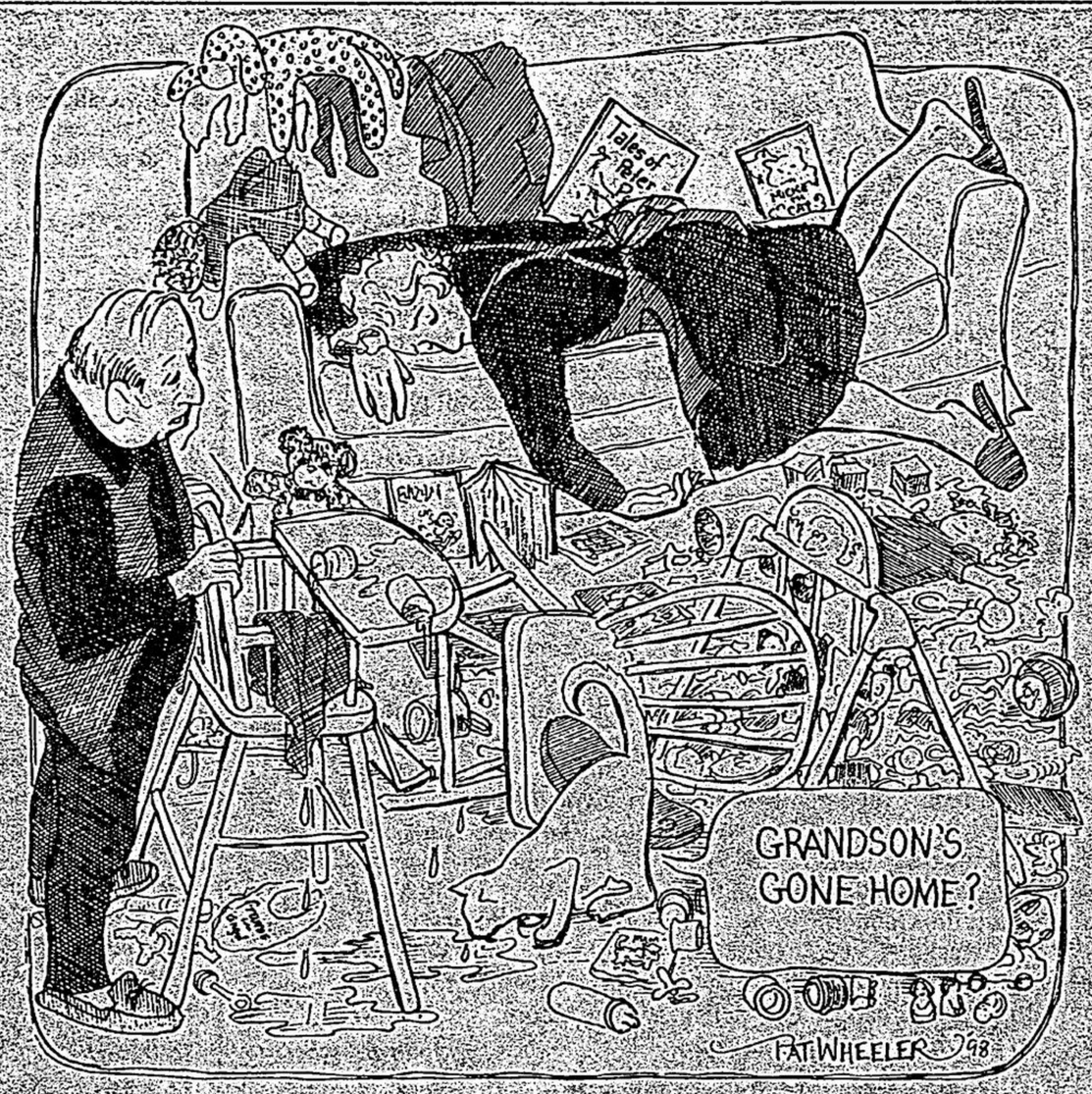
Such is the case with the Latcham Gallery.

The Latcham Gallery began largely as the dream of Ron and Linda Baird, Uxbridge area artists. Last week, that dream ended as the library board which oversaw its operations deemed $30,000 a year too much to pay. Its 213 members and hundreds of supporters were devastated. Its opponents, those that would see money be pumped into other areas which more suited their personal tastes.

The gallery has had a checkered past these last few years. Several curators have resigned from lack of support, and the board had threatened to pull the plug at least once before.

There may a ray of light for those who believe the gallery served a purpose. A proposal has now been put forward for the gallery to be run as a private entirety. A citizen's committee is being put together to come up with a business plan to have the gallery reopened. We wholeheartedly support this venture and urge anyone with even a dim interest in the subject to lobby support for this unique community facility. If the gallery was not feasible as a public entity, then certainly it should be given the chance for resurrection in the private sector.

William James once said that "real culture lives by sympathies and admiration, not by dislikes and disdains." It would seem that the board's sympathies lie elsewhere.



