

Businessmen wonder where their money went

By SHAARON HAY
Liberal Staff Writer

Some businessmen in town are having second thoughts about the competence of the staff and council of the Town of Richmond Hill.

In March of 1979 the town gave exclusive rights to a company called National Transit Cards to

place advertisements on all Richmond Hill Transit buses.

Businesses which contracted with National Transit Cards have had problems ranging from advertisements not being put on the buses at all to signs being damaged and not replaced.

President of National Transit Cards, Frank Brouwer, cannot be

located by people in the business community or the town staff.

Town Auto Body in Richmond Hill gave up trying to deal with Mr. Brouwer and issued a writ for breach of contract two weeks ago.

The local refinishing firm contracted with National Transit in February for four large signs

to be affixed to the back of the buses — advertisements which have never appeared.

An amount of \$2,940 was demanded, in advance, for these so-far non-existent ads.

Globe Travel Service contracted with National Transit for three signs, but so far only one has materialized.

Jake Van Ravenzwaay, the owner of the travel service, said he too plans to sue the advertising company for breach of contract.

W & P Motors Limited, paid \$965 in advance for one sign.

Kurt Wichtler, president of the Volkswagen sales company, said it took six months to get the sign, and he is quite dissatisfied as the

ad ripped a short time later and has never been replaced or repaired.

Many other small businesses in town have the same tale of woe, money in advance for a contract which was not honored by National Transit Cards.

Many of the victims feel the town should have checked the

advertising firm before authorizing them to do business in town.

National Transit is not registered with either the Better Business Bureau or the Canadian Advertising Council.

"I think the town is responsible," said Mr. Van Ravenzwaay from Globe Travel.

Mr. Wichtler, from W & P Motors, also said he held the town responsible, "it's their buses — they should have checked".

Town clerk Dave Weldon said he did not think the town had any legal obligation, it merely leased the space to Mr. Brouwer and he sublet, but Mr. Weldon did say the people who had been hurt by this company are residents and taxpayers in the town so he will try to help out.

"I'm looking at the whole fiasco," he said, "to find something acceptable to both the town and the advertisers."

Mr. Weldon said he has a list of advertisers, as provided by Mr. Brouwer in June, and he intends to ask them in writing to supply the town with a copy of their contract with National Transit Cards.

Mayor Dave Schiller suggested if there was anything the town could do to complete the contracts — such as providing space available on the buses — the town would try to accommodate people.

"But, we are not in the advertising business," he said.

National Transit Cards contracted to pay the town, \$6,200 over a two-year contract for the right to place ads on the buses. Payments were to be made in monthly installments for which the town had post dated cheques (and a letter of credit for \$4,000).

The Clerk, Mr. Weldon, acknowledged that one cheque to the town has been defaulted, and the town has attempted, so far unsuccessfully, to reach Mr. Brouwer.

Mr. Weldon said he understands the Town of Newmarket is in the same situation, with a cheque in default, and they cannot reach Mr. Brouwer.

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Everyone's blamed for commuter chaos

If you want to know who is responsible for discontinuing the Bayview Avenue bus service, it depends on who you ask.

Former Richmond Hill Councillor Lois Hancey, speaking for residents of Richmond Hill east of Yonge Street, said she thinks it is the town's fault.

Council did not support the residents in their wish to have the service put back the way it was, she said.

Alf Stong, MLA-York Centre, said he thinks it is the fault of the Toronto Area Transit Operating Authority (TATOA). They did not administer the policy of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications (MTC).

Mayor Dave Schiller and Councillor Mike Burnie, a former chairman of the town's Engineering Committee, say they feel it is Markham Transit's fault. Markham Transit was competing with GO Transit for passengers on Bayview Avenue.

Last Tuesday night, an exasperated and vocal crowd of concerned residents turned out to a meeting where GO Transit officials came up with what they called a 'compromise' to the previous Bayview Avenue bus service.

GO has suspended mid-day service, added evening service to 11 p.m., and looped 'C' buses hourly to the Newkirk station.

Mrs. Hancey, speaking for some of the residents said these people did not want GO Transit's compromise, they wanted a service comparable to the one supplied by Travelways for many years.

Residents told horror stories of crowded buses (where they had to stand from Richmond Hill to

the Finch Subway), no service (mid-day and Sundays), and incomplete service (compared with Yonge Street service).

