

# School board issues need airing

Dear editor:  
In recent weeks, your paper has devoted, properly, considerable attention to the coming municipal elections.

I note, however, you have tended to avoid examining in detail major topics of concern to the residents of Markham, Thornhill and the surrounding district, presenting the subject objectively and then giving each candidate an opportunity to outline his/her position on the matter.

While I can appreciate your concern your paper be seen as being completely objective without a wish to bias the outcome of an election, I must question the usefulness of your apparent approach.

There are many issues which need a more open examination and discussion by an outside observer and by the candidates themselves.

As an isolated example, consider the candidacies for the board of education.

Thus far, I have received only a couple of pamphlets outlining the position of the candidate. It grieves me to find that every one has been from a teacher.

Is it not the board which largely determines budgetary expenditures and sits down to negotiate salaries, fringe benefits and working conditions with the teachers?

Is it not the board that determines how our tax dollar will be spent?

That an individual should be allowed to sit down and negotiate in effect with himself, his own salary and working conditions, with the taxpayers paying the bill, is beyond belief.

The conflict of interest evident in such a system is distressing and to my mind places an unacceptable burden upon an individual who is both a teacher and a member of the board.

It's a bit like expecting a bear to guard a jar of honey!

Would it not be reasonable, therefore, to expect a truly fair person would abstain from participation in any discussion involving his own welfare?

And there are other questions. Why, for example, have the universities



Larry Kennedy  
... conflict of interest

become increasingly concerned with the illiteracy and innumeracy of first year students during a period when the costs of education have been soaring?

Is there a shortage of teachers? Surely not, since the availability of highly qualified persons has never been higher, and the colleges are having to turn many good applicants away.

Is it the fault of the parents? Perhaps, but it appears parents are assisting teachers, at least at the elementary level, more than ever before.

Or is it the fault of the system? Writing on this subject, among others, 200 years ago this year, the Scottish philosopher-economist Adam Smith had this to say:

"The discipline of colleges and universities is in general contrived not for the benefit of the students, but for the interest, or most properly speaking, for the ease of the masters."

more letters  
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"Its object is, in all cases, to maintain the authority of the master, and whether he neglects or performs his duty, to oblige the students in all cases to behave to him as if he performed it with the greatest diligence and ability. It seems to presume perfect wisdom and virtue in the one order, and the greatest weakness and folly in the other."

In other words, Mr. Smith perceived the solution to the problem of learning to be a simple one: Johnny would learn to read and write, add and subtract if there were incentives for teachers to teach beyond some obscure altruistic motive.

While the hands of the local board are tied in many ways by provincial controls, surely the candidates have some views on the subject.

For example, should the local board fight for more control over the hiring and firing of teachers?

What flexibility do they have to reward those teachers who excel in their work (there are a majority who qualify) and accordingly refuse to reward those who fail to do a proper job in educating our children (unfortunately, there are also a great many who fall in this category).

Perhaps they have none; if so, do they feel they should argue for more local autonomy with Queen's Park.

Surely some incentive for good performance is desirable if not absolutely necessary.

It would be in the best interests of the students and the teachers, at least the

better ones. But any such system would open to question the merits of the present remuneration system which is not based upon the ability to teach, but upon the number of gray hairs on a teacher's head.

Currently, barring anything but a very grave misdemeanor, our teachers

advance and share equally in any increase in our tax dollars allocated to improving our educational system.

This is not fair to our teachers, our students or to the taxpayers.

I would suggest, therefore, what is needed is more local autonomy over all aspects of education, particularly with

regard to "teaching incentives" such as remuneration, with the proviso that some province-wide standard of education be maintained through a common set of tests periodically at, say, the 8th and 13th grade level.

But, assuming the above argument is a valid one, at least in principle, can we realistically rely upon a teacher to work strongly for such a system when faced with probable confrontation from the teachers' union and from his peers.

Again the conflict of interest problem arises.

Obviously, there are many other aspects to be considered when selecting candidates to sit on our board of education.

And there are many other positions up for election. Your paper has a responsibility to its readers to examine in detail some of the issues at stake and to review the positions of each candidate.

No "meeting with the candidates" evening could produce the coverage and depth of analysis that your paper could.

It is no wonder voter turnout is typically so low for local elections.

Voters are not apathetic, they're uninformed!

Let's see some good democratic journalism.

LARRY KENNEDY,  
1768 JOHN ST.,  
THORNHILL, Ont.

