

Time to act is now not in September

The strength of any legislative or administrative body lies with its ability to make effective, expedient decisions using all the resources available and creating as little fuss as possible.

That's a general guideline that can be applied to any level of government or business and theoretically, even individual family households.

It's also a trait uncharacteristic of the York County Board of Education, for at least the past two years.

Again, it has delayed acting on a set of recommendations that will prove vital to the quality of education in this town. The Richmond Hill Study Committee, in its own right, was a master of procrastination. But the decision to allow the future of one or more schools and their boundaries to rest with the committee is really the board's fault.

Though he may sound like he's hooked into a pipeline emanating from Aurora, Richmond Hill

Trustee Bill Monroe's attitude of "let's stop talking and have some action" is the only one that makes sense, when you think about it. There are too many implications like declining enrolment, growth of the southern part of the Region, quality education and how much taxpayers are willing to pay for it, to stave off action on such an acute situation.

Another local trustee, June Armstrong, claims Crosby Heights is the school to close. It happens to house some important special education facilities. Not 15 minutes before she made her comment, the school board heard a presentation about alleged inadequacies of a recent special education report, pointing out weak areas in the board's approach.

Two-week deferrals may allow a few more angry parents to write letters and make suggestions that should have been submitted long ago. The time to act is now, before next September gets any closer.

We're not enthused about Twinney vote

Politicians are a durable bunch and Ray Twinney, the new mayor of Newmarket, is no exception.

Mr. Twinney will resume his seat on regional council next week after an absence of three months, as a result of his election Monday. A chair has been kept warm for him on the regional engineering committee.

He was defeated in a bid for reelection as regional councillor last November. Some people took exception to his slogan, "Newmarket, the best damn town in Ontario." It seems they did not want four-letter words on their front lawns.

Then, Bob Forhan won the regional chairman's job, creating an automatic vacancy for the mayor's chair.

Mr. Twinney was out campaigning for the job the same day and the anti-Twinney group in town was faced with finding another candidate to oppose him.

They did, but still, in the final analysis, in the minds of the voters, Twinney, the defeated regional councillor, was the best candidate for mayor.

We would like to congratulate Mayor Twinney, but we can't get up the enthusiasm.

What it comes down to is that unless you are an independent businessman, have an understanding partner or work for a school board, or are a housewife with an understanding husband, you won't get to be mayor of your town.

Proposed budget increase out of line, reader says

Last fall, the mayor indicated that the size of the Town staff, including those of the Water Utility and the Library Board, is under control and had not increased (quoted complement rather than actual) but the town's performance was not measured to other local municipalities.

I would, therefore, like to correct the impression that the town staff is under control by making comparisons with other municipalities in the region.

Below is shown the total expenses by each municipality and the total salary cost included.

These figures are reported by the municipalities to the Provincial Government.

As you can readily observe, Richmond Hill salary cost as a percentage to total cost is much higher than the other municipalities.

In fact, if our salaries related to total equalized assessment values were the same cost as Newmarket, they would be reduced by more than \$300,000 in 1976 and more than \$500,000 in 1977. Supporting costs would also be reduced.

I would think that if the Town

followed a policy of not replacing people when one left, the town's salary costs could be brought into line with the other municipality rates. That should be a goal worth attaining.

I would like to comment that the past policy of growth for the town, as established by the mayor and council, is in my opinion a correct one.

Newmarket, whose total costs for 1977 did not increase over 1976, enjoyed a 1.7 per cent growth in assessment values and Richmond Hill was not far off with two per cent growth.

Stick to your growth plans, Mr. Schiller and members of council.

The proposed increase of 7.2 per cent for 1979 budget appears out of line since, as you can see, much of our tax is tied up in salaries.

The present mayor and council inherited this situation from prior administrations, so it will be in their hands to set a policy to correct this high element of labor cost in our taxes.

