

SCHOOL DAZE



By John MacRae

Your Turn To Ask Questions

I can remember when as a beginning teacher I had my first parent interview. I was only 20 and in those days still too young to vote. At that time parent-interviews usually spelled trouble. I had been foolish enough to fail one of my students who parents were influential in the community. The father was rushing from work at the sawmill to hear my explanation. For some reason I felt guilty that the kid had failed. I felt somehow that I must come up with the excuses. My day book was finished, I'd wiped the boards for the third or fourth time and now just sat worrying 'til the irate father appeared.

He was smaller than I but still I must have been a little up tight because I stuck my hand out, gave him my warmest smile and said "How do you do Mr. MacRae." He kindly pointed out that my name was MacRae, his name was Kelly. Very alertly I recovered by advising him that the Scots had come from Ireland. His expression didn't indicate any joy at this disclosure. He launched right in.

"Why did my kid fail his spelling?" I was prepared for his frontal attack. I showed him the exam paper. Terrence had been given 40 words and 14 had been wrong. Counting four for each mistake and deducting from 100 this left a failing mark of 44. Case closed. "Why do you take off four? My teacher used to take off only three." Now I rarely worried about why the sun rose, why the stars came out, why the wind blew, nor why my old teacher had always deducted four for each spelling error and why I did too. This base, crude attack I attempted to meet with a wan smile and a "Because..." I never really recovered. When I suggested his boy should study harder, he asked, "Which words?" I said, "All of them." "Would you still deduct four if you gave all the words in the speller?" This seemed unfair even to me so I replied quickly, "Oh no — just two if all words are dictated." I wanted to give the impression that occasionally I did give all the words for dictation. Mr. Kelly persisted. "How many words are there?" Mentally I multiplied 36 weeks by 20 words, added an extra zero for some idiotic reason and grandly said, "About 7,000." "Do you give them all at once?" "Certainly." When I started calling him Mr. MacRae again, he mumbled something about "making sense", took the speller I offered him for home help and left smacking it on his thigh. I never allowed Terrence to fail a spelling exam again.

Some teachers still believe that kids fail exams — that they don't get enough marks to pass. It never occurs to them that if they would ask the right questions all the kids would pass. Let me give you a brief example. Here are ten words from a new grade four speller, one from each of the first ten exercises — field, fruit, shiny, together, twelve, wheat, gnaw, sound, glasses, wooden. Here are ten different words from the same speller, one from each of the same exercises as before: barn, pick, gay, heat, cave, fork, drum, test, feet, pile. Now I guarantee that there'll be a dramatic difference if you dictate the two lists to a weak or even an average speller. The point is this; if the teacher dictates words like the last ten for the exam then everyone in the class will get good or excellent marks. But if she uses words like those in the first list then there'll be a lot of failures. In order to avoid either extreme, examinations at any level are set this way; to get a good "spread" of marks teachers ask a few easy, some average, and some very difficult questions.

But examinations are over and reporting to parents will begin soon. Now it's your turn to ask questions. Here are some I'd ask as a parent.

How did you arrive at this mark?
Were all the marks low?
Was this a difficult exam? How difficult?
Have you covered all of the work on the test?
Did they understand the question?
Have they had this type of question before?
Did they know what you considered to be the most important parts of the course?

Then you ask the most important question of all, "How could my son improve his marks?" Listen very carefully to the answer to that one.

School's Speaker Smashes Glass

York County Board of Education trustee hopeful Robert Thompson was the last speaker on a marathon list at Richmond Hill's all-candidates night Monday in Richmond Hill High, but he certainly wasn't the least. The sound of breaking glass dramatically punctuated Thompson's five-minute tirade against the rising cost to the taxpayer of money required to repair broken school windows and other vandalism every year. Thompson paused four times in his speech to heft a hammer and smash small panes of glass magically produced for him by young helpers.

The shattering glass roused any heads that might have been nodding in the wake of some 30 previous speakers at Richmond Hill High School Auditorium.

Thompson was one of six candidates making public pleas for election to the three Richmond Hill seats open on the county board of education December 4.

The other five hopefuls include incumbents Robert Houghton and Warren Baillie plus newcomers Douglas Allen, Catherine MacDiarmid and Peter Sale. Present Trustee Deena Simpson is

not running. The three Roman Catholic School Board positions went to Malcolm Peake, Father Francis Robinson and John Taylor by acclamation.

Thompson dwelled on the damages caused to schools by vandals stating that "some \$67,000 of your tax money has been used by the school-board in the last two years in repairing windows and other damage in the schools."

He indicated that some of the fault was due to schools being built with glass windows on the lower floors.

He urged greater control of vandalism pointing out that only \$20,000 of this total amount would enable every "school to be opened for community usage at no charge to you."

Thompson finished his "physical" speech by telling the school janitors that he would "sweep up any glass on the floor after the meeting."

