

Thornhill High School Commencement Was Held Friday Evening



The 1961 graduating class of the Thornhill High School give a rousing school yell to mark the end of their high school days.

(By Margaret I. McLean)

"I have no path strewn with roses to offer. Your student life has been easy to what you will experience in the workaday world", warned Mr. Russel J. Aitchison, B.A., B. Paed., as he addressed the seventh graduation class of Thornhill High School on Friday evening last.

"Are you capitalizing on today's opportunities to prepare yourself to meet tomorrow's challenges?" Mr. Aitchison asked the graduates. He pointed out that 70% of Metro Toronto's 58,000 unemployed had not completed Grade 9. Thousands in the past had held very simple jobs, he continued, but to-day they were swept aside and left in the ranks of the unemployed. Technological developments require workers to develop new skills and new understanding, and these new skills are basically mental powers. The quantity of knowledge an individual possesses is of less significance, he insisted, than the power to acquire knowledge.

"Be curious. Think for yourself." Mr. Aitchison counselled. "Weigh what you hear in the scales of your own judgment but remember that the experience of others and the advice of those you trust must be recognized in your verdict. Respect the opinions of others but form your own for yourself." While recognizing that the graduates were living in a tempestuous age and were about to enter a world which was brutally frank and teaming with stark realities, Mr. Aitchison reminded them that "Much has been given to you. Much is expected of you."

Mr. Aitchison was no stranger to Thornhill High School having served there for part of last year as vice-principal. A graduate of Queen's University, he was for 17 years the principal of Central High School of Commerce in Toronto and is presently the Administrator of the Canadian Government Vocational Training Plan. The commencement exercises were opened with the invocation by Rev. M. C. Johnston of the Thornhill Baptist Church, which was followed by the singing of a hymn.

Chairman Eric Axelsson of the York Central District High School Board brought the greetings of the board to the graduates and expressed the belief that they had brought honour to themselves, to their school and to the community at large.

Need Two More Schools Mr. Axelsson then went on to sketch briefly the great changes which had taken place in the educational district, noting that four years previously the district had two schools, 1,200 pupils and 53 teachers, while at the present time it had four schools, 2,500 pupils and 125 teachers.

He expressed the opinion that in another three or four years the district would have an additional two schools caring for 3,500 students, and approximately 360 staff members. He stated that the vocational courses offered this year at Thornhill High School would be offered also at Bayview next year. He especially commended the principal and staff of Thornhill High School for meeting "with ingenuity and patience" all the problems caused by the unexpectedly large enrollment at the school and the confusion consequent on the construction of the vocational wing.

In his opening remarks, Principal A. S. Elson stated that they were proud of the classes represented and felt it a privilege to honour them. He noted with satisfaction that 88.6% of the Grade 13 graduates were continuing their education in some form and that 71.4% of the Grade 13 graduates were now attending university.

Secondary School Graduation Diplomas (general course) were presented to 59 Grade 13 graduates by Trustee Alan C. Peck, assisted by Miss P. Simpson of the staff. Trustee Ernst Redelmeier presented the fifteen graduates of the commercial course their diplomas, assisted by Mr. W. Freeman of the staff. The honour graduation diplomas were presented to the 35 grade 13 graduates by Trustee John Honsberger, assisted by Mr. Youle-White of the staff. The Buttonville Women's Institute Prize for General Proficiency in Grade 9, general course, was presented by Mrs. Adam Brown to Laurel Sabiston who obtained an average of 83.7%. Honourable mention went to Allen Reoch with 83.5% and to Ian Calvert with 83%.

President David Iverson of the board of student senators was then assisted by Mr. E. Lazar in the presentation of the following middle and lower school prizes: Grade 9, commercial, to Diane Shail with 77.5%; grade 10, general, to Terry Lazar with 89.4%; grade 10, commercial, Joanne McHoull with 82.7%; grade 11 general, to Alita Wise with 83.6% and honourable mention to Marilyn Clark for 82.8%; grade 11, commercial, Jean Maw with 82.8%; grade 12, general, to Ingrid Heinonen by reversion from Maureen Wright and Doris Barker with 77.7%; grade 12, commercial, to Patricia Moore with 82.3%.

Alan Aho, Janet Alecock, Mary Ann Baker, Marilyn Clark, Eve Leisups, Jim McTaggart-Cowan, Patricia Moore, Joe Pethes, Linda Watt and Alita Wise were presented with bronze pins in recognition of having achieved first class honours for three years. For obtaining first class honours for four years, Linda Baker, Doris Barker, Ingrid Heinonen, Robert Howes, Jerry Lazar, Jane McGowan, Louise Martin and Maureen Wright were presented with silver pins by David Iverson.

Gold pins in honour of obtaining first class honours for five years were also presented by David Iverson to Robert Blackburn, Lois Davidson, Lynn Hall, Nancy Hallawell, Anna Lund, Aimo Manninen, Margaret McDonald, Gillian McTaggart-Cowan, Ronald Stagg and Victoria Watt.

The special grade 10 academic history prize, donated by Mr. D. Foley was presented to John Denby, by reversion from Terry Lazar. The grade 10 commercial history prize was won by Ann Ward by reversion from Joanne McHoull.

For obtaining an average of 86.5% on her junior matriculation, Maureen Wright won the Thornhill Lions Club scholarship which was presented by Mr. W. A. Doherty. The Bank of Nova Scotia Prize for General Proficiency in Middle School was presented to Doris Barker who obtained 78.2% by Manager D. M. Jamieson of the Thornhill Branch of the Bank of Nova Scotia.

