

Readers Write

Giving photo credit where it's due

To the Editor:

I was excited to be included in the recent Women of Influence article in the May issue of the Stouffville Free Press. Credit for my photograph was omitted and I would be most appreciative if we could give Sandra Boland, photographer of the book *Dogs and Dads*, credit and thanks for letting me use this picture. My dog, Chevy, who passed away recently, was the mascot for my school and this is a great photo that captured his true essence.

Debbie Reynolds
Life's Ruff Dog Training • Markham

Historic Photos



An aerial shot of the Stouffville Country Market in earlier times. The market opened in 1952 as a livestock auction and later became a popular flea market, drawing people from miles around. When it closes down at the end of 2007, its loss will represent the end of an era in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

MONTHLY MALAISE

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Vintage Whine

*Happy
Birthday.
That will be \$149*



By Kate Gilderdale

For my birthday, I got to go to the driver and vehicle licence office and pay the government \$149 for car tax and licence renewal.

The good news is, it wasn't Basil's year (Basil is my car) for an emissions' test (\$35 plus whatever it costs to get him up to snuff). The other good news is, those lovely folks at the Stouffville licencing office let me smile for my photo, so that instead of looking like Attila the Hen or the local axe murderer, I appear almost presentable, if not exactly a dead ringer for Uma Thurman.

My most recent passport photo is another matter entirely. Small children shudder at the sight of it; my own offspring fall about in helpless mirth and pass it around to all their friends; grown men cry. Except for customs officers of course; customs officers ask where I've been and why, take a cursory glance at the ghastly ghoul in my travel documents and heartlessly wave me on.

It's worse than movie theatre ticket sellers who want to know if I'm a golden ager, or whatever repulsive euphemism they're using these days. My question is, how could anybody think that thing in my passport is me, and not the long-dead remains of Boris Karloff?

Oh well. Since I was \$149 lighter I decided to forgo an expensive night out for a wonderful evening in Toronto with my daughter and friends at our irregularly scheduled and highly whimsical book club. Book clubs are, of course, practically a requirement these days among those whom the national press refers to as the chattering classes.

Ours, however, is not run along strict lines. In fact it's not run along any kind of lines at all. We assemble about once every six, eight or 12

weeks, having attempted to read a 600-page novel in approximately eight hours, after receiving a kindly email from our one fairly organized member reminding us that our date with literary discourse is imminent.

Since we are determined to improve our minds (and in my case, believe me, there's plenty of scope) we tend to vote for lofty, complex books, often translated from the Russian, the Farsi or the Welsh. This means that a frantic attempt at speed reading the entire tome on the GO Bus en route to the city is doomed to ignominious failure.

At first, I was embarrassed by my lack of preparation, but my fellow clubbers are as organizationally-challenged as me and some barely make it past the foreword. Although we never leave without discussing the book and, if it's shaping up to be really hard work, sneaking a peak at the last chapter to find out what happened in the end, we also make it a social event with food and wine (some of which, at our last meeting, inexplicably ended up on the ceiling).

My forays into the city to meet my daughter are a highlight of my life. I know that mothers and daughters are supposed to have relationship 'issues' (the word formerly known as problems), but every time I visit her I come away a happier, more laid back person, ready to make peace with my inner (and, I fear, outer) Boris Karloff.

So when her birthday comes around in June, I know exactly what to give her. A cheque for \$149 and a guide to running a successful book club. The only trouble is, I think she'll have to start by de-listing all the current members.

As for me, I have to stop writing and start reading *War and Peace*. Our next meeting is tomorrow.

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