

Letters

Thornhill parent very unhappy with public schools

Standard of education has been reduced to mediocrity

Dear Mr. Editor:

Now that the civic elections are over and the apathetic public has the kind of government it deserves, the area weekly newspapers can perhaps take a more dispassionate view of the actions of some of the more concerned citizens of York Region.

Prior to the civic elections on December 2 the area newspapers enflamed the public by headlines and editorials with the notion a small group of citizens were creating a rift between teachers and parents.

This was far from the truth. The Thornhill Parents' Council, an organization of about 400 members at that time, was the only group of citizens who were sufficiently concerned with the educational problems in York Region to take a position and to inform the electorate of what was transpiring.

Had it not been for the Thornhill Parents' Council, there would not have been a public meeting with the trustee candidates from Markham and Vaughan for the board of education.

Had it not been for the Thornhill Parents' Council presenting the issues to the electorate, there would not have been the significantly better turn out at the polls than in Metro Toronto.

Far from the rift within the executive or membership in the Thornhill

Parents' Council as reported, the fact is only two people resigned, a man and his wife. However, there was a significant influx of new members.

Although the teachers have consistently denied they are members of unions, there is no escaping the fact their federations have adopted all the criteria of a union, i.e., compulsory membership and dues.

They speak for the teachers and negotiate salaries and working conditions for them. They black list boards of education, etc.

The following is an excerpt from an article which appeared in The Toronto Star on December 12.

"John Akin, provincial executive councillor of the OSSTF, has criticized the federation for 'selfish concern for our own economic and political welfare. At the present time, I feel that I have become more a member of a union than a professional organization', Akin, a high school teacher, told a federation meeting in Elora."

Since teachers' unions negotiate salaries and working conditions with school boards and since all teachers must be members of the teaching unions, it is obvious there is a conflict of interest when teachers are members of school boards.

For whose betterment do the teachers wish to take

over the school boards? This was a valid and pertinent question posed by the Thornhill Parents' Council.

Although the answer was self evident in the literature and directives issued by the teaching unions to its members, Mr. Akin has now affirmed this policy to the general public.

Although I am an executive member of the Thornhill Parents' Council, I am not speaking for this organization. However, I must say this group of concerned citizens is serving a useful purpose in our community for the reasons already outlined.

In addition, its membership is receiving copies of minutes of board meetings and thus a larger segment of the community has become more aware of what is transpiring in an area of civic government that raises and administers the spending of approximately 50 million dollars annually.

The York County Board of Education has asked interested individuals and organizations for input in determining spending priorities. At a meeting of the board of the Thornhill Parents' Council held on December 10, which was attended by members of the school board and a member of the administration, suggested priorities were discussed.

It was obvious from this list of suggested priorities as prepared by the board of education that they fell into three main categories, as follows:

a) Improvement of maintenance of plant and equipment, i.e., parking lots and driveways could be substantially repaired.

b) Increasing teacher benefits, i.e., decrease class size; making teacher time available for courses of study from departmental guidelines.

c) Frills for students, i.e., establish a fund for extended student travel.

It was admitted school boards must operate within spending ceilings imposed by Queen's Park.

It was admitted needed maintenance was being deferred due to lack of funds.

A teacher candidate for the board of education was asked at the candidates meeting at Thornlea Secondary School on November 26 how he would

have the time to devote to the board, when he was engaged as a full time teacher in North York. He stated that in consultation with his principal, he arranged his teaching periods so he would be free afternoons and evenings.

Do the teachers really require more time off from their teaching duties? Cannot class size be reduced by having the same teacher teach to two smaller classes rather than one large class? Would not the sub-

sidization of student travel be discriminatory as only a few would be able to participate?

Does the public really know how approximately 50 million dollars of their money is spent?

Does the public really know how the Hall-Dennis report has fragmented the courses of study in our public school system?

Does the public know the standard of education has been reduced to mediocrity by a proliferation of

"Mickey Mouse" courses?

Does the public know that until recently it was possible for a student to attain sufficient credits to graduate from high school while taking all his courses at the grade nine level?

Is the public concerned that a high school diploma has become meaningless as many graduates can neither read, write, do simple arithmetic or communicate properly?

There is an increasing number of people in this

municipality who are concerned with these and other matters affecting our educational system. Such people and organizations should be encouraged and not accused of causing rifts and divisions within the community.

ED DIRENFELD,
75 Laureleaf Road,
Thornhill.

DON'T DELAY IN
PAYING YOUR LIBERAL
CARRIER

Yonge Street widening has meant drastic loss of Conservative support in Thornhill

Dear Mr. Editor:

I sent a letter to Premier William Davis, Transportation and Communications Minister John Rhodes and Donald Deacon M.L.A., York Centre regarding the recent drastic loss of Conservative support in Thornhill because of the proposed widening of Yonge Street. My sentiments were as follows:

At a recent meeting of citizens to discuss the proposed widening of Yonge Street from Steeles Avenue to Richmond Hill, there was an apparent attempt by civil servants of the above mentioned ministry to mislead the people into thinking that their superiors, who had made the decision in question, were both unconcerned with public opinion and downright dumb. So I have written to forewarn you of this threat within the rank and file of the once civil, but now insouciant service.

We have long been accustomed to getting the raw end of the stick which is Toronto. Thornhill is fixed like an eavesdropper, albeit historic and picturesque, to an overwhelming Toronto.

