

Breakaway school —

One-room values sought

A group of Metcalfe area parents are planning to open a breakaway elementary school that would give them more of a say in the education of their children.

Kevin Ferguson, chairman of a board of directors representing parents, teachers and clergy and established last month to organize the school, said "certain members of the community today are looking for more in the way of education for their children than the public system provides."

Stressing that the public school system may offer the best possible education for the general population, he added that sup-

porters of the proposed breakaway school "just want something more for their own kids."

He said the new institution would be modelled after community Christian schools, which have been established in Williamsburg, Ottawa and the Niagara Peninsula. The schools combine students of different grades in the same classroom, emphasize Bible teaching and operate in close relation with parents — somewhat like the old one-room schools.

"There is a feeling by some parents that their contact with the operation of the public school system no longer seems as strong as it once was. In the type of

school we are talking about, parents as heads of the family have a strong say," Mr. Ferguson said.

Aside from being represented in the administration of the school, parents would also be kept closely aware of their children's work by regular teacher visits to the home.

In keeping with Biblical teaching, student respect for elders would also be a factor.

"Students will get on a bus today and say anything to the driver, and not be afraid to say it," said Mr. Ferguson, a bus driver for eight years.

And, other than Biblical teaching, the school would be obliged to follow curriculum guidelines set down by the province — French would be an essential course. Provincial grants for the subsidization of French courses would be available but, generally parents would have to finance the school's operation.

"It would be a type of separate school and the impression is that the province would rather not have them," he said, "Ontario is one of only two provinces in Canada where parents can't direct their taxes to these schools."

The school would be interdenominational and, so far, 20-25 pupils have been confirmed. Organizers are looking for a first-term population of about 40 to form two classes and are seeking space in preparation for a tentative opening in September. Interested residents can contact Mr. Ferguson (826-2479); John Bouwers, vice-chairman (821-1987); or Tom Phillips, board secretary (826-2445).

"In my opinion, there was a lot to be said for the one-room class. A lot of values could be learned by students of different grades," Mr. Ferguson said.



ROYAL MILK MAID

Margareth Van Munsteren has been a very busy lady since being selected last June Russell County Dairy Princess. She has spent the past several months visiting school children, women's groups, brownies, girl guides, and attending banquets and parades. Here she talks to Darin Lampman, a pupil at Russell Public School.

Church in limbo

The fate of Russell Village's historic Baptist Church remains anybody's guess although township planning board chairman Baird McNeill feels the building is "probably worth fighting for".

While he's of the opinion that the church doesn't have historical attributes equal to the registry office, Duncan House, or even the village general store, Mr. McNeill said its "unlikely" he would agree to it being torn down to make way for a convenience store.

Surprisingly, Obiter Dicta Ltd., the company negotiating purchase of the building with the church committee, has yet to apply for a zoning change.

Don Hope, of M.D. Ross Realty, said the sale is conditional on a zoning change from residential to commercial. The time limit is 60 days, more than half of which has elapsed with no contact from the interested party, Mr. Hope explained.

The real estate agent had been informed by Obiter Dicta that it intended to tear down the church and open a convenience store on the site.

Russell Reeve Gaston Patenaude is categorically opposed to such a plan on grounds the site is too small and he would prefer to preserve the church.

If Russell Village residents want a convenience store, it could be more suitably located in the old bank building now for sale, Mr. Patenaude suggested. There are other more appropriate sites, he added.

The Castor Review had made an offer on the church which was rejected in favor of a higher bid from Obiter Dicta. The newspaper's application to planning board for a zoning change had been approved.

The paper had planned to leave the church intact, using it for administrative offices as well as an outlet for the work of local crafts people and artists.

In Greely —

Bestsellers at Firehall

A new library planned for Greely should get a bargain rate for fire insurance . . . it'll be located right in the firehall.

Osgoode Township council has allocated \$20,000 for an extension to the two-bay firehall to be shared by volunteer firefighters and a library. Without unforeseen complications, work will start by May.

Greely is currently without a library and residents must travel to Metcalfe, Vernon or Osgoode to borrow books.

The project once-again demonstrates the community-mindedness of the township's 55-member volunteer fire brigade. After a contractor has erected the shell, the fireman will — free of charge — install services and complete the interior.

Noting that his men are from "every trade imaginable", township fire chief Peter Griffin expressed pride in their willingness to pitch in and help, thereby reducing costs to ratepayers.

During this decade, the volunteers have organized a number of fund drives for the purchase of equipment and have provided the labor to upgrade facilities. At the moment, they're organizing an auction sale through which they hope to raise \$4,000 to equip members with paging units.

The library section of the Greely addition will have a separate entrance and access to washrooms in the firehall. It's possible that Greely may expand eventually to such an extent that the library space will be required by the fire department, Chief Griffin said. If that occurs, the library can be moved to another location.

Linking the library and firehall is all part of making the best use possible of municipal properties, he said.

Metcalfe bank —

\$225,000 expansion set

The people who save money for Metcalfe residents will be spending a bundle of their own . . . at least \$225,000 to redesign, expand and provide parking behind their Victoria Street building.

The work at the Royal Bank will include introduction of the "centralized teller concept", manager Lorne Finnis revealed. The concept, gaining popularity in banking institutions, involves centralizing money handling operations, giving tellers more specialized responsibility.

"It should free more of the staff to wait on customers when required and speed up the whole process considerably," Mr. Finnis explained.

In implementing the concept, the existing counter setup will be rearranged. An addition is planned for the rear of the

building to provide storage and an expanded vault and negotiations are underway for the purchase of an adjacent home to be demolished for parking space.

While Mr. Finnis isn't too familiar with the centralized concept, his banking colleagues speak highly of it. It should also provide more security against robbery, he said.

Purchase of the home hinges on Osgoode Township approval to change the zoning from residential to institutional. The addition will provide customer access to the parking lot.

The existing bank opened about three years ago and business has boomed, said Mr. Finnis, Metcalfe banker during the past six years. There are now 10 full-time employees.

Teachers go, school grows

Construction of a \$1.5 million extension to Osgoode Township High School will get underway "almost immediately" and be in use by the beginning of next year, principal Wyatt MacLean told the Castor Review.

Work will include additions to the gymnasium and library and 11 new classrooms on two levels. There will be some site improvements as well.

Ironically, the extension gets underway when declining enrolment is forcing the layoff of four teachers at the school.

Mr. MacLean said the school was designed for a capacity of 620 students; next fall, there will be 700 enrolled. The extension will allow the elimination of eight portables now in use.

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