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A Metroland Publication Serving Whitechurch-Stouffville Since 1888

Vandorf Park being destroyed p. 6



Rebels win a close one sports p. 18



Bruce & Sue's BIG adventure p. 12



CHEQUE MATE: Bill Payne, first vice-president of the Stouffville Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion stands among the team members of the Stouffville Squirt Girls' Rep. Team. Payne, on behalf of the legion, presented the team with a \$500 sponsorship cheque.

Photo by CHERYL JOHNSON

Teachers poised for strike vote

JENNIFER BROWN
Staff Writer

York Region public high school teachers will vote next Friday on whether to give their union a strike mandate to back up their demands for improved working conditions.

And as talks broke off on Wednesday, the threat of a strike remained a distinct possibility with no new talks scheduled.

However, a walkout could not begin until June 26, long after the students have left for the summer.

The board and its 1,800 secondary teachers were in the same position last June, when the teachers technically walked off the job after classes had ended. But the dispute was resolved just prior to the first day of school last September, delaying the students' return to class by a day.

Union leader Lynn Johnston said she has plans to visit York Region high schools starting Monday to inform members about the issues, three days after a conciliation officer was appointed to help find a solution.

"If we get a strong mandate, hopefully the board will sit up and pay attention and say 'Let's work something out in a reasonable fashion,'" Johnston said Thursday.

Even though talks have broken off, the board has proceeded with its staffing plans for next year,

using measures that violate the current collective agreement, which expires Aug. 31.

Board vice-chairperson Karen Barker said the union's decision to walk away from talks doesn't stop the need to schedule classes for next fall.

"We put our proposal on the table and the union didn't propose an alternate solution," said Barker. "But we have to staff for the fall."

Barker also pointed out that the province now dictates how classes are staffed.

The Ministry allocation is less than our teachers currently make - there is a 5 per cent differential," she said. "It's a simple case of mathematics. This is the new reality. This is provincial direction, it's not locally driven. And fundamental to that is there are no legal means to raise funds locally."

The new education funding formula has not provided the public board with enough money to pay its secondary and elementary teachers, who are the highest-paid in Ontario. The discrepancy has created a \$14 million budget shortfall, which the board hopes to recover during this round of negotiations.

But just because the board must cope with a new funding structure doesn't mean teachers are about to roll over, Johnston said.

The board wants to have the

Gallery membership goal at halfway mark

KATE GILDERDALE
Correspondent

Latham Gallery is already halfway towards meeting its membership goal of 250, representative Sharon Maude told *The Tribune*.

A new exhibition opened in the former gallery space at the library June 9, as the result of a rental agreement which enables the Latham Gallery association to hold a total of five shows up until the end

of the year. Photography by Robert McNair runs until July 5 and features the work of the Stouffville-born photographic artist, a graduate of Stouffville District Secondary School.

McNair, who has lived in the Kitchener area since 1997, has participated in a number of solo and group exhibitions and has taught a Photography for Artists course in the Fine Arts Department at the University of Waterloo. Residents are invited to meet the artist at a reception at the library June 28 from 1 to 3 p.m.

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