LETTERS

Electorate decides, losers must accept defeat graciously

Dear Editor,

Question: What do Mike Watson and a few of the American Olympic Hockey Players have in common?

Answer: They are all sore losers!

When a person decides to put their name forward and run for public office they should be prepared to accept defeat graciously at the hands of the electorate as readily as they would have accepted victory.

It is obvious to me that Mike Watson doesn't recognize the unwritten but widely accepted honourable rules of defeat.

1. Upon learning the results of the election the loser immediately goes to the winner and publicly congratulates them on their victory. (I understand that Mike Watson was a "no-show" and did not offer Mayor Emmerson his personal congratulations on election night. There is no acceptable excuse for such childish behaviour).

2. After the election the losing candidate, even though it hurts, always accepts the will of the electorate and gets on with their private life. In so doing this allows the winner the opportunity to carry out the mandate granted by voters until the next election.

(Mike Watson and his campaign manager are either extremely naive or someone has forgotten to remind them that the election has been over for months and they lost. The electorate has already decided that their ideas were not acceptable. No amount of 'mud-slinging' about Mayor Emmerson's legal and highly successful fundraising efforts will change the results).

For the Watson family to have to contribute over $4,000 of their own money to a less than $6,000 campaign tells me more about their inability to raise the necessary funds to support their ideals than it does about their commitment to the community, as suggested by last week's letter to the editor. As a recipient of one of the many unsolicited fundraising letters that they sent out before the election and the recipient of two pestering follow-up phone calls, I am sure I am not alone in wondering how they raised any money at all. Tom Brooke, a professional campaign manager, claims that "without money there is no campaign, no way of spreading the message and convincing voters to support a particular candidate or a particular platform. In other words a candidate with money has a campaign; one without money only has a cause."

Bill Ballinger
Stouffville

Government knows best, or does it?

Kate's Corner

Kate Gilderdale

Isn't it nice to know that, whenever you need protection from yourself, there's always a government department happy to oblige?

A couple of weeks ago, a zealous bunch of federal bureaucrats instigated a campaign to eradicate even the most unlikely sources of mad cow disease from store shelves across Alberta.

Among their targets were killer Bisto, Baxter's Soups and other deadly British foodstuffs, including, for some inexplicable reason, a pie that contains no beef.

My first coherent thought, after the initial shock had subsided and the realization that the government always knows best had reasserted itself, was, What about Marmite? This unique delicacy, for those who did not grow up in the U.K. and are unaware of its subtle charms, is a spread which you have to have ingested from early childhood to fully appreciate.

A typical Canadian response to the stuff, heartily endorsed by my own children, is 'Yuk.' Marmite, alas, was hard to come by when the latter were small and I was unable to introduce it into their daily diet before they developed discerning palates.

Back to the plot. I rushed to my larder, wherein lurked two tiny, perfect bottles of this unsung gem, to check the list of ingredients. "Yeast extract, salt, dehydrated carrots and onions, spice extracts," it said comfortingly, in both official languages. Marmite does, however, have a decidedly beefy flavour, so I'm stocking up, just in case, even though I may not live to regret it.

Meanwhile, in Toronto, Buster, the cat, another potential carrier of pestilence and plague, has been threatened with eviction from the Sweet Indulgence bakery, at the urging of a new, keen city health inspector. No deaths, or even slightly debilitating illnesses, have been attributed to Buster, who has been a feline fixture since the store opened 10 years ago.

His function, apart from being cute, was to rid the bakery of mice, a chore he has performed with estimable enthusiasm and sterling success. Still, rules are rules and if the provincial Health Protection and Promotion Act says Buster must go, then obviously he's bakery toast.

When Mr. Wallethead read about the Buster brouhaha, he regarded Poc thoughtfully for some moments before postulating that perhaps we should rethink our approach to health on the family premises.

We're courting double disaster, he pointed out, by harbouring bottles of Bovril and providing shelter for two mindless, but endearing, moggies, whose preferred perch is the kitchen counter.

As a compromise, I am writing this column to warn future guests of the hazards of breaking bread at Chateau Gilderdale. And while politicians protect my fellow humans, I will continue to regard the former with a jaundiced eye, concurring heartily with the words of Sir Ernest Benn: "Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding out whether it exists or not, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedy."

Spanking can be effective form of discipline

Dear Editor,

I share the sentiment of one of the letters published on March 12, it would be wonderful if parenting courses were as popular as prenatal courses. However, I have an even greater concern when one calls spanking a "simplistic and violent solution." The spankings I received growing up were never simplistic or violent, and I never perceived the person spanking me as "hitting" me. But they sure helped teach me some lessons I'm awfully glad I learned early in life.

Corporal punishment that is not administered according to carefully thought-out guidelines is a dangerous thing. Just because a technique is used wrongly, is no reason to reject it altogether. Children who receive corporal punishment from loving parents have no trouble understanding its meaning. I was spanked, I never doubted their love for me.

Timothy Neimy

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