

# Opinion

## Family life centre questions beg answers

By Evelyn Buck  
Mayor of Aurora

I keep meeting people in the region who express surprise to find I am not what they expect. It seems my public image in some quarters is not flattering.

Be that as it may, whatever other function I have as an elected representative, I see it as my main responsibility to render a judgment on those matters which come before me and to vote according to my conscience.

My views of course, are a reflection of my life's experience and knowledge of government machinery.

The question of public funding for family life centres in York Region has been the subject of much debate in the last two years. We have arrived at a point where the province has refused to share the cost of the privately operated centres equally with the region.

The pressure has now been turned on the region by the operators to fund the operation to the tune of \$100,000 or 75 percent of the

projected 1975 budget.

The region has only one source of tax revenue — the property tax. Basically, this tax is meant to provide services to property.

Though many social services including education are administered at the regional level, they are mainly regulated by the province. Average cost-sharing is between 70 to 80 percent provincial and the rest local.

Yet even the provincial payment for the programs are not wholly met from provincial coffers. Federal payments are also substantially reflected in cost-sharing arrangements.

Needless to say, the higher levels of government have a myriad source of tax revenues; namely, income tax, sales tax, customs and excise tax, death taxes, royalties from natural resources and a few more besides that most of us don't know a thing about.

Even at that, the senior levels do not attempt to finance social services through taxation alone.

Canada Pension, Unemployment Insurance, Ontario Health Insurance and



The guest spot

A topical column of opinion by our readers. Submissions should be no more than 400 words, typed preferably.

Workmen's Compensation are funded in the main from contributions from employees' earnings. Need I emphasize the sizable hole that makes in a weekly wage packet.

It has been stated on several occasions the purpose of regional government is to permit a greater range of social services to be provided at the local level.

That is not my interpretation. It is some time since I tried to absorb the four volume Report of the Ontario Committee on Taxation. It was published in 1967, after four years of study, and resulted in the recommendation for regional units of government.

The object of the study, I believe, was to unscramble the incredible mish-mash of government financing and to find a way to relieve the homeowner of the ever increasing burden of social services.

The aim was to do this without removing local determination of what programs are needed and have public support.

There is no argument that people on the local level are better qualified to assess needs and determine the degree of public support for particular programs.

With regard to family life centres, a number of questions beg answers:

Is there a need? Do the centres fulfill the need? Does the general public support the need? If they do, what are the costs likely to be next year and the year after and the year after that?

Is there a need? Do the centres fulfill the

need? Does the general public support the need? Are they prepared to accept the full burden of property taxes? If they do, what are the costs likely to be next year and the year after that and the year after that?

What are the costs relative to the benefits? Is anyone entitled to avail themselves of the service at public expense without qualification?

If the region undertakes full responsibility for this service, how many other special interest groups will take it upon themselves to develop social programs and demand the full brunt of the cost fall upon the homeowner?

What about other organizations which provide a service now through voluntary contributions — will they also abandon their fund raising endeavors and demand public funding for their service?

How much public money is presently being spent on counselling services? How effective have they proven to be? Do parents and students have less problems as a result of school psychologists and guidance counsellors?

How many privately governed institutions like Blue Hills Academy do we have? (I understand there are 36 staff members and 19 residents who go off to school every day and home at the weekends.) How much are they costing us? How effective are they?

How effective are the outreach programs from the two hospitals in York Region? How much do they cost?

Last week I discovered family counselling is covered under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan, with fees substantially less than the fee established for the privately run family counselling service.

Are the professional services by doctors and psychiatrists effective or not? If not, why are we paying for them through our OHIP contributions?

These are just a few of the questions I have asked why the homeowner should be asked to pay for additional counselling services in York Region.

And before I'll be persuaded to dip by hand into another man's pocket for the funds, there will have to be some clear and concise answers.

## Letters

## MLA Deacon answers reader on party's regional policy

Dear Mr. Editor:

This is further to my letter appearing in last week's Liberal which questioned the need for a regional form of government, and criticized irresponsible actions of elected school board representatives.

The letter was also addressed to Donald Deacon, MLA, York Centre, and asked what measures the Ontario Liberals might take in correcting the situation if elected to govern the province later this year.

I attach herewith, for publication, Mr. Deacon's response:

"Thank you for your open letter regarding the position of the Ontario

Liberal Party with regard to regional government in Ontario.

"Generally, we believe regional government is admirably suited to coordinate planning and capital borrowing functions of local municipalities and have supported the granting of powers to them for that purpose.

"However, we question the value of transferring the responsibilities for police protection to a regional level, particularly when there are great distances from one end of a region to another with little common interest between the communities and municipalities involved.

"The same is true of health and social services and other municipal services which we feel should be controlled on a more local level.

"In any event, the cost and benefits of assigning such responsibilities should be examined carefully by the public and the representatives.

"In future the Liberal Party intends to give the people in each region the opportunity to transfer responsibilities back to the local community where a study indicates this is advisable.

"The reason our party emphasizes the granting of maximum responsibility to

local municipalities is so there is much closer contact between elected representatives and the public and therefore greater room for variations in the manner in which service is provided.

