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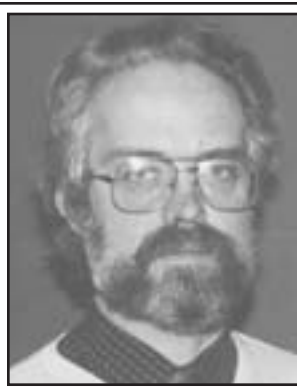
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**Bill's
Bulletin
Board**

By Bill Rea

E-mails are wonderful things, even if you do have to put up with a certain amount of junk.

The nice part is all sorts of interesting items end up in the system and get spread around. It's almost like circulating chain letters, without threats of dire consequences if you break the chain.

One of these items was making the rounds last week. It somehow got to my wife's office and made the rounds, Beth forwarded it to our computer at home so I could see it, I forwarded it to a couple of colleagues of mine, and who knows how far it will eventually get. Perhaps you have see it yourself.

I subsequently learned that one of the colleagues I forwarded it to had already received it and had put it to the same use that I currently am. Okay, so I lose originality credits!

It's in the form of a letter, addressed to kids who survived the 1930s, '40s, '50s, '60s and '70s, and it's sort of a commentary on the way kids are protected today, as opposed to the horrors and dangers people like me had to endure.

It points out we might have had mothers who smoked and drank while they were pregnant with us. I know my late mother

smoked at one time in her life, but I believe she had quit sometime before my heralded arrival on Spaceship Earth. She did take a drink, but I have no idea whether or not she curtailed such activity during those nine crucial months. And considering how much time has passed since then, I really can't get too worked up by it all.

The letter also addresses some of the other terrors we went through, such as riding our bikes without helmets; riding in cars that didn't have seatbelts, let alone special seats for anyone other than infants; and drinking water from garden hoses (something I vividly remember my father telling me was okay).

It also deals with some of the ways we're supposed to treat kids with proverbial kid gloves these days, such as the fact that a kid who didn't make the team just had to get over it. While there was no mention of it, little kids like me just had to get used to the idea that if we were going to take part in organized sports, there was a likelihood that we would lose, and sometimes get creamed. And sometimes, those defeats would come in sudden-death overtime, not sudden-victory overtime, a term that is used in some politi-

cally-correct circles.

And I used to ride my bike to my friends' houses, with just telling my folks I was going out. And for the most part, if we showed up at their doors, we were welcome. There were a couple of exceptions. The father of one of my friends insisted that we go to the back door, for reasons that I never completely understood (I doubt that would be appropriate or even tolerated today). That was the same adult jerk who I once saw hit his son over the head with a hockey stick. A stunt like that today would probably bring the police and CAS running.

Teachers in my day were allowed to beat up kids in their charge (I had one guy who seemed to enjoy it, possibly because he did). As I learned later, my folks were reluctant to raise a fuss because they feared this jerk might have made things worse for me. Teachers might try some of the stunts he did today, but I don't think they teach for very long if they do.

Of late, we have been hearing complaints about the amount of violence kids are exposed to on TV, computers, video games, etc. I guess there's a point to be made there. During my early school years, I watched a show called Batman (over my parents' objections), which featured a couple of fair-to-good fistfights every week. The show is currently on daily in syndication, and Beth and I watch it on weekends. My personal opinion was Robin was a much better fighter than the Caped Crusader (Burt Ward had a brown belt in karate at the time). But that was a differ-

ent type of violence, in which everybody spent a couple of minutes beating everybody else up, and then they all got up and went about their business. No one ever died, or even shed blood. But that was a long time before the realities of 9-11.

I come at this as a kid who came to life in the '50s (late '50s), came to awareness in the '60s, came of age in the '70s and who is still plugging away in whatever it is we're supposed to call this decade (the zeros?)

But the letter was addressed to people who survived the '30s and '40s too.

