

THE RICHMOND HILL Liberal

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Welfare cut off

"Maybe they expect us to curl up and die"

By LARRY JOHNSTON
Liberal news editor
Arthur Smith and Evelyn Rivers thought they were near the end of the line. They sat huddled around the wood stove in their living room last Thursday, wondering how they are going to pay the \$110 they still owe for last month's rent or the \$170 due at the end of this month. The gas was cut off last summer and the wood stove is the

only source of heat. Everyone sits with their overcoats and boots on and the thermostat on the wall which starts at 60 degrees does not register. The only food in the house was supplied by a local church. Their last welfare cheque dated December 29 was for \$164.90 for two weeks, including a fuel allowance of \$15.40. Mrs. Rivers has called the welfare office and has taken from the conversation that there is no way she can get

more welfare. The York Region welfare department admits cutting off Smith and Rivers in an effort to get him to take a program for alcoholics as ordered by the courts. "We are pressuring them," says welfare supervisor Glen Davies. "Their case is still under investigation. If he lives up to certain obligations, he will get welfare." Smith did not know whether to

put his faith in that, or whether some other tragedy will hit him first, like not having the money for transportation to the hospital for treatment. Smith and Mrs. Rivers live right in the middle of Richmond Hill, right across the boulevard from the Cadillac-Baif development in an insul-bricked cottage, on the corner of Carrville and Avenue Roads, with plastic over the windows and a back door that does not close

properly. The landlord, said Smith, is a good man. He let them saw down a tree on his property across the street for firewood. But that supply has run out. When Smith's car was working, he used to scrounge wood from construction sites but now it is difficult to see if there are even a few pieces left under the snow in the back yard. Smith and Mrs. Rivers like their place, except in this, the coldest part of the year. They are sharing the two heatable rooms with a dog that just had puppies, a well-fed cat and half a dozen potted house plants. They still have a television set and a telephone and an assortment of other appliances, some working, some not and a hundred or so salt and pepper shakers; Mrs. Rivers collects them.

They've had help but need a home

Evelyn Rivers and Arthur Smith have asked all kinds of people to help them and several individuals in various agencies have responded.

They include doctors in two hospitals, a probation officer, the John Howard Society and a regional public health nurse who promised taxi fare.

But there is one thing no one can help with, housing.

Welfare recipients are left to their own devices to find accommodation "as best they can", says area supervisor Glen Davies. "It is surprising how many people use wood or space heaters to heat their homes.

Unfortunately in York Region with vacancy rates running between one and two suites in 500 for the general population, housing for the needy is extremely hard to come by.

There are just ten rent-geared-to-income housing units run by the Ontario Housing Corporation in York Region for people under age 65. There are also about 100 rental assisted units.

Regional council commissioned an outside report on housing last year which showed these figures.

"You might as well say rent-geared-to-income housing nonexistent," is a planning staff analysis.

Richmond Hill, Markham and

Vaughan have no plans for any rent-geared-to-income units although subdivisions are awaiting approval, according to regional estimates, to supply home buyers for the next eight

years. There were 1,229 people on general assistance in York Region last November, the last month for which figures are available, compared with 1,054

one year earlier. That is about 0.58 per cent of the region's population and does not include women on mother's allowance which is a provincial program.

More than 500 people tour operating rooms

By MILLIE STEWART
Five hundred and fifty people visited York Central Hospital in Richmond Hill last Saturday, not to visit patients, but to view one of the most sacred inner sanctums of any hospital... the operating rooms.

The idea of such a tour came from a nursing magazine, which showed a similar tour in an American hospital. This is the first time such an open house concept of a hospital has been undertaken in this area, and as far as anyone knows, in the province.

SOME CLOSED DOORS
York Central Hospital has seven operating rooms, and of these, five were open to the

public. Two had to remain sterile and protected from prying eyes in case they were needed, and during the course of the tours, one was used for an actual operation.

All visitors were directed to the operating room area by hospital auxiliary members. Once there, they received a map of the area showing them where they could go and where they could not.

All areas closed to the public were well marked and not one visitor got lost.

Many doctors were on hand to answer questions. They were: Drs. Alexander, Morissette, Arai, Karas, Bergman, Bate, Golab, Phillips, Leroux, Treisman, Little, Tyl, Ng, Conrad, Bhat and

MacCon. Visitors were welcome to examine the operating rooms and all the equipment that is used in them.

Included were displays of various sets of instruments and explanations about which kind of surgery they were used for.

