



# The Liberal

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## Need More Information, Debate On Amalgamation

Vaughan and Richmond Hill are spearheading a drive to bring about amalgamation of the Southern Six municipalities (Richmond Hill, Markham, Vaughan, Markham Village, Woodbridge and Stouffville). On April 29 these two councils passed a joint resolution calling on the province to bring about at least an amalgamation of Vaughan and Richmond Hill but preferably a total joining of all of the Southern Six municipalities.

It has been apparent for some time now that Richmond Hill and Vaughan are both strong advocates of some form of regional government for the southern part of York County. Markham, Stouffville and Woodbridge Villages have been somewhat cool to the idea, while Markham Township has been in outright opposition to the proposal. Markham and Woodbridge Villages sent observers to the April 29 meeting while Markham Township and Stouffville ignored it.

Several factors should be considered before any final decision is reached on regional government. The taxpayers in Richmond Hill and Vaughan should be told just how much total amalgamation is going to affect them dollar wise. It has been mentioned that savings would result through a pooling of such services as police, fire, hydro, roads and planning.

Certainly it wouldn't result in the case of hydro in Richmond Hill where, for example, the town has a well developed and financed hydro system which has been in existence since 1957. Vaughan's hydro system just came into existence in 1967 and thus is at a very expensive stage in its development, to say nothing of

the fact that Vaughan had to pay a great deal more in 1967 to purchase its system from the province and therefore has a resulting higher debture than Richmond Hill did in 1956, the year it purchased its system.

It also should be remembered that in the matter of fire and police services in a township covering many miles such as Vaughan does, larger departments are required than in the compact urban area of a town. Planning and the provision of recreation facilities (Metro Planning Board and the Metro Conservation Authority) do lend themselves to regional co-operation.

Two of the main problems which must be resolved before any amalgamation can become a reality is the position of Markham Township and the county, and to a lesser extent Markham, Stouffville and Woodbridge Villages. It stands to reason that before making any decision on the present application, the province would want to be conversant with their attitude to the proposal. Markham Township does not look with favor on the plan, preferring to keep its identity as a separate municipality. The question then arises, should it be forced into annexation against its will? The position of the county is also the subject of serious thought, as amalgamation would reduce the present 14 municipalities to eight. What is paramount is, could the county survive if it loses such a large and important tax base as the Southern Six?

These and other questions will have to be answered before a realistic assessment can be made of such a major proposal as amalgamation.

## Town Cenotaph Site

Following World War I, when Richmond Hill's War Memorial was erected, the site must have seemed an ideal location. Most of those being honored by the cenotaph had attended the school, which was replaced by the core of the present L. M. McConaghy Public School in 1918 on the same site. In fact, five different buildings on that site have housed the young people of the community in their search for learning since 1816.

The location has remained a wise choice throughout the years — with the names of those who lost their lives in World War II added to the original structure. As boys, these men had attended the school built in 1918.

The fact that the town-owned memorial sat on land owned by the public school board was of little importance since both bodies are parts of the municipal government.

However, with the imminent introduction of a county-wide board of education and the ownership of school properties about to be invested in a county body, the problem becomes real and acute.

Richmond Hill's official plan calls for the McConaghy School to be abandoned at some time during the next two decades and to be replaced by a new school on a different site. The school at present houses the maximum number of pupils it can accommodate. A further addition (there have already been two), be-

