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Sonshine Club gets hearing at school board

Discussion on issue deferred to Feb. 24 meeting

JULIE CASPERSEN
Staff Reporter

Noon-hour Bible classes, banned from four Stouffville elementary schools last summer, are under debate by the York Region Board of Education.

Religious education in public schools during school hours is not permitted by the Ministry of Education and the lunchtime bible classes were cancelled.

The Sonshine Square Club held the optional classes for two years at four elementary schools before public complaint led to the ban which took effect last September. The club was one of many elective activities offered to children who don't go home for lunch. Parental approval is necessary for attendance.

"We simply want to be one of the alternatives," said Ron Warder, speaking to the board on behalf of the Fairness in

Noon-hour Electives (FINE) group. Warder said the Christian club ran according to board criteria: it was volunteer run, required parental approval, had the support of the community and was no cost to the schools.

"We believe parents have the right to exercise their responsibility for their children's education, especially in the areas of religion and values," Warder told trustees at the Jan. 27 meeting.

Also speaking in defence of the club was Gerald Vandezande of the Coalition for Religious Freedom in Education who urged the board to "provide religious education parents request as long as it is not coercive, discriminatory or mandatory."

But Jeff Atlin, co-chair of the League for Human Rights of B'Nai Brith Canada, central region, said attendance at the Sonshine club is not a religious necessity. "You can still be a good practitioner of the Jewish faith without using the lunch hour," Atlin said some religions require prayers be said at times during the school day.

"A school board should accommodate this particular need." Discussion on religious freedom at the school level was deferred until the Feb. 24 board meeting.



Photo/JOHN ANDREWS

Tuesday accident

A Stouffville man has been charged after an accident last Tuesday morning at Stouffville Road and Hwy 48. The accident was almost a head-on collision. The driver of the car was turning east on Hwy 47 from Hwy 48 south when it collided with the northbound van. The drivers of both vehicles were taken to hospital, treated for minor injuries and released.

A new look

The Tribune is undergoing some changes.

In the coming weeks, we will redesign our look for the '90s, making the paper easier to read, with many new features. Keep an eye on us! If you have any comments or suggestions, call 640-2100.

Farmer Jack's clears zoning hurdle

Farmer Jack's Gardens has cleared another obstacle in its bid to attract a Seneca College campus to town.

A public meeting was held Tuesday night to deal with a rezoning application from Farmer Jack's owner Jack Burrows. Burrows wants the town to amend the highway/commercial designation on his property to allow retail stores and educational facilities in his plaza.

Seneca College has expressed interest in a proposal to locate a re-training campus in the town

of Whitchurch-Stouffville. Empty office space above the plaza has been offered as a potential future site for the campus. Burrows told the public

meeting the campus "is strictly speculation at this time."

Council passed the zoning amendment following the public meeting.

Optimists now in Stouffville

The newly formed Stouffville Optimist Club will focus on brightening the lives of local youth. Under the motto, "Friend of Youth", the club will promote drug awareness through its "Just Say No" program, and organize an essay contest, Youth Appreciation Week, Bike Safety Week and Optimist Respect for Law Week. The club met for the first time on Thursday, January 30 at the Stouffville Inn but for more information on joining, call Doug Benedict at 640-8109, Marcel Bossi at 640-6281 or Ronald Brabander at 642-3844.

Rotary auction will benefit Community Awareness Bureau

KATE GILDERDALE
Correspondent

The Great Rotary Auction, in support of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Community Awareness Bureau, takes place at the recreation complex on Friday Feb. 7.

It's a great opportunity to get out, meet friends and neighbors, help a good cause and bid on more than 100 fantastic items.

Since the flyer promoting the event

was printed, many new donations have been received, the Rotary Club's Susan Myers told *The Tribune*.

"Canadian Partner (a Canadian Airlines subsidiary) has given us two air tickets as a door prize for the evening, but you must be present to be eligible for the prize," she noted.

"Thrifty Rent-A-Car has given us a car for the weekend and Maples of Ballantreae gave us a weekend for two plus Sunday brunch." Hathaway Decorators

has donated a \$75 gift certificate and Freckles will create a grapevine wreath to individual specifications.

"If you're having a dinner party, Donna Fraas will make a dessert for you," said Myers.

Other services offered include a videotape of your home for insurance purposes, donated by Bob Lewis; ski lessons at Georgian Peaks, donated by Stan Newmarch and ski lessons at Lakeridge, donated by Len Greenwood.

Local lawyers Gord Ness and Andre Kozak are each giving a pair of wills and Farmer Jack's is donating golf lessons at Spring Lakes. *The Tribune* is offering \$100 in free advertising.

"We should end up with between 130 and 150 articles," Myers estimated.

The event gets under way at 7:15 p.m. and tickets are \$8 a head, which includes wine and cheese.

To reserve your tickets call 640-6034 (days) or 642-1117 (evenings).




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