Winner of the Gordon Lake Memorial Prize for languages was Maureen Wright with an average of 87.8%.

Trustee Ralph Wood presented the following prizes awarded by the York Central District High School Board: lower school general proficiency, general course, Terry Lazar, 87.2% two year average; commercial course Joanne McHoull, 79.6% two year average; middle school, general course, Doris Barker with 78.2%; commercial, Patricia Moore with 82.9%.

Mrs. Heather Morrison presented the Doncaster Community Club prizes for students of the Doncaster area to Patricia Wren, grade 9 special; Richard Maers, grade 9 general; Carol Wallace, grade 10 special; Vincent Reuter, grade 10 general; Carol Mason, grade 10 commercial; Richard Malenski, grade 11 general; Dianne Wallace, grade 11 commercial.

The music club scholarship was presented by Jerry Lazar, president of the music club to Lona Martin. Senior typing prizes were won by Pat Moore and Dianne Wallace and junior typing prizes by Kathy Buchanan and Bonnie Barnes. Bonnie Barnes was also awarded the Sims prize for greatest improvement in typing.

In the Upper School, the York Central District High School Board prize for mathematics, physics and chemistry was presented to Gillian McTaggart-Cowan by Chairman Axelsson. The prize for general proficiency was presented to Robert Blackburn.

Presentation of "Ontario Scholar" certificates from the Ontario Government were presented by Principal Elson to Robert Blackburn, Gillian McTaggart-Cowan and Aimo Manninen. Each of these students attained over 80% on their grade 13 examinations.

Mrs. Mary Threapleton presented the Mary Threapleton Prize for English Literature to Gillian McTaggart-Cowan and the Morley J. Kinnee Plaque for Proficiency in English went to Robert Blackburn. The staff prize was presented by Mr. D. Foley, chairman of the committee to Lois Davidson.

Physical Education Prize President Terry Hemming of the boys athletic association announced that as few students were entering physical education courses at the university, the boys and girls athletic associations were offering an annual prize of \$50.00 for an outstanding student in sports and activities, but that the \$100 prize for a student entering the physical education course would be also awarded whenever the conditions were met. The girls athletic association prize was presented to Beverly Morris and Richard Charles received the prize from the boys' athletic association.

Robert Blackburn then brought the evening to a gracious close with an amusing and fast-paced valedictory speech in the form of a last will and testament whereby the graduating class bequeathed to those who followed one slightly used high school, complete with gum underneath the desks, and to the teachers and parents, their heartfelt thanks for their patient understanding and co-operation.

The school orchestra, capably conducted by Mr. E. Lazar provided a welcome leave through-out the proceedings and following a stirring rendition of the school song, complete with a sizzling cheer, the parents adjourned for cakes and coffee in the cafeteria, while the graduates danced in the gym.

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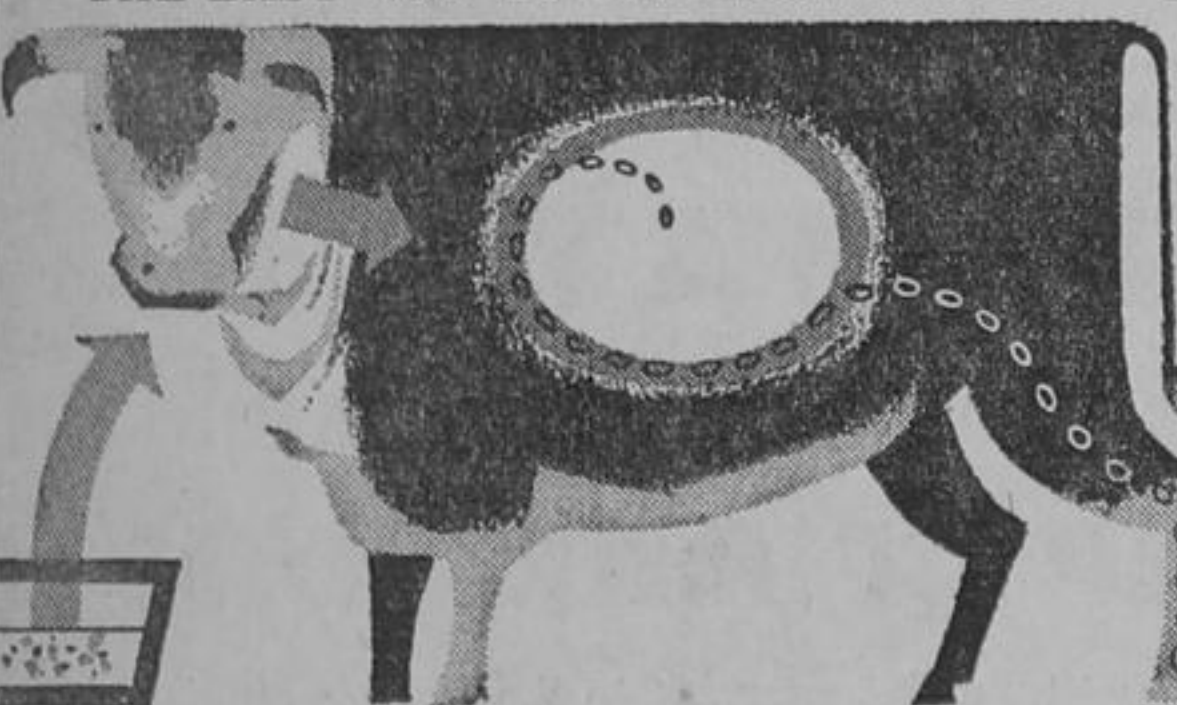


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