

Bob Forhan leading race for chairman

Newmarket Mayor Bob Forhan appears to have the inside track in the race for the York Region chairman's seat, according to a Liberal survey.

Several regional councillors remain undecided about their choice, and their votes may well determine who wins when council elects its 1979-80 leader tomorrow afternoon in Newmarket.

But the Liberal poll indicates that incumbent Garfield Wright will have to play catch-up if he hopes to retain the seat he has held since 1970.

Both candidates believe they can count on 10 or 11 votes. Sources indicate that both camps may be counting on the same two votes — those of the Georgina representatives.

But in the race for the magic nine-vote total — the simple majority of the 17-member council — Mayor Forhan definitely has the edge. The Liberal poll shows he has eight committed votes, with only three in the Wright camp.

Three other councillors told The Liberal they're undecided, while the remaining three refuse to say where they stand.

Mr. Wright would have to marshal all six of those uncertain votes to keep his seat, while Mayor Forhan need only pick up one of the six to win the chairmanship.

One factor which may bear heavily on the outcome is the alphabetical order in which the members of council cast their voice votes. Alma Walker of Markham, for example, will be next-to-last in the roll call. She says she won't decide who to

support until her name is called. "They're both great guys," she said.

She's followed by Vaughan Mayor Garnet Williams, a Wright supporter. If the vote is tight, their two votes could conceivably keep the incumbent in office.

Whatever the outcome, the poll makes it clear that Mr. Wright faces a tough battle to retain the seat he has held since the provincial government appointed him York's first chairman eight years ago.

Mayor Forhan, who began lobbying well before the Nov. 13 municipal elections, is capitalizing on the growing disenchantment with Mr. Wright. He said yesterday he is "gratified" at the results of The Liberal poll, but feels confident he'll garner at least two or three more votes than the survey revealed.

Key votes in tomorrow's balloting are held by the new Georgina representatives, Mayor Joe Dales and Councillor Michael McDonald, neither of whom would reveal his position; Dario DiGiannantonio of Vaughan, who says he's undecided; Mrs. Walker, who apparently will check the scorecard before casting her vote; and Richmond Hill Mayor David Schiller, who says he's "leaning one way" but still hasn't made up his mind.

Mayor Schiller, never an ardent supporter of Mr. Wright's leadership, nonetheless is not committing himself to Mayor Forhan, at least not yet. For him, one important consideration is the candidates' "specific commitment and willingness to see the official plan passed".

"I'm going to be looking for the candidate who would be most capable of, and interested in, getting the official plan approved," Mayor Schiller said.

Eldred King, the new mayor of Whitchurch-Stouffville, refused to divulge his stand, but says he feels the decision "is very difficult for the new members coming in."

"I don't think the region's necessarily functioning the way it should," Mayor King said. "But I don't know whether it's the chairman's fault or not."

His comments were echoed by another council rookie, Mr. DiGiannantonio, who said he's still "debating in my mind" who to vote for. The decision is especially vexing because he has not worked with either candidate, he said.

Richmond Hill Councillor Gordon Rowe will nominate Mr. Wright, while Markham Mayor Tony Roman is expected to nominate Mayor Forhan.

Association supports cops

York Regional Police officers who plan to take legal action against citizens will have the support of the police association, the new president, Sgt. John Moorhead, said this week.

Specifically, he said, four police officers are planning to issue writs against Douglas Sheldrake, the ex-cop who accused some York policemen of various wrongdoings last summer.

"The men figure they've taken enough," Moorhead said.

He said that in the past a police officer was left on his own if he elected to bring legal actions against anyone.

"It has never been tried before," he said, "but now the association will support the men, handling legal fees and other necessary requirements."



If it wasn't for the officer's uniform, this could easily be the scene inside Marshal Matt Dillon's office after he forced all them mean cowpokes to check their ironed before heading to the saloon. In this photo, Ontario Provincial Police constable Gord Wells checks out the 35 firearms that were handed in to the Oak Ridges detachment last month. Most came in during the final week of the amnesty program. While police are happy with the response, they still believe only a fraction of the illegal weapons have been turned in. (Liberal photo by Bruce Hogg)

Don't shoot

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Officials check damage to this twin-engine Cessna which made an emergency landing on Markham Road in Richmond Hill's east end

Thursday morning. Pilot neatly placed the troubled aircraft on the two-lane highway avoiding several hydro lines. Plane did sever a

guy wire, causing damage to a wing and propeller. None of the five people on board were hurt. (Liberal photo by Bruce Hogg)

Engine trouble forces light plane to highway

Rush-hour traffic problems in Richmond Hill are bad enough but motorists near Markham Road and Leslie Street got a bit of a shock last Thursday morning when a Cessna 411 aircraft parked itself in the middle of the road.

The twin-engine plane, owned by Konvey Construction Company Limited in Unionville, had just taken off from Buttonville Airport when it developed engine trouble, according to a spokesman for the Ministry of Transport.

It was en route to Elliot Lake with five passengers when the pilot felt it was necessary to make an emergency landing.

Pilot Keith Gilbert was to land without injuring any of the passengers but on the way down, the plane clipped a hydro guide

wire causing about \$10,000 damage to the left wing and propeller.

"Even though it was a short flight, the plane kept me too busy to think about what had happened," said Mr. Gilbert. "If it was possible, I would like to have

tried flying back to Buttonville."

York Regional Police and mechanics towed the Cessna back to the airport and an investigation of the incident will be carried out by Ministry of Transport Officials.

Some go up, some go down

Equalization of hydro rates throughout the new town of Richmond Hill has resulted in an increase of about 12.8 per cent for some parts of town and a decrease for other areas.

The 1979 rate schedule for the restructured hydro commission

of Richmond Hill, which includes customers formerly covered by Ontario Hydro and the commissions of Richmond Hill and Vaughan, has now been approved by Ontario Hydro.

