

A Victorian Christmas

All decked out for a Victorian Christmas are the Grades 4 and 5 students of St. Mary Immaculate Separate School, Richmond Hill. The kids offered parents and the community a taste of Christmases past during their special day-long celebrations last Wednesday. From left are Laura Dalle Rive, Agnes DeLuca, Anna Wachna, Paddy Kelly and Elizabeth Mangialardi. (Photo by Bruce Hogg)

Schiller optimistic

Country getting on track

Entering the new year on a note of cautious optimism, Mayor David Schiller believes the country is "slowly getting on the right track." "It took us a few years to get into the mess we're in," he said in an interview Friday. "But I'm beginning to be a bit more optimistic about the national economy." On an international level, he also sees the coming year as a time for hope. "For the first time, there have been some mildly believable moves in such things as arms control." Although he feels much of what the town of Richmond Hill can accomplish in the next year depends on what the state the country is in, he is hopeful that 1978 is measuring up as a "year of reasonable stability and moderate growth". The town has already held a couple of meetings on the upcoming budget, he said, and is aiming to stay below the Consumer Cost Index for this year. "How far below is still up in the air," he explained. One of the principal accomplishments in 1978 will be the adoption of the town's new Official Plan, which in combination with other "legal tools for planning", will make sure that the development that comes in the 1980s, will be "reasonably placed and needed by the community", said the mayor. During the next year, some "pretty major public works" should be completed, he predicted. The provincial GO train line with its northern terminus in Richmond Hill will be finished, as will the provincial water grid system which will "cure for all time the town's water shortage".

Shopping problems solved

Shopping can be tough for senior citizens. And finding suitable single portions can be even tougher. The Richmond Hill Social Planning Council has come up with a plan to make life a little easier for the town's older folks. With the co-operation of Allencourt IGA, the council is trying to set up a two-hour per week shopping period, where those wanting small portions, such as one pork chop or a single lemon, will receive special attention. If the council can establish a real need in the community for this service, it will also attempt to organize bussing to the store at a nominal fee. While the program is being organized, the council will concentrate on the core of Richmond Hill, said spokesman Ruby Birch. But once the service is well established, she hopes that it will spread. Anyone who would be interested in using the service is asked to call Helpmate at 883-2234.

York lawyers investigate

Police treatment 'major concern'

The way York Regional Police treat young offenders is "a major concern" of a lawyers' committee set up earlier this month to investigate police conduct, the committee chairman revealed in an interview last week. "We're saying we suspect a problem here," said D. Bruce McChesney, a Newmarket lawyer. "We feel it is every bit as important to the York Regional Police as it is to us. We're not looking for a confrontation, but that doesn't mean we're not determined," said Mr. McChesney, who chairs the York North Law Association's steering committee on police conduct. His comments came in an interview after he released the text of a five-point motion on police conduct which his committee passed at a Dec. 14 meeting. The motion, and Mr. McChesney's subsequent remarks, represent the first public comment from the committee since York Centre MPP Alf Stong ignited the police misconduct controversy in the provincial Legislature on Dec. 1. Although law association president Robert Evans had intimated that only "one or two lawyers" are worried about the misconduct issue, Mr. McChesney said: "That is not correct." However, he refused to divulge the number of lawyers on his committee. A public statement from the committee listed Mr. McChesney, Martin Herman of Richmond Hill and Gordon Ness of Stouffville as the two other lawyers involved in the committee's work.

"We do not intend to go on a witch hunt," Mr. McChesney said. "But if the York North Law Association decides that there is a significant problem in this area, we do not intend to let it rest." The steering committee will report to the law association membership at a meeting on Jan. 18. The committee's Dec. 14 motion will form part of that report. The motion suggests that the law association investigate cases where "there is more than one complaint against a police officer." According to the motion, the law association also should: • Give an annual award — "possibly a substantial cash award" — to the police officer "who best fulfils his or her role as a peace officer, with special emphasis on the ability to maintain self-control in provoking circumstances;" • Work with police officials to formulate a police code of conduct; • Give a series of lectures and seminars on proper police conduct, in co-operation with police officials; • Support current legislation to set up police complaint bureaus in Ontario. Original published reports on the lawyers' concerns indicated they believe police misconduct is extensive among York police officers. To that point, Mr. McChesney would only say: "We're not suggesting that the majority of the York Regional Police break the law on a regular basis." He also would not comment on whether complaints to lawyers involve police brutality. His committee has been concerned at the ebb and flow of publicity on the matter since Mr. Stong's original comments, Mr. McChesney said. "Mr. Stong's comments were premature and unfortunate," he said. And Mr. Evans' letter to Chief Bruce Crawford, in which the law association president expressed regret over the publicity, made it appear that the lawyers' group was "waffling," Mr. McChesney said. "We're not waffling," he stressed. The association should not rush to investigate every complaint of police misconduct.