## \$68 million budget needs top trustee

Dear editor:  
Trustees elected to the York County (public) board of education for the next two years will be dealing with a budget of over \$68 million of our tax money.

Seven candidates are seeking election in the Thornhill-Markham area. All have some commendable ideas regarding new educational programs and (or) improvement of existing programs.

However, the size of the York County (public) board's budget requires we elect trustees who have more than an interest in the education system.

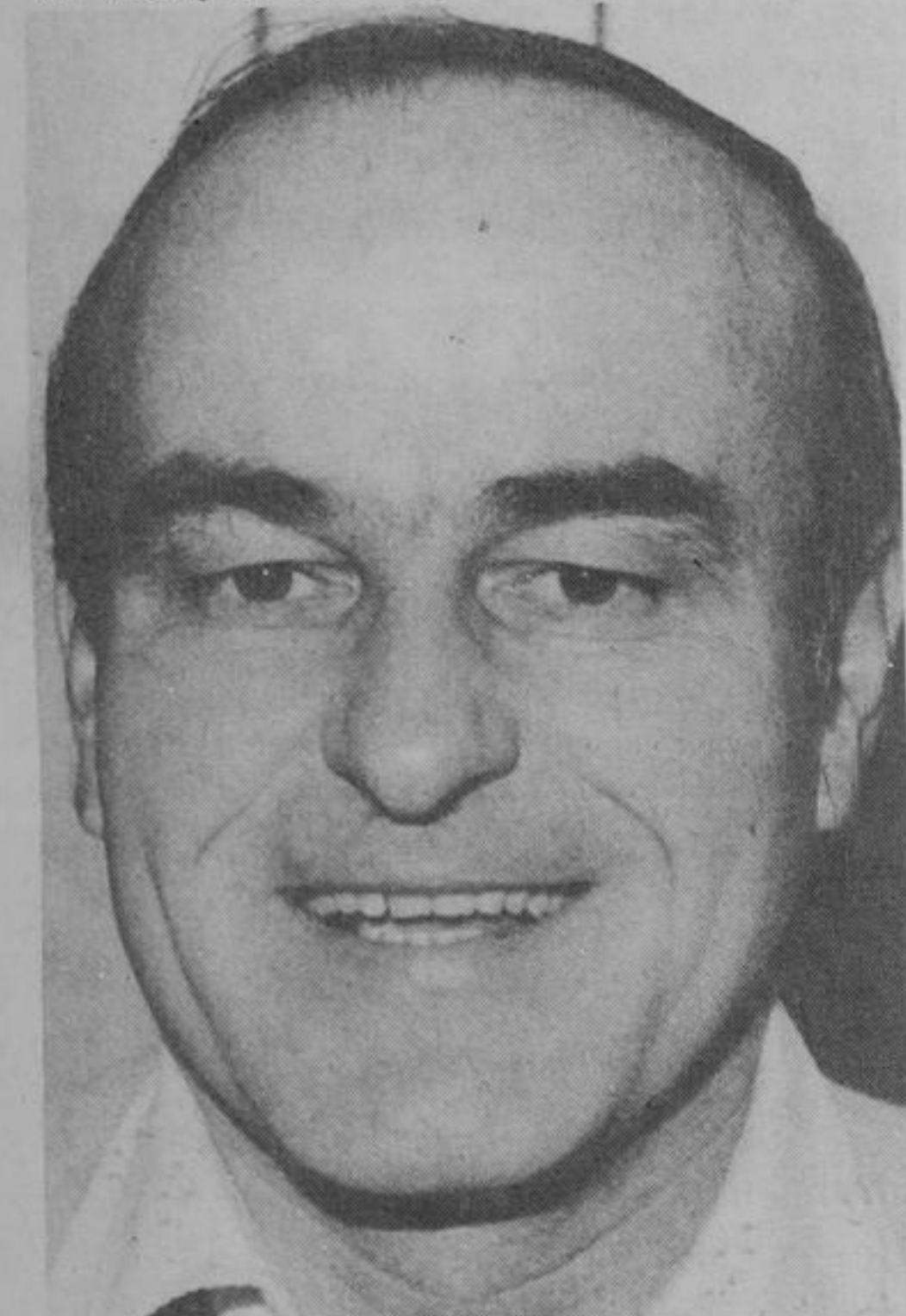
Trustees must also possess a clear understanding of fiscal matters and of sound business procedures.

In my opinion Bob McMonagle is the only candidate in our area (Markham Wards 1, 2, 7 in Thornhill) who has the qualifications needed to meet these requirements.

