

Schools at capacity

By GREG COATES
Staff Reporter

Lot levies and relocatable and multi-purpose buildings were among the solutions to school overcrowding suggested at a public meeting Tuesday.

Sponsored by the Parent-Teacher Association at Parkview Public School in Unionville, the meeting was the first of several public forums on the overcrowding issue.

Rapid growth in Markham, Unionville and Milliken has officials and parents concerned about overcrowding in the schools, both at the elementary and secondary levels. Approximately 100 residents turned out for the meeting.

Area 4 Superintendent Dr. Peter Ross explained that of the 27 schools he administers, there are no empty classrooms.

"We're in a situation where we have to plan one year at a time," he said. "It's very frustrating."

Unless Ministry funds are received for additional schools, Dr. Ross said there are three ways to deal with the problem of overcrowding — portables, boundary changes and extended hours.



PETER ROSS
No empty classrooms

"I foresee a combination of the three," he said. "Some portables, some boundary changes and some kind of extended day."

Projections

He added the problem is height-



CAROLE BELL
Calls for lot levies

ened because the school board and the Ministry are always dealing with projections.

"When in Markham we're constantly dealing with people that aren't here yet. That's where the problem comes in," said Dr. Ross. "The numbers are critical and we don't know how fast new subdivisions will grow."

Other guests at Tuesday's meeting included Markham Mayor Carole Bell, MPP Don Cousens, Ministry of Education representative Malcolm Shiner

and Trustees Anne Atkins and Joanna French.

While Mr. Shiner didn't make any promises about upcoming funding, he stressed the Ministry of Education is well aware of the situation in York Region.

"Ministry experience has been cautious. Don't be hasty. See the students first. Don't just go on projections," he said. "A lot of funny things can happen to projections."

Ministry cautious

"So yes the Ministry is cautious. And yes we're nervous about moving on just projections," Mr. Shiner added. "The bad news is there's never enough dollars. It is a time of concern, a time of restraint. The good news though is we do recognize the rapid growth in this area. The regional office is very sympathetic and supportive to what's going on here."

He noted that of the \$563 million allocated by the Ministry last year, York Region received approximately 16 per cent of it.

"This is probably at the top," said Mr. Shiner. "The Ministry of Education has been listening and has been doing something."

Markham Mayor Carole Bell suggested that if sufficient funds aren't received from the Ministry, perhaps residents should lob-

by for a change in legislation enabling communities to receive lot levies from developers to help put up more schools.

Community schools

"What I pledge to do is to assist the trustees to get into some of the provincial offices to try and impress upon the Ministry the importance of community schools," said Mayor Bell. "Not taking our children to Stouffville or Metropolitan Toronto or Richmond Hill, but community schools where your children can go to school where you live."

Anticipating a question on why the town continues to approve housing units when children have no place to go school, Mayor Bell pointed out that not approving units is a "totally illegal act."

Addressing the possible problem of having unused schools in the future — if student enrolments start declining — several panel members suggested that more flexible buildings be constructed. Multi-purpose buildings that could be used for more than just schools.

Another public meeting is scheduled for 8 p.m. Thursday in the library at Unionville High School. Rapid growth in Unionville and how it will affect Unionville High School will be the focus of discussion.

UHS emergency evacuation plan

In case of emergency, Unionville High School students would be evacuated to either William Berczy public school or the Markham Hydro building according to a new plan.

The emergency plan, prepared by the school's vice-principal Chris Collins, also details how students would leave the school and outlines the staff's responsibilities during a crisis.

"It's basically an evacuation plan," Mrs. Collins said. "It's an extension of our fire-drill procedure."

Mrs. Collins said it was necessary to find locations that were within walking distance of the school.

Markham Hydro officially con-

sent to the plan at its meeting Monday.

Unionville High School requested it and we reciprocated because it's so workable with us," said Hydro Commissioner Don Cockburn.

The hydro building, to be used in case William Berczy public school is not available, was chosen because of its size and its close proximity to the school, Mr. Cockburn said.

He said the large sheltered garage for hydro equipment could also be used by the school if needed.

Every York Region school is required to have this kind of plan, according to Mrs. Collins. "This isn't anything new or unusual," she said.

Coupon brings good response

Unionville resident Dennis Seeley has reported good response to a coupon published in the Weekender on Feb. 1 in regards to tougher sentences for drinking drivers.

"We have received responses from all areas

that your newspaper covers and they continue to arrive daily," he said.

Because of the response, the coupon is reprinted below.

I care about the the Gerrards and the Grunerts who lost their lives in a tragic accident. I support our government's recent actions against impaired driving and I urge further actions be taken to make us all realize there is no place for impaired driving in this country.

NAME:
ADDRESS:
PHONE:
Mail to:
Dennis Seeley or Economist and Sun
11 Eckardt Ave. 9 Heritage Rd.
Unionville, Ont. Markham, Ontario
L3R 1P1 L3P 1M3

CBC film crew at Musselman's Lake

By ERKKI POHJOLAINEN

A CBC crew spent Tuesday on Musselman's Lake filming a scene for "The Last Season," a network special.

Truck-loads of equipment arrived at 7 a.m., and within an hour, 45 technicians and actors were on the ice. They were shooting one of the early parts of the three-hour drama, based on Roy MacGregor's book by the same name.

The story follows the life of fictional Felix Batterinski from his younger years in a small northern Ontario town, through his NHL career as a defenceman and finally as a coach in Finland.

Unit Manager Bing Kwan told The Weekender, in an interview on location, "the drama goes through some of (Felix's) escapades of trying to put together a winning team and how he's able to get the players hyped-up."

Musselman's Lake was chosen, Mr. Kwan said, "to depict the rink on which Felix played hockey as a child in his home town, Pomerania."

The CBC crew cleared the snow and created two hockey rinks common to lakeside communities 20 years ago.

The set was complete with several cars from the early-

1960s. Even the skates used are of the era when Felix was nine. The climax in the Musselman's Lake scene is when Felix's uncle comes to the rink and tells him his grandfather has died.

Mr. Kwan said filming will take several months because "Last Season includes scenes from winter, spring and summer."

The telecast date is not yet known, Mr. Kwan said, "but I think it'll probably be aired close to Christmas because it includes a Christmas scene."

The cast of this Robert Sherrin production includes Booth Savage as the adult Felix and John Calicos as his father.

Mr. Sherrin produced Love and Larceny and a long list of series and specials aired on the CBC network. Booth Savage played the role of Bruce in the CBC series Home Fires and a variety of roles in more recent shows, including a killer in Seeing Things.

John Calicos' previous work includes the role of the evil Clingon, Commander Koor, in the long-running series Star Trek, and more recently, a character in the National Dream.

Both actors are also familiar to Stratford audiences for various roles played on stage.



A CBC crew was filming at Musselman's Lake this week for a television special called The Last Season, based on a book by Roy MacGregor.

Shooting involved clearing the snow to make a skating rink on the lake.

— Erkki Pohjolainen