

advertisement in any subsequent issue.

## Value for money

### Randy Shore



#### EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

What do you do when the city, in its infinite wisdom, proceeds to make "improvements" on your street that destroy the quality of life for you and 125 of your neighbours? And what if the city wants YOU to pay for the work?

Well, the answers to those questions and more have been eluding the homeowners of Dundas Street since 1986.

Mariken Van Nimwegen and Michael Dunn, along with their neighbours between the 2400 and 2800 blocks of Dundas, received notice six years ago that the city, "acting on its own initiative" was about to widen, pave and install curbs on their relatively quiet residential street.

The "improvements" effectively extended the busy Powell Street artery east through Dundas to Renfrew instead of dispersing traffic at Nanaimo Street as had been the case in the past.

To add insult to injury the city assessed each homeowner about \$100 per year for 15 years to pay for \$117,000 worth of work nobody wanted done in the first place.

After three years of letter-writing and phone calls to city councillors, city engineers, and traffic commissioners Van Nimwegen learned from the engineering department that, despite all assurances to the contrary, improved traffic flow from Nanaimo and Powell ONTO Dundas was the priority all along.

Since that time Dundas has been used as a dangerous goods trucking corridor (a practice now discouraged by the city) and traffic has continued to flow onto the formerly quiet street despite tinkering by the city. Trucks, speeding and heavy car volume continue to be problematic.

Frequent letters, calls and meetings with city officials have not been completely ignored, says Van Nimwegen. According to her point-by-point history of the issue, a traffic count was carried out in January of 1991 to determine whether the street's traffic volume had increased as a result of the improvements. A traffic count conducted the week after the region's heaviest snowfall in 25 years concluded Dundas Street traffic has not increased since 1981, says Van Nimwegen with hints of extreme fatigue and some considerable exasperation in her voice.

The bottom line seems to be that if the city engineers want Dundas to be a major artery, that's what will happen. Only a political decision to erect some kind of traffic barrier to discourage commuters can solve the situation. But Dundas Street has been waiting six years, through three city councils. Perhaps the city expects that, in the fullness of time, these squeaky wheels will all quietly pass away.