

ACFO meet covers a lot of ground

by Ken Regan

At its recent convention in Penetanguishene, the Association Canadienne Francaise de l'Ontario (ACFO) held several discussions and information sessions which formed the basis for upcoming programs and policies to be instituted by the organization in coming months.

That, according to Rejeanne Guay, animatrice communautaire, (Community Animator), for the regional branch of the association was the meeting's purpose.

One of the key items up for discussion at the weekend meetings was of course the French high school issue and Guay said there were some positive comments about the whole issue as well as some misgivings expressed by local Francophones.

Students

She said yesterday that many of the students and parents who showed up at the convention expressed the feeling that the school crisis "was a marvelous experience." She explained that they felt the crisis and all

of its ramifications afforded them a unique educational experience, heightened their political awareness and was, in general, a valuable human experience.

In another area, the 100 or so people who attended the Friday evening meeting evaluated the crisis and felt perhaps the Francophone community was not made completely aware of events and reasons for some of the actions taken by organizing groups.

Establishment

One example mentioned concerned the establishment of the parallel school, La Huronie. The school was set up, before LeCaron was established, in the centre d'Activites francaises as a form of protest and as an alternative to taking less positive action such as staging sit ins or rallies.

Some of those present felt more information could have been provided about the rationale behind the school's formation.

Guay expressed disappointment that no English speaking residents showed up for the open discussion on the French school

question. She emphasized that the objective of that exercise was to have a frank, open discussion on the issue and to receive input from the Anglophone community and to exchange views and ideas on the matter.

Policy

The convention resulted in several policy statements being formulated, including one to restructure the regional ACFO organization. Guay said that input from people in the French speaking community suggested that perhaps the regional body was not specialized enough.

She explained that in the past, all representatives would meet on a global basis; that is, they would all meet to discuss all issues, economics, education, and various others. In future, she said the ACFO group will become more specialized so that individuals can concentrate on specific areas of interest. It's felt this will allow for more concentration on specific matters and more information to be learned and passed on by the individual study groups.

Board

The gathering also felt continued efforts must be made to emphasize the importance of a French language high school to the French speaking community. In a related matter, the convention decided to study the feasibility and work towards the formation of a distinct school board with jurisdiction to deal with matters concerning French language schools.

As a result of the convention, steps will be taken to inform the Prime Minister, M.P.'s and the Constitutional Committee of concerns the French community has about three sections of the proposed new constitution. They are; section 1, the War Measures Act, section 23, dealing with rights of minorities and section 133, pertaining to access to, and management of their own institutions.

Progress

The Animatrice was pleased with the progress made at the convention and felt the turnout was good, but felt it could have been even better except for the inclement weather which prevailed the first night of the convention.



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Ponders next move

That's Penetanguishene's Police Chief John Geere in "civies." The chief was photographed pondering his department's move today back into

the town's new-look police department after spending months in temporary quarters in the basement of the town library.

Clarke to play tonight

Todd Clarke of Balm Beach will be playing for Midland Centennials

tonight in his first game in a Centennial sweater. It was decided by the

OHA recently that Clarke should play in Midland, not in Penetanguishene where he started this season.

Clarke will be playing on the line with Steve Dunn and Andy Seeman tonight when the Centennials will face Haliburton Huskies.

Tom Garner, coach of the Centennials feels good about Clarke's return to Midland where he played all of his minor hockey.

Clarke originally went to Penetanguishene for the exposure.

Bill 82 may bring 'special education' to this area

Bill 82 which should soon pass third reading in the Ontario Legislature could mean Catholic parents in this area, of exceptional children, such as the trainable mentally retarded, could have those children educated in a Catholic school.

As well, it could mean that some form of special education facilities will be available in areas where they are not currently available.

According to Vince Monaghan, the trustee responsible for special education for the SCRCSSB, the new legislation will mean that whereas before, school boards had the option to provide special education programs to needy children, now they are obligated to do so.

With reference to Simcoe County Roman Catholic Separate School Board, the legislation, for the first time allows Catholic parents of the trainable mentally retarded children to have those children educated under the RC board with a Catholic education.

Notice of the impending legislation was seen in a recent Queen's Park report from Liberal leader Stuart Smith, but according to Monaghan, the preparatory work for laying the foundations of the new programs has been underway for some time.

He pointed out that there were 21 pilot projects set up by the province to develop a planning approach for development of the new programs and stated the Simcoe County Roman Catholic Separate School Board had been studying the implications of the legislation for a number of months.

Definition

"There are some things that need some real definition," said Monaghan, "before we really know the exact implications of (the Bill)." As an example he mentioned the methods of implementing the new programs.

Newly-elected chairman of the RC board Michael Ronan was asked if the new legislation might impose a burden on the Catholic school board, but said he could not really speak about the financial implications since all the details of Bill 82 were not yet known. He did say it could cost more money to implement the special education programs but added that if it was to create a burden on the board it would be a welcome burden, since it allows the board to provide services to children in need of special education.

Citizen briefly

General public invited

Penetanguishene's new council will be officially sworn in office Monday night at 7:30 p.m. at ceremonies in town hall to which the general public is invited to attend.

CCBU invitation to Stephenson

Minister of Education Dr. Bette Stephenson and other politicians have been invited to Penetanguishene Jan. 8 to state their positions on the controversial French language high school.

The Concerned Citizens for Bilingual Unity group has sent invitations as well to Simcoe Centre MPP Gordon Taylor, Simcoe East MPP Gordon Smith, and political candidates J. J. Harber (Lib., Simcoe East), and Fayne Bullen (NDP, Simcoe North).

The meeting is scheduled to be held at 7:30 p.m. in the hall of the Penetanguishene Legion. The invitations were sent by registered mail Dec. 2 to ensure sufficient time for a reply, according to CCBU member Gordon Press.

No break in negotiations

Details are scanty but negotiations are continuing between Decor Metal Products and UAW Local 1411.

A member of the union bargaining team said yesterday that progress was being made.

When asked if arrangements had been made for talks to continue next week, the spokesman said negotiations would go on next week if necessary.

PFD called out twice

Penetanguishene Fire Department were called out twice this past week, but in both instances, the calls proved routine.

Early Sunday morning, PFD was called to the residence of A. Quesnelle, at 134 Poyntz St., after the Quesnelle furnace developed problems and blew a door off. When firefighters arrived, things were under control.

At 3:20 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 2, PFD were again called out, this time to a chimney fire at the residence of Marcel Buttineau, of 94 Robert St. West. Penetanguishene Fire Chief Ted Light said yesterday the fire was contained within the chimney and there was no damage.

Light said this is the third fire this winter related to wood burning stoves.

Flurries to greet Santa tomorrow?

Santa Claus will feel right at home tomorrow when he takes part in Midland Civitan Club's fourth annual Santa Claus Parade starting at 1 p.m.

The weatherman is predicting a windy day with some flurries. So if you are planning on seeing Santa and all his helpers bundle up...you'll be glad you did.

Tiffin promoted

Town of Penetanguishene's police force has added a new NCO as of Dec. 1.

Const. Tom Tiffin who has been with the police department since '73 was promoted to the rank of sergeant.