

OMB should seek truth

Last week, Ontario Municipal Board members in Buttonville refused to accept a newspaper clipping as evidence.

There is nothing surprising about that as the hearing chairman explained it would be unfair to introduce a newspaper article if its author was not available for cross-examination.

The only trouble is that the OMB routinely accepts all kinds of letters from government officials who are not available to the public to answer for their questions when an OMB hearing takes place.

In this particular case, the newspaper article dealt with the overcrowding of York Region's schools, quoting board chairman Donald Cousens' statement that 50 new schools would be needed.

It appeared to be in direct contradiction to the standard letter from the York County Board of Education stating that space could be made available in existing schools in the village of Markham for students in a new subdivision, or that a new school would be built.

Several residents told the OMB about the chronic school overcrowding problem in the village, but the OMB members preferred to place their confidence in the school board's ability to build schools.

No one was available to be cross-examined on the fact that the York County Board of Education is already two elementary schools behind in the Town of Markham and the situation is likely to get worse before it gets better.

It is unfair for the OMB to take the word of far-off paper pushers that is directly contradicted by several residents who take the trouble to testify.

The OMB had several days allotted for this particular hearing and could have insisted that school board administrators be called to back up their letters.

Otherwise, the letters should have been received with the same lack of credibility as the discarded newspaper article.

The rules of evidence should be used to get at the truth, not speed up a hearing.



LIBERAL SPRINKLINGS

Bringing the town together

By SHAARON HAY
 Liberal Staff Writer

Does Richmond Hill have a community spirit?

Last week two women from a firm in Montreal, came to Richmond Hill trying to find the answer to that question.

Rita Norton and Debra Lyons of L. J. D'Amore and Associates, interviewed people representing school board, hospital, Chamber of Commerce, citizen organizations, service clubs and church groups, trying to get a feeling of our community and the reaction to conducting a federally funded energy conservation project right here in Richmond Hill.

The federal government is hoping to develop community energy conservation through citizen participation and initiative. They will experiment for one year in three municipalities across Canada.

It started out Richmond Hill was one of 20 municipalities in Canada being looked at, but it turns out the government wants one town representing the east, one typifying the west and one central, a fact which lowers the odds.

Richmond Hill is now one of 11 potential candidates to host such a demonstration project.

It is hoped citizens themselves will assess conservation alternatives, set realistic goals and determine actions required to accomplish such goals — through their own initiative.

After speaking with Rita Norton, the key to selection seems to be "Can the community pull together and work efficiently toward a common goal?"

"PUT DOWN"

I wonder if that is a BIG question in all municipalities?

I think it is in Richmond Hill. Sometimes it seems as though some citizens here play a game called "Put Down".

The players are known as "Private Enterprise" or "Developers" and are stacked against "The Do-Gooders" or "Controlled Development".

These factions in town are so irritated with each other that if one brings up an idea, the other disagrees — just on principle.

Just a small example: For some time now the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee has been trying to enthuse Yonge Street downtown businessmen to spruce up or refurbish Yonge Street, but gets little support.

"You can't turn a sow's ear into a silk purse," is a common reaction, or "bulldoze the whole thing and get the traffic moving" or even more common, and indignant "why?"

That is not known as community spirit. Richmond Hill seems to have more than its share of dedicated people, but they are "issue-oriented".

There are those who oppose the hydro towers, those who support the Recycling Committee, active minor sports groups, church organizations, special education facilities — but would these people be willing to work together, not just for the good of Richmond Hill, but the whole of Canada?

There are even many groups already working on energy conservation programs.

St. Mary's Anglican Church had a successful newspaper drive to raise money to insulate part of their building. There is the Richmond Hill Recycling Committee, a volunteer group collecting newspapers each week and a depot set up for collecting glass and cans. Even the schools are looking into ways to conserve energy.

Can these groups all be co-ordinated to work together?

I think all sympathize with the energy conservation issue, and most are willing to make an effort to voluntarily change their lifestyle in a small way — but what about working together?

WHO WILL HELP?

Who among us is willing to help his neighbor save dollars by insulating an old wall or leave the car at home and join a car pool?

On the other side, who can easily accept such a suggestion or even such an offer of help? We have become very independent.

Anyone working in such a community oriented project would have to be gentle with such unbending attitudes prevalent in Richmond Hill, or then again, they might be bowled over by existing organizations offering services and dynamic suggestions.

I think such a project could put Richmond Hill on the map and might even be able to draw this community together.

Letter

We're not civilized

I would like to thank the original birds to fill Marjorie Kenneth for the cages.

The next day they are of the public the barbaric trucked off to still another manner in which live fowl are kept and handled at the Stouffville Market.

Often they go for many hours or days without food or water.

I find the entire procedure so offensive I can no longer go near the Stouffville Market.

I feel we still have a long way to go before we can call ourselves civilized.

Those that are not sold during the day are trucked back home and more are thrust in with
 D. Turgeon,
 216 Shaughnessy Blvd.,
 Willowdale.

YESTERDAYS

By MARY DAWSON

First Christmas tree appeared here in 1933

Richmond Hill's first Community Christmas Tree appeared in 1933.

Donated by Frank Graham of Vaughan Township the 30-foot high tree was cut by James McLean assisted by O. Mallory and Percy Young who also hauled it to the village where it was erected next to the radial station at the corner of Yonge and Lorne by a gang of volunteers.

Doug Chamney and his

hydro staff took care of the lighting installation.

The village's board of trade were the sponsors of the tree, raising the necessary funds by a Christmas Stocking banquet held in the Masonic Hall December 10. The Women's Institute catered for the banquet and donated \$10 of their fee to the project which was to provide a Christmas Stocking filled with candy, nuts and

other goodies to every child in town and surrounding area who attended.

