

Want More Foot Patrols

Oppose Yonge Parking Ban

By MARY DAWSON

Better police co-operation, more foot patrols of downtown Yonge Street and return of the no parking within 50 feet of intersections regulation, and a truck bypass were suggestions made by members of the downtown business community at a meeting held May 2 to discuss a proposed parking ban on Yonge. The meeting was called by Richmond Hill Council's Committee on Transportation and Parking, chaired by Ward 2 Councillor Graeme Bales.

The proposal is to ban parking on the west side of Yonge from 3 am to 3 pm and on the east side from 3 pm to 3 am.

FIGHTING FOR LIFE

Optician Gordon Wood fired the opening shot when he charged that the committee was not considering the businesses in the area. "We are fighting for our life now and we might as well close up if this ban is approved."

Chairman Bales reported he had received complaints from a lot of people who find it hard to get through the town.

"I'm very upset about this," said Jeweller Charles Taylor. "From my own survey I have found that some people don't like driving on Yonge Street, but the local people know how to get to other streets and prefer to travel on these rather than driving downtown and inheriting the traffic on Yonge. You can come south from Elgin Mills to Markham Road and go north, without travelling on Yonge. You appear to be more interested in the people who want to save three or five minutes than in the people who live and work in the area."

TOO MANY CARS
"I've lived here all my life," stated Mr. Bales, "and realize that the time has come when there are just too many cars for the street."

LOCAL ROAD
Mr. Taylor then read a brief he had prepared and which was later endorsed by Thomas Murphy for the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Taylor recalled that before and during the 1969 - 1970 reconstruction the Highways Minister had accepted the principle of Yonge as a local street "which was clearly indicated by the actions of his representatives, who brought many people to see what was being done. At this time Highway 404 was being actively pursued."

Council introduced a truck ban on Elgin Mills Road West between Yonge and Bathurst, diverting a great deal of traffic to Yonge Street. "No parking from here to corner" signs were removed, preventing cars from moving to the right of cars in the centre lane waiting to make a left turn. Vehicles making left hand turns are mostly local people on local business on a local street, he stated.

The brief pointed out that a no parking bylaw on Keele Street in Maple had practically wiped out a previously thriving business section.

PARKING LOTS FILLED
Mr. Taylor also noted that all available off-street parking in the downtown core is filled to capacity from Monday to Friday. "If you remove 87 parking spaces on Yonge, where are you going to put those cars? There are no services to open up interior parking."

He also recalled that an effort had been made to bring owners of property in the core and the town together to provide interior parking and claimed that council had felt the cost of supplying services for off-street parking was prohibitive.

SUGGESTIONS
Short term suggestions presented by Mr. Taylor included:

- Restoring the 50 foot no parking zones at corners.
- Setting up and enforcing a truck bypass along Markham Road to Newkirk to Elgin Mills Road East.
- Consideration of business area bypass signs for the same route.
- Ensuring police enforcement of parking bylaws.
- Accepting suggestion of Bathurst Street as major highway.

In light of a recent retail space study which indicated established businesses will be severely hit by the large shopping mall to be built in BAIF, Mr. Taylor asked that council undertake a similar study of the impact of the proposed parking ban — including present use, future use, services and cost of providing off-street parking, and to seek provincial government help in conducting this survey.

"I cannot believe the destruction of a high tax-paying business area to facilitate the flow of traffic going into other municipalities is in the best interests of the people of Richmond Hill," he said.

BATHURST CONTRACT
Regional Councillor Gordon Rowe reported that the region has let contracts for the initial work on Bathurst Street, which may alleviate the traffic congestion on Yonge.

Councillor Louis Wainwright pointed out council had not initiated the ban on trucks on Elgin Mills. "I realize that," replied Mr. Taylor, "but it did help increase the flow on Yonge." "The planning department is doing a study on Yonge Street," reported Chairman Bales. "I get flak on the

fact that we've spent a lot of money repaving Yonge and movement of traffic has not been improved."

