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# THE TRIBUNE

## Weekender

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**SADD sufferer?**  
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**SPIRIT BIG WIN**

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# Board closes schools; asks sides to settle

MIKE ADLER  
Staff Reporter

Striking teachers scored a local point in their fight with the province as York Region's public school board, citing "enormous pressures," announced yesterday it will close its schools to both staff and students.

But it was still not known, as both sides

waited for an injunction, if the Ontario-wide walkout would continue Monday.

York's public board, which had tried to keep its schools open and its administrators on duty, said it regretted its decision.

"The tensions have grown beyond our ability to ensure the safety of all concerned," Education Director Bill Hogarth said in release yesterday afternoon. "In good conscience, we can no longer allow our employees to face the enormous pressures."

The move will mean that teachers who want to cross picket lines cannot, and principals and vice-principals — feeling intense pressure to join their fellow union members — can leave their posts.

The board is one of the last in the Greater Toronto Area to close schools, a spokesperson added yesterday. Local separate schools have already been closed to students, and union officials say Catholic principals are doing picket duty with other teachers. Education Minister Dave Johnson released amendments to Bill 160, the touchstone for the illegal strike, which included removing principals and vice-principals from teachers unions.

On Thursday, Hogarth joined public board chair Bill Crothers in appealing to union leaders and Premier Mike Harris to settle the strike this weekend. "With the passage of time, the lasting consequences of the dispute become potentially more significant," the two men wrote in an open letter.

Hogarth and Crothers also suggested Harris and Johnson "immediately cease the constant criticism of teachers, school boards, and school administrators," and urged the government to add amendments reducing "the degree of centralization" proposed in the bill.



**FEELING THE HEAT:** Mayor Wayne Emmerson bows his head as mayoral candidate Mike Watson looks on during a sometimes testy candidates' meeting Wednesday at Musselman's Lake (Ward 2).

Photo by STEVE SOMERVILLE

# Mayoral candidates face off during debate

JOAN RANSBERRY  
Staff Reporter

Ward 2's controversial water issue dominated Wednesday's election forum.

More than 200 people turned up at the Ballantrae Community Centre to hear incumbent Mayor Wayne Emmerson, mayoral candidate Mike Watson and Ward 2 candidates Helene Johnson and Mark Carroll outline their election platforms.

Most of the questions from the audience were linked to the \$8-million communal water system. People asking questions were angry. And at times, the candidates were testy.

While the water system is up and running, some residents of Musselman's Lake and Ballantrae continue to challenge its necessity.

Blair Bassett, who summed up the majority of concerns, said his well water is perfect. "You expect me to hook up. If I do my children will drink water that's not as healthy as they're

getting now. Explain it."

Emmerson said Bassett and others had to connect to the system because it's mandatory. Carroll and Johnson said they sympathize with all the people who have sound wells and yet were forced to pay out thousands of dollars to get connected.

During other debates, Emmerson said he'd like to work towards getting horse trails, a park for Musselman's Lake, a proper drainage system and a new fire hall for Ward 2.

Watson was blunt. In the past year, as the town's Ward 2 councillor, Watson said he learned 'the system' and how to "drag the information out of staff and politicians."

The present government is not open, said Watson. "We need to regain the power of our town, council needs to provide direction to staff rather than having them provide direction to council," said Watson.

Meanwhile, Johnson told the audience she

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## @random

Eliminate your waste

■ Today is the final day for the York Region Waste Depot taking place at the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex in Newmarket at Eagle Street just west of Yonge Street. York Region residents may drop off household hazardous wastes free of charge from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Clear your home and garage of oils, cleaning solvents, propane cylinders and more.

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