Crawford finds motion positive

A motion released last week by a lawyers' committee on police conduct appears to be "a very positive document," says York Regional Police Chief Bruce Crawford, and he'd welcome the chance to discuss it further with area solicitors. He'll get that chance if the committee's motion is accepted by the membership of the York North Law Association at its meeting on Jan. 18. In its motion, the steering committee on police conduct suggests that the law association give an award for exemplary police conduct under provoking circumstances; work with police officials to set up a police code of conduct; give lectures and seminars on proper police conduct and procedures; and investigate cases in which more than one complaint is lodged against the same police officer. Chief Crawford was cool to the lawyers' suggestion that they probe complaints of police misconduct, but said in an interview that he'd like to join a "round-table" meeting with the lawyers to discuss the document. "I think it's a very positive document that has a lot of merit, and I'd like to sit down and discuss it with them (the lawyers) at their convenience," the chief said. "I don't think they have good intentions. I don't think they're still on the kick they were on a couple of weeks ago. I'd like to see their good intentions furthered." Noting the lawyers' suggestion that they give an annual police conduct award — "possibly a substantial cash award" — Chief Crawford said it would be against departmental regulations for officers to accept cash.

Beating injures Thornlea girl

A 15-year-old Thornhill girl has been released from hospital after being treated for severe injuries suffered in a beating at Thornlea Secondary School, December 21. Laurie Tobias, Olde Towne Place, received head injuries and required plastic surgery, according to police, and was treated first at York Central Hospital and then moved to North York General. Police, who are still investigating the incident, said the girl appeared to be the innocent victim of a scuffle among some other teen-agers — both boys and girls, all of them juveniles, except one. Timothy John Howard, 16, of Kirk Drive, Thornhill, has been charged with wounding and assault occasioning bodily harm.

Hayes resigns

Barry P. Hayes, chairman of the Board of Trustees of York Central Hospital, has announced his resignation. Due to a change in location, Mr. Hayes found it necessary to relinquish his post of the past two years and retire from the Board, Executive Director Jim Hepburn said. Mr. Hayes served the hospital as a founding member of the Board from 1961 to 1965 and from 1971 to the present. During 1974-75, he was first Vice-Chairman and chaired the Management Committee. It was with his initiative and support that the York Central Hospital Foundation was established. In recognition of his contribution to the hospital over the years, it was the unanimous wish of the Board that Mr. Hayes be appointed Honorary Chairman. Bill Lazenby was elected by the board to replace Mr. Hayes as Chairman and Harry Hill was elected to the office of first Vice-Chairman.

