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The People Must Know

There is no matter of greater economic and social importance today, to the exploding population of Southern York County municipalities, than community planning. And when events occur that cause concern and public anxiety in this field, it is a very serious matter indeed.

At present the local bodies responsible for community planning in our towns and townships are the planning boards appointed by the municipal councils. These bodies are in the midst of formulating and applying Official Plans which will determine the character of uncoun- ted neighborhoods to be inhabited soon by many thousands of citizens.

Some of these planning bodies are working in secret, either partly, or almost completely. Public knowledge of what is going on is minimal, if it exists at all. At the same time, and at least in part as a direct result, much badly needed community participation is lacking.

Undoubtedly some very bad planning is being done and we will soon have the evidence of it in higher taxes and daily urban discomfort.

Attempts by the press to obtain access to planning meetings and information have been thwarted in recent weeks, most notably in Whit- church Township. And this in a township where the most crucial of all planning business is going on. It was only in December that Whit- church Township obtained Department of Municipal Affairs approval for its Official Plan. Soon property owners will begin to feel the bite of development policies and zoning by- laws now being formulated without their knowledge or participation.

The press is being denied access to public business being conducted by the Whitechurch Township Planning Board. Reporters are also not per- mitted to attend meetings of other committees of the council. Only sec- ond-hand information and the bare bones of resolutions are made public after these meetings—a most unsat- isfactory situation.

And in King Township during recent weeks, draft copies of this munic- ipality's proposed Official Plan were presented to the planning board by consultants. There followed a debate as to whether this most important document should be made available to the press. Only one member of the board insisted upon turning his copy of the report over to a reporter. A majority of the board voted to keep the report confidential for a further period, thus reducing the opportunity for badly needed public participation in planning the future of the township.

However, there has been hearten- ing evidence of a preliminary stirring of interest in King Township, with interested ratepayers attempting to organize. But unhappily this is not yet the case in Whitechurch Town- ship.

Municipal officials should make every effort to communicate the con- tents of reports immediately to the public. Particularly so in the case of such an important document as the preliminary draft of an Official Plan. They would do well to adopt the practise of more experienced and progressive municipalities where such documents are circulated as widely as possible as soon as possible, even before meetings are held to receive them. Of course, officials must have an opportunity to read reports before citizens start asking questions. Most members of the press will observe publication dates set for public documents. Those who don't can soon be identified.

The local governments and the press derive mutual advantages by working together to provide a maximum of communication for public affairs. Indeed, neither would be doing the best possible job without striving for the greatest possible co- operation in the job of informing the public.

Community spirit, public partici- pation, and even community forma- tion, depend largely on local fac- ilities for communication. The avail- ability of comprehensive information is vital for ratepayers' organizations, boards of trade, service clubs, and all other such groups. The difference between a live community and a dead community is largely a matter of communication in local affairs.

To do a little research on this matter of secret municipal govern- ment, particularly as it relates to community planning, we referred to the local town public library. From a number of reference volumes most kindly and quickly provided, we gleaned two quotations deemed ap- plicable to the question here under discussion.

In a recent publication entitled "Cities in the Motor Age", an inter- nationally known planner, Wilfred Owen, writes the following, which we think local municipalities and citizens should take to heart:

"The real difficulty that stands in the way of our achieving a broader planning approach in urban areas is the problem of gaining the neces- sary public understanding and sup- port. Very often the major hindrance arises from the fact that the tech- nical experts concoct their plans and draw their maps in almost complete secrecy, as if it were necessary to enter into a conspiracy in order to get anything done. The reason for cloak-and-dagger planning is a reluctance to test the sensitivity of the politicians. Yet the basic problems are political problems, questions of public policy. They are questions that the technical experts are fre- quently incapable of assessing.

"No matter how merciful the deci- sions may be, there are some people whose homes have to be disturbed and whose businesses have to be up- rooted in the process of roadbuilding, renewal and constructing public works. The community is confronted with personal problems, and these put planning in the realm of policy decisions, which are political deci- sions. Answers to such problems are not to be found solely in good tech- nical advice. Decisions have to be made with the participation of po- litical leaders and citizens of the community. We shall find that we are very much mistaken if we try to solve the problems merely by creat- ing engineering service agencies or planning agencies that float around loose.

"Citizens' committees, chambers of commerce, and other groups must be well informed if satisfactory pro- gress is to be made. Otherwise, the best plans will not be understood, there will be no citizen support, and there will be no action.

"People cannot see clearly what has been happening before their eyes, much less visualize the events that lie ahead. They need to be informed and to be included in plans for their own future. The local newspaper editor has proved to be the key man in communities that have made an appreciable effort to help themselves. "Another important ingredient of a program for urban betterment is the participation of a strong citizens' committee that can bring to bear on the planning process an expression of what people and industries of a community need. Such a committee needs to act as a watchdog for city hall and for citizens who have long been oblivious to the city's needs."

