

# THE RICHMOND HILL Liberal

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## Elementary teachers say no to larger class sizes

Nearly 300 elementary school teachers streamed into the Administrative Centre at Aurora Monday night to impress upon school trustees they are unwilling to accept increasing class sizes throughout the region.

The enthusiastic but orderly group comprised only half the number of teachers who attended an earlier meeting where unanimous support was given to their salary negotiating team over the major issue of the number of pupils in regular classes.

While they milled about outside the board room and passed out buttons with a beseeching "Reduce class size now!" slogan on them, trustees spent an hour in closed session debating a staff report requesting the hiring of 27 new teachers for next September.

"Negotiations on the next contract haven't broken down," said Negotiations Chairman Kirby Brock, "it's just that our first priority happens to be class size. Our team feels that all the other issues can be settled once we've reached agreement with the board on this."

According to YCETAF (York County Elementary Teachers' Association of Federations) the average class size in York exceeds 28 elementary pupils.

It claims expansion of programs could raise that figure in excess of 30, causing regular classroom students to suffer the effects of larger classes.

Both French and Special Education programs get provincial grants for extra

staffing and the board must recognize the impact of staffing requirements for special programs, said a release from the teachers.

During its pre-meeting closed session, the board did just that. After hearing a report from Director Sam Chapman stating the need to conform to Ministry Regulation 704, which states special education classes may have a maximum of 12 pupils per class, the hiring of 27 new teachers was approved.

"I think it was a responsible decision by the board," said Dorothy Zajac, chairman of the board's elementary team. "Since we are putting in new programs we had to go ahead with the decision to hire teachers."

Mrs. Zajac said these teachers will be hired outside the PTR (pupil-teacher ratio). Class size and PTR are figures not totally related; PTR is determined by dividing the total number of full time equivalent teachers into the number of full time equivalent pupils; it is a negotiable item in salary negotiations and something Mr. Brock said his team will "negotiate hard on, even though part of the problem lies with the ministry".

PTN now stands at 21.23:1. Class size is the average number of pupils in regular day classes and many teachers, like YCETAF President Dean Bodkin, fear the larger they're allowed to get the more programs that will have to be cut back.

"Things like guidance time, library time and administration time will also have to suffer if we

can't break this deadlock with board negotiators. I'd say the library of a school is a key room, the focal point of the school," he said.

The teachers' show of numbers was supposed to influence the board to re-examine its position on class size. Many of those who had stood outside the boardroom

for more than an hour left 90 minutes into the meeting.

Mr. Brock said he is confident other issues being negotiated will fall into place once progress is made on class sizes.

The team is requesting a salary increase which would keep up with the cost of living or one comparable with a secondary

school contract, for example. The team also wants a teacher's years of service to be taken into account before his contract can be ended due to declining enrollment.

"We're not looking at other boards—we must deal with what we have here, within the bounds of York County," said Mr. Brock.



The grass fire season hit with full force last week as Richmond Hill fire fighters and citizens combined to bring some 20 blazes under control. This one broke out

Friday on Yonge Street north of the Summit Golf Club, and consumed about two acres of grass and bush before flames were extinguished.

## 20 grass fires...so far

Grass fire season arrived with all its fury last week in Richmond Hill and Markham.

Markham Fire Department responded to 17 grass fires in a five-day period from last Wednesday to Monday of this week.

Richmond Hill Fire Department was kept hopping as men and equipment responded to no fewer than 20 grass fires and eight bonfires, all since Thursday of last week.

Other fires also kept everyone busy.

Ratcliffs of Canada on Yonge Street in Richmond Hill was the scene of two pre-dawn fires; one on Friday morning about 3:30 and the other early Monday

morning. A faulty fan in the building is said to be the cause of these fires, and it will be repaired.

A cut-rate gas bar on Yonge Street in Oak Ridges caused some moments of apprehension Monday afternoon as smoke could be seen coming out of the roof.

Fire fighters responded and no serious damage resulted from the blaze, that was quickly extinguished.

The cause of this fire is still under investigation and at present, there is no estimate of the damages.

TOTAL DOWN  
Richmond Hill Fire Chief Bob

Kennedy says the grass fire total is down compared with other years, and he attributes the decrease to the change in school holidays.

When school children were home for the old Easter holidays, there used to be many more grass fires, but now that there are no more holidays at Easter and the kids are home for a week in March instead, the total has dropped.

Kennedy says this is because in March the ground, is still pretty wet and fires don't really have the chance to get going, not as well as they do in April once the ground has dried out.

## Libertarian candidate is selected

The Libertarian Party, committed to protect private enterprise in Canada, now has a candidate in York North riding.