Speaker Allen emphasized his experience with new school construction as an architect which had involved "designing these schools as economically as possible, eliminating any frills, and in general seeing that the taxpayer's dollar isn't spent unnecessarily."

He advocated that the taxpayer's dollar should be concentrated on providing an excellent teaching system and a subsequent better educated student.

He also urged that the board of education should endeavor to ensure that they use school buildings "to their maximum."

Allen pointed to the great trend of population growth ahead for Richmond Hill and the school sites that would follow in its wake.

"I think as an experienced architect in handling the construction of schools I can be of great assistance in negotiating school sites with developers," he said.

Mr. Baillie said one of his immediate objectives was to have a "meeting of the minds" between the municipalities and the school boards with a view of "finding a way in which school buildings can be more readily put to the use of taxpayers."

Mr. Baillie said that "there is a feeling on various councils that now is the time to discuss this important aspect of our school life and involve the community on a greater scale."

Mr. Houghton listed a number of vital concerns he wished to pursue as a trustee in the next term. These included what he felt was a too-high incidence of four-year-olds failing kindergarten, the safety aspect of bussing children, the ultimate in staff-student relationship communication, more school field trips, "plus

increased co-operation with municipal councils which is very important.

"I'm very concerned about greater community usage of schools and I think this can be accomplished to everyone's satisfaction by co-operation."

"As a teacher myself I know the problems facing the educators and students and I think it's important to have a teacher on the board."

Mrs. MacDiarmid thought it was very important to have a "mother's point of view" on the board.

She pledged to do her part in seeing that "your tax dollar is spent on education rather than on buildings."

Peter Sale said he wouldn't make any rash promises about creating any "utopia" on the school board but would represent the feelings of the community on education and relay them to the board.

He expressed his reason for wishing to become a member of the board as "being my interest in children. I don't intend to use the board as a stepping stone to a higher political reward."

Teachers Get Raise

(Continued from page 1) otiators decided not to hold out for the last \$5,000.

"We realize we are still in an unfavorable position when compared to the public school board. We had strongly emphasized the lower end of the teacher pay scale, levels one and two. Pay in the first years wasn't at all favorable in comparison with industry and the public service. It is now some better," Tadmán told "The Liberal".

ONE-YEAR CONTRACT

The settlement provides for a one-year contract expiring August 31 and covers 219 York Region teachers. Without degrees these teachers now earn \$5,400 to \$7,800 a year. Teachers with degrees start at \$8,700 a year and theoretically can go as high as \$14,300, although none are close to the maximum, according to Sorochan.

Resignations from teacher association members had to go to the board today (Thursday) to be effective.

COMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 2, SATURDAY, 1:30 pm, Christmas Bazaar, Ladies of Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church are holding their annual sale of Christmas baking, handwork preserves and tea room, in Maple Masonic Hall, Maple, c2w21

DECEMBER 2, SATURDAY, 8:30 pm to 1 am, Thornhill Lionettes Gray Cup Party at North Thornhill Community Centre. Tickets or information, 889-9545. clw21

DECEMBER 2, 10 a.m. to 12 noon, Richmond Hill and District YWCA Re-Sale shop Rummage Sale, 25 Yonge Street North, Richmond Hill at the rear. clw22

DECEMBER 3 SUNDAY — Aurora and District Kennel Club, All breed Sanction Dog Show, Bradford Arena, Bradford. Information, 727-5407. clw22

DECEMBER 3, SUNDAY — 10-6. Antique show and sale, Lions' Hall, 106 Centre Street East, Richmond Hill. Furniture, china, glass, silver, jewellery, brass, pictures. Bargains galore. Sale held first Sunday every month. Donations to Leukemia Fund. c5w22

CENTENNIAL beard growing contest, starting time January 1 - January 10, 1973. Sponsored by the area Lions Clubs. c5w22



(Photo by Ramon Stringer)

Get Thee Behind Me, Sir Francis

I don't know whether to believe you or not, is what Yvette Steel, who plays Isabel Vane, the charming heroine of East Lynne, seems to be telling the dashing, but lecherous Sir Francis Levison, played by Dennis Stainer, as he tries to lure her away from her faithful husband, Sir Francis, a man "steeped in the ways of villainy," proves to be too powerful

an adversary for the fragile, young heroine, however, and as a result . . .

Well, come and see for yourself when the Curtain Club's first production of the season also sees the opening of it's new theatre at Elgin Mills and Newkirk Roads. Hiss or cheer as you see fit, from December 2, 6, 9, 13 and 16. Tickets: 884-6052. See story Page 15.