S. Carl Hirsch in his 1968 pub- lication for schoolage readers, "Cities Are People", on one occasion sees fit to make the following statement about local planning:

"The solving of such problems, the decision making, should belong to the people. However, the grim reality of city life is that often such matters are decided, not in open debate, but by the undercover pressures of private interests. The democratic pro- cess is undermined when those who wield power in the city government use it to their own ends."

Thus does writer Hirsch warn against the potential danger in secret meetings where political patronage and corruption can flower, away from the withering spotlight of public scrutiny.

Southern York County munic- ipalities could well take a page from the story being written in Markham Township, where special efforts have lately been made by planning boards to gather the press at its meetings and to involve and communicate with the public. In Markham Township, too, the citizens are making very noticeable efforts to contribute through ratepayers' groups, citizen organizations, and neighborhood recreation councils. The township council recently was able to draw from a new citizens' organization to fill a vacant planning board seat.

There are enough barriers to ef- fective public affairs communication on the local level in Southern York County without having local officials put up artificial barriers like secret meetings and secret reports. The very fact that there are so many different local jurisdictions frag- ments the news sources. There are so many small meetings at different locations, often taking place simul- taneously, that effective coverage of every municipal body all the time is a formidable task.

In the interests of good commu- nity planning for all of York County, the holding of secret planning board meetings should cease.



(Photo by Bailey)

Winter Camping Can Be Fun

Temperatures which dropped to 24 degrees below zero did not chill the enthusiasm of 125 Scouts and Venturers and 28 leaders who camped out on a January weekend at Albion Hills Conservation Area.

The Scouts learned the insulating value of a pile of snow as high as possible around the tents and of a thick layer of straw on the floors as they were kept busy collecting wood and feeding the fires around the clock. The meals cooked over these outdoor fires were particularly relished and the campers enjoyed skiing, tobogganing, skating, snowmobiling, socializing and campfires in the evenings.

In the above picture 4th Richmond Hill Scouts were caught as they prepared a meal in the open. It is evident that they have learned how to adapt to winter camping.



In the Spotlight Bayview Players To Present "Anthology"

By MARY MONKS

Once again Theatre 42, the drama club of Bayview Secondary School, is in the news. Following its outstanding success with "The Miracle Worker", its first major production, the group will be presenting "Anthology" at the school March 13, 14, 20 and 21. This is a collection of excerpts from six famous plays, and offers a wide variety of styles in writing and acting. The portions have been carefully chosen and adapted by several teachers of the English department, assisted by students.

"Anthology" will include two selections from the works of Bernard Shaw, "Caesar and Cleopatra" and "St. Joan", the very funny "Pyramus And Thisbe" scene from Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream", and scenes from "Death of a Salesman" by Arthur Miller and Christopher Fry's "The Lady's Not For Burning".

Artistic director of this theatre company is Barry Pearson, associate head of the English depart- ment. Since the purpose of Theatre 42 is to involve as many interested people as possible regardless of whether they are members of the theatre arts course, all comers have been welcomed into the production. The cast contains almost forty actors, less than half of whom are theatre arts students, and parents, teachers, students and at least one member of the secretarial staff have combined to produce the 55 costumes and a number of props. Such a complex production needs a large crew, and suffic- ient willing hands have been found to get the show rolling.

It is the interest shown by "outsiders" in his theatre projects that has particularly pleased Mr. Pearson. While teaching in Saskatoon, he partici- pated in a scheme for the successful merging of a high school drama group with adults from the neighborhood, resulting in true community theatre. He feels that the amount of interest shown in the production of "Anthology" bodes well for the future. He would like to see his senior students running shows on their own and producing theatre for child- ren.

To this end he is encouraging an increasing number of improvisations in his drama course, thus giving his students the experience of creating from within themselves. Added to the technical know- (Continued on Page 14)

George McIlraith MP Federal Solicitor-General Opposed To Legalizing Use Of Marijuana

Solicitor-General George Mc- Ilraith, who has represented the riding of Ottawa West in the House of Commons since 1940 and has been a member of the federal cabinet since 1945, prob- ably knows more about the dangers of marijuana than any other Minister of the Crown. His department is responsible to parliament for the RCMP.

When he firmly opposes any move to legalize pot (as the weed is commonly known), on the basis of existing knowledge, it is significant, Mr. McIlraith says that, according to infor- mation collected by the RCMP, the facts about marijuana use in Canada today are:

Pot distribution throughout Canada is well organized by professionals who enlist stu- dents and others in each com- munity as pushers, reaching into relatively isolated com- munities as well as the cities.