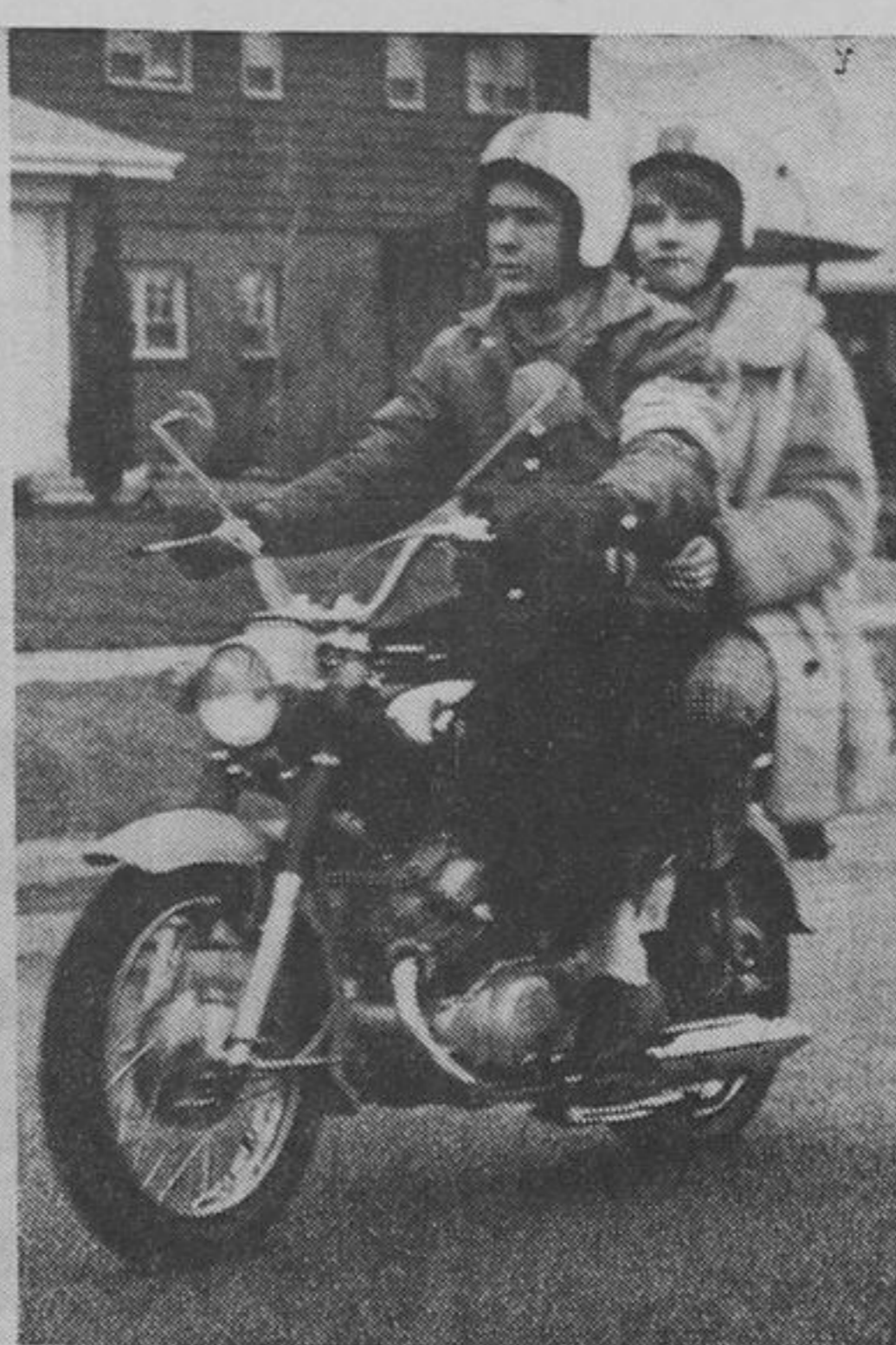
cause of the limited area of the playgrounds is undesirable. Since a large percentage of the pupils must cross Markham Road and Yonge Street, both with very heavy traffic loads, its Yonge Street location is no longer satisfactory.

If the new county board decides to follow this plan, unless the town is then financially able to purchase the entire site, it may well fall into the hands of developers who will want to erect a high rise apartment building. By that time under new zoning regulations this will be permissible. That such a purchaser would be content to sacrifice highly valuable Yonge Street frontage for the preservation of the memorial is doubtful, and he would be under no obligation to do so.

