

# OSD seniors learn about elections as "civic week" educates new voters

Senior students at Ontario School for the Deaf in Milton received a good lesson in the democratic process and the mechanics of governments and elections last week. The staff organized a highly successful "Civic Week" program to help the students learn more about their government and to help prepare them for the provincial election on Oct. 21.

About 55 of the 312 seniors at OSD will be voting for the first time in this provincial election, since the voting age was lowered

to 18. The civic week program encompassed the entire senior school body as many of them are almost 18 and will be able to vote in the next federal or provincial election.

### Candidates speak

Highlight of the week was a wrap-up program at the senior auditorium Friday morning which was attended by three of the four Halton East riding candidates—Liberal Bob Blake, NDP Kenneth Gelok and Conservative Jim Snow. All

spoke for five minutes, answered questions from the floor, then mingled with the students to answer further questions.

School officials had also asked the leaders of the three provincial parties to attend, but none could work the meeting into their busy schedules. Liberal leader Robert Nixon, however, had Herbert Breithaupt of the nearby Peel South riding come on his behalf and Mr. Breithaupt extended greetings from Mr. Nixon and the Liberal Party of Ontario.

"I think all the students found the workshops very interesting and informative," vice-principal Jim Etherington said. The only problem was that the teachers felt they still didn't have enough time to cover all the topics they would have liked to discuss.

Assistant superintendent Roy Wollaston explained the civic week was held to make students aware of their voting responsibilities, explain the purpose of an election, teach the structure of government, discuss party platforms and the function of political parties and to explain the voting procedures. Hopefully, the program also assisted the students in making a sensible selection. All the political parties were given "equal time" in the discussions.

The program also made the students aware of the names and party affiliation of candidates in their own constituency. Students at OSD live throughout the western half of Ontario and will vote in the riding where they live. Those who are residential students will vote at advance polls or by proxy if they are unable to be home on the day of the election.

### Four workshops

Workshop sessions covered four main areas—structure of government, political parties,

party platforms and the voting procedure. Two teachers handled each workshop.

About 150 persons attended Friday's meet-the-candidates meeting. Several deaf adults employed at OSD sat in on the session. Most of the adults are residents of Halton East and school officials said about 10 of the 55 eligible student voters are residents of this riding as well.

Because many in the audience will not vote in this riding, the candidates dwelt mainly on provincial issues rather than local issues. Economics, pollution, leadership, welfare, education and taxes were the favorite subjects of their three speeches.

### Insurance discussed

Questions from the floor dealt with jobs for deaf students, the lack of a college for the deaf in Canada, farm taxation, inflation, welfare, sales taxes and automobile insurance. The students' questions on insurance caused the only controversy of the day as the three candidates defended their parties' positions on socialized insurance, as proposed by the NDP.

Four OSD staffers acted as interpreters for the candidates and translated their speeches into sign language for the students.



M.P.P. JIM SNOW, the sitting member in Halton East (left) sips coffee as Lindsay Moir translates his replies to students' questions. He and Liberal Bob Blake and NDP candidate

Ken Gelok spoke both formally and informally with students at OSD Friday, as part of the school's "civic week" education program. — (Staff Photo)



DISCUSSING CAMPAIGN LITERATURE, Halton East Liberal candidate Bob Blake converses with OSD students following Friday's three-candidates meeting. The morning program wound up a successful

"civic week" at OSD which informed students about the role of governments and their responsibilities as voters. —(Staff Photo)



SURROUNDED BY STUDENTS who came prepared with dozens of intelligent questions, NDP candidate Kenneth Gelok of Oakville chats informally at OSD on Friday morning.

Three Halton East rivals for the government seat at Queen's Park spoke with students and deaf staff members, then met with the new voters informally. —(Staff Photo)



ABOUT 150 STUDENTS and several deaf staffers at Ontario School for the Deaf sat in on a meeting with three Halton East election candidates Friday morning. Gerry Hall was

one of the interpreters who translated the men's speeches into sign language for the students. In the background are some of the students' election displays. —(Staff Photo)