Mayor William Lazenby recalled that in the 1970 discussions on off-street parking one person on each side of the road would not cooperate in providing a continuous flow which would have permitted opening up the interior of the lots for parking. "They are not here tonight, but they are the ones who made it unfeasible."

NO POLICE HELP
"The parking area behind my place of business is packed," stated Realtor Tom Murphy. "Sometimes the cars are two and three deep and the first in can't get out. When we call the police we get no assistance. Off-street parking is used to capacity and if the ban goes through I don't know where cars are to go."

LEFT TURNS
Answering Mr. Wainwright's question about banning left turns from Arnold to Richmond Heights Centre, Mr. Taylor replied, "The people of the town must be considered. They're local people, they're taxpayers. The motorists going right through are not local people."

Photographer Stuart Casement claimed that no longer can anyone park on the post office property where there is lots of space and that signs indicating parking there had been removed and parked cars had been ticketed. Works Commissioner Otto Whalen stated that the town's agreement with the federal government for use of this parking space is still in effect but cars parked in the driveway would be ticketed.

SYNCHRONIZATION
Mr. Casement also complained about the lack of synchronization of the traffic lights. "You cannot possibly drive from one end to the other without having to stop several times."

"Representatives of the province tell me that they made the trip from Markham Road to Levedale twice this evening at 28 miles per hour and did not have to stop for a traffic light," countered Mr. Rowe. "I feel that one light, the one at Lorne Avenue, which we didn't want, causes most of the problem," said Mayor Lazenby.

This was refuted by representatives of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications. "During the peak hours of the morning the lights are synchronized so that one may drive from Elgin Mills to Markham at 27 miles an hour and not have to stop for a traffic light. This is reversed in the evening rush hours. In the off-peak hours it is not possible because of the spacing of lights. We have discovered that the Centre Street signal is causing the problem. Without it we could get proper synchronization of progression. Because of the existing two lanes with parking on both sides Yonge Street will just not handle all the people who want to use it."

"I would rather lose some business through people avoiding Yonge Street, than lose my whole business through a ban on parking," stated Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Casement felt the traffic for the two arenas in the park is responsible for much congestion in the Church Street area.

COMMON SENSE NEEDED
Eric Charity pointed out some instances of faulty parking and suggested that commonsense is all that is needed to clear up some of the difficulty.

Other business owners complained of cars and trucks parked all day in front of their places of business, where a one hour limit is set. They charged that the police had been called with no result. Added to that were complaints of exposure, foul language and threats to life with a recommendation for a police foot patrol.

Mayor Lazenby reported that in the past Richmond Hill had a police committee responsible to council and had an effective police force as a result. Now the region's police force is understaffed. "I can appeal to the police commission or the chief of police and when I do I get co-operation."

GREEN HORNETS
To the suggestion of Green Hornets to enforce the parking regulations, the mayor noted this would be an extra expense to the ratepayers of this municipality. "Should we pay this extra amount on top of our large contribution to the cost of the regional police force. I hope it will be able to hire more men and become more effective."

He was echoed by Mr. Rowe, who stated, "We are going to get what we're entitled to and I will see that no bus-

ness man pays extra for the protection he should have." Advice from Regional Councillor Lois Hancey was that in the future when a complaint is made and no action taken, the merchant should note the number of the police officer and the time of the request. "If he does not chalk the vehicle and come back to check, the incident should be reported to the mayor and council, the police commission or Chief Bruce Crawford. You are entitled to know why he didn't because the drivers of the vehicles are breaking the law. I would strongly urge all citizens to do this." Mr. Bales also urged them to get the dispatcher's name on a phone call and if no action results to ask for Inspector Fred Mason.

NOT ENOUGH TIME
Mac Langton of Arnold Street asked about the timing of the amber light in the traffic signals. The department representative reported three seconds on the amber followed by one second all red, "an accepted engineering time." Mr. Langton felt the three seconds was not long enough. "I have observed some three or four very narrow squeaks (one involving myself). Some time we are going to have a serious accident."

