

Turning Back the Clock

Historic photo submitted courtesy of Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum



As students across Whitchurch-Stouffville prepare for another year of hitting the books, logging onto computers and hanging out in the schoolyard, we look back at Jean Churchill's Kindergarten class of '84 at Orchard Park Public School. Note the refreshing absence of corporate logos on the clothing.

We're always looking for interesting old photographs to feature in our Turning Back the Clock feature. If you have a picture you think might be of interest, contact Kate at 905-642-8107.

Pictures should be of street scenes, building or people and must include information and date picture was taken.

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

Whitchurch-Stouffville This Month believes your opinions are important, and encourages you to voice your comments or concerns in a Letter To The Editor. We accept all letters, but only publish letters which have been signed. We request you include a phone number (not to be published) for verification of the letter writer. While Whitchurch-Stouffville This Month reserves the right to edit letters, due to content or length, in most cases letters will be published as written.

Fax your letters to: 905-642-2368, or e-mail to: withwrinkles@hotmail.com or mail to WSTM, Kate Gilderdale, 6111 Main St., Stouffville, Ont., L4A 3R4

Whitchurch-Stouffville This Month is on the web. Look for us each month at: www.stouffvilleonline.com

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Kate A'la carte

We're having no truck with this company

Summertime, and the moving is easy.

Or not, as in the case of my son's move from Montreal to sunny southern Ontario in a truck rented from a company I shall hereinafter refer to as the Bring Your Own Truck Co. (BYOT) to protect the guilty. The name also provides insight into BYOT's idea of customer service. The one thing this company does efficiently is to part you from your unrefundable deposit before agreeing to take your reservation. After that you are at the mercy of its whims, its surly staff and its finely-tuned version of voice mail hell.

In theory, the advantage of BYOT is that you can rent a truck at one location, drive it to a destination anywhere in Canada or the US, and leave it at the local dealership. In many cases, however, there is just one element missing from this happy scenario: the truck.

As my son sat glumly in his apartment, surrounded by boxes, the day after his truck had failed to arrive as promised, I worked the phones at home. When I called the dealership to ask where the truck was and when it would be available, the woman at the other end said she had no idea, but that yesterday's customers would get priority when and if any vehicles came in. The tone of her voice suggested the latter eventuality was about as likely as a face-to-face meeting with Mick Jagger at the Toronto SARS benefit concert.

When I asked why BYOT took reservations it couldn't fulfill, she got a little testy. 'It's our busiest time of the year,' she snapped. Knowing this to be the case, I said, perhaps it would be a good idea if the company either took fewer reservations or ensured it had more trucks available. Alas, my suggestions proved as futile as Liberal backbenchers' attempts to convince our beloved prime minister to step down before February 2004.

Recognizing that my morose customer service person was all out of helpful ideas, I hung up and called the toll-free head office number for that infamous oxymoron, customer service. Twenty minutes crawled by to the accompaniment of recorded ads extolling the virtues of renting from BYOT and offering fulsome appreciation for my continued patience.

When I finally reached a human being, he didn't seem nearly as eager to help as the recording. He had no idea about my son's situation and didn't seem to think it was his problem anyway. 'You'll have to talk to our regional office,' he said. 'I'll put you through.'

The person at the regional office couldn't help me either. 'It's nothing to do with me. You'll have to call the dealer.' Efforts to explain that I'd been there, done that, and got everything except the truck fell on deaf ears. I re-visited the company's website and called the toll-free reservations number where I spent another 20 minutes before being put on hold and then cut off.

By 4:30 p.m. I had reached a customer service person who had not completed his 'fobbing the customer off onto another surly person' training. After some prompting, he actually agreed to call the dealership for me and announced that a truck had just come in. It was the wrong size and was waiting at the wrong location -- a \$60 taxi ride away -- but it was a truck, and by this time I was grateful for any glimmer of hope.

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