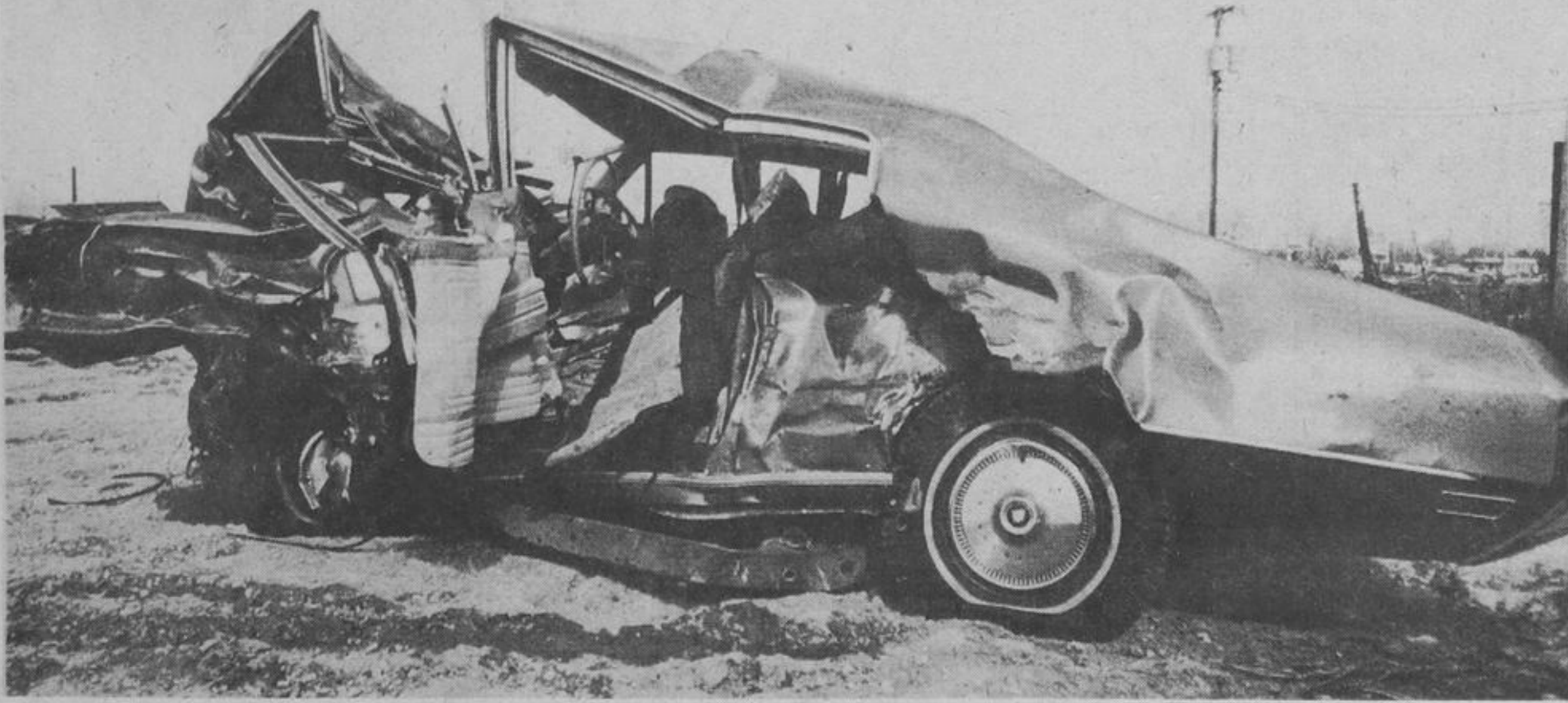


The axe falls on McConaghy

THE RICHMOND HILL *Liberal*

A Metrospan Community Newspaper Wednesday, March 14, 1979 20 Cents 28 pages



Three died in this twisted wreckage

Head-on smash kills four

Four people died and one was seriously injured in a five-car pileup on Highway 7 just east of Bayview Avenue Saturday night. Dead are Fitz and Kiarana Arthur and their 11-year-old daughter, Sandra, all of Scarborough, and the driver of one of the other vehicles, 22-year-old Christine Ballis, of Willowdale. The fatalities occurred when two of the five vehicles hit head-on, but Ontario Provincial Police

believe another car was sideswiped before the head-on collision happened. Two other vehicles involved were unable to avoid the pileup. One person survived the head-on crash... eight-year-old Wayne Arthur was taken to York Central Hospital, Richmond Hill, suffering a broken leg and internal injuries. He is now listed in satisfactory condition.

