

Letters from our readers

Depleted capital reserves a concern

To the Editor:

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville's capital reserves are getting "very thin".

That was the caution given by the town treasurer to council towards the end of the capital budget meeting on Oct. 29, 2002. He suggested that some capital expenditures be financed instead from the working capital reserves.

I have attended town budget committee meetings since the fall of 1993, when they first became open to the public. According to the town's official audits for years, there have been high reserves. Until now, I do not recall a town treasurer cautioning council about depleted reserves.

The town's operating budget meeting is to be held in January. Will council be faced not only with increased taxation for town operating costs, but also with the

need to levy extra taxes to build up the depleted capital reserves?

Is this a wake-up call for town taxpayers to pay attention to the way tax dollars are being spent?

Margaret L. May
Stouffville

Development threatens

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next small town... but why do their wishes overrule the aspirations of our residents?

The lifestyle of all the citizens of Stouffville is in jeopardy. We are asking that development be slowed down and carefully monitored before any irreparable damage is done.

Sig Kusatz
Concerned Citizen
Stouffville

FAITH & LIFE

A MENNONITE PERSPECTIVE

by

Gord Alton
Pastor of Community
Mennonite Church



When we enter a new year, it is often a time of reflection, a time when we consider making New Year's resolutions. Many resolutions arise as we ponder our life and how we are living out our core values. Seeing discrepancies, we shift priorities hoping to add more meaning and joy to our life. Some of us also look at the big picture—where we have come from and where we see ourselves going. Again, if we are not content with our current life direction, we consider changes in our life with the goal of a more meaningful future. When we reflect about core values and life's purpose, we are really asking faith questions, questions that arise from our understanding and experiences of God and spirituality.

During these next few weeks, I hope we can consider these faith questions, Christian and non-Christian alike, and allow ourselves time to think about them in some depth. With our fast pace and busy culture, it is a challenge to find such opportunities, for we are pulled in many directions. Because of this stressful reality, I encourage you to seek a church community if you aren't already part of one. One purpose of church is to help people create opportunities to contemplate these spiritual questions, and in contemplating, discover some sense of God's presence and guidance in their life.

During the month of January, we will focus on the theme "Encountering the Spirit of God." We will explore different prayer forms that Christians have used in their lives that allow them to be more aware of God. We will then investigate the different ways that God becomes present to people. This study will include the interior movements that people notice within their mind, emotions, and body when God draws near. Also, we will consider external signs of God revealed in coincidence, community, miracles, character

transformation, and acts of love and justice. This emphasis on the Holy Spirit will carry over to February and March when we explore, in more detail, the different ways that God's spirit moves within us through transforming our character and blessing us with special gifts of ministry.

Please join us if you are looking for a Christian community to help you deepen your experience and understanding of God.

Cutting Edge (a group for innovative thinkers): On January 16, 8 p.m., at Parkview Village Boardroom, we will be discussing the book, "The Trivialization of God." The author explores the various ways we, as humans, fashion God in our own image or wishes and the reasons for this. If you would like to participate in this discussion, please come. Reading materials can be requested by phone or email.

Middle East Talk: On January 24, 7:30 pm, our church has invited Peter Ginsburg, a Canadian who spent several years in Israel, to speak on "Understanding the Middle East". Please join us at Parkview Auditorium for an interesting evening certain to illuminate a complex situation

Feedback? We'd love to hear your comments. Please contact us at:

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Community Mennonite Church

Parkview Village Auditorium
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Sunday School: 9:45 - 10:30 am
Coffee Time: 10:30 - 11:00 am
Sunday Worship: 11:00 am

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Point of View

by Ralph Pohlman

It's all in the genes (sniff, sniff)

It seems, according to recent research, that women sniff out their prospective mates. Apparently they prefer a man who smells like dear old dad.

Researchers at the University of Chicago conducted a study in which they asked 49 women to smell a single T-shirt, each worn by one of six men from diverse backgrounds. I'm not kidding. This is a research study?