Therefore, Richmond Hill Council's move, suggested by Councillor John MacDiarmid, to acquire a deed for the site from the public school board is a necessary and timely one. We know that the two bodies will come to a satisfactory settlement while there is yet time.

If it is possible, we would suggest that the school board also recommend to its successor that if, and when, the entire site comes on the market the town be given preference in its purchase at a reasonable figure.

This is an historic site, since education has been carried out on it since 1816. We agree with Deputy-revee Floyd Perkins that it should be preserved for posterity as a small passive recreation park.



## "Ape Hangers" And Side Saddle Passengers Illegal

In case you've forgotten during the winter while your motorcycle was in storage, new safety regulations came into effect in Ontario last October 1. Because unusually high handle bars can hinder a driver's control of his bike, they must now be no more than 15 inches above the uppermost portion of the seat provided for the operator when the seat is depressed by the weight of the operator.

The new Department of Transport regulations aim at passenger safety too. A passenger may ride on a passenger seat behind the driver only if it is securely fastened, if there are foot rests and if the passenger sits astride the seat with feet on the foot rests. Sidecars are still permitted.

### McKeough's Financial Tiger

(Kitchener - Waterloo Record)  
Ontario Municipal Affairs Minister Darcy McKeough hadn't better sit around too long waiting for constructive criticism of his new bill providing basic shelter grants. This is one time when the critics will be speaking in vague generalities for the simple reason that it is so difficult to find specifics.

Mr. McKeough, in short, has a financial tiger by the tail because he hasn't yet been able to find out how to make certain the money will get to the right people. Private home owners appear to have no great problem. They can exert direct representation on the municipality to get their money. But the speech Mr. McKeough made introducing the somewhat delayed legislation indicates why it has come late.

The provincial grants go to the municipality for distribution and the local treasury is responsible for seeing that it gets to the individual. In the case of persons renting premises, they and not the landlord are to be the recipients, in theory anyway, of the governmental largesse.

The difficulties this presents are obvious. Who can be sure a tenant will stay the full year? This uncertainty of occupancy makes it clear that the rebate cannot be in lump sum. One answer is a reduction in rent. But where does this put a landlord who raises the rent? Who will determine if the rental increase is legitimate or just a way of making sure the landlord retains the grant?

Other provinces and states provide grants to householders and must have some answers. The grant in British Columbia is more than double that proposed in Ontario and is viewed as homesteader aid rather than a basic shelter grant.

Finally, and Mr. McKeough is hardly likely to come up with an answer to this one, what is to prevent a council from spending an extra amount approximating the grant total and getting it back in taxes it would not otherwise demand?

Pondering all these things Mr. McKeough may well wonder at the difficulties he is experiencing in giving away money.

### KNOW WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT?

When a neighbor comments on the week's news, don't be caught short. Make it a habit to read "The Liberal" every Thursday for latest developments in local government, education and community affairs.

## Letters to the Editors

### THE MARTYRDOM WE ARE ALLOWING OUR TEENAGERS TO ENJOY

Dear Mr. Editor:  
I am sorry that I did not read Margaret McLean's article April 18 but I would like to express sincere sympathy to "Anonymous Teenager" whose letter appeared in the April 25 issue of "The Liberal" because (she) tells a sad story.

The writer naively expresses the problem several times. "One gets tired of doing the same thing." "After awhile it gets boring if nothing exciting is happening." "If we hang around the management doesn't like it." etc.

Dear Anonymous the word "bored" should not be in your vocabulary. A possible reason for your boredom is that your dominant thought is — entertain ME and then you practically dare anyone to do it.

Were you never taught that you are responsible as your host for the success of your entertainment and this applies to public entertainment such as "The Hole Thing" at the United Church as well as private. Why must you always be provided with excitement? Don't you know anything about quiet pleasure?