"What people want in Fort Erie, can be very different from what they would like to have in Grimsby and similar situations undoubtedly exist in the Region of York.

"Our party also intends to give much greater discretion as to how provincial grant funds are to be spent so locally elected councils are not told by the province how to spend the money.

"But they and their residents will be told by the province how the money was spent and the value that was received in comparison with the value received in

other municipalities. "In this way we believe local councils can be much more responsive and responsible than they are under the present system of

regional government emphasis which removes them too far from direct voter influence.

"We believe the same principle should be applied

to our educational structures where we believe we shall have the added advantage of a much closer involvement once again between parents, teachers,

students and the elected representatives in the provision of education." ERIC CHAPMAN, 6 Stancroft Drive, Richmond Hill, Ont.

## Little late to piously proclaim Hill should grow from core out

Dear Mr. Editor:

In the February 5 edition of The Liberal, a report is given on the January 28 planning committee meeting. Regional Councillor Hancey is quoted as saying that "we should plan from the core out. I don't agree with putting in subdivisions here, there and all over".

## 18 months of enthusiasm, planning, dedication resulted in superb Thornhill community centre

Dear Mr. Editor:

I wish to make the following comments on your front page article of February 5 concerning the Thornhill Community Center.

A simple, one-rink arena was planned to be built in Thornhill in 1972.

A determined effort by the Thornhill Lions Club convinced the town of the greater need for a complete community center.

Eighteen months of enthusiasm, planning and dedication resulted in the superb complex opening next month.

This is a completely new tune she is singing now.

In 1970, when the Richmond Hill Town Council had an appeal before the OMB to block the BAIF development because it would create an entirely new community with a projected population of almost 15,000 and would harm the storekeepers of the core

area with its proposed shopping center, she voted to withdraw the appeal.

She also very strongly supported the BAIF Developers and did her best to have the council agree to move the town hall from the core and into the BAIF area.

Now the BAIF development is a 'fait accompli', and the residents in both

BAIF and the core can do nothing about the population density, the high rise apartments and the shopping center, it seems a little late to piously proclaim we need a community identity and should grow from the core out.

ERIC GEORGE, 413 North Taylor Mills, Richmond Hill, Ont.

enjoy the same opportunities, rates and activities.

Memberships are, and have always been accepted at the community center on that basis.

Thornhill Lions are most appreciative of the intense

interest received from the people in Thornhill.

Our pledge of \$250,000 accompanying the presentation which led to the community center, was based on our confidence in that support.

The facilities at the new

center, its staff and policies, confirm the benefits that will be available to all people in the community for years to come.

DEREK GILES, President, Thornhill Lions, Box 400, Thornhill.

### Evelyn Buck's family services position rapped

Dear Mr. Editor:

I cannot support the stand taken by Mayor Evelyn Buck of Aurora at the regional council meeting January 23 regarding the financing of Family Service

Centres here in York Region.

Her remarks suggested a lack of awareness and sensitivity to people's needs, that I found most disturbing in a person of her position

and influence.

Family service is not an extra. It is a basic necessity! Many people are in great emotional need.

I strongly suggest the region and the province get behind the centres financially — without delay!! (MRS.) DAPHNE McNEILL, 44 Kirk Drive, Thornhill, Ont.

## Bayview's Buzz

By Susan Powell  
Bayview Secondary School correspondent  
Telephone 884-8584

### Elka Woldenga was first runner-up

Heh! heh! heh! We've got a first runnerup at our school.

Elka Woldenga was the first runnerup in the Winter Carnival Snow Queen Contest. She represented Bayview's year 5. Yea, Elka!

Wednesday of last week we had a super ski trip up to the Blue Mountains at Collingwood. Everything worked out really well, except for four minor injuries. We picked up the injured at the hospital on the way back.

We left poor ole Jim Wood in Barrie, thanks to a friendly bus driver.

**Dance Saturday night**  
Saturday night is the big night to boogie. Ian Thomas and the "Incredible Greaseball Boogie Band" will be here to entertain.

Hope to see everyone here. Tickets are \$3 with student card and \$3.50 without. Doors open at eight.

**Champion ice sculpture**  
The annual winter carnival came off really well for Bayview. Year 3 won for their ice sculpture in their division and lots of people went out to participate.

Our German exchange students played the Bayview girls and held them to a scoreless tie.

A lot of thanks goes to everyone who went out and participated to help make this winter carnival lots of super fun for everyone.

### Family of schools plan

York County Board of Education has approved a motion leading to area advisory committees possibly being re-organized on a family-of-schools basis. The motion, which was made by Trustee Douglas Allen of Richmond Hill, will be studied by each area committee at its next meeting.

The area committees were formed in 1969 so teachers, trustees and administrators could meet on an informal basis and exchange information.

However, as some of the board's four areas are independent of municipal areas, some trustees then took in two or three of the committees. Only a small number of teachers, on the other hand, became involved with the committees.

Under the family-of-schools method, higher levels of local autonomy are established. One or more high schools and their feeder elementary schools are combined into a single, or family-of-schools unit.

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MRS. RUTH CLARKE, Church Clerk, 75 Oxford Street, Richmond Hill, Ont.