The results were reported in a publication called Nature Genetics. It appears no one man emerged as the most pleasant smelling in the study. Instead, the women favoured men who had immune system genes similar to their own. The analysis showed those genes had been inherited from the women's fathers.

All together now ... "I want a guy, just like the guy, who smells like dear old dad." I find this a bit hard to believe, since my wife picks up my dirty T-shirts and socks with a pair of tongs.

The other important point is that they did this study on women, not on men. That's because all the women I know are very sensitive to odours, whereas most men are not able to detect an aroma below the level of downwind from a pig farm.

I expect this is due to evolution and, over the years, becoming accustomed to the smell of their athletic bag in the back seat of the car. It contains the still wet socks, jock strap and T-shirt from the last 14 times they played basketball, squash, hockey or ran away from the cops after a B&E. That's certainly the way it is at my house, anyway.

At least weekly, the following conversation takes place.

Her: "What's that smell?"

Me: "What smell?"

Her: "CAN'T YOU SMELL THAT?"

At this point, I look around to see if the house is on fire or try to remember whether I ate any chili lately. Like most women, she can detect a spoiled peach in the house next door, or look in the fridge and know the cheese is one day past its expiration date.

She sniffs everything she takes out of the fridge - cold cuts, milk, fish, even if she bought it two hours ago. If she is even slightly suspicious, it goes down the garburator. We could feed Afghanistan with the stuff that gets

tossed. I, however, would happily scarf down a wiener left over from the last Blue Jays World Series game.

It has been my experience that women generally smell pretty good. Even the ones who pour on that Estee Lauder Youth Dew, which guarantees you can smell them 20 minutes before they arrive and an hour after they've left; a week, if they've been in your car. Men, on the other hand, generally tend to give off the odour of "Recently Cleaned Stable," or "Old Road Kill."

But back to the story about women sniffing out possible mates according to their immune system genes.

It is only about a couple of years ago, Feb. 12, 2001, to be precise, that the announcement was made of the unravelling of the genome - that is, the analysis of the genes of human chromosomes. It was expected the genetic impact of all sorts of diseases would be figured out, like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, asthma and various kinds of cancer.

But what we didn't expect was that lots of our behaviours would be located in our genes. I find that to be very encouraging. No longer do I have to defend myself as to why I prefer ice cream to salad, Licorice All-Sorts to grapes, or Big Macs to brown rice. It's in my genes.

And that's why there are no self-help books on How to Build a Bigger Beer Gut, Ten Steps to Frivolous Spending, or Nurturing the Infidel Within. I already have all those instructions implanted in my genes. No longer do we need to look to Sigmund Freud but, rather, to Charles Darwin.

Anyway, it seems the growing story is that genes influence our behaviour in a big way. According to a guy from the University of Utah, the immune system genes might be involved in choosing mates, friends and in identifying kin (although I don't know exactly how that last one works).

"Hi." (Sniff, sniff.) "You smell like you might be my cousin Clarence on my father's side."

Maybe that's what Maggie, my springer spaniel, is actually doing when she greets another pooch on the street, checking to see if they're related.

Library a growing concern

The new library, which opened its doors Aug. 14, 2001, has quickly become a focal point of the community.

"An increase in the number of Internet and CD ROM work stations, to a total of nine, created a whole new side to information access," noted library CEO Marilyn Ferguson. "Nearly 50 percent of the residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville are active users of the library."

With 9,000 walk-in patrons and 1,800 online visitors each month, the library boasts an average monthly circulation of 11,000 items. "The library volunteers again came through with help in support services and fundraising activities; the Book Sale Committee raised \$8,700 for new equipment, material and programs."

This year's Giant Book Sale fundraiser runs from March 27 to 30 and will offer a huge selection of books for all ages and interests. Look out for more details in upcoming issues of *Stouffville This Month*.