Both my parents were born in the '20s, meaning they started grasping certain realities of life during the Depression. The deprivation of that time was something I don't think my mother ever completely got over. As a kid, my losing the smallest item usually resulted in a hysterical and hyperbolic lecture about how close we were to the destitution.

And then there was a World War they had to get through, although people in my age group had to get by during a Cold War.

I hope I don't sound like I'm lamenting for the good old days, and I'm not trying to sound hard-done-by for all the traumatic things I had to endure as a kid.

After all, my dad never hit me over the head with a hockey stick (the thought probably occurred to him a couple of times), and he had nothing on some of the bullies I encountered in the school yard.

And being forced to wear a helmet when I rode my bike as a kid probably

would have come in handy the night I was knocked off it by a car, crashing to earth head-first. As my mother later told the story, "They took him to the hospital, took X-rays of his head and found nothing."

If you think that was bad, Mom came into my room the next morning with a look of maternal concern on her face and said, "Bill, do you feel a little run down this morning?"

And I also hope the letter that inspired this piece isn't a shot at today's

youth, because that routine has been worn out through the last couple of millennia. It has never been a secret that kids today have a lot of things going for them than old fogies like me never had. I just look at all the neat toys my nephew and niece play with, and get very jealous. There are more steps taken to keep them safe, keep them out of trouble and help them out when they happen to get into difficulties. Laws today are geared to give them a break if they get caught running off the rails (many of us did while we were growing up, but it was the unlucky ones who got caught).

Sure things are a lot better. That is part of progress. Who would want to see things get worse?

I don't want to view this letter being circulated as bellyaching over the fact kids have it better today than they did 40 years ago, although I expect we'll hear the same complaining from today's kids in some 40 years. I look it as more of a celebration of what has been accomplished. I hope some of today's kids will think that in 40 years too.

Editorial

A budget should start as an item for information, And later become an item for action

Contrary to popular, or cynical belief, budgets in King Township and other municipalities are not established by the bureaucracy, but by the taxpaying public, through their elected representatives.

These politicians are expected to set spending and taxing priorities according to such factors as what they perceive their constituents want and need, tempered by other obligations, such as to other levels of government, the courts, etc.

The bureaucrats come up with suggestions, based on their interpretation of what they think the politicians want to provide for their constituents, along with a professional knowledge of

what is required in the community. As well, municipal staff sometimes has the job of delivering bad news, such as what some needed works, projects or services are going to cost, although they come up with ideas to cushion the financial blows.

It is from this realistic starting point that budgets are born, and after considerable thought, debate, soul searching and number crunching, a final document is prepared.

King councillors just started on that process Monday, so there is still a long way to go before it's complete.

No one has suggested that King raise its share of property taxes by 31 per

cent. Township staff simply presented a scenario, and then offered an alternative to avoid it. That alternative involves borrowing and debt, which would normally not be the first choice of anyone. But in this case, there are sound arguments to be made in its favour.

Still, we can appreciate a certain amount of frustration existing around the council table, as they come to grips with required road work

concurrent with sewers going into King City and Nobleton.

This is Councillor Cleve Mortelliti's first budget since he took office, and he seems puzzled that more funds were not set aside to cover these expenditures, which certainly must have been anticipated. Whatever the explanation, his concerns are well-taken.

We can't help wondering how funds that had previ-

ously been frivolously spent could have come in handy right about now.

Perhaps this is a good lesson for Mortelliti and his fellow rookie councillor, Jeff Laidlaw, on the importance of looking ahead when money is being spent, and pondering whether the community is really benefitting from the expenditure.

For that matter, it's not a bad refresher lesson for the veteran councillors either.

Food bank will operate Saturday

The King Township Food Bank will be open for business this Saturday (Jan. 27) from 9 until 11 a.m.

Depots will be running out of St. Mary

Magdalene's Anglican Church in Schomberg, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Nobleton and All Saints' Anglican Church in King City.

Anyone in the community in need of food assistance is welcome to attend.

For more information about the food bank, phone (905) 939-2314.