Dan Davidson, 35, a professional engineer from Thornhill, nominated to represent the party in this area, said the Libertarian party would like to see more personal freedom and less government in Canada.

"People don't need to be governed from cradle to grave," said Mr. Davidson, "they can make some decisions for themselves."

Mr. Davidson said he was referring broadly to areas such

as unemployment insurance, minimum wage laws and overtime restrictions.

The Libertarian Party feels a person in a position of running a small business should be in a position to make these kinds of decisions himself, said the candidate.

Libertarians would like to change the tax system in Canada, said Mr. Davidson.

The present government is "gobbling up" a lot of dollars in taxes, he said, but the taxpayers have little to say how the money is spent.

Mr. Davidson's party would like to see taxes lowered and

people pay for privileges they desire.

The Libertarians feel there are many areas in which the government is now involved that could be far better handled by private enterprise.

Mail delivery is a good example, he said.

"We would work very hard to eliminate government," said Mr. Davidson.

But, there are three proper functions for government, he said, the judicial system, the armed forces to protect the country and the police force to handle disputes between individuals.

## Chamber to sponsor all-candidates night

The Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce will sponsor an All-Candidates Night, Friday, May 11.

Included will be the four candidates seeking the seat in the

federal riding of York-North May 22.

They are Liberal incumbent Barney Danson; Libertarian Dan Davidson; Progressive Conservative John Gamble; and New Democratic Party's Bruce Searle.

The event will be held at Don Head Secondary School in Richmond Hill, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

While some details remain to be worked out, it is expected the format for the evening will include a panel of media personnel, and questions from the audience.

Members of Richmond Hill's Citizens Advisory Group had also planned to hold such an event, but decided to work with Chamber members to assure the success of the meeting May 11.

Chamber directors will meet again tonight to continue planning the event.

## TRANSIT

### Gormley to lose GO Bus service

By the end of April residents of Gormley will no longer have a bus service.

Gormley resident, Dr. Gerry Gold, said last week the Toronto Area Transit Operating Authority (TATO) presented passengers of a twice daily Gormley bus service, with a notice advising the service would terminate.

The Gormley bus originated in Stouffville, travelled along the Gormley Sideroad to Bayview Avenue where it turned south to meet the Bayview GO Transit service and proceeded to the Finch subway station.

According to Dr. Gold, six to seven residents depend on this service to ride to Toronto in the morning and home in the evening, each work day.

Dr. Gold said a representative from TATO informed him this "tag end" service through Gormley was too costly.

"Is public transit to serve the public or to make money?" asked Dr. Gold, suggesting if that was the case, 75 percent of TTC routes would be cancelled immediately.

The Engineering Committee for the town of Richmond Hill was informed by Dr. Gold about this loss of service.

Councillor Mike Burnie assured Dr. Gold he personally would look into the matter immediately and if GO Transit could not be persuaded to continue the service, Engineering Administrator, Bud Newton, would be asked to look into the cost of running a town bus to the area.

Mr. Newton said he would look into other alternatives including the Travelways bus travelling to the subway from the north along Don Mills Road.

He hoped Travelways could be persuaded to detour the one and one-half miles along Gormley Sideroad to serve the Richmond Hill residents living in Gormley.

### Bayview bus route undergoes changes

Changes are proposed for the Bayview Avenue bus service from Richmond Hill to Finch subway station—some good, and some bad.

The Ministry of Transportation and Communications (MTC) sent proposals to the municipality subject to approval by the Toronto Area Transit Operating Authority (TATO) board, outlining variations of the existing route.

Engineering Administrator, Bud Newton, said the town engineering committee decided to choose the alternative, routing the Bayview GO Transit bus across John Street in Thornhill and down Yonge Street to the Finch subway station.

At this time the bus goes south on Bayview Avenue to Steeles Avenue, where it crosses to Yonge Street.

To protect the Markham Transit buses running the same route down Bayview, GO Transit would pick up passengers to Highway 7, but after this point the bus would only stop to let

passengers disembark.

The new proposal also means buses would leave on a 30-minute peak rush hour basis rather than every 15 minutes as it does now, and there would be no buses on weekends.

The positive factor in the proposal is the fare will drop from 60 cents a trip to 40 cents.

MTC also recommended this Bayview bus service be only a peak hour service, 6:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., and buses running at other times be eliminated.

A member of the engineering committee for the town, Councillor Mike Burnie, said this was not acceptable to Richmond Hill.

"We want it to operate during the day," he said, requesting Mr. Newton to advise TATO of the town's stand.

There is no implementation date for the revised service at this time, said Mr. Newton, who stressed it is only at the proposal stage and has yet to be approved by TATO.