# Need man to help Sunshiners swim

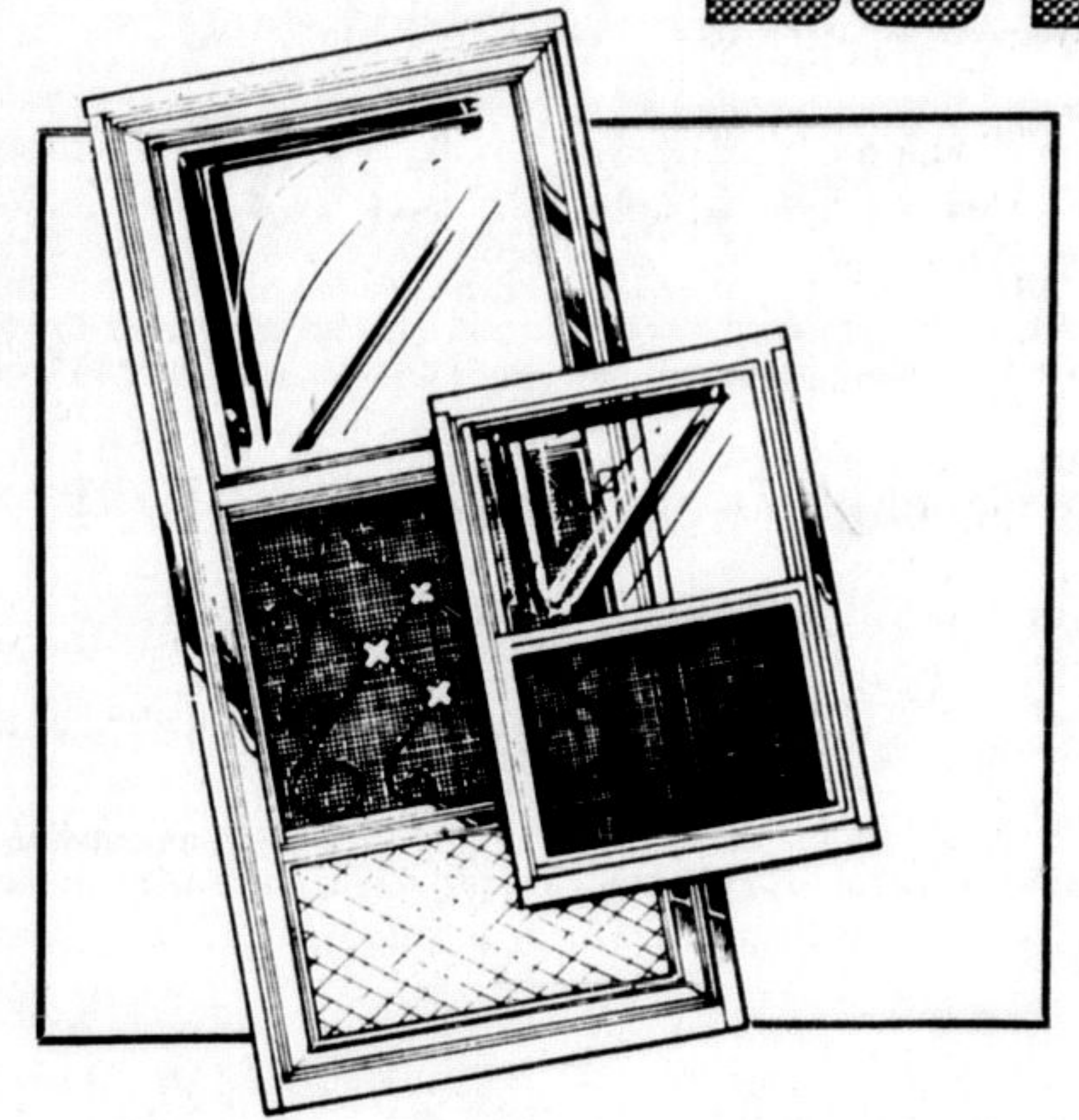
boys go to change. All the teachers at the school

Sunshine School, the Hornby school for mentally retarded children from the north Halton area, is looking for a man to volunteer an hour or so once a week to help with their swimming program.

Principal Mrs. R. P. Jeffares explained that every Friday the students visit the indoor swimming pool at Ontario School for the Deaf, for an hour's swimming instruction. The problem is, they need a man to supervise the boys in the pool dressing room area. The job does not entail any swimming (although a volunteer helper would be welcome to take a dip when the students do)—it's simply a need to have a male adult on hand to help when the

are women. Swim periods start Fridays at 12.45 and last until 2 p.m. Any man (or perhaps several volunteers on a rotating basis) willing to give 90 minutes of their time to help out on Fridays, should contact Mrs. Jeffares at the school.

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