

Gardiner claims double standard used

Conflict of interest case may impact other boards

By LISA TALLYN
Staff Writer

The outcome of a court case dealing with conflict of interest allegations leveled against five Halton Board of Education trustees could have far-reaching effects says Acton/Esqueving trustee Ethel Gardiner.

"This case is far-reaching in terms of the impact it could conceivably have on every board and municipal council in Ontario," said Gardiner.

The Taxpayers Coalition Burlington Inc. (TCB) has cited the possible breach of Municipal Conflict of Interest regulations in relation to the board's 1996 budget deliberations, since the five trustees have family or other relatives working for the Halton or Peel school boards. The first hearing for the case has been set for Sept. 18 in Milton court.

Gardiner said throughout the province and since the inception of the Halton board "trustees have

declared conflicts on specific budget items, yet voted on the entire budget."

"I see voting on the bottom line as a responsibility. I followed a precedent. I did what hundreds of trustees in this province do every year." She added of 19 boards surveyed, 17 conducted their business the same as the Halton board.

Gardiner said there appears to have been a double standard used against the trustees.

"Not named are several trustees who also declared conflict of interest throughout the budget process and still voted on the final budget."

Gardiner said the hardest issues she has had to deal with since the allegations were raised "are the attack on my integrity and motive for serving as your trustee."

Gardiner did not want to comment on the legal action being taken, but added it's disturbing it is taking place at all.

"At a time when every ounce of energy should be focused on

educational issues and the dramatic changes taking place provincially and at the board table, it is not pleasant to be dealing with this at the same time."

New busing system could save \$1.9M

This September marks the start of the Halton catholic and public school boards' joint busing system expected to save the boards more than \$1.9 million in its first three years of operation.

According to Heather Palmquist of the Halton Catholic School Board's transportation services, the integration has been done mainly in the southern areas of the region. There is integration of the high school bus runs with Bishop Reding High School students and Milton area high schools. But for the most part, elementary schools in the north are relatively unaffected.

Individual bus routes and schedules are posted at each school.

Late Death Notice
JOHNSTON, Sheila Eleanor--Suddenly on Thursday, September 5, 1996, at home in the arms of her beloved husband Vic. Dearly loved mother of Wendy of B.C., Scott and his wife Toni also of B.C., and Ken and his wife Lisa of Mississauga. Dear Grandmother of Holly and Heather, Beau, Myles, Karli and Michael. Sheila is survived by her brother Kenneth Lightbottom and his family in Australia. Friends will be received at the Shoemaker Funeral Home, 55 Mill Street East, Acton, on Saturday, September 7, from 12 noon until 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. until service time in the Funeral Home at 7 p.m. with the Rev. J. Mark Tiller officiating. Cremation to follow. As expressions of sympathy, donations may be made to the Canadian Cancer Society.

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We thank all applicants for their expressed interest, however, only those being interviewed will be contacted.

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