No one else was seriously injured in the accident, but the drivers of the other three vehicles were shaken up. They are James Riley Woods of R.R.1 King; Frank Mitchell of Danforth Road, Scarborough; and E. Marie Brittain of Richmond Hill. York Regional Police were called to assist OPP officers at the scene and traffic was detoured from Highway 7 for several hours.

LENGTH RESCUE
Markham and Richmond Hill firefighters were called to assist in rescue operations, because the drivers of the two destroyed vehicles were trapped in their cars. Two tow trucks, winches, porta-powers and the K-12 were all needed to pry the bodies from the twisted wreckage. Coroner, Dr. Robert Seaver of Markham, was called and he pronounced both drivers dead at the scene. Mrs. Arthur and her daughter were pronounced dead on arrival at York Central Hospital. Constable Michael Norton of the Oak Ridges OPP, the investigating officer, said, "It was one of the hardest impacts I have seen."

Was lack of left turn lane a factor, councillor wonders

John Birchall, Councillor for Ward 3, where the multi-fatal car collision occurred said "If the left turn lane had been there would those people be dead today?" The Richmond Hill Councillor expressed dismay that it had taken two years to get to the position where MTC would agree there was a problem, "but we still don't have action from government", he said. "It's almost criminal, the town recognized the problem back in 1977 and tried to get MTC to follow up." He was referring to a memo from Works Commissioner Bernie Toporowski in April of 1977 stating MTC had agreed to assist the town in preparing a study of the traffic flow on Highway 7 in the vicinity of Doncrest and Rockwell Roads. In May of 1977 the regional traffic engineer for MTC was asked again by the town to review the situation because of hazards for residents trying to merge with the existing traffic flow. Another request was sent in August of 1978 after complaints from the residents and later that month a letter came to the town from MTC saying they felt the highway in this area was "operating satisfactorily". The letter did say the collision experience in the area was "less than ideal" and mentioned the signing may be the cause of the

collisions which had occurred. MTC said they would recommend larger signs. Before the signs were erected a petition with 59 names was presented to the town engineering committee in October of 1978. The petition said that residents of the area "live in constant fear" saying it was impossible to leave or enter these streets without "risking your life" and were asking for immediate action in view of the number of serious personal injury accidents in the area. At this time the town wrote directly to the Minister of Transportation and Communications, James Snow telling him of the municipality's concerns about the numerous accidents in the area and asking for corrective measures. In November of 1978, Mr. Snow advised the town his ministry would look at options and get back to the municipality with his findings.

A staff report admitted there probably was not enough time between cars passing to allow safe crossing of the street, but suggested other solutions rather than a traffic light. Mayor David Schiller said he had seen far too many reports like this one from the traffic department. "They give reasons for not doing what is requested and then make all kinds of suggestions to other jurisdictions about what they could do to alleviate the problem."

The region in this case suggested police or a "responsible adult" could be on duty to help the mentally retarded cross the street since they all arrive at about the same time. It also suggested that police could come into ARC Industries to give a safety talk to the employees since one was observed walking onto Elgin Mills Road three times forcing traffic to slow before he actually crossed the street. Then he forced it to stop. The main suggestion was that Richmond Hill divert its buses at peak times to go into ARC Industries. This would only take two or three extra minutes. None of the three intersections in the area had enough traffic to warrant lights, but the staff report recommended monitoring of the Elgin Mills and Newkirk Road intersection. Mayor Schiller said this was like "tossing a bone". Engineering committee chairman Ron Moran said there had been considerable discussion of the situation in the committee before the recommendation was adopted.

York says 'no' to light to help retarded adults

Requests for a traffic signal to help mentally retarded adults cross Elgin Mills Road in Richmond Hill have been turned down by the Region of York. ARC Industries, operated by the York Region Association for the Mentally Retarded, is on Edward Street just north of Elgin Mills Road. The regional traffic staff observed 10 individuals get off a Richmond Hill bus and then cross the street to go to ARC Industries.