R. Marquis,
 46 Roosevelt Drive
 Richmond Hill

	Total Cost	Salary cost	Percent	Total assessment	Salary cost on \$28,000. home
Aurora	\$2,030,000	\$792,000	39	\$137,050,000	\$162
	2,857,000	963,000	34	144,996,000	186
Markham 1976	10,663,000	3,918,000	37	770,710,000	142
1977	12,683,000	4,819,000	38	814,115,000	166
Newmarket 1976	3,621,000	1,186,000	33	205,812,000	161
1977	3,604,000	1,386,000	38	209,309,000	182
Richmond Hill 1976	5,368,000	2,586,000	48	387,227,000	187
1977	6,080,000	3,104,000	51	394,905,000	220

++This cost is for each \$1,000 of assessment.



Bird's Eye View of the Winter Carnival

By BOB RICE

Just-A-Farm more than that

Lindsay is a pig.

Now that I've got your attention, I would like to tell you about a neat little place where you and the family can kill a few hours and have a nice time to boot.

Two weekends ago our gang was feeling a touch of the winter blahs and decided to do something about it.

Our first choice was to take a long promised crack at cross country skiing at the Metro Zoo. Our friend Tommy Thompson has done one heck of a job since taking over the zoo in trying to boost attendance and broaden the scope of the area.

Each weekend you can spend a minimal amount of money and strap on a set of skis and take in the whole zoo and those animals that see fit to stare at you, in spite of the cold.

Unfortunately, the weather was just a titch too cold for this old bear and we agreed to delay our first sojourn on skis until a warmer time. It was about this time that Deirdre came up with Just-A-Farm.

The ad was almost hidden in the classified section and just mentioned family sleigh rides and a phone number. We called immediately and a very nice lady's voice at the other end gave my wife some further information and

directions to the farm.

Although the winds were still blowing quite strong, we elected to bundle up, drive off and partake of a Sunday outing in the country.

DOUBTED SANITY

As we neared our destination the snow was blowing across the concession road and I was suddenly beginning to doubt my sanity as thoughts of a log burning in our fireplace and a warm drink of anything raced through my brain.

We drove up the driveway and before we could open the door a friendly gentleman walked toward the car to greet us.

Although we were the only customers present he made us feel as if our family of four was as important as a group of 20. We stayed in the vehicle while he hooked the two horse team to the sleigh and gave them a short walk prior to our hopping aboard. His wife had joined us by now and she was as bubbly as he.

COOL RIDE

Dee and I were not dressed as warmly as the children and upon seating myself on the wooden sleigh I knew that a certain part of my anatomy was in for a bit of a chilling.

Despite the cold, the ride was more

than enjoyable. The farm is a very deep 50 acres and Mr. Tribbling covered all of it on the ride. Once clear of the open areas the wind couldn't get to us and the ride through the small bush at the eastern limits of the property was the highlight of the trip.

As we returned to the starting area, I noticed that another carload of brave souls had arrived and were awaiting their turn near the barn.

We disembarked and Mrs. Tribbling asked if we would like to see the animals before leaving. The girls were off like a shot and we were close behind.

The barn was small by farm standards and most comfortably warm. In separate stalls were housed a full grown Hackney pony, a beautiful horse that was Mrs. T.'s pride and joy, a sheep, a very pregnant sow and Lindsay and her family.

A BEAUTY

Lindsay was a magnificent porker and she was surrounded by her three-week-old babies. With utmost patience, she allowed her young to drink her milk and cast contented looks from her beautiful eyes. When the piglets had finished she got to her feet and

carefully threaded her way through the frolicking youngsters to the edge of the stall. She proffered her snout to me and I obligingly patted it.

We drove home shortly after and rounded out the day with an excellent dinner at one of our favorite restaurants.

Just-A-Farm is located on the Seventh line of the Town of East Gwillimbury and can easily be reached by driving north on Woodbine Avenue to the Mount Albert Sideroad. Turn east on this paved road and then North on the seventh. The farm is on the right side about two miles north and I think you will enjoy the outing as much as we did. The Tribblings charge five dollars a car for families and the sleigh rides are also available for groups at an average of two dollars per head.

