

Proposed Flamborough Quarry would impact surrounding schools

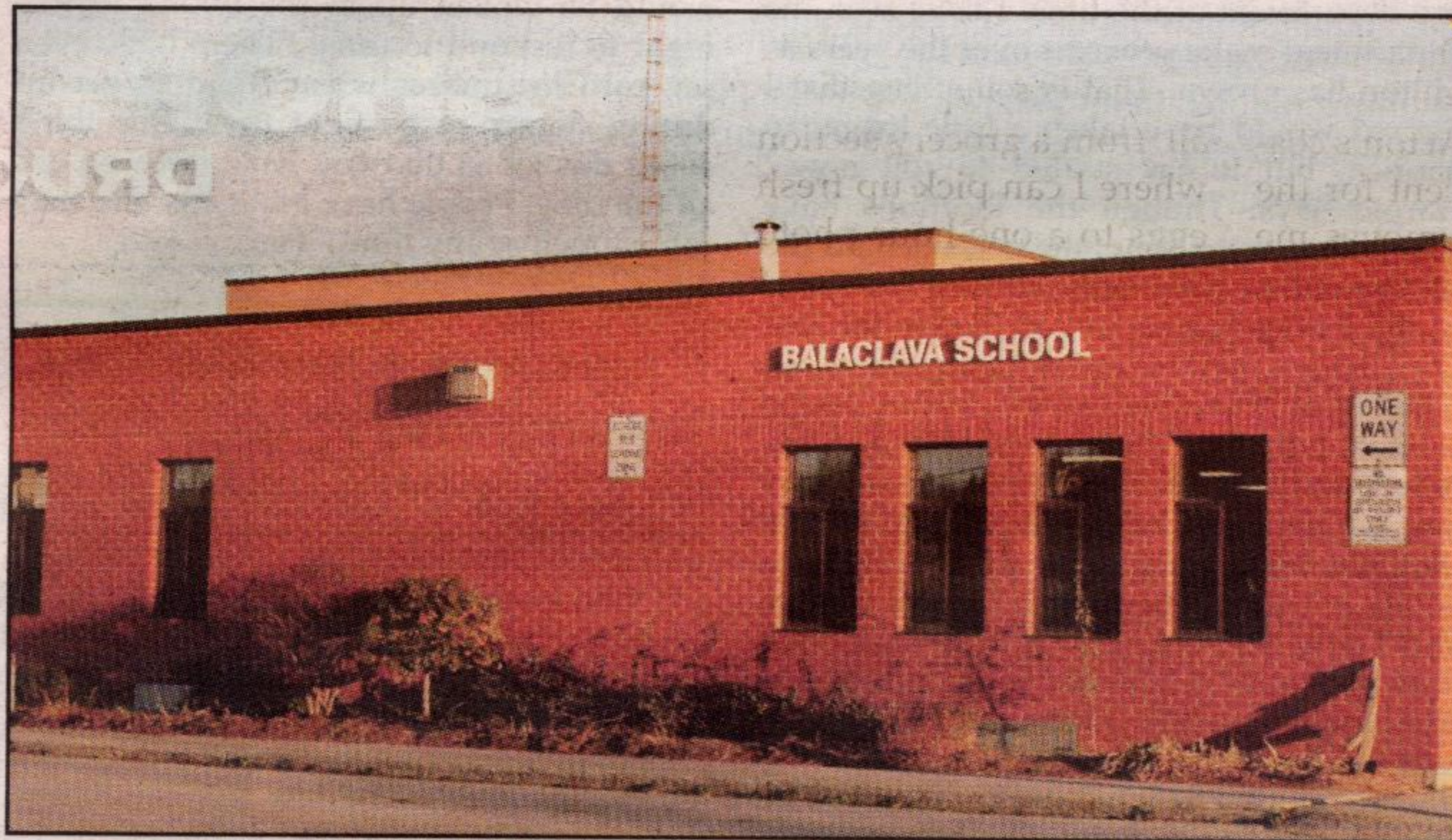
By ANN KORNUA

Jane Whitlaw speaks out about safety issues for students and schools that will be affected if the proposed quarry in Flamborough starts. In September 2004, Jane and other members of the Balaclava Public School's Council forwarded a resolution to trustee Reg Woodworth when they decided to take the matter to the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board. They asked the board to take a position in the interest of Balaclava and to request party status to the application with the City of Hamilton. On October 25, the matter was addressed when it was agreed to assign staff resources to analyze the potential impact on Balaclava and to intervene appropriately.

"It is up to every school, every student and every concerned parent to take notice of this and how it will affect them. A student at Balaclava public school has passed around a petition with his concerns about how his education will be affected by this quarry," Jane says. Many community concerns are focused on this application. Wetlands and significant woodlots where teachers take students to study animal habitats are in jeopardy of being lost.

The Flamborough quarry plans to excavate aggregate to be used for roadbeds, unpaved roads and in concrete and asphalt for road construction. The blasting that is involved with excavating the aggregate has raised concerns from organizations and community groups about the harm that can be done to the fragile surrounding wetlands in the Flamborough area. Excavation often requires regular blasting that can go below the water table imposing stress on the natural varying water levels.

"There are serious implications for Balaclava, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Kilbride, and Brookville schools, varying in gradation depending on location. Jane explained, "Balaclava Public School is located in the 10th concession and the quarry is being built in the 11th. One major concern is that the quarry



Balaclava Elementary is just one of the schools in the escarpment country that will be affected by the proposed plans for the new quarry.

will be sharing the same drilled water well with the school."

Emissions from the trucks are also a concern since they could have an effect air quality. All three schools use major bus routes that will be shared with trucks using the quarry. If the application is approved, children in the area who are bussed in or ride bikes in the good weather will soon share those roads with over a thousand new gravel trucks carrying tonnes of rock for processing and construction. Most of the back roads that the buses use don't have proper shoulders or are wide enough for safe passing.

"The key thing is our kids have clean air, water and a safe way for our children. We don't want to have schools closed if the conditions get bad," Jane says.

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