And your solution. To whom are you speaking? Isn't it the ineffectual older people who have failed to provide you with the opiate of excitement — the mysterious "They" you are asking to make a survey. Why don't you break your boredom and make this survey yourself?

Why don't you find this super young person who could "possibly find some activity for you"? Possibly was the right word because you would be bored with his efforts in a short time. Your next move is to get backers who are willing to let you have equipment and space. Simple? No it is not. But it is what many older people have done for teenagers who find that the whole thing was boring.

You are intelligent enough to criticize and to know what you don't like so you should be intelligent enough to work out your problems. I know you need leaders and you would get them if you would stop being martyrs, become unbored, stop being spectators and passive receivers and get into the doing and giving lineup.

You will know by now that I am an old biddy. I am tired of hearing that someone got low marks because they have a

"lousy" teacher. I am tired of hearing that the game was lost because the other fellow cheated and I am sick and tired of hearing that it is the fault of parents when young people make a mess of life. I am sick of all this alibing and passing the buck. You are healthy and you are smart. You have advantages that were never available to your parents so start working on your own problems.

I must correct you, you do not speak for all teenagers. I know a great many in that age bracket and not one has a chronic case of boredom and neither do they have money to "Hop down to Toronto" for action. That too, is an illusion. I think they are content because they are preparing for the future and they have not succumbed to a defeatist view that there is no future and they enjoy the simple pleasures that are available.

Do read Ken Hamilton's Column, High School Sports, April 25 issue of "The Liberal". Believe me, Anonymous, this is "To you, with love".  
MRS. LOREN GUILD,  
RR 2, Gormley.

### "PIAZZA PIERRE"

Dear Mr. Editor:  
We hear a great deal about the problems of our teenagers. Pierre Berton would like to see sidewalk cafes, piazzas, a togetherness not found in the suburbs. Part of the blame he places on the shoulders of developers and politicians. Some teenagers cry about "boring hours" and blame adults for lack of planning.

Your editorial dated May 2 re the need of recreation facilities suggests a greater contribution by developers. All in all, it appears that everybody is blaming everybody else for the shortcomings of our society.

I don't wish to go on record and say that I know all the answers, but surely, are we not dealing here with a small minority? Like the mother who wrote, "Let's stop giving publicity to the whiners" I am conscious of the fact that there are good parents, teenagers develop a strong moral fibre and don't stray.

Developers, politicians, cannot be responsible for student protest and teenage rebellion. There is a great deal more to be considered. First of all, protesting does not necessarily mean condemning. Without

youth involvement, our society will decay. The energy emanating from it needs only to be directed into useful channels. Where, in the past, the direction came first from parents, second from the church, third from the schools, today we have abandoned all this and think it should be the responsibility of government, starting at the municipal level.

Perhaps those who advocate the removal of all religious training from the schools, that a teacher should not use punishment to instill in a student respect for civil laws and that mothers and fathers should turn their offspring over to others to be raised, should not look to developers to solve social problems.

As a developer, I will give land for parks and recreation facilities. I will build "Piazza Pierre", but the voters must tell their representatives to prepare plans and think big for only large scale planning can move the thinking of provincial politicians and excite the vision of federal representatives.

I am afraid we are entertaining urban social changes with a rural mentality, or applying urban mentality to rural environment. Let us begin by sorting out the two.  
Yours truly,  
C. D. MILANI,  
Milani & Milani Holdings Ltd.,  
44 Uplands Avenue,  
Thornhill.

### IS LIFE TOO BORING AND STULTIFYING?

Dear Mr. Editor:  
Last week I listened to a rather sad discussion by worried and puzzled parents on the drug problem and their fears for their children. The anguish was real.

The closing talk given by the chairman of the meeting was excellent and perceptive in going to the roots of the matter: Are we somehow failing the youth of today? Don't they want humanistic identification?