GEORGE MACNAUGHTON,  
129 Baythorn Dr.,  
Thornhill, Ont.



George MacNaughton  
... 7 Thornhill candidates



Robert McKee  
... from 50-foot lot

## Need industrial park

Dear editor:  
Keeping in mind the national and international economic climate—somewhat in the doldrums—and the regional statistics released by regional candidate Lois Hancey indicating Richmond Hill and about five per cent vacant commercial space; I can only agree with Ian Scott's Nov. 17 response to real estate board president Gino Matruandola's suggestions for "continued development".

Travelling along Yonge Street in the old core of Richmond Hill, one cannot help but realize we still have an excess of empty commercial space—a key issue in the 1974 election.

The town planning department's study indicated it will take about five years of residential growth to eliminate this excess.

Empty stores such as the ones at the MacDonalds plaza don't bring in assessment revenue, though they cost the taxpayers plenty in the provision of services!

Growth for growth's sake just doesn't make sense. The core needs a renewal and restoration program.

The best prospect of relief for taxpayers is the 800-acre industrial park at Highway 7 and Leslie Street. That will help balance the town assessment ratio.

The next best thing would be controlled, and possibly reduced, spending at the board of education and regional levels.

(MRS.) DAWN OSMOND,  
110 Arnold Cres.,  
Richmond Hill, Ont.

## Party politics objection

Dear editor:  
As an active supporter of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, I object strenuously to the methods by which Richmond Hill mayoralty candidate Gordon Rowe's supporters are plying us with party politics.

Evidence of this has reared its ugly head in their recent solicitation of signs and door-to-door canvassing.

Many will agree with me that party politics are totally unacceptable on the municipal scene and Mayor David Schiller's non-partisan position is just one more reason why he has and will receive my support.

(MRS.) LINDA CHRISTIE,  
220 Browndale Cres.,  
Richmond Hill, Ont.

## It's developer's dream

Dear editor:  
Combine mayoralty candidate Gord Rowe's plans to build Richmond Hill to a population of 250,000; eliminate local government; get rid of public ward meetings (as he stated was his intention on cable television last week) and what you get is a "developer's dream".

Doesn't he care at all about the present residents?  
PATRICIA MILLS,  
377 Balkan Rd.,  
Richmond Hill, Ont.

## Lady puts pure Garbage in letter

Dear editor:  
In regard to the Nov. 24 letter to you headed "Thinks Rowe should replace Schiller".

This lady claims to be an oppressed scientist and conservationist who calls England her home. She owns a summer residence on a three-acre lot on Gormley Road.

She wants rid of Richmond Hill Mayor David Schiller, a proven man for the people.

This mayor she wants replaced by Regional Councillor Gordon Rowe, a man for the developer.

Speaking scientifically, of course, this change could very well increase the value of her property.

For the rest of her letter, and strictly from a conservationist's point of view, it was pure garbage.

These viewpoints, by the way, are from a taxpayer whose summer and winter home is on a 50 by 100 ft. lot.

From a political point of view, I desire the opportunity of having some say in the development of our town.

There really are no issues, only concern for the future of our town and its destiny due to development.

Citizens have a choice in how it is going to be controlled. The decision will be made each marks an "X".

Vote, vote, vote! I make one request. Don't be a sw—itcher, be a Sc—hiller. Why start from scratch?

Ge, I got carried away on my political point of view. I forgot about the dear oppressed lady.

I apologize for that and offer a solution to her problems.

Sell your property, buy a boat and Gord will Rowe you to dear old England.

ROBERT McKEE,  
286 Palmer Ave.,  
Richmond Hill, Ont.

## Lois Hancey Gets things done

Dear editor:  
So it is election time again! And throughout all the districts people are studying the varying promises — and performances — of the candidates.

Here in Richmond Hill and district we have many claimants, most of whom, I am sure, are very worthy in their own


particular orbits.

If I were advising anyone I would say by all means vote for Lois Hancey.

She is a humanitarian of conscience and experience, besides which, she is the woman who gets things done.

EMMA HALL,  
89 Rockport Cres.,  
Richmond Hill, Ont.

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**RE-ELECT**  
**Marylo Graham**  
**COUNCILLOR**  
**WARD 4**

**WE'RE not switching ....**



**we're just keeping right on track with**  
**DAVE SCHILLER**  
On December 6 vote  
**SCHILLER for MAYOR**

This message was lovingly conducted and enthusiastically paid for by supporters and admirers of Dave Schiller