They also expressed the fear regular service cutbacks were just another indication there would be no Bayview Avenue bus service to Richmond Hill before too long.

"We're upset that at a time of a need for energy conservation we should have to be here to plead our case not to use our cars," said Mrs. Hancey. "If dollars were the criteria — there wouldn't be public transit."

In reply to Mrs. Hancey's accusations that it was the town's fault, Councillor Burnie went over the history of the problem again, each time emphasizing "Richmond Hill always asked for NO changes".

"Markham Transit is the one that sits at the foot of the whole thing," said Councillor Burnie.

GO Transit representatives sat in the middle being talked about and not given the opportunity for rebuttal.

Manager of Bus Operations for GO Transit, Ron Swanson, said only, "we did want we could to satisfy requests we heard the other night", referring to a meeting October 4 to discuss GO's new policy.

A Thornhill resident, unhappy with the Markham Transit service, and wanting the original GO Transit service back on Bayview Avenue, suggested the people of Thornhill and Richmond Hill should join forces.

At this point Mayor Schiller suggested Richmond Hill council members, Alf Stong, GO Transit representatives, and as many concerned residents as possible

try to meet with Markham Transit to find a compromise.

Yesterday Mayor Schiller said his suggestion will go as a resolution to council November 5, and then he will look into the timing of such a meeting, if council members agree.

Near the end of the meeting residents almost "cut off their nose to spite their face" by not accepting GO Transit's latest offer, hoping to wait them out to get what they wanted.

Finally it was decided residents would "trust" the town to find a solution to the problem and with a show of hands decided to agree to the service as outlined by GO Transit.

Ernie Madden, Manager of Marketing for GO Transit, said Monday, the new service was in effect in Richmond Hill.

Energy group may have new location

If both parties are agreeable, Energy Action Richmond Hill may soon have its storefront location.

The energy conservation group has been looking for a home for more than a month, but has been unable to find anything suitable.

Richmond Hill Town Councillors Dave Amos and Lou Wainwright came up with a suggestion — the senior citizens' clubroom at 10149 Yonge Street.

Councillor Amos made his presentation to the conservation group's steering committee Wednesday morning.

He and Councillor Wainwright met with Seniors' president Dorothy Price and agreed a meeting between the two parties should be set up.

Councillor Mike Burnie, a member of the energy group's steering committee, felt it might be awkward in that location because of the various senior citizens' functions which occur there on a regular basis.

However, he and other members of the committee agreed to meet with the Seniors to discuss the possibilities of the location.



At the official opening of new facilities for the handicapped at Richmond Hill Public Library with the aid of a Wintario Grant from the Monday, Mayor Dave Schiller, Chief Minister of Culture and Recreation. The Librarian, Betty Rowland, Chairman of the reception was for the adult handicapped and Library Board, Ella Bremner and provincial representative, Alf Stong, watch Gordon a puppet show, magician and clowns. (See Snyder, of Bathurst Street, cut the ribbon. story, Page A-7).

When you bank this week, do it the United Way

A three-day blitz campaign in which the public can make contributions to the United Way of York Region campaign has been announced by Barney Danson, campaign chairman.

On November 1-2-3, United Way volunteers will be at every bank branch and trust company office throughout York Region, during normal banking hours, to receive contributions from the public.

"With the co-operation of these financial institutions and hundreds of volunteers, we are hoping the residents of the

Region will take advantage of this convenient way to support the United Way", said Mr. Danson, adding that cash, cheque, pledge or credit card donations will be welcomed.

Donations may also be telephoned to the United Way office at 884-0132.

Noting that the size of the Region and the distance between population centres makes the organization of a door-to-door canvass difficult, Chairman Danson said "SAY YES DAYS is an experiment. I hope it works. It has enabled us to

concentrate on calling on industries throughout the Region where we are receiving excellent support. Now it's the public's turn to 'Say Yes' for the 18 United Way of York Agencies."

He added that the support of York Regional Police Chief Bruce Crawford in organizing "SAY YES FOR YORK DAYS" is typical of the hundreds of volunteers from every part of the Region who have come forward to help push the United Way campaign for funds over the top of the \$496,000 goal.