The nature of a living entity is to function as an active being. It will function in a meaningful way or in a negative way, and if positive, creative and outgoing activity is denied it, it will seek excitement and relief from boredom in ways which may have deleterious effects.

The nature of the adolescent (Continued on Page 14)

## In the Spotlight



By JOAN HAROLD

Browsing around the countryside on an antique hunt is a most pleasant way of spending a sunny spring day. There is the excitement of wondering whether you will return with an inexpensive piece of trivia that appealed to your sentimental eye, or a long sought-after treasure unearthed at just the right price.

If you go on a jaunt this week there will be the added bonus of the beautiful countryside. The blossoms are out, and the feathery effect of trees about to burst into leaf makes Ontario look like a Grandma Moses painting.

A seventy mile drive, most of it on a quiet strip of 401 west of Toronto, will take you to Brantford where the tenth annual antique show is taking place at Glenhurst Gardens, the Art Gallery of Brantford. This show has an enviable reputation far beyond Ontario, and dealers come from miles away to take advantage of showing their antiques in ideal surroundings.

Local dealers attending the festival include Margaret and Noel Binns, Kinghorn, King City, the Norris's of the Penny Farthing, Newmarket, and Margaret Philip, Canadian Homestead Antiques, Markham.

Glenhurst is an elegantly landscaped sixteen acre estate overlooking the Grand River, and was bequeathed to the City of Brantford in 1955 by Edmund L. Cockshutt, on the understanding that it be used as a culture centre. The large and gracious mansion lends itself perfectly to gallery exhibitions, and the Glenhurst Arts Council offers highly qualified, professional instruction in drawing, painting, and many other cultural subjects.

For the antique show the large house and coach house are filled with the displays, and a marquee houses the well reputed Chez Gourmet. Each year the best cooks in Brantford create their most cherished recipes for the festival. If you don't want to take the time for a gourmet lunch or dinner, there is also a snack bar.

The last day of the show is Friday, May 10, from 11 am to 10 pm. Admission is one dollar, and parking is free.

Many people saw "The Soldiers" when it was given its English language premiere by Theatre Toronto last February, but those of us who were (Continued on Page 14)



## Rambling Around

by Elizabeth Kelson

### And Adventure By The Way

This spring and summer and perhaps fall, especially if balmy weather comes along, I intend to do what I've always wanted to do but couldn't find the time. Travel!

There are a lot of people travelling about these days, flying, going by car, bus and boat to almost anywhere. I'm taking a different course for I'll be travelling the streets of Thornhill and Richmond Hill on foot. I love to walk. I do my best thinking, wondering and admiring that way. And I meet people, young people, children and old people. Those who are too old to drive cars and those who are too young. This being on foot is a real bond between myself and them. From the grounded people comes a fine mutual enjoyment in what's available, like rain, sunshine, grass and flowers and other things too numerous to mention.

I have a reason for this way of travelling. I want to reveal the world that doesn't make the news columns. It's not spectacular enough, or sensational enough or negative enough. It is a world of people doing ordinary things, having private opinions about the world, and the things that children like. It's a world we take for granted and that we hardly ever take time to see. How long is it since you ever really looked at the person you're talking to?

Also I want to communicate to those heroic people whose only means of travel is by armchair, wheel chair, or with the help of a friendly neighbor; or perhaps their only means of travel is on the magic carpet of their own imaginations. (Continued on Page 14)

## Hill Residents Get Greatest Rebate

# Shelter Exemption Grant Will Reduce Local Tax Bills But Produce Hidden Costs

By MARGARET McLEAN

It could be that local residents will actually look forward to getting their tax bills this year, just to enjoy the exotic experience (in the sense of rare, strange, wonderful) of finding the total bill reduced.

The reason of course is the introduction by the province of its much heralded basic shelter exemption on the first \$2,000 of assessment for every property owner and tenant in the province.

However, the exact amount of the tax credit to be allowed will vary slightly from municipality to municipality in accordance with what is called "the provincial equalization factor."