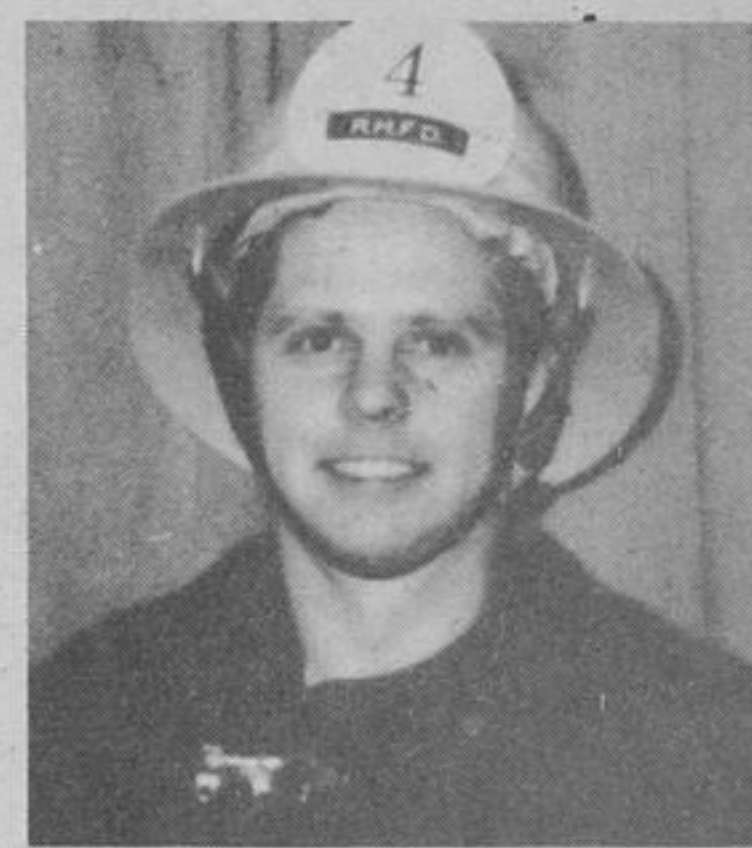
Izzard, Fawn receive award

Fire fighters share honors

Two Richmond Hill fire fighters will share this community's first "Fire fighter of the Year" award. The plaque, donated by Doug Hinchcliffe in honor of "Blaze", a fire department mascot who drowned earlier this year, will be presented to Captain Kevin Izzard and fire fighter Ron Fawn. The presentation will be made at the first council meeting of 1978, January 16. A selection committee made the choice last Wednesday. Izzard and Fawn were in a burning house on February 12 searching for a person believed to be in the building. The two continued their search despite the fact a hose, which would have been used to cool the interior, burst and had to be replaced. Not waiting for new hose, the two pushed their way through the burning building, seeking the person. It was Captain Izzard who found the 16-year-old lying unconscious in the second floor bathroom. Fire Chief Bob Kennedy, who was a member of the selection committee, said the youth likely would have died if Captain Izzard had not continued the search. The youth was carried outside and given mouth to mouth resuscitation before being taken to York Central Hospital. Fire fighters answered the alarm to the house at 1.07 a.m. February 12. Upon arrival, Captain Izzard was told by a York Regional Police officer that someone was still in the house. Fire Chief Kennedy said the house — at 133 Palmer Avenue — was "boiling".



KEVIN IZZARD, CAPTAIN



RON FAWN, FIRE FIGHTER

"At that point, the smoke was rolling within the structure and billowing out of all openings," Chief Kennedy said. Meanwhile, the selection committee agreed honorable mention would go to fire fighter Paul Schuster, for his rescue efforts at 376 Bluegrass Blvd. on September 24. Off-duty at the time, Schuster arrived on the scene first and was told there was someone inside. Hampered by smoke at the front door, Schuster entered the house from the rear. "He opened the door to what appeared to be a den and found the smoke to be minimal as the door to the involved room was closed," Chief Kennedy said. "On a couch just inside the room he found a man, 32 years of age. He awakened him and led him outside." "Blaze", in whose honor the "fire fighter of the year" award is made, was the department's dalmatian until earlier this year when he drowned in a swimming pool. "Blaze" had been donated to the department by Doug Hinchcliffe, and an anonymous donor. Last week, The Liberal learned the anonymous donor was Richmond Hill Councillor Lois Hancey.

Holiday hours

The Liberal will be closed Monday, January 2, so the staff may enjoy the New Year's holiday. Advertisers are asked to have all copy to The Liberal by Friday. The editorial department will be closed Friday but re-opens Monday for business as usual.

community pulse

Grieve's views uncut

Markham councillor Walter Grieve had been pestering local newspapermen for some time to print his views on France's welcome to Rene Levesque without success. So he was surprised when Newsweek Magazine printed his letter-to-the-editor on the subject uncut. The gist of his argument is that the next time the Germans take Paris, they can keep it.

Back next week

If you miss the Community Calendar this week, don't fret it'll be back next week with all the activities for the New Year. Space limitations this week prevented us from printing the information calendar but, if you still have last week's edition, all the information for the coming week is included. And by the way, Happy New Year to our friends at Helpmate who provide us with the information for the popular weekly column.

Bowl for charity

Next Sunday, January 1, is a special day at ABC Bowl, Richmond Hill. All proceeds from the day's bowling, 9 a.m. to 11 p.m., will go towards the March of Dimes. Each year the company features a different charity for the New Year's Day drive.