

Markham committee study women's status

MARKHAM — A committee to study the status of women in the municipality and the role women play in the community, appointing a nine woman

members of council from individual wards are Irma Melville, Markham; Jeanette Anbinder, Unionville; Eugenia Cork, Thornhill; Betty McCulloch, Unionville; Shirley McCague, Victoria Square; Gail Newell, Markham; Ellen Verdi, Thornhill; Muriel Oliver, Unionville; Audrey Cunyworth, Markham.

Although no aims or objectives have been formulated at present, Councillor Carole Bell hopes that the appointed task force will tackle a number of areas of interest and, periodically, report to council.

Mrs. Bell feels that a study of the historical achievements of women in the old township is important. This could result in the town honoring these women in some way for their contributions to our heritage.

"Perhaps a women's resource centre could be established in local libraries," Mrs. Bell said. "Information on day care centres, legal aid and family planning could be compiled and made available."

Mrs. Bell also expressed the possibility that the committee could petition council for the extension of transit service to accommodate women who want, or must, work outside the home.



Gertrude Baycroft retired at the end of 1974 after 14 years with the former Township of Whitchurch and then the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. She was the tax collector

in the town office. Here Mayor Gordon Ratcliff presents a town crest to Mrs. Baycroft in appreciation of her work. —Don Bernard

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Trustees to take turns Prayer opens meetings

AURORA — Future meetings of the York County Board of Education will be opened with a prayer — more or less.

This was decided at the last meeting when trustees voted to approve a motion by trustee Keith Hargrave. After a few preliminary remarks to the effect that "the Board can use all the help it can get," trustees settled down to a lengthy debate on the topic. Vice-chairman Craig Cribar, an ordained clergyman, appeared to have some reservations.

Cribar referred to section 229 of the Education Act, which stipulates that teachers have a duty to inculcate "respect for religion and the principles of Judeo-Christian morality" and such other things as loyalty, sobriety, industry, purity, and temperance.

Cribar questioned

whether this is actually done in most schools in the County. He went on to suggest that the duty of leading the prayer should be done on a rotation basis among trustees. An amendment to this effect was approved.

Trustee Chris McMonagle asked if the prayer might be a silent one. Her Markham colleague, Don Cousens — also a clergyman — thought that would be up to the individual trustee.

Trustee Don Cameron supported the motion, describing himself as one who tries to be "a practicing Christian." He pointed out that Section 229 was to have been dropped during the latest amendments to

the Act, but was left in after the Ministry of Education received a number of protests.

William Laird, who seconded the original motion, was anxious to make sure that principals and teachers are made aware of section 229. Other trustees gave their views, some supporting the motion and some doubtful about it.

Two more amendments were eventually passed, one allowing each trustee to "decide individually on an audible prayer or "silent meditation", the other stipulating that the prayer be "ecumenical."

Hargrave expressed himself as "very

pleased" with the attitude of the Board, but had some harsh words for Cribar's earlier suggestion.

"If the schools don't know about this, they should," said Hargrave. "I will personally make it my business to see that they know about it."

He also said that anyone who didn't want to take part in the prayer could leave during it, and suggested that trustees should be allowed to abstain from leading the prayer if they choose.

The amended motion carried, and the new feature will presumably come into practice at the beginning of the next board meeting.

Trustee proposes trust fund with extra pay

AURORA — Trustee Chris McMonagle has no intention of taking the extra money that Board of Education members voted themselves earlier this year.

The Markham representative opposed the 100 per cent increase, but it was passed despite her objections; Mrs. McMonagle then announced she would not

accept the money. During the last Board meeting, she revealed how she will get rid of it: through a trust fund.

The fund will make grants for the specific purpose of helping teachers to learn to deal with children who have learning disabilities. Any teacher in the York County system can apply, and awards will be made

by a committee. The committee will consist of Mrs. McMonagle, two others chosen by her, and two persons chosen by the Board.

Trustee Donald Cameron questioned the set-up, asking why the Board shouldn't control the fund.

Since it's my money, I'd like to know where it's going... for the first while, anyway," said Mrs. McMonagle. Pointing out that she would only be one of five committee members, she added, "I wouldn't control the committee."

After brief discussion, Markham trustee Don Cousens proposed that the matter be referred to the chairman's committee for a report. Mrs. McMonagle seconded the motion, which carried.

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Teachers-board

Pressure applied

AURORA — At a joint approach has been made. While both Cribar and Nixon lamented rising costs, they could not be pinned down to specifics.

At a press conference last week, it was announced that the York County Board of Education and the OSSTF District 11 are going to co-operate in bringing pressure on the Ministry of Education. The conference, held by the two negotiating chairmen — Craig Cribar and Donald Nixon — was somewhat indefinite. The two spokesmen were bent upon requesting a joint meeting with the minister for the purpose of "conveying concern" over the spending limits which the province imposes. This is believed to be the first time such a

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