A staff report admitted there probably was not enough time between cars passing to allow safe crossing of the street, but suggested other solutions rather than a traffic light. Mayor David Schiller said he had seen far too many reports like this one from the traffic department. "They give reasons for not doing what is requested and then make all kinds of suggestions to other jurisdictions about what they could do to alleviate the problem."

The region in this case suggested police or a "responsible adult" could be on duty to help the mentally retarded cross the street since they all arrive at about the same time. It also suggested that police could come into ARC Industries to give a safety talk to the employees since one was observed walking onto Elgin Mills Road three times forcing traffic to slow before he actually crossed the street. Then he forced it to stop. The main suggestion was that Richmond Hill divert its buses at

By STEVE PEARLSTEIN
Liberal Staff Writer
M.L. McConaghy Public School opened in March, 1915, with an enrollment of 200 students and this June 30 will be the last day some 233 pupils will have to answer the bell there. Along with its decision to close the old school, the York Board of Education also approved "its intent" to close Jefferson Public School on the same date in 1980. Both moves, though necessary according to the vote, left a bad taste in most of the trustees' mouths.

Only three trustees, Beverly Breslow, Margaret McConaghy and John Denison, voted against closing McConaghy, which was one of three recommendations. Surprisingly, after two years of work by the Richmond Hill Study Committee and board staff research of the implications of shifting student enrollments and the utilization of pupil places, few questions were asked by any of the trustees Monday night. Richmond Hill Trustee Bill Monroe, who has made no bones about favoring the closing of McConaghy all along, stated his case succinctly and even moved the recommendation. June Armstrong, a Richmond Hill trustee who previously couldn't agree with school closings based only on better utilization of space, appeared to give up altogether. "The reason I support this recommendation is I can find no other way to solve the enrollment problem in our area. I don't believe it was an exercise in which we as a board can be proud... closing a school is a very sad thing. The school has roots and a history and I believe in those things."

She said she was glad the board will bring forth a clear policy for the procedure of closing a school and changing boundaries. NOTICE OF MOTION She was referring to a notice of motion (to be debated March 26) submitted by Vice-chairman Dorothy Zajac asking that the Planning and Building committee establish a task force to develop a procedure which will be followed in producing reports and recommendations to the board about boundary changes, school organizational changes or closings. The other Richmond Hill Trustee, Beverly Breslow, who spent time on the 'study committee as a representative of the Ross Doan parents group, was vigorously opposed to closing McConaghy right up to the final vote. Later, she admitted she was emotionally drained by the whole experience and felt the board's current procedure for such proposals is a sham. She, too, looks forward to the proposed new policy. "... in all good conscience, I can't support the staff recommendation to close M. L. McConaghy. I have been involved in the process and I can only say I'm glad I'll be able to be a parent of this new process coming to the board. I feel it will resolve much of the middle and problems we've had to face in this situation." She agreed there must have been a way to reduce the number of empty pupil places in Richmond Hill but claimed she still had to ask the question that kept coming over the last year: "If a school or schools in Richmond Hill have to close, why look at just McConaghy."

Staff picked up on that suggestion because the third proposal was to close Jefferson Public School this June also, if parents agree. If they didn't, the idea was to wait a year and then lower the boom. The problem is that any school scheduled for closing must be given a year's notice, according to the board's current position paper. MAYBE THIS JUNE The dissension of enough trustees resulted in the board approving its intention to close Jefferson on June 30, 1980 but if the majority of parents are in agreement, it could be closed this June. Director Sam Chapman made it clear, however, that if staff reports revealed new information, that "intent" could always be changed by the trustees. Jim Monkman, chairman of the McConaghy Association, though not surprised by the board's decision to close a school where his wife taught for 10 years and his kids are a third generation to attend it, said he learned a lot from the experience. "We met many people in the community and at the board who were truly concerned and that's reassuring. I'm disappointed we weren't given more grandfather clauses in the board's notice to close the school, like kids who are enrolled in a program now be allowed to continue until they graduate," he said. During a break he peppered Bill Monroe with questions about what will happen to his children's extra-curricular activities — guitar lessons and ballet and jazz dancing are all in close proximity to the school.

