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PROTESTING PUPILS BLOCK HIGHWAY

Smoke-free policy stirs students to walk out

By MARY-LIZ SHAW
Herald Staff

About 300 Georgetown High School students blocked Highway 7 for over one hour Friday morning to protest the school's smoke-free policy.

The sit-down protest, which began at 11:30 a.m., was on the street in front of Georgetown District High School and had traffic blocked for about one kilometre each way.

Earlier in the protest, some cars and trucks managed to cut through a thin opening left by the students before police arrived to divert traffic.

The students stayed on the street until about 12:45 when Principal Barbara Singleton promised to suspend student smoking detentions until Monday morning.

Grade 12 students Brett Robinson, George Osborne and Mike Tyler will meet with the Principal at that time to review the smoking ban.

The students were standing in the middle of the road shouting "smoke free sucks" and passing around a nine-page petition against the school's recent policy to ban smoking entirely from grounds.

Teachers at the school, however, are permitted to smoke in a designated area.

Principal agrees to study issue

...A8

The protest was organized at about 10 a.m., and gained momentum as students reached the street. These were some tense moments during the road blockage as two trucks tried to burst past the line of protesters. One student leader, Brett Robinson, jumped on the grill of a tractor-trailer as the driver tried to squeeze his rig through the line of protesters.

A policeman, Constable A. Stenett arrived on the scene about 15 minutes later and tried to convince students to move to the side of the road. Brett Robinson sat on the ground and refused to move. About 100 students then decided to join Mr. Robinson on the street and the highway was blocked completely.

The students charged the school with "discrimination" allowing teachers to smoke in the staff room. Under the current policy, students who are caught smoking on school grounds are issued a warning. A student caught twice for smoking on the grounds is suspended for a day. A full three-day suspension is issued to students who are caught more than twice.

"If you're old enough to smoke at home, you're old enough to smoke at school," said James Gage, a Grade 12 student.

The school's Vice Principal Joseph Bray said he felt the protest was "unworthy."

"It creates bad feelings and acts in the disinterest of students," Mr. Bray added.

The school's smoking policy was the result of three-years of research, during which time, the students were asked for their opinions, he said.

The vice principal added he did not believe the protest would change the school's policy.

Six more policemen arrived and the students were vowing to continue their protest every day until they were assured the policy would be reviewed.

"We'll keep coming back again and again," said one 18-year-old student who asked not to be identified.



ON THE STREETS - Friday afternoon was no ordinary one for students at Georgetown District High School. About 300 pupils gathered around the sidewalk and on Guelph Street to protest the smoke-free policy at the school. The police had to detour traffic and a Go Transit bus was haplessly stuck for some time before an alternate route was found. (Herald photo)

Pupils feel road sit-in was only way to be heard

By DAVE ROWNEY
Herald Staff

Many students protesting the smoking ban at Georgetown District High School were sorry their protest led to a blockade of Highway 7.

But they were just as adamant about what they feel is their right as students to smoke on school property.

"We're glad about the blockade, but we didn't want it to come to this," said Jay Johnston, one of the protesters. The students want their smoking area back, after a smoking ban on school property was implemented last year.

Since September, pupils have been receiving two-day suspensions for smoking while on school property.

The pupils feel there is a contradiction concerning the smoking ban. "The prime issue is that the teachers can smoke," said Jay Johnston.

"It's discrimination. We have to fight for our rights. If teachers can, we should be able to smoke inside the school," said Julie Van Alphen. Students found in the school parking lot are being suspended by teachers and it's "depriving us of our education," she said.

Student spokesman for the protesters, Brett Robinson, was not happy with his first meeting with Principal Barb Singleton. "No one agreed to anything. She said she wasn't prepared to give us back a smoking area so we're just going to sit," he said.

Police asked the student leaders to move the pupils from the highway, but Brett Robinson said they wouldn't give them any help.

The turnout, estimated to be around 300 students, with as many as 60 actually sitting on the roadway, was "better than we expected," he said.

The protest started at 11:30 a.m. and broke up at about 12:45 when principal Barb Singleton agreed to lift the ban until Monday when talks would be held with student representatives.

The principal went out to the crowd of pupils and warned the teens that people can't negotiate when they feel "backed into a corner. This is football day, this is supposed to be their day," she said.

The principal's message that "no more smoking suspensions (would be in effect) until Monday when we talk about this," calmed the crowd and they dispersed shortly after.

she said. "I think this shouldn't have happened, but this is the only way to get our message across to the public," said Pat McCarthy.

One of the protesters said very few students are using the old smoking area, as a lounge area a quadrangle which was fixed up after a smoking ban was levelled.

Julie Van Alphen said she wouldn't be satisfied if teachers were told they couldn't smoke on school property. "It doesn't affect me if teachers don't smoke, so that's no good."

"The only thing we want is our smoking area back," said David J. Presswood.

Some students told The Herald the vice-principal and principal are more concerned about the school's reputation as a leader in having a smoke-free environment for students.

"They're willing to jeopardize our education by suspending us just to protect their reputation," said David Presswood. "How can they take our right away when we are at the age to smoke," he asked.