Microscopes were set up with slides for anyone who was interested in seeing this side of hospital work.

A video-tape display of an actual Caesarean section attracted many of the visitors, although the more squeamish held back.

This display was the work of several... O.R. Nurse Pam Brooker took the pictures; Kathy Dedrick from the library did the video-tape; and Dr. Alexander Golab did the narration.

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York Central Hospital is a community hospital and O. R. Head Nurse Ann Meijers feels that the public should be aware of what it's like even behind the scenes.

This way the public is aware of what all the expensive equipment is used for and how everything is as modern as can be.

All visitors were asked to fill in a questionnaire about the tour, and of those who did, most said they would like to see the same tour repeated.

A full operating room staff was on hand and with the help of volunteers and some part time nurses, everything went just fine.

So much for being helpful

When Provincial Police Constable S.A. Layton tried to give help to a driver on Highway 7 near Islington Avenue Sunday night, he got a little more than he bargained for.

As he approached the car, a Corvette, which was later learned to be stolen from Toronto, the driver tried to run him down.

The officer escaped with some bad bruises to his leg and he'll take a week off work to recuperate.

The accident was listed as a fail to remain under the criminal code. No charges have been laid so far.

Community Pulse

Hydro meeting today

Area elected representatives will continue hydro transmission line discussions today. At 2 p.m., Alf Stong, MLA-York Centre; Bill Hodgson, MLA-York North; and the mayors of the three southern municipalities, Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Markham, will meet with hydro officials to attempt to resolve the question of line relocation and the feasibility of burying the lines.

Kinsmen anniversary

The Kinsmen Club of Richmond Hill will celebrate their 25th anniversary this year, and to mark the occasion, plans a dinner and dance on February 24. The event will be held at the Richvale Community Centre in Richmond Hill. All former members of the Club are invited to attend. For further information, contact Tom Hetherington at 884-2535 or George Woodhead at 884-4504.

Snowmobiles needed

Anyone with a snowmachine interested in introducing children and youths to the fun of snowmobiling on Winter Carnival Weekend, February 8, 9, 10 or 11, should call Jim Barber at 884-6942 or 884-0951. Usually the always popular run goes around the north end of the pond and into the bush area and Mr. Barber would like more machines to spell his list of volunteer drivers.

Tickets on sale

Tickets are now on sale for two big dances during Richmond Hill Winter Carnival weekend. A dinner and Dance for the Carnival Princesses will be held at Richvale Community Centre February 8. Call Ed Banks 884-6240 or Paul Hunter 884-7589 for tickets. Saturday, February 10, will be the annual Sleigh Ride and Dance at Richmond Hill Golf Club. Call Kathy Hicks 884-7207 or J. Flett 884-2746 for information and tickets.

Bathurst is the pits

The unpaved section of Bathurst Street between Oak Ridges and Aurora is the worst road in York Region in the opinion of Richmond Hill Councillor Gord Rowe. It is inadvisable to travel more than 15 miles per hour on it, he said. "It must be keeping six garages in business." He wondered if the region was not bothering to maintain it because it is scheduled for paving. Engineering commissioner Bob Hodgson said this is not the case although he intends to have it paved in 1980.

Wilt numbered carnival buttons

Four thousand, seven hundred and forty-two, is the exact number of Richmond Hill Winter Carnival buttons numbered by hand by Wilt Young of Centre Street West.

The distinctive red, green and white Oookpik buttons purchased by the carnival committee were to have numbers printed on the back to be used for a lucky draw. When they arrived — they were blank.

Mr. Young, who retired after working with the town's parks and recreation department for ten and one-half years, said he felt he had time to number the buttons himself.

"Otherwise it would take up a lot of evenings for someone," he said.

It took Mr. Young only one week of working on and off with a "miniature compressed air hammer about the size of a pen" to complete his job.

This job was only one of many Mr. Young has done for Richmond Hill's Winter Carnival over the 11 years since its inception. With Parks and Recreation he has helped prepare the ice and snow slides, set up the tent and barbecues, change the dates on signs around town and dozens of other little things that have to be done for the big weekend.

He said he felt very few realized the time, work and number of people involved each year to put on the winter carnival.

"It's a community affair," said

Mr. Young, "and not an individual effort."

The Centre Street resident, who recently spent eight days in the coronary unit of York Central Hospital, reminisced about the history of the carnival including the fact that only twice has the weather caused any trouble.

