



The Tribune

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Editorials

Who wants minority rule?

This newspaper has always taken a dim view of elected (or appointed) representatives who, for reasons too seldom revealed, fail to attend meetings on a regular basis.

So also do co-members who give of their time, one hundred percent.

They show a willingness to shoulder their load and, quite naturally, are critical of those who don't.

In publishing comments of this kind, the media itself is criticized. So be it. The electorate has a right to know the truth.

The controversy at present, relates to the absence of Jim Wong (Ward 2) from almost 50 percent of council and planning meetings, (not to mention other committees), from January through March and points up two weaknesses in the system.

First, a candidate often assumes office, not realizing the amount of time required to do the job. Later, he learns that with so many irons in the fire, he cannot keep pace. Secondly, he feels the main requirement is to 'keep the fences mended' within his Ward.

This isn't so. For decisions, that affect the entire municipality and all wards, are made in the council chambers and around the planning table; not over the telephone or across a backyard fence.

Unfortunately for Mr. Wong, and perhaps the Town, several issues of major consequence, have been decided in his absence and on split votes. This points to the threat of minority rule, something that cannot be tolerated.

Need anniversary project

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Stouffville Horticultural Society.

The milestone, of historical significance, will be celebrated at a special program, Monday, April 15, in St. James' Presbyterian Church.

During its half-century of service in this community, this organization has done much to improve and beautify the town—often with little fanfare and too little appreciation. One need only check back through the records (1924-1974) to realize the multitude of projects completed during this period. Indeed, these are a dedicated group of people who have asked little, but given much. The executive and its active membership are to be commended.

But what does the future hold?

Horticulture is everybody's business, yet, for most of us, the interest and enthusiasm for such things extends no further than our own backyards. This should not be.

So, to commemorate the Society's Golden Anniversary, we'd like to see the town embark on some major venture, with the horticulturalists taking the lead and the community falling in line.

This would not only present a challenge to the organization in '74, but give it the encouragement and incentive to carry on in the years ahead.

Compromise on library site

Town councillor, Mervyn Baker (Ward 3), has recommended the purchase of the present Post Office, Main and Market Streets, for use as a future Public Library in Whitechurch, Stouffville.

We agree, if the price is within reason and renovations estimates prove practical.

No one will argue the fact that Library facilities here are totally inadequate. But repeatedly saying this and still doing nothing,

provides no solution to the problem.

The Library Board, it seems, is sold on one particular site.

Council has suggested two. Neither is willing to budge and the promised purchase is now past the deadline.

We feel the Post Office, that should be vacated by mid-November, could prove an excellent compromise. It's worth considering again; this time, seriously.

Editor's Mail

Appreciate good losers

Dear Sir: On Friday (March 29), I accompanied a friend to the Markham Arena, to see her son play hockey. I didn't see all the games, only the ones involving the Stouffville team.

Stouffville, of course, won, but the coach, in my opinion, came last.

Hockey is a game where everyone plays, not just the best. I saw the little guys who didn't rank as 'super stars', continually pushed to the end of the line. In the last game, our little friend played only once.

Perhaps he is not 'star' material, but I always thought that hockey for 8 and 9 year olds was meant to teach kids sportsmanship, not just win-win-win. If he was my son, he wouldn't be playing next year.

I felt sorry for these young boys. Not only was their coach screaming at them, so were their parents. Apparently they're expected to play like the Maple Leafs.

Is winning really that important to young boys? Or is it more important to their parents?

Unfortunately, life isn't always being the winner. You must be a good loser, too.

Thank you for listening to my beef.

Lorraine Tabernor, Markham.

Editor's Note: Your complaint may be well-founded. However, it should be noted that in winning both the 'A' and 'B' series championships in the tournament, the Stouffville team also received the 'Best Sportsmanship'

Trophy for exemplary conduct on and off the ice. In addition, the local OMHA Convenor received personal calls from referee Bill Friday and Gerry Williams, the tournament chairman, congratulating the club on its accomplishment.

Dear Mr. Editor:

Now that the students are back in the secondary schools of York County and the dust seems to have settled for the moment, I would like to comment on two things that are of great concern to me—and in my opinion, should be of concern to a great many people: be they parents, teachers or taxpayers. I would hope that in confining my remarks to two items, I might be helpful in promoting some greater understanding and would not in any way further enflame the situation.