Former Ontario Hydro customers within the town will

receive some alleviation from the high rural rates they have been paying while existing customers from Richmond Hill and Vaughan will experience increases of about 12.8 per cent.

Sam Cook, chairman of the new Richmond Hill Hydro Electric

Commission, said the changes are long overdue and reasonable in light of increased costs from Ontario Hydro for power.

"We have been striving for several years to take over the Hydro customers within the town and bring about uniformity of

rates," said Mr. Cook who was the chairman of a region-wide hydro study committee which recommended the restructuring of local utilities.

Mayor Dave Schiller, also on the new commission said the increase in the rates in the central section of town was generally in line with the predictions of the restructuring study, and therefore acceptable.

Mr. Cook said he feels the overall picture for 1979 is "excellent", considering the increase in costs from Ontario Hydro totals 13 per cent.

The chairman also indicated that the restructuring transition has been progressing quite smoothly.

On January 1 the Richmond Hill utility will double its customers to 12,000 and will increase its service area by 12 times.

"We do not anticipate any major problems as a result, but are hopeful that our customers will bear with us when the physical changeover takes place," said Mr. Cook.

"Ripoff" - Hicks says

Cable TV rates too high

A dispute often has three sides. Residents living in the senior citizen housing complex at 75 Dunlop Street in Richmond Hill wish to have cable television service installed in the building.

Classic Communications Limited, suppliers in Richmond Hill, offered the service at \$7 per month with a \$12.50 installation charge — the same price any other citizen in Richmond Hill must pay.

Senior citizens living in this building are upset saying other seniors in Ontario Housing in Newmarket and Aurora are paying only \$3.50 or \$4 per

month for the same service. "It's a complete rip off," said resident Don Hicks.

Florence Tocher said, "We want the service, but not at that price".

Mrs. Tocher said rent in the building had gone up, telephone charges increased and now with the cable charge, seniors on small pensions would have expenses over \$100.

"That doesn't leave a heck of a lot," said Mrs. Tocher.

Not all residents in the building at 75 Dunlop Street are opposed to the charge.

"I'm willing to pay," said Tony

Crossley, "because I'm sick of looking at the snow (referring to the poor reception from the existing aerial)".

Joe Hermal is worried the publicity and refusal of some residents could mean the service would not go into the building.

"Looks to me like they'll can the whole thing because of some," he said.

Tom Surgeoner, housing manager for OHC in Newmarket, said the senior citizens referred to in Newmarket and Aurora received cable service at \$3.50 because the cable company had entered into a bulk agreement with OHC.

This agreement says OHC will pay the cable company \$3.50 for each unit in a building and collect \$3.50 from each unit — a compulsory payment.

Mr. Surgeoner pointed out Classicomm in Richmond Hill will wire the building under a "rights agreement" and charge the tenants a private deal.

This is a "private deal" said Mr. Surgeoner, where residents can take the service if they wish, but are not compelled to take it.

The Liberal approached John Graham, director of Classicomm who explained his company policy is not to enter into a bulk agreement with anyone — hospitals, schools or special housing.

"We know many cannot afford cable," he said, "not just senior citizens."

Mr. Graham said because of this fact his company maintained a standard approach to everyone.

Classicomm will be wiring every apartment in the building at 75 Dunlop Street, regardless of how many join up or take the service.

The director of Classicomm said he or another member of his staff would be more than willing to meet with the residents to explain the company's position.

Trevor Jones, area manager for OHC stressed one more side to the problem.

OHC is getting away from entering into bulk agreements with cable companies.

The program now, "right across the board", is to enter into a rights agreement, letting the cable company charge the tenant directly.

When the bulk agreements expire, which could be as soon as 1979, said Mr. Jones, the cable companies in other

municipalities will be free to charge the going rate.

"The rates could conceivably go from \$3.50 to the going rate in Newmarket, which is \$6.50," he said.

Residents concerned about the availability and condition of the existing aerial, if they do not choose to hook-up to cable, are advised by Mr. Jones that OHC will maintain the aerial.

"It will always be in place so there is no obligation to take cable," he said.

Community Pulse

Students host seniors

Christmas is the time of year when young and old can share many things, especially music. Students at Roselawn Public School will play host to 150 senior citizens at a concert on Thursday December 21 at 2 p.m.

A special treat for the seniors will be refreshments prepared and served by the students.

Sunday at the fights

Peace on earth there may be, but not in North Bay Sunday night. That's when the Richmond Hill Rams Provincial Junior A hockey team clashed (and we mean clashed) with the North Bay Trappers. So many players were expelled from the game in the second period there weren't enough left to finish the game. All the details are in Fred Simpson's story on Page B-1.

Who has a concertina?

Richmond Hill Curtain Club needs to borrow a concertina for its next production "Major Barbara". What's a concertina? Well, it's a musical instrument of the accordion family. If you happen to have one, Joan Ryland at 884-2917 would like to hear from you. The sooner the Curtain Club gets it, the sooner the musician can learn to play it.

Hospital wins letter

Have you looked into the sky lately as you've been driving north on Yonge or Bathurst Streets to Richmond Hill? If you had, you would have noticed the beautiful new 'H' sign mounted high on the southern exposure of York Central Hospital. Since the 'H' is the international symbol for hospitals, anyone looking for York Central, should be able to find it without any stopping to ask directions.

Man killed

York Region recorded its seventh traffic-fatality yesterday morning when police discovered the body of a 20-year-old man lying near Bayview Avenue and Markham Road.

A spokesman for York Regional Police said positive identification had not been made by press time, though they are treating the case as a hit-and-run accident.

A letter from Robert Doty,

Blood clinic - Dec. 19 at St. Mary Immaculate