Institute members also assisted by making all the necessary gift stockings. So, indeed it was a real community Christmas tree, made possible through the co-ordinated efforts of many residents and business people of the village.

When the big evening, December 23, arrived, Santa came down from the north to be met by a parade at the northern limits of the village.

He was escorted to the tree by many citizens, young and old, and by a band which had also come from the north, from Newmarket.

When the parade reached the big tree, already decorated with lights and hundreds of Christmas stockings, Tom Trench, president of the board of trade, took over as master of ceremonies.

Members of every church choir in the village were already grouped on the station platform and led the singing of Christmas carols under the direction of A. J. Hume and accompanied by the band.

And then came the big moment when Santa presented a well-filled stocking to each child present.

In all 525 stockings were given out.

For a time the committee in charge feared that Santa's pack would not hold out until the last child had his gift, but fortunately supply and demand balanced out.

There were even enough stockings to take care of sick and shut-in children throughout the area.

By BOB RICE

Why do people gather at crash sites?

It was very upsetting to read a headline in one of the daily papers Monday titled "Ghouls gather at crash site".

The accompanying story told of how efforts by OPP and York Regional Police to raise the wreckage of an airplane in Lake Simcoe were being hampered by boatloads of "sightseers" who had gathered to watch the macabre operation.

Sitting in the airport coffee shop that morning I had a hard time convincing my flying compatriots that such a thing does go on until I told them about the crash of Flight 621.

On a sunny Sunday morning, many years ago, I was finally getting around to laying the new kitchen tile that I had put off for many weeks.

I was nearing the halfway point when the phone rang and Dee called out that it was for me.

The KEY newsman's voice was quite excited as he told me that an airliner had crashed north of Toronto International Airport and wanted me to get the helicopter airborne as soon as was possible.

I had just received my license the previous week and normally I could have covered the short distance to Buttonville Airport in about eight minutes.

However, the helicopter had been taken downtown on Saturday for some minor servicing and I was faced with the decision of either having to disturb our back-up pilot, Jim McClellan, on his day off, and have him pick up the machine to meet me enroute or to lose precious time and drive downtown to the lakefront heliport myself.

Fortunately Jim was home and within 15 minutes he was airborne and I drove across Highway 7, keeping in touch with him via my two-way radio.

Prior to leaving the house I had called the Toronto International control tower to ascertain whether I would be allowed to fly near the crash site and not only did they give permission but also welcomed whatever aid that we could offer.

EMERGENCY PLAN

An emergency plan that had only recently been formulated by the various agencies involved had already been put into effect and I approached the first roadblock at Highways 7 and 27.

Following a quick radio check with his superiors, the OPP constable let me through and I continued westward to the spot where Jim and I planned to meet.

The chopper touched down and within seconds I was strapped into the right seat. Using a special radio frequency set aside for the crash co-ordinators, I informed them that we were airborne and were available to assist.

As the site of the disaster came into view I found it hard to believe what I was seeing. Had the area not been crawling with police

and rescue personnel the scene would have been that of a farmhouse set back from the main roadway, the laundry still drying on the clothesline and a large hole in the ground within 300 feet of the building. It was impossible to comprehend that more than 100 people had died in that hole.

Upon landing at the site we were asked to fly a pattern around the area and try to spot any debris from the DC-8. Within minutes Jim and I were jotting down position points of various pieces of the jetliner and returned to the crash co-ordinator with our findings.

SHORT FLIGHTS

Next came a series of short flights between the disaster area and the airport during which various Air Canada and government personnel were transported to the scene of the tragedy.

I remember vividly one passenger was an ashen faced priest who sat silently on the journey back to International.

I found out later that it was his unfortunate job to tell the bad news to relatives and friends who had gathered in a special room at the airport while awaiting news of their loved ones.

The longer I spent at the scene the sicker I got. Even Jim who, during the days with the Metro Police Force, has seen some grizzly sights, had a hard time trying to keep his mind on the job at hand.

Four hours after the impact of 621 the chaos settled down. Department of Transport inspectors had full control of the situation and the tremendous jigsaw that is the aftermath of such a tragedy was slowly taking shape.

We took to the air for one final sweep of the area to doublecheck for additional wreckage and that is when I saw them...the ghouls.

What possesses normally sane people to change into sick members of humanity for several hours of their lifetime? Why would allegedly "responsible" parents load their young children into a car to expose them to such tragedy? Why would these people walk several miles over plowed farmland and barbed wire fences, in some cases carrying a picnic lunch?

Are they all so sick that they have to feed on the misery of others to somehow sustain themselves throughout their lives?

The scenes that I saw at the crash of 621 will always be with me and believe me, I wish I had not been there. However bad it may have been though, the sight of hundreds upon hundreds of people, trying to get close to the wreckage and carnage that had disrupted that perfect day, some even laughing and joking as if going to a gigantic party...that made me even sicker and left me wondering if some of us are no better than animals.

I don't think the ol' Millpond Philosopher has anything to add.

A new type of artistry at Centre

During the month of August, Greg Schilhab will display a totally different type of artistry at the Thornhill Community Centre when he shows his airbrush and water-colour works.

Greg is a resident of Thornhill and a student at Thornlea Secondary School where he had his first gallery show.

Greg describes himself as a 'self-taught artist' who started sketching about 12 years ago and for the last three years has been painting large scale with air-brush and water-colour.

His ideology stems from the story of a continent he is writing about. While the story has been temporarily shelved, Greg is back to surrealism, never painted from scenes or pictures, but rather from pictures which are always assembled in the mind.

His earlier influences were from Salvador Dali but now all his attention is on the surrealist Rene Margitte from Belgium.

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