



AT THE ZOO

Erewhon Theatre of Toronto was in town Saturday afternoon for a one-show-only performance of "Charlotte's Web" at the Cedarvale gymnasium. Sponsored by the Georgetown Public Library and the regional library service, the play was well received by a crowd of about 100 youngsters. Actor Brian Smith and actress Kathy Popham posed for a picture with the cast: Templeton the rat, Mildred the goose, Wilbur the pig and, of course, Charlotte, held by Georgetown children's librarian Judi Starkey.

(Herald photo)

NHAMR offers help to older citizens, as well

Although the Halton Developmental Centre is meeting the needs of the region's severely mentally handicapped youngsters, until recently little was done for those older than 18.

David Williams, director of the North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded (NHAMR), said Friday that the Association launched a pilot project in early September, keeping two severely retarded adults within the mainstream of society, rather than putting them away in an institution.

"We're trying to maximize their potential for personal growth and development," Mr. Williams told The Herald.

He said that in north Halton's Are Industries program in Hornby, the special adults are involved in "meaningful daytime activities."

If they are trained to stack wood at the workshop, Mr. Williams said, they may learn to stack dishes at home.

Entirely funded by the NHAMR, the program will attempt to identify the needs of severely mentally handicapped adults even if they have limited contact with the rest of society.

A similar project is planned by the Burlington Association for the Mentally Retarded and should get under way later this month.

Preferential treatment charged

Solution found to class size issue?

Herald Special
The Halton Board of Education has given parents of McKenzie-Smith middle school pupils preferential treatment in the opinion of the board's north area superintendent.

The trustees have also set a dangerous precedent, he added.

Don Gentleman told parents at a meeting in the school Monday that eighth grade classes will now be smaller than most primary and junior schools in the area.

Classes in other area middle schools have more than 30 pupils while McKenzie-Smith classes will revert to an average of 28.

In order to find funds to hire the additional teacher needed to create a fourth eighth grade class, the school will have to give up a librarian half-time.

Mr. Gentleman feels this is a bad idea because "someone will get the message if Acton can get along with a half-time librarian with that many kids, so can other schools."

Parents protested when an eighth grade teacher was removed from the school during the first week of classes

and four classes were shuffled to create three classes with enrolments of 37 or more students each.

Principal John Simpson has solved the problem with help from Mr. Gentleman by taking the librarian out of the library and turning her into a classroom teacher for half a day.

Mr. Gentleman has managed to squeeze a quarter of a teacher out of his allotment and permitted Mr. Simpson to convert the 25 per cent guidance teacher allotted to the school into a regular classroom teacher.

Mr. Simpson said staff will cover the library and take on guidance counselling with students in order to fill the vacancies created by changing duties already assigned to teachers.

Mr. Simpson said he still has a few kinks to work out on timetables of individual teachers who will be losing spares in order to take on extra duties, but the students won't be affected by the change.

He also warned parents that it will likely be next week before the new timetable can

be put into effect and the new classes set up because he now has to hire a teacher to give mathematics, science and social science to the students.

Mr. Simpson said Kay Kavanagh, the school librarian, has contacted Acton high school in search of some students who might be willing to help out in the library as part of one of their courses.

One parent suggested that there must be mothers in the community who have the time to offer their assistance one morning a week in the library to help make up for the librarian's absence.

One of the teachers also suggested that parents willing to offer their time in the library might also be willing to help out with other areas of the program under the guidance of the classroom teachers.

It was also suggested that a letter be sent to all parents later in the year to determine the amount of interest in forming a parent-teacher association for McKenzie-Smith.

Mr. Gentleman warned the parents that there is nothing magical about small classes and there is no guarantee that concessions made this year to give students small classes

will be made a second time. "You may think you're winning," he said, "but I think you're losing. We've had a commitment to putting librarians in schools full time in the north wherever possible. The students will lose out on the research skills they gather from a librarian."

Mr. Gentleman said the

school would also be losing out when they give up their quarter guidance councillor. There are many social problems around today that kids get into, both at home and in the school and the community. Sometimes they need help and teachers recognize the need for additional people to do this job in the school system.

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