One thing of concern to me is the almost complete 'misunderstanding' of the term 'pupil-teacher ratio' and its significance. I say 'almost complete' because, as I see it, the amount of discussion around this term lately has at least laid to rest the previously commonly held misconception that a P-T ratio of 20 to 1, for example, would mean that there would be 20 students in a class with one teacher. I am sure that all teachers and trustees welcome this partial understanding of term. However, what I do find distressing is

that the understanding seems to stop there in so many cases.

Pupil-teacher ratio is a formula for establishing the number of jobs there will be and does not in itself determine how many students each teacher will have in a class. It is a contributing factor, of course, in that it does determine how many people will be employed for the various jobs that go into the education of the students—such as classroom teachers, department heads, librarians, guidance personnel, principals and vice-principals.

In other words, the class room teachers and all the support services provided within the school for those teachers and their students.

No matter how dedicated I might be as a teacher, I would feel 'hard done by' to have 40 students in some of my classes during the day and have the proportionate number of assignments and exams to mark in addition to my lesson preparations in my out-of-class time—knowing full well that at the same time the teacher down the hall has only 10 students in class with a corresponding out-of-class work load.

If I were a teacher really interested in quality education for my students—and in my eleven years as a school trustee it was my good fortune to meet many such dedicated teachers—I would be most interested in having some say in how people were deployed to fill the available positions. (I hasten to add that although I am no longer a school trustee, I know many of those dedicated teachers I knew are still around.)

It must be very evident to everyone that the amount of money available for education is limited, and therefore decisions have to be made as to how it will be spent to do the best job possible. That means that everyone is going to have to look for alternatives to present arrangements, and probably even then, will have to make some hard decisions.



ROAMING AROUND

Why editors and husbands grow grey

By JIM THOMAS

Tuesday is D-Day for most weekly newspapers across the country, with 'D' standing for 'deadline'.

The Tribune is no exception. Our target is 6 p.m., all in, all done as the auctioneer would say.

Usually we make it, but sometimes we don't. There have been occasions when I've 'snuck home, just about dawn, only to rise and shine, two hours later, to go to it again.

Why does this happen?

There are many reasons, but it's no use trying to tell anyone, because nobody cares. They look on anyone working a 21 hour day as some kind of 'nut'. And they're probably right.

Be that as it may, most folks who put down their fifteen cents every week for their paper, never once realize the blood, sweat and tears that often goes into the operation before the finished product hits the street.

The problems I've encountered over the past 23 years would fill a book. Trouble is, nobody's read it. They've got trouble of their own.

An example of mine, however, was Tuesday. It's always a Tuesday.

The phone rang about 2 p.m. It was my wife. "I know you're busy and I hate to bother you," she whispered softly, "but I think the house is on fire." "The house is what?" I hollered back.

"On fire," she repeated. "Well, not exactly, at least there's no flame, but the downstairs is full of smoke and it smells like something's burning. Can you come?"

I was momentarily stunned, like someone had just hit me over the head with a sledgehammer. For I feared the worst and my mind painted terrible pictures: a raging inferno, fire shooting out through the windows, smoke pouring up through the roof, everything lost, totally destroyed, after fifteen years—nothing!

"Call the fire department," I commanded, "get the baby to a neighbor's, take out what you can carry. I'll be there in a minute."

I grabbed the keys and streaked (not really) for the car.

The distance is less than a mile, but it seemed like a thousand.

I thought of a million things.

What's worth saving first?

Did we pay the last insurance premium and for how much coverage? Does it include contents?

Where'll we stay?

What about clothes?

The oil tank—will it explode?

I don't hear the siren, what's taking them so long?

Get out of my way (stupid women drivers) can't you see I'm in a rush.

Whoops, there's the police, too late now. He'll understand.

Ahh, Rupert Avenue, soon be there.

I wheeled into the laneway, showering the neighbor's lawn with stones.

Strange enough, everything looked normal—no smoke, no flames, no anything. I heaved a great sigh of relief and whispered a little prayer.