Wendy's would locate across from McDonald's

McDonald's and Wendy's, the two big hamburger chains in North America, are going to battle it out in Richmond Hill. Melvin Zackheim, the biggest developer of Wendy's Old Fashioned Hamburgers in Canada, now has town planning staff and committee of adjustment approval and will very soon present plans to construct a standard prototype Wendy's, right across the street from McDonald's. Mr. Zackheim, acting for Triumphant Holdings Ltd., owner of the property, which is now occupied by a rent-all business and the former site of A&W Restaurants, said the owner will demolish the existing building and begin construction of the new restaurant within the month, hoping to be open for business three to four months later. The restaurant is proposed to seat 92 people as well as have a convenience window, typical to Wendy's, for take out orders. The site will have greater parking facilities and additional landscaping and fencing, as requested by the town. Mr. Zackheim said Wendy's is an adult hamburger operation, not totally geared to children. He also said Wendy's likes to be as close to McDonald's as possible.

Wendy's acknowledges McDonald's as the first of the hamburger giants, he said, and recognizes they have prime locations. "But", said Mr. Zackheim, "We are not after the same market." "No one can meet McDonald's head on," he said. But he did say that two weeks ago Wendy's surpassed McDonald's as number one growing company in the fast food market in North America. Wendy's Old Fashioned Hamburgers began in the United States. Two years ago they came to Canada and so far have opened 23 restaurants. "Within two years we expect to have 400," said Mr. Zackheim enthusiastically. The representative for Wendy's said when the restaurant is in full operation it would employ 64 full time people, 99 per cent of whom would be students working shifts during business hours which are 10:30 a.m. until 10 p.m. Signs, often a problem in Richmond Hill because of size and height restrictions, presented no problem to the Wendy's representative. "We will adhere to whatever the local requirements are," he said.

Community Pulse

Hockey fever

Hockey fever hits Richmond Hill with a thump next week as the 12th annual Richmond Hill International Midget Tournament gets underway. Thirty-two teams from Canada and the United States will participate in the week-long event. Details on Page B-1.

Taking a Break

Meetings of committee and council during the March School Break, March 19 to 23, are cancelled and any committee meetings necessary will be transferred to the week of March 26, at the call of the chairman.

The Master Plan

The Parks and Recreation Committee will hold a public meeting Monday, April 9 at the Richvale Community Centre to present the master plan for parks and recreation facilities. The report is an elaboration of the policies contained in the revised Official Plan and provides objectives and policies to meet future needs for open space and recreation facilities and programs. Discussions begin at 7.30 p.m.