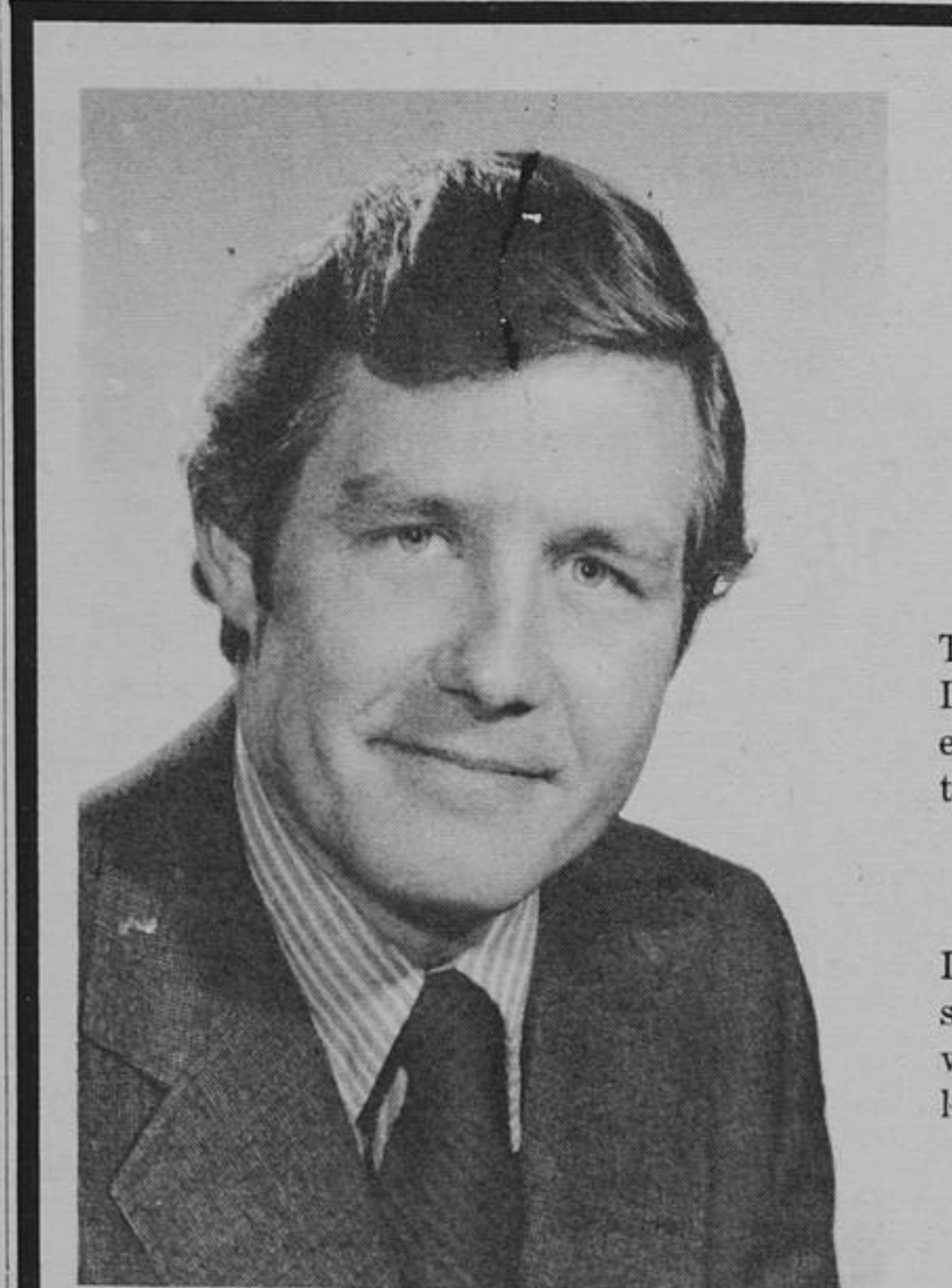
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20 REGULAR GAMES — 3 SPECIAL GAMES
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To The People Of Richmond Hill

The end of the campaign is fast approaching. On December 4th we will have the opportunity of electing those we want to represent us during the next two years.

During the past few weeks I have discussed and stuck to the issues, large and small — those who would suggest there are none are simply not listening to the people.

The workings of a modern municipal government are complex — I am glad to be able to bring to those problems an extensive engineering and legal education.

Now more than ever we need to communicate with and respond to the citizens of our community — I pledge to fill that need by deed as well as by word.

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Everybody has their troubles. So, instead of burdening our valuable customers with any more of ours, we sent Tiny on a holiday.

THIS WEEK — ALL WE HAVE TO OFFER ARE BARGAINS!
* * * BELOW ARE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES * * *

60" LUREX BROCADE CRIMPKNITS
A very beautiful selection of a Couturier Lurexknit at very substantial savings.
Reg. Value \$10.95 Yd.
MILL OUTLET PRICE **ONLY \$5.95 YD.**

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PLAIDS & CHECK DESIGNS IN MIX-MATCH AT A PRICE WELL BELOW NORMAL SELLING PRICE.
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All the Vaughan - Markham - Whitchurch-Stouffville and Richmond Hill Municipal Election Returns and All the candidates
A TV 10 News Program

CLASSICOMM

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