



Race against the weather

Work is proceeding on re-construction of Sunset Boulevard in Stouffville between Albert Street and Ninth Line South. The road is to be widened, curbed and guttered at a cost of \$221,000.

—Jim Thomas

Spotlight on Education

Buckle up!

By LYNDA WILLIAMS

The issue of seat belts in school buses was raised again recently in a letter to The Tribune Weekender from seven-year-old Jenna Chevalier of E.T. Crowle Public School in Markham. Jenna wants seat belts in buses because she's "afraid of getting hurt."

For the last ten years, it's been mandatory to "Buckle Up For Safety" in vehicles that come equipped with seat belts. Because of declining enrolment, longer field trips, French Immersion and special programs, (Bill 82), more children travel farther each day by bus.

Rural students likely spend more time in a school bus than in the family car. My children will each log approximately 56,000 miles per school career, (K-13), plus field trips.

The Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 222 became effective Sept. 30, 1980. Passive restraints form the compartmentalization concept. The bus seats are placed closer together, the backs are higher and padded, and built stronger. In a crash situation, the acceleration of the student passengers is stopped by having them crash into the high padded seat-back ahead of them.

Transport Canada did a study in Sept. 1984, and released a report and film in Feb. 1985, (School Bus Safety Vol. I). Three buses of varying sizes, were crashed into a fixed barrier at 48 km/hr. Six anthropomorphic dummies per bus were used. Three wore seat belts and three did not. This test raises many questions in my mind.

Only a frontal collision was tested. What about a rear-end crash or a roll-over?

Only lap belts were used. Why not at least one shoulder/lap belt combination?

All the dummies wired to instrumentation were the same size, (102 pounds). Could varying sizes have produced results more representative to the student population, (K-13)?

Only six dummies were used per bus. In an actual collision on a large bus, sixty students would be hitting against one another and the seats.

School buses are one of the safest vehicles in which to travel according to accident statistics. Does this mean we should not seek further ways for injury reduction? I think not.

According to the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Communications "seat belt usage and driver attitude survey, May/June 1984", one of the largest groups of non-wearers of seat belts are those 16 to 19 years of age.

In a presentation to the Ontario Association of School Business Officials, March 1, 1985, "Restrain Our Children", L.E. Dagnone M.D., F.R.C.P. (C) states: "A precedent is established which disrupts earlier good habits and increases the likelihood that seat belts will not be used by older children and especially teenagers for whom motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death." As well as the physical benefits of being able to ride down de-acceleration in an accident, Dr. Dagnone suggests seat belts in buses are "a means of effecting attitudinal change."

Regular use of seat belts for 14 years while going to school could very well become a habit many teenagers would carry over to their personal driving.

Perhaps a standard lap belt will not be the best restraint system to use in school buses, but we should be considering seat belts. Probably a shoulder/lap combination is the best, but the dollar cost for installation is considerable and the bus frame may also need to be strengthened.

I feel the prevented injury of just one child makes it worth it.

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Editor's Mail

U.S. foreign policy is in a shambles

Dear Editor:

One might describe the Foreign Policy of the United States, at the moment, as being in a shambles. No denials by President Reagan can undo the damage to the credibility of the American Government after the exposures of the Nicaraguan affair; the sale of arms to Iran and not-to-be-forgotten, the misinformation concerning the Libyan bombing episode.

Ex-President Nixon and lame-duck President Reagan have done little to enhance the prestige of America or the Republican Party.

Present and past foreign policies of the administration, so far as Central America is concerned, appear to be based on the full support of existing right-wing military dictatorships, aided by mas-

sive injections of military and economic aid.

The excuse for support of these regimes is that they are a bulwark against Communism. The United States have themselves created these problems in Central America by their support of these dictatorships and where 'human rights' are dirty words.

When the local populations rise against these conditions, they are immediately dubbed as Communists. All they are trying to do is improve their impoverished lives.

Needless to say, the real Communist countries take full advantage of the situation by in turn giving full support and aid to the anti-government forces.

A typical example is the United States backing the wrong horse with their support of Batista, the former dictator of Cuba, who counted on United States support, both economically and militarily for his continuance in power.

If support had been given to Castro and his revolutionaries in the early stages of the revolt, I venture to suggest that today Cuba would be an ally of the United States rather than an enemy.

It is a tragedy that a great country like the United States, that is supposedly a champion of the down-trodden and the underprivileged, continues to support these Governments who are the very antitheses of freedom and justice.

Sincerely,
Adam Johnstone,
R.R. 1, Stouffville

S.D.S.S. smokers

Kick the habit

STOUFFVILLE — Smoking's on the way out at Stouffville High. "More and more teachers are endeavoring to kick the habit," Principal Peter Bright told The Tribune. "Smoking's no longer socially acceptable," he said. Unlike the Catholic Board,

there's no policy targeted towards a total smoking ban, Earl Evans, public relations director for the York Region Public School Board said. Instead, each school has established its own limits.

The motion, recommended by a staff relations committee of the board, went into effect June 1. At S.D.S.S., no smoking is permitted in any open areas of the building, Mr. Bright stated. The ruling applies to night school as well as day.

The only places where smoking is allowed is the custodians' lunch room and the staff room.

The arrangement is much the same at the Board Office in Aurora. There, smoking is permitted in one's own private office and at one end of the staff lounge, "but in no open areas where others are working," Mr. Evans said.

The York Region Catholic Board has approved a motion that bans smoking on all board property effective Sept. 1, 1988.

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