

Board bans 111 books teachers never read

Halton Board of Education has chopped 111 books from a long list teachers haven't read. The books were to be purchased for use next year.

Board policy states that every book teachers request the board to buy must be read and the teachers must prepare a rationale stating its educational value.

Superintendent of Program Bruce Mather told the board, Thursday, that in early May he asked every principal to turn in a list of the books requested which weren't read or didn't have a rationale.

This check uncovered the fact that at four elementary schools and two high schools, teachers hadn't read the books they requested so the books won't be purchased. He said the teachers can submit the list of books again next fall so they can use them in courses, so he expects they will be busy reading this summer. Mather said none of the offending schools are in North Halton.

The second book controversy in recent years in Halton exploded several weeks ago when Trustee Elsie Hilson began protesting about the administration rushing through the list of book titles and not giving trustees time to read the books if they wanted to.

After it was passed Hilson enlisted the aid of Halton Police Chief Ken Skerrett to have a book called, Even Cowgirls Get the Blues, removed from the list. Mrs. Hilson called it a "trashy little novel" and Skerrett agreed it didn't need to be used in Halton schools. They objected to sexual aspects of the book.

In 1975 the board had problems with parents complaining about the use of the book Go Ask Alice.

Thursday Hilson spearheaded the passing of a new book guideline stating that in the future books approved by the board will be approved for only specific grades.

She complained that under current conditions, when a

book is approved, it is for all grades and all schools.

Hilson said she was worried about books which are meant for senior high school students being read by grade nine and 10 pupils.

She explained the new guideline would prevent "books from slipping down to lower grades."

Trustee John Bradley said he didn't think books should be allowed to slip down to lower grades. He said trustees can't tell what books are like just by looking over a list of titles. From the title, he thought Even Cowgirls Get the Blues was about ranching.

Mather told the trustees the new guideline was welcome and would present no problems for programming. He explained it will be of help to trustees to know which books might be deemed later as controversial since many books will be classified for use in all grades. Some will be specified for only senior grades.

Director of Education Em Lavender said there was no way. Even Cowgirls Get the Blues, would be bought and he would try to find out what published comments, attributed to the principal where the book was to be used, meant. The principal is supposed to have said it will be used outside the school now.

Trustee Dr. Helen Howard-Lock thought maybe the board should go back over all lists approved in the past which don't have a rationale to go with them and take them out of the schools. But Mather didn't think that was possible because it would be a "mammoth job."

Hilson said she approved of the deletions but not of the list of books which will still be bought.

"There is still a lot of crap which will be coming into our schools," Hilson declared.

She didn't agree that a book should be banned just because teachers hadn't read them. Hilson said the concern expressed by the administra-

tion was due to the policy not being followed, and not because content of some books requested was poor.

She said she wants a set of guidelines for proper book selection drawn up and posted in every school so teachers can't say they don't know the policy in the future. "Then there will be no excuses in the future and if this kind of thing happens again they will be fired."

Trustee Bill Priestner observed there are over 100 books being chopped and some aren't controversial in any way. He didn't think they should all be removed just because they hadn't been read.

Among the books removed and Helter Skelter, Two Minute Warning, Black Sunday, Slapshot, I'm Ok You're Not So Hot, Space By the Tail, The Bad News Bears, The Six-Million Dollar Cucumber, The Cassandra Crossing, All About Striking and Lady Sings the Blues.

Cowgirls Get the Blues hadn't been read by any teachers.

Fergus aids fire victims

Pat Mestern, a Fergus woman, has organized a mercy mission to fire victims in Cobalt. They have collected a transport full of items for the 400 Cobalt residents left homeless in the Victoria Day fire.

She and her family put up collection boxes all over the town, and are looking for things that are not usually donated to fire victims, such as toys.

Vote

Vote as you like, but vote tomorrow in the provincial election.



LEGION LADIES Auxiliary was represented well at Sunday's smaller version of Decoration Day. The women head out among the tombstones to plant geraniums.