And now, if we are to believe these bureaucrats, we are to be outfitted with a new Yonge Street gutter to flush Toronto's overflow even further north, even faster. Tell me it isn't true.

I heard words spoken like "Roads will be made more efficient", the rows of sugar maples will be "dealt with", the pavement width will be gloriously "doubled", buildings will be "eliminated", etc, etc, etc. They told us the street here had four to seven times the number of accidents as

the greater Ontario average. But they didn't know what that average was, or what the average was on a comparably improved section of Yonge Street south of us.

Are these the people who you hired as civil servants to manage our affairs? Surely they were imposters.

It was suggested the speed limit be reduced to 30 mph so as to decrease accidents. They claimed to have never thought of that.

We were told they own the land anyway... they seem to have forgotten they are we, and we are they. You are one of us, aren't you... or, weren't you... once?

They told us we could get seven lanes for the same cost as four lanes.

Really... if the same logic were applied to driveway paving, this man would have us believe we all would choose to have our front lawns completely paved. I mean, was that the logic that was applied to the planning of the Greater 401 Nightmare? Is it really that simple?

Why don't you bypass Thornhill, as we have already been bypassed by the east-west Highway 7?

Everyone at the meeting heard the Vaughan representative offer land on Bathurst to the ministry, with the suggestion Yonge Street become a land-use Road and Bathurst the arterial road — a road which goes all the way to Holland Landing without threatening any towns the size of Thornhill, Richmond Hill, etc.

As it is, the street bulges and bursts through these

bottlenecks. With further encouraged traffic, it will only aggravate existing congestion and safety problems. Do we have to throttle on it first?

But all these are technical questions which can be resolved with basic common sense by some of your real planners. The main question is simple... why should Thornhill have an 80-foot slab of pavement, four lanes of traffic, two lanes of parked cars, one lane for left turn lanes — lying like a curse between our shops, our schools, our churches, our social affairs?

Naturally, the word was sent out to tamp our outrage with the old faithful... "well, we can't please everyone".

In this situation, it is patently obvious no one is being pleased, no one is even being asked. The only people who are getting off on it are the civil servants who must silt their life's satisfaction from such community relics as succumb to the geometric perfection of such comfortable runways.

As if a traffic death is easier to take if it is on a new road.

Are the people who made this decision so totally out of touch with the realities of modern government. Citizens are not so stupid as to accept the old style rhetoric which assumed we all believed progress served us.

We have had the progress... now let us have some service.

JOHN RILEY,
79 Elgin Street,
Thornhill.

Taxpayers stuck with day care

Dear Mr. Editor:

Day care, provided by the taxpayer, has understandably become another "motherhood" issue. It was indeed refreshing to read Jim Irving's column (December 4) in which he maintains nobody will do anything but give "carte blanche" acceptance to such demands anymore, because this is the age when you're supposed to do your own thing.

The taxpayers' "own thing" of course, is to pick up the tab.
WILLIAM RAE,
27 Savarin Street,
Scarboro

My own Christmas Angel

I have my own Christmas Angel
Smiling down on me
I have my own Christmas Angel
As beautiful as can be
I have my own Christmas Angel
Her face is in the heart of every rose
Every Carol brings a message from my Angel
My love for her grows and grows and grows
I have my own Christmas Angel
Smiling down on me
I have my own Christmas Angel
As beautiful as can be
She sits on my pillow each Christmas night
And I tell her of my dreams and loves
Because I know she'll set me right
When I join her in the star-lit heaven
I'll visit you each night
I pray I will be like my Angel
And make your Christmas Bright

ELSIE RICE,
RR 2, Maple

BOXING DAY SALE

THURSDAY, DEC. 26th 9:30 a.m.



SUITS

The last great suit sale of the year! Beautiful all-wool and wool/polyester blends in a huge selection of tweeds, checks, stripes and handsome solids. All your favorite colours and styles. One day only.

Reg. values to \$142.50

\$79⁹⁹

SPORT COATS

The sport coat value of the season! Prices just can't go any lower. Your choice of saxonies, tweeds, checks, stripes and plains in a great collection of colourful shades and quiet tones. Shop early and really save!

Reg. values to \$85.00

\$39⁹⁹

SLACKS

All your favorite patterns, in all your favorite colours... at an all-time low price! Your choice of all the latest stylings too! Another great Tip Top bargain!

Reg. values to \$27.98

\$12⁹⁹

LEATHER COATS

A handsome collection of current styled leather coats that ranges from the dressy trenchcoat to the ever popular car coat. Colours from rich chestnut browns to lighter tan tones. Some with warm zip-in Borg linings. One day only.

NO REFUNDS OR EXCHANGES ON BOXING DAY

20% OFF

REGULAR PRICE

DRESS SHIRTS

Save up to 50% on these famous name-brand dress shirts. Colours and patterns that range from spicy prints and geometrics to dressy solids and stripes. Top off your wardrobe with a couple of these beauties!

Reg. values to \$16.00

\$5⁹⁹

OUTERWEAR

Every imaginable style... suburban and stadium coats, car coats and overcoats. All beautifully designed to keep you warm and looking great in a wide selection of fabrics and colours. Shop early for the very best bargains!

50% OFF

REGULAR PRICE

ALTERATIONS EXTRA ON ALL CLOTHING REDUCED BY 1/3 OR GREATER.

TIP TOP

Open a convenient Tip Top Charge Account.

HILLCREST MALL — RICHMOND HILL