One year there was an extremely cold and strong north wind, he remembered, that blew the tent down and spoiled some of the festivities for at least one night.

Another year, Friday and Saturday went just fine, but right after pancake breakfast — it rained the whole day.

"Other than that we've had very good weather," said Mr. Young.



Bayview Secondary School offers these five pretty girls as competitors in the annual Richmond Hill Winter Carnival Snow Queen contest. They include, top to bottom, Diane Eldridge, Year 4; Terry

White, Year 3; Lorna Campbell, Year 1; Terry Davis, Year 5; and Kathy Snowden, Year 2. Judging will take place Thursday, February 8.

Snow removal is an art, Liberal reporter finds

What do garbage day, high winds and parked cars all have in common?

They all make hazards for Richmond Hill's Works Department snow removal crew.

Operators of the town's two graders, six truck ploughs and two sidewalk Bombadiers unanimously agreed last week that parked cars created the biggest problem and nuisance to their methods of snow removal.

During the snow storm last Wednesday, Liberal staff writer Shaaron Hay was allowed to ride with town staff to see the other side of the problem that residents view from behind clogged driveways or slow blue "bleeping" lights.

Roads Superintendent, Herb Rose, who has been with the town works department for 23 years, said there must be at least three inches of snow before the ploughs will venture out.

This three inches lessens damage to the equipment caused by hitting protruding objects.

If the snowfall arrives after normal business hours, Mr. Rose leaves word with the man on night duty to call the superintendent who checks the roads and if snow is sufficient, calls the foreman and gets the men on the job.

Two mechanics and one supervisor are on call at all times to keep the equipment on the road in case of breakdown during the storm.

In a normal snowfall, said Mr. Rose, the 260 lane miles in Richmond Hill will be cleared in six hours — unless the roads need to be sanded and that will take another four hours.

The concern of most residents is the annoying habit of ploughs which fill freshly shovelled driveways with heavy road snow.

"People give us the devil for filling their driveways," said Mr. Rose, "but we've never got finished if we stopped each time."

Gord Corry, operator of the impressive big grader, said, "you just don't look to the side — Someone might be standing there waving a shovel!"

It seems the answer might be to purchase a house on the right side of the street (whichever that is) because ploughs take off the heavy load in one direction and return on the same road removing the excess.

The drivers of all vehicles agreed cars parked on the side of the road were the biggest hazard, making their job both difficult and incomplete.

Ploughs and wings must be lifted, (depositing heaps of the cold wet stuff), the vehicle must go around, (sometimes squeezing oncoming traffic) each time a parked vehicle is encountered.

If there are too many such obstructions the town requires the snow removal vehicles to return the following day to try again.

By using the truck ploughs there is always the possibility of damaging the parked cars because although there are two men — one driving and one operating the ploughs — the driver does not always have clear visibility to see where the wing is, to make sure he clears the offending vehicle.

The Liberal reporter had the privilege of driving in one of the truck ploughs with Eric Fish and Tom Miller and marvelled at the synchronization and ability of these two men while moving snow from a local cul-de-sac.

Manhole covers in Richvale sometimes get knocked off, and sometimes the odd driveway is marked but usually the job is handled without mishap.

If all else fails, residents usually feel free to grumble about the amount of salt being spread liberally about — just waiting to eat fenders and leather boots.

Maintenance Manager for the town, Merv Perkins, said the town uses about seven per cent salt to each 100 pounds of sand — sometimes heavier in ice storms.

"But, we're doing our best to cut it back," said Mr. Perkins, expressing concern for vegetation on roadsides.

The snow is pushed to the side for as long as possible and then comes a time when road crews must remove it.

Last year 1,790 truck loads of snow were removed from the streets of town, said Mr. Perkins, and deposited in an old gravel pit on the south side of Markham Road just west of the third line.

BOMBADIERS

Parked cars are also a problem for the operators of the two Bombadiers that clear the 30 miles of sidewalks in town.

The overhang of cars parked in driveways creates a danger for these men because as they attempt to go around if they hit any obstacle, curbs, heaved sidewalks or large patches of ice, the vehicle can be thrown over or off to the side.

The purpose of the sidewalk clearers is not to make the paths as clean as a June day but only to take off the heavy snow for the convenience of walking residents.

These little vehicles can go in reverse, but young and able pedestrians should step to the side rather than challenging the driver.

The message from your friendly snow plough man seems to be if you are able to get your car off the road it will make for a better job of removing snow from your streets.