

# SDSS takes role of holding school

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approved a number of new teachers to be added to the roster and new supplies will help alleviate the temporary problem.

## New gear suits chief

Whitchurch-Stouffville firefighters will soon be battling blazes in brand-new suits, offering safer protection against heat and fire while on the job, says Chief Bill Brown.

The fire department is ordering 30 new custom-fit bunker suits to cost Whitchurch-Stouffville taxpayers \$625 for each suit or about \$19,000 in total.

The new gear, that meets with safety standards across the country, consists of three protective layers including a vapor barrier and an outer layer that is used in most bullet-proof vests, the chief says.

"The new suits are multi-layered with an outer layer that is fire retardant allowing the suit to breathe. The new suits totally protect the body."

The old suits, traditionally consisting of a long coat and high boots are on the way out, making room for the new short-coat, low-boot gear allowing "more complete protection."

Chief Brown says the new suits add protective pants to the outfit, replacing a long coat, allowing total protection to every part of the body.

The new suits, designed primarily for "structural firefighting" are able to breathe, but at the same time allow for heat from inside to penetrate outward away from the firefighter's body.

This allows for a more comfortable fit and a vast improvement in personal protection, Chief Brown says.

He expects to have a prototype available at the station in about three weeks and hopes to have his brigade completely fitted by the end of the year.

"We will be creating new classes and hiring new staff to accommodate the additional students. We may be crowded this week and next week, but then things will get back to normal," he says.

A number of the Markham area students are new immigrants and English as a second language course will be increased from one to six sessions, he adds.

Mr. Dickson says the school was not aware it would be asked to house the additional students until late August, or the temporary crowding situation would have already been taken care of.

"It has been tremendously hectic for the guidance counsellors and they deserve praise," he says.

He adds the crowded classrooms - some holding as many as 60 - will be back down a normal size of 24 to 30 within a few weeks. There are several vacant classrooms that will be put to use, he says.



Photo: SJOERD WITTEVEEN

## Crowning glory

These three winners beam for the photographer Saturday night after taking honors at the annual Markham Fair Queen Contest. Lynne Beckett, 22, of Unionville (centre) was crowned Markham's Queen, while Stouffville's Tracy Emery, 19, (left) won first runner up. And third runner up went to Tracy Morrison (right) of Markham. Judges had a tough time choosing between the five contestants. Jim Thomas of Stouffville was a member of the judges' panel.

## At Whitchurch Highlands

# Board, Region at odds on safety issue

TRACY KIBBLE  
Staff Reporter

York Region and the public school board are at odds this week over a safety problem at the Whitchurch Highlands Public School at Bloomington Road and Warden Avenue.

And Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Fran Sainsbury is worried the two sides will be trapped in another "stand-off" like the recent Summitview Public School traffic light and road swap dilemma that had the two sides fighting over the price of land which held up the project for several years.

There has recently been concerns from parents at Whitchurch Highlands school that the truck

traffic on Bloomington Road and lack of traffic lights in front of the school is posing a safety hazard for children and for buses turning in and out of the school off the major truck route.

At a recent York Region Engineering Committee meeting, officials agreed the problem should be rectified after surveying the number of trucks passing the school each day, but questioned the fact that traffic lights alone would solve the problem.

Regional Chairman Eldred King earlier said the "badly designed" bus turning lane - taking buses in and out of the school off Bloomington - should be reconstructed in a loop fashion.

But York Region Board of Edu-

cation (YRBE) Chairman Harry Bowes said the board is not prepared to go to such lengths because a bus turning around where children are getting on and off buses is dangerous.

Mr. Bowes did, however, agree the current bus lane "isn't the best" design and said the board may consider a bus access off Warden Avenue.

"We have to find out how to do that. We just planted 200 trees along (Warden) and the land is just not conducive" for bus facilities on school grounds," Mr. Bowes said.

He also said York Region should help pay for reconstruction of a turning lane off Bloomington, since "the board often transfers land worth \$400,000 to the Region for \$2" to make planning easier. He said York should be returning the favor.

"It's a matter of where we will get the money from. This is being forced upon us now when our priorities lie in important things like class rooms and much needed supplies."

But, "We hope the board of education sees the children's safety as high a priority as (the region) does," Mayor Sainsbury said.

In the meantime, the Engineering Committee will recommend



FRAN SAINSBURY  
worried

additional police enforcement in the area, and are asking staff for a report to have the speed limit reduced to 40 kms per hour.

And the YRBE will discuss options at an upcoming meeting.

"We're waiting. We have to do certain things and they have to do certain things," Harry Bowes said.

"It's a matter of not panicking and getting the problem resolved as quickly as possible," maintained Mayor Sainsbury.

## REGION BRIEFS

# Province to protect Oak Ridges

York Region officials received a report August 30 from the Natural Resources Ministry announcing provincial measures to protect significant features on the Oak Ridges Moraine.

The province will work closely with municipalities and conservation authorities in the planning study area, announced Municipal Affairs Minister John Sweeney.

The Moraine, a 100-mile stretch of 30 rivers from the Niagara Escarpment to the Trent River, including streams and tributaries in the Greater Toronto Area, supplies water and drinking water to several municipalities including Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The 400-square-mile Oak Ridges Moraine passes through 14 municipalities including both rural and urban areas.

A report prepared by St. Andrew-St. Patrick MPP Ron Kanter - Options for a Greater Toronto Area Greenlands Strategy - has identified the Oak Ridges Moraine as a "major natural feature," the announcement states.

A study, announced on behalf of the Natural Resource Ministry and Mr. Sweeney, will review the impact of development and land-use practices within the area and will provide direction to York Region and its nine municipalities to recognize the significance and sensitivity of the Oak Ridges Moraine.

"Inappropriate development on the moraine could jeopardize both the water flow in Toronto area rivers and the natural underground reservoirs on which many people who live on the moraine depend for their drinking water," announced Natural Resource Minister Lyn McLeod.

### Plumbing inspections

The York Region Health Committee has recently recommended all plumbing inspection responsibilities and administration be transferred to each of the nine municipalities.

The Health Department has received comments from all municipalities, showing five in favor of taking on plumbing inspections, while the remaining four are against the proposal.

Aurora, Georgina, Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan are in favor, while East Gwillimbury, King, Newmarket and Whitchurch-Stouffville are against the idea.

### Police Enforcement approved

The York Region Engineering Committee has approved a step-up of police enforcement on Bloomington Road where trucks pass by the Whitchurch Highlands Public School at Warden Avenue.

In light of recent concerns the truck traffic is posing a safety threat to the children playing outside and for school buses turning off Bloomington into the school, the committee has also tentatively approved traffic lights to be installed.

However, the committee will only install the lights, if the York Region Board of Education agrees to reconstruct the school bus turning lane, which is part of the problem, the committee said recently.

The Engineering Committee has also requested staff prepare a report to determine the need for a reduced speed limit (40 kms per hour) in front of the school.

The school board will discuss its options at an upcoming meeting, said Chairman Harry Bowes.

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