11-year-old beaten, no Block Parents near, mother says

Last week an 11-year-old boy was badly beaten by older children and he could not find help.

Penny Spence, president of Richmond Hill Block Parents, said the mother called her asking why there were no Block Parent homes in her area.

Mrs. Spence had to inform her that there were at least five on the route the boy would travel and then turned to find out where the system for assisting anyone in trouble had broken down.

"It illustrates the need for more Block Parents homes," said Mrs. Spence, "and the need

for educating kids how to use the program."

This week Mickie Ashman, chairman of the Block Parent education committee, began a new program in the 17 public and separate schools in Richmond Hill.

The program begins with a film entitled "What's a Block Parent?" and leads into a discussion of the film and times when kids should use a home with the familiar red and white sign in the window.

Mrs. Ashman said the kids ask questions such as "what if you go to a house with a sign up and no one answers?" or "what do we do if there are no Block Parents?"

Children are encouraged to go home displaying the Block Parent sign if they are harassed by older children, adults, or animals, or if they are ill, hurt or lost.

The Block Parents organization has been operating in Richmond Hill for four years and have 600 homes registered. "That's not many in a town with our population," said Mrs. Spence, the president.

Each time Mrs. Ashman goes to a school she presents a plaque with the Block Parent emblem and town insignia, asking it be displayed in a prominent place, permanently.

Classes are given a poster to display showing the times when to use Block Parents, and each child receives a stencilled sheet to color with the same message.



Richmond Hill Transit's millionth rider, Cindy Allingham, is congratulated by Mayor Dave Schiller at Allencourt Plaza, where she was boarding the bus.

Richmond Hill's Transit Co-ordinator, Bud Newton (left), driver David Proulx,

and Councillors Dave Amos and Mike Burnie look on while the mayor tells the lucky winner of prizes she has won.

CINDY ALLINGHAM

Our millionth rider to use Nashville trip for honeymoon

Wednesday turned out to be a good day for Cindy Allingham to go to work by bus.

As Cindy stepped on a Richmond Hill Transit bus at Allencourt Plaza, a wild cheer went up and Richmond Hill's mayor and two councillors stepped forward to congratulate her as the millionth person to board Richmond Hill Transit.

"I don't believe it," gasped Cindy typically. On her way to work at Pop's Tavern on Yonge Street, Cindy, who is relatively new to Richmond Hill (here since February) said she used the bus to get to work every day, but did not know anything about the award being

presented to the millionth rider.

Mayor Dave Schiller, Councillors Dave Amos and Mike Burnie and Transit Co-ordinator for the town, Bud Newton, boarded the bus at Richmond Heights Centre at 11:10 a.m. last Wednesday.

Mr. Newton's figures showed that the 11th person to board the newest Orion bus travelling the green or red route through the east part of town would be number 1,000,000.

Number 999,999, Hazel Steward, when she saw Richmond Hill's officials on the bus, asked if she couldn't get off and board again. The prize to be presented by the town at the

next council meeting will be a free pass to Richmond Hill Transit, for one full year — a value of about \$250 for someone like Cindy who uses the services five days a week.

Travelways, who operate the Richmond Hill system for the town, also offered the millionth rider a special prize — a four-day bus tour to Nashville, complete with two nights accommodation in Nashville and reserved seats at the Grand Ole Opry.

Cindy and her husband Steve both like country music, and since they have been married only three months, plan to make this a honeymoon trip.

Community Pulse

A Tut treat

For those who wish to be part of the phenomenon called "Tutmania", Richmond Hill Public Library will treat 120 persons to a lecture and slide presentation entitled "Treasures of Tutankhamun".

Allan Kelley, Research Associate, Egyptology Department of the Royal Ontario Museum will bring this special program to the Main Library Wednesday, November 14 at 7:30 p.m.

Because the attendance is limited to 120, anyone interested is requested to register at the main library before that date.

Seniors' Council meets

This area's Senior Citizens Council met last week at the seniors' club rooms in Richmond Hill, with President Dorothy Price presiding. The group is planning the publication of a booklet of information for seniors.

The Council represents seniors in the Town of Markham, Richmond Hill, Stoffville, Ballantrae and the area east of Bathurst Street adjacent to Thornhill, Richmond Hill and Oak Ridges.