

OPINION



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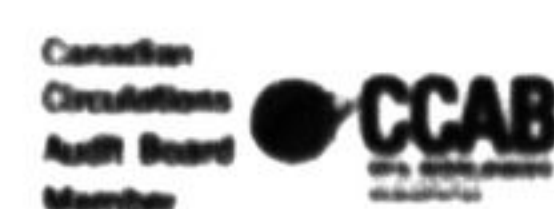
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Poetic wishes to you and yours

It's been a wonderful year
With few bumps and curves
Not many rebuffs
To grate on my nerves.

Optimistic remarks
Far outweigh the rejections
Hope these poetic comments
Don't foster objections.

My crossing guard role
Is one of delight
Although traffic congestion
Is an insoluble plight.

Concern for our children
Should be tops on the list
A full four-stop corner
Would serve kids' needs best.

But the council at present
Has seemingly agreed.
That our arterial roads
Are built mainly for speed.

The children I serve
Three times each school day
Obey all the rules
Every step of the way.

With nary a complaint
As they stand in the cold
A chorus of 'thank you's'
Is a delight to behold.

To the York District board
Go to the head of the class
You're finally doing
Just what I asked.

You've agreed to secure
All elementary schools
Feb. 3 is the date when
You implement new rules.

Cameras and monitors
Are being installed
To insure rowdy stalkers
Aren't traversing the halls.

Young lives are too precious
The risk factors too great
Better action right now
Than leave it too late.

Four newspaper routes
I continue to travel
The weatherman's taunts
Cause nerves to unravel.

But patron support
Is truly just great
They never complain
When the paper is late.

They welcome my presence
With wide-open arms
But dogs, on occasions
Are cause for alarms.
For there's something about



Roaming Around
with *Jim Thomas*

We newspaper guys
That triggers a "get 'em"
In many dogs' eyes.

But I hope to continue
Despite these real fears
And establish a milestone
Of twenty-five years.

A funeral home greeter
Is a position I tout
Patrick welcomes me in
And thankfully ushers me out.

My time there is limited
Too few hours in each day.
Less important duties
Often get in the way.

The fall student concert
Is my personal pride
A show window of talent
Music teachers provide.

Five hundred young people
Play, dance and sing
Great joy to their parents
The evening does bring.

A fundraiser, too
For each school taking part
The event has clearly won
The community's heart.

The multi-cultural group
Should not be ignored.
Under Joanne Iannuzzi
Interest has soared.

We're welcoming residents
From far-distant places
Enriched by the skills
Of various races.

I count it a privilege
To be part of this team
That helps each arrival
Fulfill every dream.

And so to you all
From far and from near
A very Merry Christmas
And a Happy New Year.

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Food bank angels, mayor made Christmas hamper event special

I attended the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank's Christmas hamper charity event at the Ballantrae Community Centre Dec. 14. This event went off partially because of our good mayor, Wayne Emmerson, who held a food drive and made arrangements for the use of the centre.

I know I speak for many and would like to thank him and all those who donate generously all year round.

To the volunteers who give freely of their time to help others less fortunate, you are considered angels who walk among us here in Stouffville.

Everyone who was there for assistance was made to feel welcome and cared for. Tables were set up holding many Christmas decorations for people to help themselves. The atmosphere was very festive.

Then a special gift was given. A lovely mysterious woman, her delightful little girl and her friend appeared. They brought a guitar and invited us all to join in singing Christmas carols with them.

Truly this made everyone smile and it felt warm and loving in that building. Complete strangers really looked at each and felt the joining of souls as everyone sang along. I was granted permission to take

their picture, yet they were too modest to give names.

When and if a time comes in one's life they find the need to visit local food banks, it can be very embarrassing and stressful.

*An individual who may have
been making a six-figure salary
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fence.*

An individual who may have been making a six-figure salary the year before, and who had always given to the local charities, is now walking in someone else's shoes and on the other side of the fence. It's a place they never imagined to visit.

If it happens to you, never feel awkward about saying "yes, I need help," any time of the year. Helping and feeding those who need food is what Jesus teaches. After all, it is the birth of Christ we are celebrating this month.

TERRY TALN
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

Dog licencing cash grab for municipality

Having returned to Stouffville this summer after a lengthy absence, it was a wonderful feeling to be back.

In mid-August, a representative from the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville came to the door and we purchased two annual dog tags for \$90.

We assumed — lesson learned, never assume — when the young woman told us we were good to go, this would be valid until next summer.

Yesterday, in the mail was a bill from the town that dog tag renewals expire Dec. 31 and we must pay \$35 per dog.

I was understandably upset, so I called the town office to inquire about this. I politely asked why I had just

paid an annual fee of \$90 for a full year, which really was only for four months and two weeks and was rudely told, that's just the way it is.

*Really? That's one
of the most inane
things anyone has
ever said to me. I
was not living here.*

I asked to speak to a supervisor so I could understand how our town's accounting system works, because that just doesn't add up in my world.

I was hung up on. Certainly, professionalism was not provided in that conversation.

The way I look at it, our car licence plates are prorated, why not our animals licence tags?

On top of this, I was told I was penalized an additional \$10 for not purchasing said tags by February of 2013.

Really? That's one of the most inane things anyone has ever said to me. I was not living here.

I have no issues following the rules and paying the fees for my animals. What I do have a problem with is the way I was treated when I called for an explanation of how the town can justify the cash grab on their licencing policy, which I understand has been changed for 2014.

What would make me happy is to be credited the seven months of 2013 I paid for that I did not reside in Whitchurch-Stouffville to be applied to my 2014 tags and to be treated with some semblance of respect when I call the municipal offices as a taxpayer with a question.

AMY DAVIES
STOUFFVILLE