



announcing

The
TRIBUNE'S**1** annual

The Tribune is pleased to announce our first summer fiction contest. Open to all adults in the area, the contest is for works of prose on any subject but no longer than 2,500 words. We'll print as many stories as we can in the coming weeks, and from all entries, a panel of judges will select the best of the bunch. Entries must be typed and submitted to our office by August 15. Write on!



Stouffville Tribune

VOL. 103 NO. 30

A Metroland Community Newspaper

Wednesday, July 24, 1991

20 Pages

50 cents

Claremont Library gets reprieve from board

MAXINE SHARE-STROM
Correspondent

On Saturday July 13, the Pickering Library board shut down the library in Claremont for the summer. Budget cuts, they said. Blame Pickering council.

According to some residents of the tiny hamlet, a predictable outcry ensued: after all, this is a place that has fought for and lost both its post office and Via Rail service in the past 18 months. Both were important social meeting places in addition to their business functions. Claremont resident Kathy Glover Scott told *The Tribune* Tuesday, "Everyone met at the post office to chit chat."

"This town has had some hard knocks," she said. "We need to keep our library."

Last Thursday, four days after an emotional public meeting chaired by the board and attended by 100 of Claremont's 650 residents, the board changed its position and opted to restore limited service in Claremont while cutting hours in the two other northern library branches, one in Greenwood and the other in Whitevale. Following Thursday's decision, Claremont's summer hours will drop to seven from 13. Greenwood's will drop five hours to eight per week, and Whitevale to five hours from six.

Heeded concerns

"The board has heeded the concerns of the Claremont residents," library CEO Sandy Cameron told *The Tribune* Thursday night following the decision.

But some residents of the tiny hamlet feel the apparent about-face was a carefully calculated political move aimed at Pickering council for not approving its budget this year.

Library board representative Gwen Mowbray told *The Tribune* her board's initial decision was strictly financial. "Council looks at the bottom line," she said. When the board went to Pickering council for approval of their 1991 budget, they were told to cut back.

Cameron told *The Tribune* council advised the board to cut \$50,000 from salaries and wages and \$150,000 from operating costs of a total budget of just over \$2.6 million.

Falling steadily

Initially, Claremont was selected for closure because its circulation has been "falling steadily over the past 10 years," he said. However, resident Michael Klatt said in an interview the board asked council to approve an 11.5 per cent increase over 1990, "about twice the average increase in the municipality," he said.

"In actual dollars, they got a \$311,000 increase but they came into the meeting and said 'Oh, we got such a budget cut.'"

By closing the Claremont branch for the summer, the board would save \$2,700, he said.

Glover Scott said the board was trying to make Claremont "the scapegoat for their systematic problems."

She said council told the library board not to cut services in Pickering's new central library in the civic centre - a \$2 million operation. The board then zeroed in on circulation in the northern branches and singled out Claremont, she said. While circulation in the other two northern libraries - Whitevale and Greenwood - dropped about 50 per cent in the first six months of 1991 compared to the same time last year, Claremont's circulation fell only five per cent, she said, disagreeing with Cameron's interpretation of declining circulation.

Resident Grant Baker said these figures show "we're the ones most dependent on the library, most loyal."

After the board reversed its decision Thursday, Cameron said library budget cuts cannot be considered strictly in terms of dollars and cents. "There is more to libraries than just what output measures," he said. "Unless council comes to realize that 'we'll always have a problem where libraries play a spectacularly important

social role," as in Claremont.

He conceded the loss of library service touched an emotional chord with residents.

"It seemed to them another substantial loss of their community's focal points."

While Baker is pleased some limited service will be restored starting Tuesday, he's convinced the drama has been strictly political. "I think the library board may have wanted

to get back at council for cutting their budget," he said in an interview Thursday.

Klatt agrees. "This is the most dramatic gesture you could do to close one of the little libraries for the summer... As a result of the decision, you get everyone in Claremont steamed up in a hot room and you go back to council and you say, 'Look what you made us do.'"

He said he's not convinced the library will be safe from encroaching "centralization" in the future. "We will simply never be efficient in downtown terms," he said, vowing to fight to maintain library service. "In a way, it is good this has happened. They've cut the hours in Whitevale now. I know there are a lot of people there who won't be happy with this, and I know they can do some yelling."



Skimming off the top

Carl Ruffolo, 9, tried skimboarding on the weekend at the Preston Lake Weed Harvest, without much success initially. The sport involves riding a board across the water's edge. For more on the harvest, see p. 10.

Photo/ANNETTE BUCHKOWSKI

GARDEN CENTRE & LANDSCAPING SUPPLIES

farmer Jack's
CRAFT & GARDEN
CENTRE

PROTECT & ENHANCE
YOUR PAVING STONE

WITH
Techal Seal

ON SALE - 10% OFF
SAVE \$15.00
ON 18 L PAIL OF SEALER

We deliver

top soil
triple mix
farmer Jack's own
1/2" & 1/2" mix
Permacon paving
stones
Sand
Gravel
And Much More

STORE HOURS

Mon. to Wed.
9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Thurs. & Fri.
9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Sat.
9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sun.
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Phone:
640-5080

We
are
here

