

Education

Public teachers vote for full strike over prep time

By MIKE ADLER
Staff Reporter

Public school elementary teachers have decided they are willing to strike to get back their preparation time, says a teachers' union president.

Joan Heeler, of York Region's Women Teachers' Association, said after teachers voted 87 per cent for a strike that a work-to-rule is not being considered.

"It will be a full strike," said Heeler. "We've got to get all the prep time back."

Added to the December vote of their high school colleagues, yesterday's vote places all public board teachers in York Region on a strike footing.

Heeler said 2,848 members of the two elementary federations cast votes in favor of a strike yesterday, and only 488 were against.

No dates have been set for further contract negotiations.

"I am asking that the York Region Board of Education return to the table immediately with a renewed mandate before we are forced to leave the classroom," Fred Mayor, president of the local Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation said in a release.

Teachers charge a scheduling change imposed by the board last fall which shifts half their 200 weekly minutes of preparation time to after classes, is illegal.

A provincial hearing to decide the issue continues Monday.

Provincial law says teachers unions must give five day's notice to the board before starting a strike.

Crime Watch

High school evacuated after vandals start fire

By JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Reporter

A fire set by vandals forced the evacuation of a Stouffville school on Thursday.

Stouffville District Secondary School (SDSS) principal Rod Leonard reported that the Stouffville Fire Department was called when a fire was discovered in the boys washroom at the downtown school.

The washroom floor and a stall were ablaze causing smoke damage and raising a concern for the safety of the students.

Murray Emmerson, spokesperson for the local fire department, said the incident posed a threat to the safety of the students and staff.

"I don't understand why in his day and age we'd have such an act of vandalism. It's expensive and it's dangerous," said Emmerson.

Such acts of vandalism are rare at SDSS, said Leonard. School, fire and police department officials are carrying out an investigation.

"We hope to find out who did this," said Leonard.

Port Perry woman dies in two-car crash

A 41-year-old Port Perry woman was killed instantly in a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of Bethesda Road and Kennedy Road Thursday morning.

Jane Reader of Island Road, R.R. 3 Port Perry, died at the scene, York Regional Police reported.

Charges against the driver of the second vehicle could be laid pending the results of an investigation, police said.

At the time of the accident, Reader was travelling southbound on Kennedy, entered the intersection and was stuck by a cube van driven by Gary McDonald, 41, of Keswick.

The Stouffville Fire Department used the Jaws of Life to help remove Reader's trapped body from the wreck.



Women's Institute celebrates 100 years

Several women dressed up in period costumes for a meeting of the Women's Institute at Parkview Wednesday to celebrate their 100th anniversary. Marjorie Fretz (far right) wears an outfit, which came over on the Mayflower, that belonged to her great-great-grandmother. The women represent Altona, Goodwood and Claremont chapters.

Photo/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Stouffville teen charged with break-ins

Three teenagers arrested minutes after a Holland Landing home was burglarized Tuesday have been charged with 24 daylight break-ins.

The arrests followed a short car chase in which an unmarked York Regional Police cruiser was damaged and a getaway vehicle crashed into a tree.

Det.-Sgt. Doug Hall said two of the suspects were captured immediately after they attempted to escape on foot.

The third suspect was found hiding behind a

garage after he ran through a house. Police tracked him down by following his footprints in the snow.

Hall said the arrests were made by "old clothes" detectives who happened to be staking out the Oriole Drive neighborhood searching for burglars responsible for a rash of break-ins in Newmarket, Aurora and East Gwillimbury over the past two months.

"We had just been getting hammered with

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No urgency to move club: owner

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said, adding whatever happens he will continue to hold on to the team.

"I have no intention of giving up the team, I really enjoy the hockey. I knew it would take time to build it up."

Meanwhile, Emmerson was hoping Hakonson would cool down and consider the plan he is putting together to guarantee the club a prominent place in the local recreation scene.

He said the Spirit have been guaranteed practice time two nights a week with the coming of the second ice pad.

"If he's willing to forget the past and look ahead as of April 1 and give us a three to five year commitment, then we can go forward," Emmerson said.

While Emmerson wouldn't divulge details of his proposal, he said it involved a total restructuring of the way the club operates, including the appointment of a board of directors.

"I just want to meet with Mr. Hakonson to give him the town's proposal," said the mayor. "The door is open if he wants to pursue it. I want the team to stay in Whitchurch-Stouffville."

Emmerson said he was confident the new approach would also result in putting more fans in the Rec Centre for Spirit games.

Only 50 fans attended the team's second last home game Feb. 13, with crowds diminishing as the season wore on.

Emmerson's plan to save the team may find a receptive ear. Hakonson said that if he could get the proper guarantees of support that he might reconsider his plan to relocate the club. "If I see that the will is here to make the club stay then maybe we could make it work."

He suggested a solution might lie in selling the club to 40 shareholders at a \$1,000 a share so that any negotiations between the Spirit and town officials would involve a delegation of interested people rather than just himself. "I'm not asking for a handout, I'm not looking for anyone to bail me out."

Hakonson admitted there are positives to keeping the Spirit in Stouffville. He pointed to the team's upbeat head coach Dan Larmer, who is an area resident.

He said he's been talking to an experienced Provincial League general manager from the Greater Toronto Area about taking over from Wally Crowder, who is to step down as team GM. The bottom line, he said, is that he'd love to see the club become entrenched in the community.

"I love it when you see 50 kids outside the team's dressing room door looking for autographs."

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