Throughout the province, local mill rates vary because of wide divergences in assessment. In many municipalities, assessment is about one third of market value.

The "equalized mill rate" was devised to convert the local mill rates to what they would be if all property were assessed at market value.

Accordingly, there will be variations in the basic shelter exemption in local municipalities, according to how high properties are assessed there in comparison to others.

In Markham Township, the equalization factor has been set at 19. In the urbanized southwest portion of the township, where residents are in a lighting and water area and support TSA 1 public schools and York Central District High Schools, the mill rate this year is approximately 121 mills. By taking 19% of this 121 mills, a rate of 23 mills is arrived at. Multiplying this by \$2,000 (the portion of assessment on which the exemption is allowed)

a figure of \$46 is obtained which will be the basic shelter exemption for the area.

Separate school supporters will receive a slightly larger exemption, in the same proportion that their school rate is higher than public school rates.

In Vaughan Township, the equalization factor is 23 and with a mill rate of 108.9 for a public school supporter, the exemption will be \$49.87. There will be slight variations on this amount for those in lighting or water areas.

Highest exemption in Vaughan Township will go to supporters of the Richmond Hill Separate School system. Their total mill rate is 121.9 and they will receive an exemption grant of \$56.07. Supporters of CRCSS Markham and Vaughan (St. Luke's Separate School) will have an exemption of \$51.47.

Highest of the local equalization factors is that of Richmond Hill where a figure of 38 will be applied to compensate for the town's generally higher assessment. A public school supporter paying a mill rate of 82.51 will receive an exemption of \$62.75.

Separate school supporters in Richmond Hill, however, whose school costs are considerably higher, will receive an exemption of \$72.83, the highest in the area.

As the general tax rate has gone up in both Richmond Hill and Markham Township, residents there will not receive an overall reduction on their tax bills equal to the amount of the exemption. In Vaughan Township, on the other hand, the residential mill rate has gone down by a half mill, so residents will receive not only the basic shelter exemption, but another few dollars off their general tax rate.

In spite of the apparent reduction in taxes, Vaughan Reeve Brian Bailey points out that the administrative costs to the municipalities in the scheme will eventually result in higher costs to the taxpayers.

"It will increase our short term borrowing costs," he said, "because we won't be paid by the province until late in the fall. We have to give the rebate now (when the tax bills go out) and then wait for the province to give it to us."

The scheme will also increase administrative costs, Mr. Bailey warned. Vaughan Township, for instance, has 24 different mill rates, according to whether properties are public or separate school supporters, in water or lighting areas, or in police villages, etc. The exemption in each of these areas must be calculated separately. The number of mill rates per

municipality of course varies widely. There are four in Richmond Hill — and 87 in Pickering Township.

Mr. Bailey also expressed concern over calls on the time of the treasurer who could presumably be called to give evidence each time a tenant swears out a warrant against a landlord for non-reimbursement of the grant. "Our treasurer could be tied up in court for months," he said.

The shelter exemption grant is the only recommendation of the Smith Report on Taxation which the government has yet adopted. Its basic purpose was to offset the regressive aspects of the property tax. That is those with low incomes spend a larger proportion of their incomes on the provision of shelter, whether through owning or renting shelter. Thus those with low income carry a property tax load which is relatively higher

than that carried by those with a larger income.

The shelter exemption brings about a graduating of property taxes according to ability to pay. This is achieved by placing the exemption on only the first \$2,000 of assessment. A \$50 exemption from a tax bill of \$1,500 will have little effect on the pocketbook of someone who pays a tax of that magnitude but a \$50 deduction from a bill of \$300 will be an appreciable relief to the owner of a more humble dwelling.

The act provides \$150 million in assistance toward property taxes but will cost the province \$850,000 to administer this year, although this cost is expected to be reduced substantially next year. The tax credit system will increase the level of provincial subsidies from 43% of provincial revenues in 1967 to 48% in 1968.