Inside, however, everything was not normal. We had no lights, no television, the furnace was 'off', so was the washer, the dryer, the stove—everything. My wife, I learned later, had smelled trouble and pulled the main switch.

And what a smell. Whew!

A call to Art's Electric had a man on the job in minutes. He traced the problem to a burned out thingamabob in the basement control box. He quickly installed a new one, then offered a few words of advice.

"It's overloaded," he explained, "you just can't keep adding new gadgets to an old system, and have all of them at once. When you do, something blows."

We had, and it did—boom!

So now the solution, but not without sacrifice. T.V. soap operas are out. They're lowest on the priority list compared to washing, drying, heating and cooking.

But what a change.

Now "The Secret Storm" comes on at night.

Former trustee supports Education Director

Having had the opportunity to work with him for four years, I can testify that there is no person more interested in quality education in York County than he is.

He combines idealism with pragmatism—a trait that, at times, annoys the idealists and at others the pragmatists. As one who frequently disagreed with him, although rarely in public, I now have to admit that he usually was right.

He seems to have a facility for seeing into the future and recognizing both the opportunities and the problems it holds. Then he puts his combination of idealism and practicality to work to try to make good things happen in education. Since not all of us are so endowed, can we not at least recognize our good fortune in having a public servant like Sam Chapman who is willing to work unselfishly for our behalf?

If Mr. Chapman should ever decide to forsake the public school system to set up a private school, I would wager that within five years large number of those very parents and teachers who in the past months have seemed so willing to 'blacken his name' would be beating a path to his door, to register their children or serve on his staff, to take advantage of the 'quality education' to be found there. Is he to be the 'prophet not without honour save in his own country and his own house'?

Although vitally interested in the sad events that have lately occurred in York County Schools, I have taken no part in discussions up till now. However, at this point I would hope my comments might be helpful in promoting some greater understanding.

At the same time, and since I have had the opportunity, not available to large numbers of parents and teachers of working with Sam Chapman, I am prepared to publicly state my support for him. York County students would be the poorer had he had not been working on their behalf.

Mrs. Louise Almoné Thornhill, Ont.

small classes except where there is a special learning problem. Regardless of how desirable it may be to provide classes in subjects that attract only small numbers of students, can we afford to provide this opportunity when we know it will mean that other classes will be very large?

Another alternative could be some redeployment of people who supply the support services within the school itself. Perhaps each school will have to decide how many support personnel are needed in the library, the guidance department or in departmental leadership. Some schools might decide they need more and some less.

How do teacher aides fit into the picture? Perhaps using two teacher aides as the equivalent of one teaching job would be the best way of dealing with some part of the educational work load that does not require the qualifications of a trained teacher. Experience proves it can work well.

Shouldn't the experience and expertise of the teachers have some bearing on how much time the department heads need to have "free of classroom responsibilities" to assist and supervise those teachers? A department having inexperienced teachers obviously needs a head with more time free to assist them, than does a department filled with good experienced teachers. Can we afford to continue a mechanism set up to deal with the flood of inexperienced teachers of the 60's when the situation of the 70's is so changed?

These are a few of the alternatives that could have a marked effect on the size of classes. Changing the P-T ratio alone isn't the only solution to the problem, but it is the one that has the most effect on the budget. Can the schools, not only of York County but of all Ontario, afford not to explore all the alternatives that do exist for finding a solution to large classes?

The second item of great concern to me is the move to vilify and discredit the Director of Education, Mr. Sam Chapman.

One of them might be the elimination of

Government operation costs more

By C. H. NOLAN

After strongly promoting the takeover of the car insurance business, the NDP governments in both Manitoba and British Columbia have egg on their face. Their prediction of cheaper insurance if only they could run the business has been dismal to say the least.

Manitoba has been forced to announce a \$10 million dollar deficit. Already the government has announced higher rates for careless drivers and business people will be asked to pay almost 50 per cent higher premiums. This brings the

motorists' payments well above those of 1973.

In British Columbia drivers have found their payments higher, rather than lower, but some relief is offered if one can fill out a complicated rebate form. The B.C. government has also confessed that it has cost \$18 million rather than \$5 million to get into the business.

Most drivers find the situation rather ironical when they see the government department bogged down in red tape, with soaring costs and poor accounting—the very faults they attributed to private companies.