The RCMP files reveal that a student pusher from the Uni- versity of Saskatchewan was sent into Prince Albert last July to open up the market there. Similar cases are docu- mented across Canada.

The pushers are often stu- dents anxious to earn extra money. Many of them believe there is nothing dangerous about marijuana.

For every 100 joints they re- ceive to sell they are allotted an (Continued on Page 14)

Bus Service Deplorable

Except during rush hours bus service on Yonge Street be- tween Richmond Hill and Metro, at the present time, is deplorable, charges Robert Mar- quis, a chartered accountant liv- ing at 46 Roosevelt Drive, Rich- mond Hill.

Mr. Marquis made this charge in a recent letter to the chairman of the Toronto Trans- it Commission.

Mr. Marquis has some con- structive suggestions to offer to the commission as it considers renewing the contract to operate this bus service for the munic- ipalities of Richmond Hill, Vaug- han and Markham Townships.

He suggests that instead of having non-rush hour buses go from Richmond Hill to Eglinton, that the same number of buses shuttle back and forth from the northern terminal in Richmond Hill to Steeles and Yonge.

"The first thing accomplished would be a much better service to those residents of the area between the town and Steeles, without taking away any ser- vice from another part of the line and at no additional cost to the commission," Mr. Mar- quis wrote. He considers the people the number one priority. In his opinion there are enough buses now using Yonge Street to reach the Eglinton Terminal, especially from Lawrence Ave-

ue, south. His suggestion would reduce congestion in that area, he claims.

"Often I have seen a Steeles bus and a Richmond Hill bus following each other closely down Yonge and both only half full," Mr. Marquis stated as he pleaded for a better ser- vice for those people between Steeles and Richmond Hill in the Yonge Street area. He firmly believes his suggestion would be a logical solution.

Calling Mr. Kierans

(Montreal Gazette) Eric Kierans is not the only postmaster-general with prob- lems. The *Literaturaya Gazeta* complains that mail delivery was faster in Russia before the revolution than it is now. It takes three times as long for a letter to go from Moscow to Tula, a distance of 120 miles, as it did 100 years ago.

The Soviet literary journal goes as far as to suggest that postal authorities consider west- ern methods. Of course, why doesn't the Moscow Post Office study the Montreal system of handling mail? Maybe it would work better there than it does here.

County Board To Operate Two Summer Schools This Year

York County Board of Education will be operating two summer schools this year — one at Thornhill Secondary School and one in Newmarket.

There was one summer school last year from July 2 to August 12 operating from 8:30 to 12:30 five days a week at Thornhill Secondary with a total of 630 students enrolled.

The program introduced by the former York Central District High School Board was expanded by the new county board to cover the entire county, giving stu- dents an opportunity to make up subjects in which they had done poorly during the school year.

The board learned at its meeting on February 9 that 533 of those enrolled were from York County secondary schools, and 47 from sec- ondary schools outside the county. There were also 50 grade 8 students enrolled Sutton who needed special help to equip them for high school.

Sixteen students who had no special problems took ad- vantage of the opportunity to

enrol in a special art enrich- ment course.

A staff recommendation that the second school be in Sutton was rejected by trust- ees who argued that New- market would be more cen- tral, that it could serve a wider area.

A suggestion that Rich- mond Hill, not Thornhill, be the location for the summer school serving the southern municipalities was disputed by staff who pointed out that Richmond Hill High School is not large enough to ac- commodate the anticipated enrolment.

Also the flow of traffic in the morning is towards Metro, and many students would find it easier to find transportation south than they would if they had to go north.

On the other hand, it was pointed out that all subjects could not be offered at both schools, and students from Sutton might have to go to Thornhill for the subjects they will need. This would mean that board buses run- ning from Lake Simcoe

would have to leave very early in the morning, drop- ping off the students who were taking courses in New- market long before classes were due to start.

Education Director Sam Chapman agreed Newmarket would be a better location for the second summer school than Sutton, "But our concern is for the people leaving so early in the morn- ing."

He said it is not feasible to have classes for less than 18 pupils. "Our break-even point is 18. If there are less we lose money."

Summer school this year will be free for York County students. Those from outside the county will pay \$35 for the six weeks.

Last year York County residents paid \$25 and those from outside the county paid \$35.

The sad part of it was that the board did not find out until too late that, if there had been no charge, the board would have been en- titled to provincial grants, said Mr. Chapman.

The grants for tuition and for transportation are the same for summer school as they are for regular school, he told the trustees.

"We will serve the citizens of York County a lot better if there is no charge," Mr. Chapman declared.

Registrations last year were: Bayview Secondary 49, Dr. G. W. Williams 69, Huron Heights 17, King City 60, Langstaff 39, Markham 72, Newmarket 47, Richmond Hill 24, Stouffville 29, Sut- ton 38, Thornhill 46, Thorn- lea 20 and Woodbridge 23.