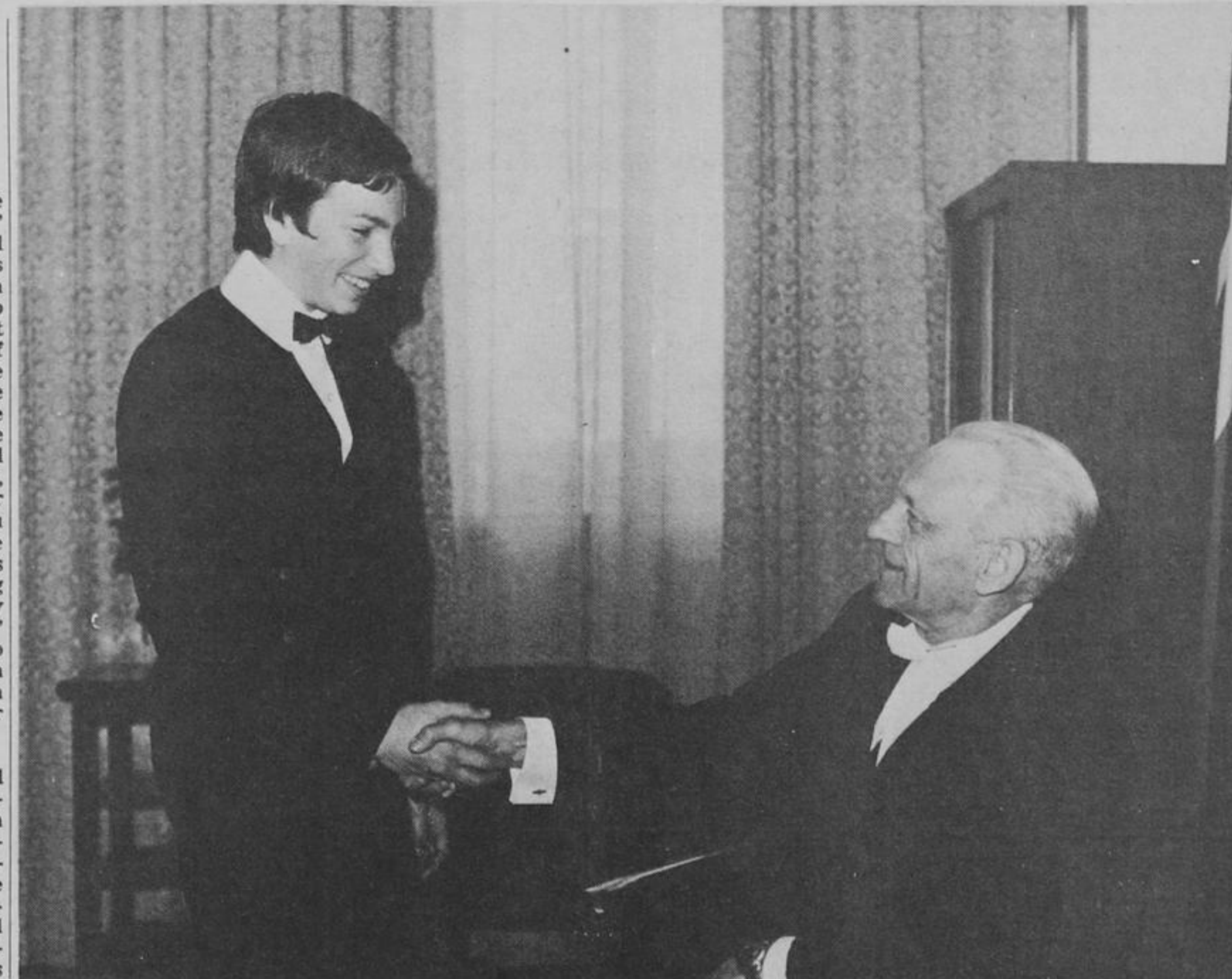
The engineer reported the timing is set considering speed, width and safe stopping distance. "This municipality has a peculiar problem of the spacing of the lights. In order to set up a progression we have to take into account certain technical aspects. To get enough time on the green we have to interfere with the amber clearances. The majority of clearances in Metro are three seconds and they have excellent records at the intersections."