Georgetown high is one of only a few schools which has a ban on smoking in all areas of the school property.

supervisor Betty Diaz spent one of her days off to come down to Sunnybrook to see Paul, she said.

"The (Georgetown) hospital's really putting in a lot of time with him," Mrs. Franks said.

The Georgetown hospital had a little Acton girl in the rehabilitation a year ago about at Paul's stage and she has started to say a few words, she noted.

Paul has had a tracheotomy and he is fed through a tube in his stomach. Part of the skull was removed and bone removed because his brain was swelling after the accident.

Paul was driving his father's car when it suddenly went out of control. There was no drinking involved and no signs of skid marks which would indicate a sudden stop," his mother said. Her son an employee of Boehmers at the time, wasn't wearing a seat belt.

If you have made a tape of the show Cruel to be Kind, contact Mrs. Franks at 877-2163.

MD's appeal begins day 1

Dr. Jack Ford's Toronto hearing reveals facts about revocation

MARY-LIZ SHAW
Herald Staff

TORONTO - Dr. Jack Ford conducted an average of 500 times more hysterectomies on women under 35 than at Womens' College Hospital said lawyer Joshua Listwood.

The lawyer made his remarks while cross-examining a witness testifying on behalf of gynecologist and obstetrician Dr. Ford.

The hearing of the Ontario Hospital Appeals Board into the dismissal of the Georgetown doctor began Tuesday with statements by three witnesses.

Gavin MacKenzie, counsel to appellant Dr. Jack Ford, called two doctors from Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital and an expert on gynecology and obstetrics to testify.

In his opening statement, Mr. MacKenzie told the appeals board of two doctors and three lawyers that Georgetown would "suffer a grave loss" if Dr. Ford's hospital privileges were not reinstated.

Dr. Ford's privileges were revoked April 7 following a decision of GDMH's board of directors.

Mr. MacKenzie presented the appeals board with numerous affidavits, including seven doctors, four nurses and two patients of Dr. Ford. The doctors testified that Dr. Ford is competent and pleasant.

He is unquestionably an asset and he is blessed with a pleasant personality," said Dr. David VanDer Bent of Acton, in a written statement.

Mr. MacKenzie called Dr. Adriane Hobart, a general surgeon, who has assisted Dr. Ford on about two to three operations per month. "(Dr. Ford) is an absolutely first class operator," Dr. Hobart said, when asked his opinion of the appellant's abilities as a surgeon. "He is technically the best I have worked with (in the area of gynecology and obstetrics)."

Dr. Hobart added that Dr. Ford is "very calm and confident" in surgery.

Joshua Listwood, counsel for the GDMH board of directors, asked Dr. Hobart specific questions concerning obstetrical or gynecological operations.

Dr. Hobart said he could comment only in a general way and not on areas relating to complex cases of gynecology.

"Are you saying you are capable of commenting on Dr. Ford's judgement?" Mr. Listwood asked.

Dr. Hobart said he is able to judge how Dr. Ford reacts in the handling of tissues or in a case of bleeding.

Appeals board chairman Thomas Wood reminded Mr. Listwood that Dr. Hobart testified he is a general surgeon and not a specialist in gynecology or obstetrics.

Mr. Listwood used statistics based on a review of Dr. Ford conducted in July of 1984 by Womens' College Hospital staff member Dr. Robert Gall.

The hospital's lawyer pointed out that Dr. Ford has conducted an average of 500 times more hysterectomies on women under 35 than doctors at Womens' College Hospital. In one six month period, Dr. Ford and Dr. Valerie Kumar conducted 20 hysterectomies on women under 35; over a 12 month period, 12 doctors at Womens' College conducted 51, Mr. Listwood said.

"I am baffled by those statistics," Dr. Hobart said.

Mr. Listwood referred to a case of a baby whose spinal cord was snapped during a mid-forceps delivery and later died as a result of the operation.

When Dr. Hobart said he was not aware of the case, Chairman Wood said he wanted to know why Mr. Listwood was referring to specific cases.

"If he is not aware of these cases, he may want to change his opinion of Dr. Ford," Mr. Listwood said.

Gavin MacKenzie then called Dr. Allister MacIntosh to testify for Dr. Ford. Dr. MacIntosh is a general practitioner and a consultant in internal medicine at GDMH. He is also the coroner for Halton Hills.

Dr. MacIntosh said he refers five to ten of his patients per month to Dr. Ford and he has found the appellant to be "helpful in the handling of patients."

During his cross-examination, Mr. Listwood asked Dr. MacIntosh about one of his former patients who had been sterilized after she had been through menopause. According to her charts, Dr. MacIntosh said the patient had been experiencing post-menopausal bleeding.

"Why would Doctor Ford sterilize a woman who had been through menopause several years before?" Mr. Listwood said.

Dr. MacIntosh said his original diagnosis of his patient was incorrect.

"She was experiencing pre-menopausal bleeding," he said.

The appeals board is now hearing the testimony of Dr. Ronald Benzie, professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Ottawa and chief of obstetrics and gynecology at Ottawa General Hospital.