## Community Pulse

### Noisy course

Hold your ears.

The annual fireworks supervisor's course will take place in and around the Richmond Hill Arena tomorrow, April 26, beginning at 9 a.m.

Around noon, members of the Richmond Hill Fire Department will stand by while the course gets down to the nitty-gritty... setting off fireworks which are guaranteed to rattle your windows.

The course is open to anyone planning to hold a public firework display this year; and, as a matter of fact, you MUST take the course to supervise such a display.

### Where your money goes

If you own a Richmond Hill home assessed at \$20,000 and you support the public school system, your taxes this year will be approximately \$822.44

The Finance Department issued estimated 1979 Mill Rates last week showing a breakdown of this amount as \$124.82 to the region of York, \$244.80 to the Town of Richmond Hill and \$452.82 to the school board.

Separate School supporters would pay \$857.66 with \$209.44 going for secondary school taxes and \$278.60 to elementary school.

The tax bill in 1975 for public school support was \$614.88 and Separate School \$650.14.

Rates for 1979 are estimated and may change slightly when final taxable assessment totals are known.

### The Klan strikes?

The Ku Klux Klan strikes again—in Richmond Hill. Sometime between the hour of midnight and 4 a.m. Saturday the election sign for NDP candidate Bruce Searle, was set ablaze and remained flaming for minutes on Pat Gregg's front lawn at 55 Loverock Avenue.

When the Greggs awoke, there on the front lawn were the charred remains.

### Playground wanted

With the goal to construct a playground at Roselawn School on Carrville Road, a meeting will be held Monday, April 30, at 7:30 p.m., to plan such a project. Officials are hopeful that residents of the area will attend the meeting and bring along ideas of how the playground can be built. For further information, call 889-6653.

### Ben started it...

Don't forget. This Sunday, April 29 at 2 a.m., daylight saving time goes into effect.

Don't forget, we can thank Benjamin Franklin for the extra hour of daylight we enjoy as a result of daylight saving time.

Benjamin Franklin suggested the idea of moving clocks ahead in a whimsical essay written in 1784 and the idea was adopted during the first world war when clocks were moved ahead one hour to help reduce fuel consumption.

The rule "spring forward and fall backward" is sure to help you remember to set your clocks ahead one hour April 29.

## 52 workers strike at Stran-Steel plant

Another steel plant is on strike in Richmond Hill.

Last Wednesday, 52 workers in local 847 of the Teamsters Union went on strike against Stran-Steel Building Systems, on Industrial Road.

Stran-Steel is a division of Westeel-Rosco Limited.

Workers, who have been without a contract since December 31, 1978, are asking the company for higher wages and benefits.

Norm Gunn, a worker at Stran-Steel for five years, now picketing the plant, said "We're the worst paid steel shop around".

Workers at Stran-Steel feel they are being discriminated against as they make far less than their fellow workers at the "mother" plant, Westeel Rosco in Rexdale.

"Why should we be treated like second class citizens," said Mr. Gunn.

George Beatty, captain of the striking local, said 100 per cent of the members voted to strike when negotiations broke down with the company.

Mr. Beatty said workers were asking for a ten per cent wage increase the first year and the same the second year of the contract.

At this time the company has

offered nine per cent the first year and five and one-half per cent the second year, said the union captain.

Local 847 of the Teamsters Union would also like to have better life insurance coverage, a dental plan, company paid pension plan and sick pay to equal their fellow workers at Westeel-Rosco, said Mr. Beatty.

Glenn Hurst, Industrial Relations Manager for Westeel-Rosco would not comment on the company position but did say the union's statements about inequality with the mother company were "not correct statements".

Stran-Steel in Richmond Hill manufactures pre-engineered steel shells of buildings such as plants, arenas and other buildings for contractors to erect and finish the interiors.

Workers are picketing the plant 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

Office staff is allowed in but already trucks delivering materials and salesmen have been turned away by the picketers.

"We'll stay out until we get what we ask for," said Mr. Beatty.

Mr. Hurst said he had no idea when negotiations will resume.

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## Meeting tomorrow may resolve strike

Striking workers at Reynolds Extrusion Company Limited on Edward Avenue in Richmond Hill are hopeful that a meeting set for tomorrow, April 26, will be productive.

President of striking local 8412 of the United Steelworkers of America, Dennis Smith, said the Minister of Labour called the meeting for Thursday and he is optimistic about the results.

"After 14 weeks, you have to be," he said.

About 170 members of the local are striking against Reynolds Extrusion in Richmond Hill as a result of a stalemate over union demands for better fringe benefits.

Mr. Smith said he felt it was in the interest of both parties involved to settle this dispute as quickly as possible.