In conclusion Mr. Taylor claimed that since the reconstruction there has never been a radar trap on Yonge south of Levedale. "As a result I see cars going past my store at a minimum speed of 40 mph, trying to beat the light at Centre."

SINCE 1959
Parking on Yonge Street has been a subject for council concern for many years. The first recommendation for a ban on parking came from consulting engineers in 1959. It was repeated in 1961, 1963, 1966 and 1969.

At present on-street parking on Yonge is restricted on the west side from 7 to 9 am Monday to Friday and from 6 to 12 pm Sundays and holidays. On the east side the ban is from 4:30 to 6:30 pm Monday to Friday and 1 pm to 6 pm Sundays and holidays.

GOOD STUDENT
This had to be signed by



Stuart McCarthy, a student at Royal Orchard Public in Thornhill, is on leave and working as a page in the Legislature at Toronto. He keeps up his lessons with a special government tutor while getting what is probably an even better knowledge of the

world. He meets and serves the elected representatives as they do Ontario's legislating. Stuart is shown getting a friendly handshake from the Honorable Allan Reuter, Speaker of the House and MLA, Waterloo South.

Thornhill Student Is Legislature Page

By MARGARET GOVAN

Stuart Richard McCarthy is 13 years old and he lives on Shady Lane Crescent in Thornhill. Last summer when he attended Camp Northland his councillor was talking about some of the things he had done as a boy. One thing which impressed Stuart was that the councillor served as a page at the Ontario Legislature for a term. Stuart has already made up his mind that he'd like to be a lawyer and he decided an experience like that would be all to the good.

He wrote Barney Danson MP, York North by mistake — Mr. Danson is in the federal house of course — but he passed the letter on to Donald Deacon MLA, York Centre. Stuart then received an outline of duties which would be expected of a page and was asked if he felt he could fulfil the requirements. He read the list carefully and then wrote back to ask for an application form.

PLEASANT QUARTERS
The pages' quarters are very pleasant with showers and lockers for each. The youngsters eat in the Legislature cafeteria. They wear uniforms when on duty. They are well looked after. On the late nights their families have to pick them up. Public transportation at night is frowned upon.

Stuart told me about his duties. He has to be on the floor of the chamber, dressed

appropriately, every morning at 9 o'clock, except on Friday when it is 8:30. He is a general messenger, fetching glasses of water for thirsty members, cashing cheques, passing notes from one member to another, going to an outside office to get information, buying odds and ends at the little shop for members, taking Hansard reports to the various offices and to the members each morning, etc.

VOTING RITUAL
Every so often a motion from a member which is to be voted upon, must be taken to the Speaker of the House. There is quite a ritual about this. The page arranges the papers so the speaker has them in his hands in the right position for reading, and also tells the speaker who is the mover, and the seconder. Then the page backs away from the speaker. After the vote, he returns to the speaker, takes the motion, bows, and the speaker bows, and the page again backs away with it.

Stuart has been working for several weeks, and has a few more weeks to go. He is beginning to know some of the members, and finds it all "fantastic."

EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGE

He thoroughly enjoys his lessons, partly because they are so arranged he has to carry on the curriculum of his own class at school. This presents a challenge for he has to do a great deal of the work on his own. I asked him if he was going to feel "let-down" after his term of duty is over. But he hadn't reached that stage in his thinking yet.

He is enjoying the contact with other pages who come from all over Ontario — North Bay, Cambridge, etc. All of the out-of-town ones have to make their own arrangements about boarding.

All in all, to quote Mrs. McCarthy: "It is a great privilege."

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MEL LASTMAN Mayor April 23rd, 1973.

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