There were also three students from Alliston, two from Bradford, ten from Brebeuf College School, five from St. Andrew's College, seven from St. Joseph Mor- row Park, and one each from 20 other public and private schools.

The 50 students from grade 8 classes all came from York County public or Ro- man Catholic separate schools.

Twenty-six teachers taught eleven subjects at various levels, and class periods

Letters to the Editors

MAKE POOL AVAILABLE YEAR ROUND BASIS

Dear Mr. Editor: Discussion on covering the Centennial pool in Richmond Hill came up again at a recent town council meeting. Columnist Fred Simpson reported on it in "The Liberal" and the remarks of the council mem- bers left us amazed. The value of water safety and swimming was never mentioned — only cracked cement and the cost of repairing same.

Water safety and swimming is not a "frill" in today's living — it is a necessity. It is omitted in the school curriculum and therefore it is our respon- sibility to provide lessons. The closest covered swim- ming pool is a 20 minute drive from our commu- nity. New schools have been built closer but again no pool in the district.

Revenue from the pool was not mentioned either. With a community of our size it is evident the pool would be used from morning to night. What better therapy than swimming for homemakers, business men at noon hour, evening classes and swimming clubs for young people. It is not enough to give children the opportunity to take lessons for eight weeks in the summer then forget about them all winter.

The Richmond Hill and District YWCA gives lessons to 100 children and adults through the winter and spring and they always have a waiting list. These enthusiastic parents drive all the way to York Mills Collegiate every Monday evening. A few of our residents are lucky enough to be squeezed into classes in North York pools when there is a vacancy as naturally North York residents come first.

Let us know approximately what it would cost the citizens (per head), then let's all take the respon- sibility of getting on with a job we started.

MRS. FRED STRAUMANN, MRS. JAMES DOWNEY, 376 Bent Crescent, Richmond Hill.

EXTEND BUS SERVICE TO HOSPITAL

Dear Mr. Editor: I heartily agree with the sug- gestion made in a letter pub- lished recently in "The Liberal" about extending the local bus service as far as York Central Hospital.

It would be a great conveni- ence to so many people. We

don't all have cars and I, for one, have to take a taxi every time I go to the hospital. This costs me two dollars, which is quite an expense when one has to take treatment there quite often.

I sincerely hope that town council will see its way clear to implementing this extension in the near future.

SENIOR CITIZEN



Rambling Around

by Elizabeth Kelson

What About The Generation Gap?

Why so much fuss and furor about generation gaps? I seem to recall a few gaps when I was younger, but they had no official names. What's more, gaps weren't given recognition. To those born since 1900, a respectable distance between genera- tions was an acceptable fact. I believe that the so- called generation gap has been here since the dawn of history.

Its true gaps are noticed more today, but that's because of rapid social change. In the early 1900's it took forty years to do what is being done in four years in modern times. That means ordinary organisms like people — who are limited in the use of their senses — have a most confusing time to keep pace. They move all over the world. They get into trouble more often. They become insatiable because the media has power by suggestion to keep them in a constant state of desire.

When society gets a little out of hand, it's good to have a few scapegoats about. Some factions blame parents. Others blame younger generations.

There are powerful forces at work in society that seek to mold people to their way of thinking. These same forces permit many of the adverse con- ditions and then have the audacity to suggest the cures. If cures fail, blame is accordingly laid at the door of that primal institution, the family. And breaking it down still further, the blame is placed on men, women, and even youth, who really have little to say about how they shall live. Yet they are all expected to pay the piper.

The word "generation gap" is just another scapegoat coined up by a few experts supported by the media. And if the media feels sensitive about (Continued on Page 14)

were two hours long, the first hour usually for general instruction and the second hour for individual instruc- tion or independent study. Some students took two sub- jects, some only one.

Registrations were highest in French — 134 — and mathematics, 299.

Asked for an explanation, Mr. Chapman said the great- est problems are in subjects that are cumulative — the difficulties build up from year to year until the student reaches the point where he needs the extra instruction provided in the summer school.

The board's Administrator of Adult Education and Sum- mer School Programs Lloyd Morrison will once again serve as summer school principal.

Mr. Morrison reported that a senior student from Thorn- hill Secondary was on duty from 8:30 to 12:30 each day during the summer school session, and the students made a great deal of use of the library facilities.

He concluded his report with the comment, "The majority of students used their time well and worked in a conscientious manner. . . . The teachers were impressed by the fact that most students took advantage of this opportunity. All prin- cipals of York County schools received the results on August 15."

The board agreed, that if a class or classes with an en- rolment of 18 or more can be established at Newmarket, staff will be provided.