Dr. Benzie told the appeals board that, with the exception of one or two cases handled by Dr. Ford, he would not hesitate to hire Dr. Ford on his staff.

The hearing is expected to continue for seven days, according to chairman Thomas Wood.

Following statements made by Dr. Benzie under the questioning of Mr. MacKenzie, Mr. Listwood has referred to more than five specific cases of Dr. Ford's.

Mr. Listwood questioned Dr. Benzie on procedures, operations and patient management.

The lawyer is basing his question on a review conducted by Dr. Robert Gall, a staff member at Womens' College Hospital and an associate professor at the University of Toronto. He also referred to a second review, conducted by U of T professor Dr. Drew Allen, which examines operations performed by Dr. Ford.

In earlier testimony, Dr. Benzie told the appeal board he disagreed with Dr. Ford's method of treatment in two cases.

"I didn't want my silence mistaken for acceptance"

— Gavin MacKenzie

Mr. Listwood said Dr. Gall was surprised at the high number of D and C (Dilation and Curetage) operations that had been performed at GDMH. D and C is a procedure in which a doctor dilates the cervix and scrapes the uterine wall. Another physician had expressed concern over "the finding of a healthy uteri that had been removed following hysterectomies," Mr. Listwood said.

Dr. Gall's report also points out that a large number of operations to relieve urinary incontinence had been performed at GDMH, Mr. Listwood said.

Gavin MacKenzie told the board that he questions the statistics quoted by Mr. Listwood.

"I didn't want my silence to be mistaken for acceptance," Mr. MacKenzie said.

Under intense questioning by Dr. Listwood, Dr. Benzie said he could not comment on specific cases without knowing the patients involved. Mr. Listwood provided the witness with patient charts. Dr. Benzie said the urinary procedure in question now generally referred to a special unit at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto.

"I remember discussing this with Dr. Ford on the telephone before I left Toronto two years ago," Dr. Benzie said. "He usually heeded my advice."

Mr. Listwood then referred to three cases involving women aged 15, 16, and 19. Each woman had had D and C operations and or insertions of interuterine device's (IUDs). Dr. Benzie again declined to form an opinion of Dr. Ford's judgement because the cases were unique, he said.

"The justification of any procedure is difficult without being there," he said.

In one case, a 19-year-old had been experiencing scanty bleeding. She had two D and C operations in one year, Mr. Listwood said.

"It would appear to be inappropriate on the surface but I can't be certain," Dr. Benzie said.

Dr. Benzie admitted surprise, however, over a case involving a 16-year-old girl. She had an IUD removed when it was suspected to be the cause of her abnormal bleeding problems. She then underwent a D and C operation during which the same IUD was reinserted.

"Why put it back in when it is suspected to be the cause of her pain," Mr. Listwood asked. Dr. Benzie said Mr. Listwood had made a fair comment.

"That surprises me," he added.

The lawyer also questioned a case concerning a woman who has had a cesarean may have a vaginal birth providing the obstetrician watches the patient carefully and has an experienced assistant available, the specialist said.

The patient in question had been experiencing some complications with her pregnancy. As she was nearing her delivery date Dr. Ford telephoned GDMH gynecologist Valerie Kumar asking her to take care of his patient. Dr. Ford then left Georgetown for Toronto, Mr. Listwood said.

The patient was handed over to Dr. Kumar without her prior consent, the lawyer added.

"That is unacceptable," Dr. Benzie said.

The hearing will reconvene on Dec. 7 after this week's two days of hearings.

Pleas for help in effort to stir son

Coma videotape gives mother hope

by DAVE ROWNEY
Herald Staff

A Georgetown woman, whose son is in a coma, is reaching out for a "little bit of hope." Mary Franks is searching desperately for a videotape of a television show about coma patients, hoping the methods shown will stir some movement from her son, 20.

The Chapel Street mother of two is asking the help of the community for anyone who taped a Fifth Estate show Oct. 13 called Cruel to be Kind.

"It could make a difference in Paul's future," said Mrs. Franks. The program tells about a treatment used by a hospital in Birmingham, England, to stimulate comatose patients.

Paul Franks survived a single car crash on 26th sideroad near Fergus five months ago, but he slipped into

a coma. Mrs. Franks has been told by doctors at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto that her son has 90 per cent brain damage.

Until Oct. 4, Paul was at Sunnybrook but his mother wanted him closer to home and since then, he has been at the Georgetown District Memorial Hospital. "Sunnybrook said there nothing more they could do," she said.

Mrs. Franks heard through friends the Fifth Estate segment was about comatose patients. "This doctor was able to stimulate the patient. One girl was in a coma for six years but now she's walking and talking. The doctor never gave up," she said.

"It's a long shot, but as a parent you want to try all the long shots you can."

Since he's been in Georgetown,



Paul Franks

Paul has opened his eyes a lot more, his mother said. Paul is closer to his brother Brian, 18, father James and girlfriend Jennifer as well as other friends now he's back in town. Unhappy with her son's treatment while at Sunnybrook, Mrs. Franks has nothing but praise for the staff at Georgetown hospital. Nursing