Reed comments on regional govt

Liberal Leader Stuart Smith has emphatically stated that "A Liberal Government will consult the people and dismantle Regional Government in those areas where such action is the will of the people."

Halton-Burlington MPP Julian Reed comments "The Liberals are prepared to restructure and reorganize Regional Government in order to return to local autonomy" and he emphasizes that "The costly studies and hearings undertaken by the Government prior to implementing the Regional system failed to give proper consideration to local autonomy."

"Citizens who have been used to having decisions made locally, now find that they must deal with a government which lacks the feeling and knowledge of local matters. Residents are experiencing a loss of identity and participation."

Police problem "The common complaints we hear" says Mr. Reed, "have to do with planning, policing, proliferation of an-

other layer of bureaucracy, increased costs and uncertainty as to responsibilities of the various levels of government. For instance, constituents complain that because of the constant rotation of Regional Police personnel, the police officers never really get to know the community."

Liberal Leader Stuart Smith has said "Planning should remain on a Regional basis to eliminate delay and

red tape but should be done by a regional board made up of locally-elected municipal representatives. Social and Welfare services such as health care should be planned and administered locally and a better system of municipal grants should be set up to eliminate inequities."

Clinic

Red Cross blood donor clinic at the high school this afternoon and evening.

Approve house for farm help

A second house for farm help will be allowed in Halton Hills, but the house will be located in the cluster of farm buildings, so it could not be separated into a separate lot in future. Each application will be controlled under sections of the planning act. Planning Board made the recommendation last week, after many requests for homes for farm help had been held up pending a policy decision.

The definition of a bona-fide farmer was a matter of debate. Councillor Pat McKenzie said he didn't want to see council hung up on the definition. "We all know the difference between a farmer and a city slicker."

Councillor George Maltby pointed out a great many farmers in Esqueping do not devote full time to farming but are still farmers who need hired help. He cited horse farms as an example. He said some farms are owned by a consortium but are still bona fide farmers. "We can't use the criterion that someone has to make a full time living from farming."

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Supervisor for crossing guards

Halton Hills is going to hire a crossing guard supervisor at a wage of \$180 a month for the 10 months school operates.

Last Tuesday Halton Hills works committee accepted a recommendation from clerk-administrator Doug Pritchard regarding the pay for the supervisor the committee decided to hire earlier this year. Crossing guards will continue to be paid \$160 a month.

The supervisor will place the guards, hand out their equipment, assign spare guards to locations where guards are absent for a day and also fill in for absent guards. In addition, the supervisor will report to the town's payroll department when regular guards are absent and when spares work and work with the police safety officer in assessing the guards work.

Pritchard said the supervisor will fill in at any location in Acton or Georgetown where a guard is needed when someone is absent. If more than one guard is absent on any day the supervisor will also have to get spares. Crossing guards will be placed at three intersections in Acton next year and eight in Georgetown.

He reported a woman who is working in Acton as a crossing guard is interested in the supervisor's job and realizes she will have to travel to Georgetown.

If there is only one vacancy in a day the town will save money by having a supervisor. If there are two, the municipality will break even, Pritchard said.

He warned a wage readjustment may be required later if the supervisor who is hired ends up doing a lot of driving to and from the two urban areas.

Safety Officer Constable Raj Swaminathan reported the police aren't giving up on safety patrols despite what some councillors think but believe some extremely busy intersections where patrols have been operating should be manned by adult guards.

He also said some parents and principals aren't too happy with fading or completely vanished crosswalk markings.

Engineer Robert Austin said crosswalks will be painted this summer. Councillor Marilyn Serjeantson said some parents in

the Chapel Street school area of town are unhappy there isn't a guard to help their children across Highway 7 to get to Park school. She said four or five children are being taken to Park school daily by taxi because their parents feel it is too dangerous for them to cross the highway. The committee decided guards will be placed at Highway 7 and School Lane, Mill and Wilbur Streets, and Highway 7 and Acton Boulevard.

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