

THE TRIBUNE

Comment & Opinions

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OPINION

Vegetation
 wiped out in
 Vandorf Park

Much of the natural
 vegetation growing
 for decades in Van-
 dorf Community
 Park was wiped out
 in two days this
 week.



A Voice
 of Vandorf

Elaine Stewart

A branch of the
 Holland River fol-
 lows Vandorf Sideroad from its beginnings east of my home
 and flows through our park. For many years, plantings on
 both sides of the creek in the park have been maintained as
 a conservation project. Many species of natural grasses
 have been carefully monitored to help sustain the natural
 balance of the creek and its wildlife.

On June 10 and 11, this project was almost completely
 wiped out by town staff with weedcutters. The edges of the
 creek now look like a war zone. Along with the natural
 grasses which have been cut to the ground, hundreds of
 flowering yellow water iris were demolished. Many trees
 have been ruthlessly pruned, ensuring that the lower
 branches can no longer provide protection for the animals
 and birds who dwell in our park.

Apparently, the majestic willows that received compara-
 tive little damage during the storm of May 31 are also to be
 cut down.

Shelley, my younger daughter, is a biology major whose
 future plans are to help save endangered species. We decid-
 ed to drive to the park to see the damage for ourselves.

My cane kept getting caught in the debris, which was
 strewn everywhere and I finally gave up trying to walk
 through it and returned to my car. Shelley continued alone.
 When she returned, her first comment was, "How long
 before the first drowning in the pond? They have cut the
 grasses to the water's edge."

Councillor Steve Pliakes assured me the town office has
 told him further work will be put on hold. As a community,
 we must ensure that all future decisions affecting our park
 are made with informed and intelligent input from all area
 residents, the museum workers and volunteers.

I have been attempting to inform Vandorf-area residents
 that a committee has been formed to turn our natural park
 into a smaller version of High Park, and will let nothing
 stand in its way.

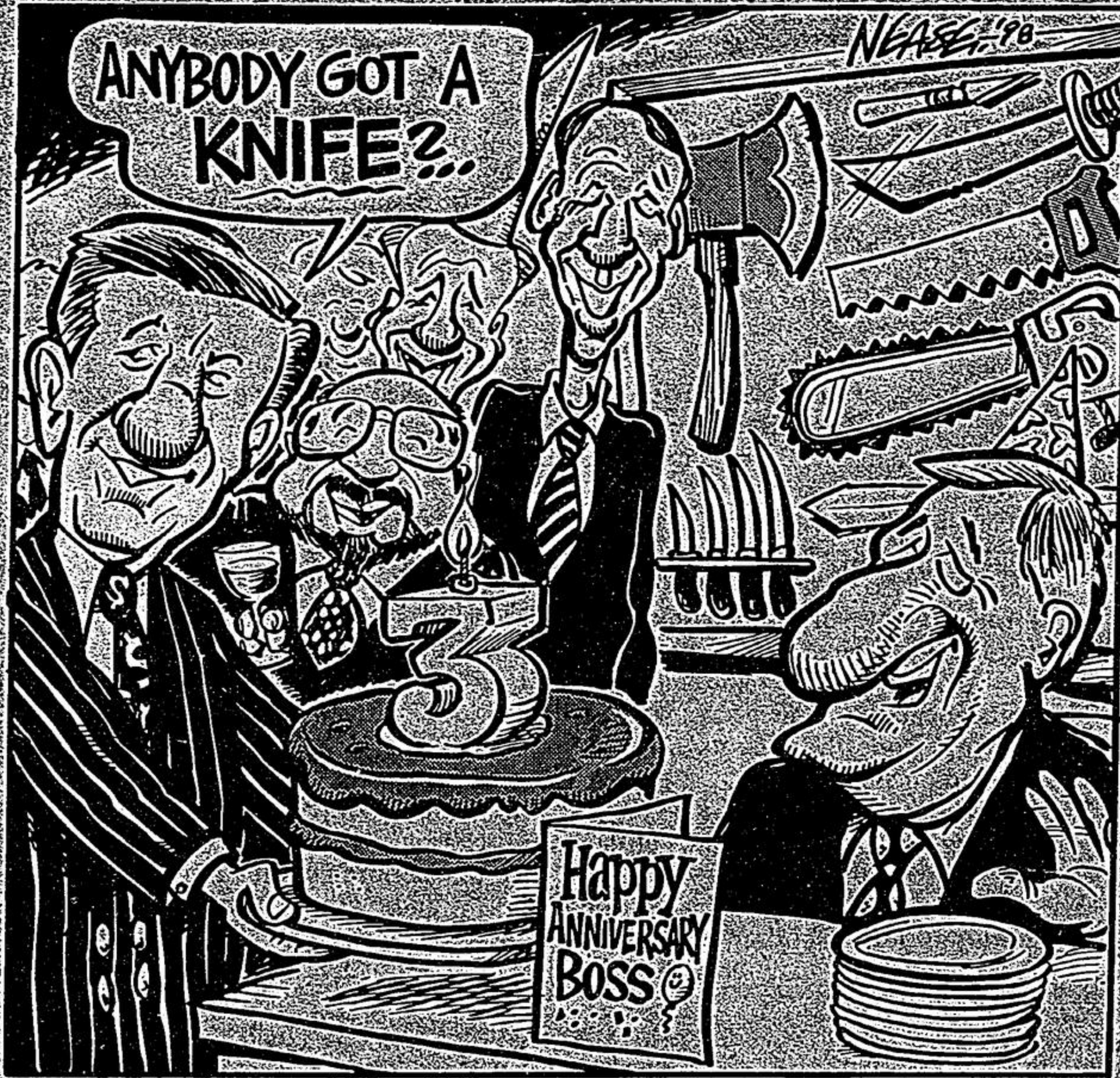
This committee had nothing to do with the first annual
 park cleanup, which was organized by Pliakes. Two issues
 arise with that cleanup.

