

MPP Arnott opposes mandatory Junior Kindergarten

The vote was close. On April 14, Wellington MPP Ted Arnott introduced his Private Members' Resolution in the Ontario Legislature, asking the government of Ontario to refrain from continuing to implement the policy announced by the previous Liberal government of forcing all school boards in Ontario to provide Junior Kindergarten programs.

The resolution was narrowly defeated in a vote of 30-24. All of the members of the P.C. party and the Liberal party who were present

in the Legislature voted in favour of the Resolution. But the governing NDP party Members voted against the resolution, with the exception of one of their members.

"I am totally opposed to mandatory Junior Kindergarten for Wellington County because I'm convinced that the vast majority of people in Wellington believe we don't want it, can't afford it and don't need it," Mr. Arnott told members of the Legislature.

"I believe it should be an op-

tional program, which communities and local boards can decide upon for themselves to see if it's necessary for their own needs and their own people," he added.

In a questionnaire which Mr. Arnott sent to his constituents, 80 per cent of respondents indicated that they were opposed to the provincial government's policy of requiring local school boards to provide Junior Kindergarten."

Wellington County Council unanimously supported Mr. Arnott's resolution and many other

Municipal Councils in Wellington have also written letters of support. Both the Public and Separate Boards in the County have written in support of Mr. Arnott's resolution, as has the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, which represents all public boards in the province.

"I won't let the issue of mandatory Junior Kindergarten die," Mr. Arnott commented afterward. "I will continue to circulate my petition opposing Junior Kindergarten and I will continue to present

these petitions in the Legislature, so that the government is aware that there is a high degree of opposition to mandatory Junior Kindergarten.

"The NDP government has doubled Ontario's debt since coming into power four years ago and yet they walk around in a daze saying: 'We don't know where to cut. We don't know what we're going to do.'"

"Here's an example of a program that should be made optional," Arnott added.

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J.K. should be 'option'

MUNICIPAL DIGEST

BY BARBARA KERKHOF
The Rockwood Miller

A policy by the former provincial government called for all Ontario school boards to implement Junior Kindergarten programs by the fall of 1994 is being questioned.

Eramosa Township Council says that the government is taking "a very heavy handed approach by forcing boards to implement Junior Kindergarten, regardless of the wishes of local boards and the ability of rate payers to finance extended programs."

The Council believes Junior Kindergarten should be "an option, not a requirement." A resolution to put more flexibility into the policy will be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Education and both school boards.

Engineers advise 'no more work on bridge'

A number of tenders were put forward detailing the state of Eden Mills' bow string bridge at last Monday's Council meeting, held at Mimosa United Church.

Delcan Engineers recommends: "no further money be expended on the inspection, condition survey and analysis of the existing bridge. This bridge is beyond cost effective repair and should be replaced by a new bridge."

Council has asked the Eden Mills Bridge and Road Committee to make a report on their findings on this point. No solid plans have been made yet.

Township's water supply to be studied

Township consultants and the Ministry of the Environment and Energy have expressed some concern over Rockwood's ability to instantaneously draw water. The demands put on the water supply due to residential growth have prompted an assessment of the situation.

Eramosa Township Council has carried a motion to have an inclusive hydro-geological analysis done. The study will evaluate the total consequences of present and future growth on "the existing aquifer and river base recharge."



GOOD BOOK!

Four-year-old Stephanie Swanton spent part of Friday at Eramosa Community Library's first book fair. Here, she's looking through John Bianchi's *The Artist*, along with her mom Josée. Money from the book fair is going toward the library's automation project. (Doug Harrison photo)

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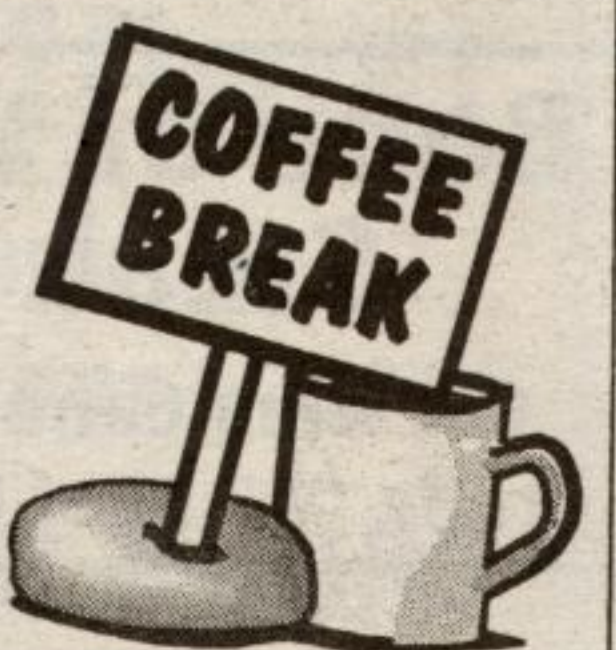


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