

Readers Write

A big THANK YOU to all YDAPA supporters

To the Editor:

York Durham Academy of the Performing Arts (YDAPA) would like to extend its deepest appreciation to all of those who helped to make our fifth season such a resounding success.

YDAPA is a not for profit corporation that focuses on providing the youth of our community with the experience of musical theatre. Unlike many other youth theatre companies, YDAPA is open to all youth, providing them with the opportunity to work with excellent directors, producers, choreographers and teachers in the staging and performance of an actual theatrical production. While there is a fee to be involved, the actual cost of putting on a production far exceeds those fees. Without the generous support of our sponsors, our productions would not be possible.

This year we were especially blessed with considerable support from Music Mania and Pace Credit Union. Their generous donations contributed to the rental costs of performance space, lighting and sound equipment, chairs and so much more. Without the generous support of our sponsors listed in our thank you ad on page 26, our productions and the benefits to our performers would not have been possible.

We would also like to acknowledge the contribution that so many parents and community members made to our program last year. These volunteers are central to the success of our programs.

Finally we would like to thank the 2,823 patrons who attended a YDAPA performance in our fifth season. There is no question that they play a crucial part in maintaining the challenge and inspiration for our performers. The audience is, after all, the "raison d'être" for any stage presentation.

Wayne Hill

Director, York Durham Academy of the Performing Arts • Stouffville

Vintage Whine

Killer donkeys reined in



By Kate Gilderdale

"Inflatable sheep and a toy orangutan had to replace children as the jockeys in an annual donkey derby after insurers refused to cover the event."

The above item, which appeared on the BBC News website, shows that no country is more zealous in the protection of its helpless, inept citizens than the United Kingdom under the nanny agenda of New Labour, and in particular its recently departed chief nanny, Tony Blair.

After 38 litigation-free years, the above mentioned 30-second race, organized by the Llandudno Rugby Club in North Wales, was modified to preclude the possibility that a child might fall off and suffer a scraped knee or similar life-threatening injury. In previous years, hordes of negligent parents had unthinkingly signed disclaimer forms allowing their offspring to participate in this dangerous, inappropriately exhilarating ritual, until saner, more lemon-lipped 'experts' were called in to prevent potential future calamities.

While riding a docile donkey may offer fleeting joy and a sense of freedom to the young and reckless, protecting children from the lurking threats inherent in everyday life has lately transcended all other considerations. After all, without constant vigilance by government tsars, health and safety advocates, insurance companies and, oh yes, I almost forgot, parents, how will future office cubicle inhabitants and other workplace drones survive into a safe and humdrum adulthood, devoid of subversive childhood memories of risky play?

According to the BBC report, even the substitute jockeys had a dissenter in the ranks, an inanimate participant who nevertheless eloquently expressed the pain of the disappointed children. "One sheep deflated spontaneously so had to be substituted by an orangutan...he was a last minute replace-

ment jockey but performed admirably," explained derby organizer Robin Holden.

In a world where protection from the slings and arrows of outrageous life is a growth industry, no risk is too small to escape government scrutiny, which in turn has spawned a plethora of self-appointed experts who are tirelessly diligent about saving humanity from itself. They are abetted by an increasingly litigious culture which encourages frivolous lawsuits and abhors personal responsibility.

Lawyers representing the rugby club pointed out that parents could not blithely sign away their children's rights, since the children themselves would be in a position to sue the club for injuries (and probably loss of self-esteem if they didn't come first in the race) the minute they reached the age of majority. Parents, who were once considered capable of making child care decisions all by themselves, now have to defer to an army of officials eager to recognize and weed out their woeful inadequacies.

Still, the race did go on, and to everyone's relief, not only did the participants survive unscathed (apart from the deflated sheep), but there were no reports of inflatable animal abuse. For those interested in the outcome, the three winners of the derby were named in the Daily Mail's racing results as follows: 1) Sheep 2) Orangutan 3) Sheep.

When the sheep are leading, you know you're in trouble. I leave you with the wise words of C.S. Lewis.

"Of all tyrannies, a tyranny exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robin baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated, but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own conscience."

Historic Photo



MAIN STREET MEMORIES

As the downtown BIA gears up for Moonlight Madness on Aug. 23, we take a look at the Main St. of yesteryear in this undated photo. Judging by the formal dress and demeanour sported by the residents of the day, we can't imagine any of them donning pajamas for an evening stroll down Main St..

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