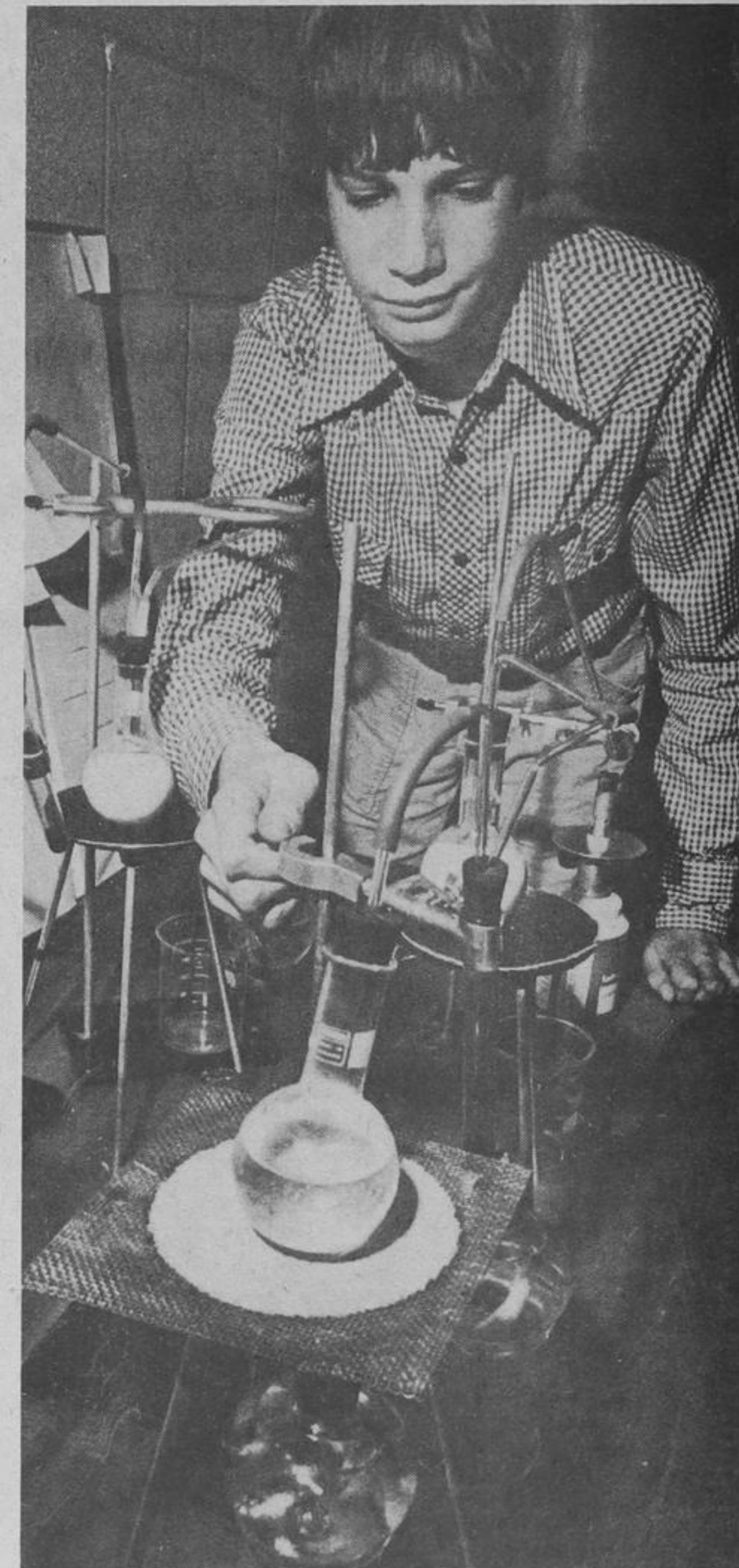
After letter printed

Teacher gets a dozen obnoxious phone calls

A Richmond Hill elementary teacher has received up to a dozen obnoxious, anonymous phone calls as the result of her views in a letter printed in last week's Liberal. Phyllis Cannon, of O.M. MacKillop Public School, commented on the apparent lack of parent concern over 40 people turned out to a well-publicized education forum at Aurora, February 22. "I expected reaction to the letter but not the nasty sort of calls I've been getting," said Mrs. Cannon. "Besides obscenities I was told I don't know how to handle children and that they shouldn't be exposed to me." Mrs. Cannon has been teaching for 15 years, has experience in primary diagnostic classes in special education and last fall published a paper on drug therapy and the hyperactive child. She can't understand the reason for the negative backlash she received. "My biggest concern is that it won't have any bad effects on the

school or any of the children. Maybe my response to the meeting just came at the wrong time." She made it clear her feelings were directed to the people of York Region at large and towards education in general. She said the principal, Doug McElhinney, considered her letter as an independent opinion, especially since she has three of her own children in the system. "Through the parent grapevine, I've heard many of the parents were sorry they missed the forum. Advance notice of it went out, but I guess many people weren't aware it was happening," she said. While all the callers refused to identify themselves, most asked Mrs. Cannon if she, in fact, taught their children. She plans to keep her phone off the hook for a few nights and take her principal's advice: "Hang in there."

Already the town needs a new bus Last Monday council approved Mr. Newton's recommendation to purchase a new 31-passenger "Orion" bus, the same as the one now used on the Oak Ridges to Richvale run. The town's share is 25 per cent of the total cost of \$70,780.55 with the Ministry of Transportation and Communications subsidizing the balance.



Martin Langhammer, 13, a Grade 8 student at Roselawn School, demonstrates a method he developed to separate water into hydrogen and oxygen at the Area 3 Science Fair held at Crosby Heights Senior Public School last week. A complete list of results, plus additional photos, will appear in next week's Liberal. (Liberal photo by Bruce Hogg)