• Why did the park need its first annual cleanup? Who is
 creating the garbage that had to be picked up?

• Why was this necessary cleanup not arranged by the
 people who are supposed to be representing us as our park
 committee?

As I have watched the increased development, I have
 always hoped that the new arrivals would learn to love the
 area as much as I have, and would teach their children to
 respect nature. Instead, it appears that some new residents
 want to flatten out the land and destroy the homes of hun-
 dreds of natural species.

A public meeting of the residents of Vandorf and the sur-
 rounding area must be called to form a new committee,
 which can equally represent all citizens and our abundant
 wildlife. This meeting cannot take place in someone's living
 room over coffee, but must be held at Vandorf Hall to prop-
 erly house the numbers who will want to attend. With help
 from other concerned community members, I will arrange
 this gathering. Pliakes has agreed to chair this meeting.
 Please call me at (905) 727-9053. Although this work has
 temporarily stopped until informed and intelligent public
 input has been allowed and the proper decisions for the
 future of our park are decided, the devastation that has been
 wrought cannot be undone.



TORY HUMOUR

Parents should be held
 accountable for teens

Dear Editor,
 I stopped in my tracks when I read View
 Point by Debora Kelly entitled "Time to take
 our parks back" in the June 9 Tribune.

Kelly took the words right off the end of
 my pen.

Vandalism is alive and well in Stouffville
 parks, unfortunately. I see it daily, I live
 close to one.

I see the major problem lying with the par-
 ents of these vandalizing teens. Case in
 point, last week teens were stealing lumber
 from a building site to create a fort.

Police were called (our neighbourhood
 watch is alive and well) the teens were
 caught and parents advised.

These teens should have been made to
 clean up the mess they created, and pay for
 the lumber they stole.

But instead, the town kindly, efficiently
 and quickly responded, albeit using our tax
 dollars.

LETTERS

The sooner a law is passed which holds
 parents financially accountable, the better
 we will be, and the sooner this needless van-
 dalism will cease.

When parents have to shell out their hard-
 earned dollars maybe they will take a closer
 look at where their children are, who they
 are with, what are they doing and teach the
 child respect.

So I agree, communities take back your
 parks, become involved, look around, take
 that walk through the park, don't take
 another route and don't be intimidated by a
 "child" or a group of children - that's what
 they are. Apathy creates opportunity.

Gwen Pollard

Yearbook committee says
 thanks to many sponsors

Dear Editor,
 The St. Mark Yearbook Committee, on behalf
 of St. Mark Catholic School, would like to
 extend its appreciation and thanks to the follow-
 ing sponsors for their contributions and dona-
 tions toward the 2nd annual yearbook. With your
 interest and support, we were able to capture and
 record memories of the 1997-98 school year.
 Once again a special thank you to: M&M Meats,
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St. Mark Yearbook Committee

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