By the by . . . if you should decide to visit Just-A-Farm would you do me a favor? Drop by the barn and say hello to Lindsay for me . . . I wouldn't want her to think I have forgotten her.

"The Millpond Philosopher said . . . 'we can surround ourselves with works of greatness but it is the simple things that give us the most joy.'"

LIBERAL SPRINKLINGS

Woodlands, Woodlands, Woodlands

BY LARRY JOHNSTON
 Liberal News Editor

No, it is not true. Principal Dennis Middleton did not offer a room full of blackboards, and free chalk, to The Liberal, for the education of the dimwit who construed the name of Thornhill's only senior public school as Woodlawn.

No, our esteemed editor has not imposed a sentence of writing Woodlands Senior Public School on Mr. Middleton's blackboard 500 times on the &!&+!& in-competent. Such an extra trip, he said, would blow the company mileage budget, but he had an alternative suggestion.

So, if you visit my office in the next few weeks, you may see Woodlands Senior Public School written 500 times on the wallpaper. I must admit the &!&+!& who goofed was me, all by myself.

To the staff and students of Woodlands, my sincere apologies for mixing your school up with an east-end cemetery.

I am aware that plans are afoot, within the Thornhill school boun-

daries study committee, to bury you. The burial may follow a slow and painful death, as your hallowed halls are used temporarily as the end of the busline for students from new sections of Thornhill who do not have schools of their own.

I'M BIASED

My mistake may have had some deep Freudian source. I have a bias against senior public schools. I went to one in Grade 8.

It was a magnificent new edifice, built when nothing was too good for the children of Ontario. It had art rooms, music rooms, a double gymnasium with a stage at one end, home economics rooms and industrial arts shops, and a swimming pool 75 feet long.

The diving board cost more than they paid a teacher for a year's work back in the Depression.

The purpose of the senior public school was to make the jump to secondary school a little easier. We had lockers, just like high school. Their openings and closings were watched over by two vice-principals who would as soon haul you off to the office as look at you.

We had half a rotary system, which meant that we crammed the academic work into half the day and the other half on fun and games, if not in the gym or pool, in the music room or metal working shop.

Or it might have been in the "speech and drama" class taught by Pat Trant. Pat, (now president of the Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill) reacted to the whole mess by not teaching again for more than 15 years.

Like many new schools, it was not ready in September and the rotary system could not start until the second term. Moreover, most of the teachers of senior grades in the area could not be enticed out of their old schools.

As a result, half the Grade 8 students were taught their most important subjects by teachers right out of training.

BETTER OFF

Even they were better off than the class that started the year under the tutelage of a rookie swim coach trying to wade through English and Mathematics in the teacher's lounge.

The point of all this is the effect of \$1 million worth of new facilities were nullified by disruptions.

I can't blame Thornhill parents one bit for their concern over their children's school lives being disrupted, perhaps more than once, by shifting school boundaries.

One of the least disrupting things that could be done would be to phase out Woodlands as the present students there move on to high school.

The boundaries committee is looking seriously at this as a solution to the declining enrollment in South Thornhill.

It would follow logically the closing of the senior public school in Maple last year.

It is the policy of the York County Board of Education not to build any more Grade 7 and 8 schools, which would indicate the beast was an expensive experiment that failed.

Another such closing might be a blessing in disguise.

At least for me. I might not have to remember the name of Thornhill's only senior public school much longer.

THE Liberal

VOLUME 101, NUMBER 32

TELEPHONES
 Editorial, Display 884-8177
 Classified 884-1105
 Circulation 884-0981
 Toronto customers 881-3373

Subscription rates: Single copy \$1.00. No mail delivery where carrier service exists. Second Class Mail Registration Number 0190.

Ron Wallace - Editor
 Larry Johnston - News Editor
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