

bility to English schools, it has been private citizens, such as Brent Tyler, and not QESBA nor its member boards, who have taken up the fight.

There are indications that influential members of QESBA are little more than toadies for the Quebec Liberals. This party supported and enacted legislation, which further suppressed an attempt to increase numbers in English schools even by a minuscule amount. How can supporters of English education trust obsequious individuals of this ilk to fight for them?

Commissioners seem more concerned with defending institutional rights of boards, rather than rights of individuals who wish to attend English schools. It may be instructive if a commissioner made a pledge to fight for increased access to our schools and denounced political parties that deny those rights. Far from the ideal of freedom of choice, the pledge would be that they demand that the Quebec government provides reciprocal arrangements for English speakers in Quebec, so that they enjoy the same rights as French speakers throughout Canada. That particular right is already contained in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms [Art. 23], but requires Quebec to agree to the provision for those living here.

Let us not debate the false choice of a Liberal or CAQ position on school boards, but deal with the central issue of students' access to English schools. After all, without students why would we need boards?

*Jim Wilson,  
Montreal*

## Why Eustace is running

In her letter to *The Suburban* on June 4, titled "Clarification in order," Mary Fabian writes that she is "somewhat confused" regarding my candidacy for chairman of the Lester B. Pearson School Board, considering I have been critical of boards for years. My actions do appear to be paradoxical. Nonetheless, I am committed to the public education system. Irrespective of my views, the Quebec government has determined that school boards will stay for four more years; consequently, I felt compelled to run to bring meaningful change.

Ms. Fabian may erroneously consider a lack of support for school boards as being synonymous with a lack of support for English education. Since they were inaugurated, it is difficult to pinpoint any board action that has provided any significant support for our schools. For example, with respect to the curriculum, the boards are mere rubber stamps for the government bureaucrats. They even failed to secure the appropriate English textbooks in a timely manner for students, who were obliged to follow the provincial programmes.

Though enrollment dwindles, bureaucracy thrives. I have first hand experience of the board's actions on financial issues. Last year the Central Parents Committee Budget Consultation Response told the board to minimize "Head office personnel, including past employees of the Board." I believe that some of my public criticisms have produced changes, such as ending the unauthorized diversion of monies from the Pearson board's regular operating budget to fund classes in Pre-K. As well I have advocated a stricter Code of Ethics for commissioners.

I am running for Chairman, not as a mission of self aggrandizement, but to improve the service given to the schools by the boards. I do not consider this to be a rung to climb the political or social ladder. Nor do I need the salary that comes with the job; I receive three pensions.

With grandchildren in the system and my 35 years experience in the classroom, I have first hand knowledge of the decisions that need to be made.

*Chris Eustace,  
Pierrefonds*

## Honoring Mordechai Richler

Regarding Jon Kantor's letter (May 28) regarding the fact that nothing appropriate has been named in honour of Mordechai Richler; the fact of the matter is that in Montreal too frequently racists receive honours, but those who expose them for exactly what they are, do not.

On June 5 I went to the CDN-NDG borough council meeting and asked "Why does Montreal still have a metro station named after a racist?"

Councillor Marvin Rotrand replied and explained essentially that once something is named, Montreal does not like to change the name. I can appreciate the rationale behind the response (and the likely fact that Rotrand detests the

fact that we have a station named after Lionel Groulx) but Councillor Jeremy Searle amusingly pointed out something to the effect that he had heard that Rene Levesque was going to be changed back to Dorchester!

Marcel Laurin used to be called Laurentien. I imagine that other streets have had their names changed as well.

In view of these changes I feel that Montreal should either change the names of every street name back to what they were originally, or change the name of the Lionel Groulx metro to either Mordechai Richler or Oscar Peterson!

*Murray Levine,  
Dorval*

## Sherbrooke bus lane and the war on cars

There has been much consternation in NDG and other boroughs as to car traffic, public transit, cycling, road repairs and other infrastructures issues. We have been led to believe - told to believe - that a key element in our collective salvation will be our abandonment of private cars in favour of communal transit. To that end, the STM has assumed omnipotent powers and now dictates its needs to those it supposedly serves: bending citizens and the politicians to their will, rather the other way around. Their rigid schedules and routes cannot be varied less a bureaucrat might have to do some actual work to accommodate a community's needs and particularities, like starting the Sherbrooke St. bus route at Cavendish rather than Elmhurst. We are told to unquestioningly accept the party-line and "conventional-wisdom" that bus lanes (like our fancy new bus shelters) will lead droves to abandon their cars and switch to public transit as it has "supposedly" done elsewhere (high gas prices and less disposable income are never the real determining factors).

Just follow the "Pied-Piper STM" tune like the lemmings we are supposed to be. Soon Sherbrooke St will be assimilated into the "BORG" that is the STM. Of course they are just doing what one would expect any bureaucracy to do: expand at all costs and use fear-mongering about the demise of the planet and other buzz-words to justify those ends.

It is this blind adherence to nebulous assertions about the inevitability of increased bus usage due to faster transit times (the 10% to 20% time saving touted may translate into perhaps 2 to 4 minutes) that our politicians and STM are using as they are about to wreck the equilibrium of usage that has settled in on the NDG - Sherbrooke St corridor. One look at the bus lanes being marked and you can see the bottlenecks developing for all non-bus traffic. Like a squeezed balloon, cars will simply divert to other streets which will then require speed bumps at every 20 feet (the solution to all car traffic issues) or potholes, whichever is cheaper.

We should be demanding evidence based solutions from our politicians, not "they're doing this in - fill in the city of your choice" or "businesses should not be effected by reduced parking but should expect an increase in sales from more transit users" as justification for their actions. The few minutes saved and the ridership increases will probably be negligible but the effect on the businesses and residents along the corridor and community beyond will not be. All this upheaval: but at least transit users will be able to sleep in 5 minutes later which they are very enthusiastic about when surveyed (in our self-centered world who can blame them). Will the politicians admit their error when their promises fail to materialize? It's not in their DNA.

*Mark Lipson,  
NDG*

## Project Genesis on the Budget

*Affordable housing crisis, social security protection not addressed*

Project Genesis, an Anti-Poverty community organisation in Côte-des-Neiges, criticized last week's budget. According to Cathy Inouye, a community organiser with the group, "this budget puts social programs under the microscope, instead of the structural causes of poverty."

The lack of commitment to the construction of social housing is particularly distressing to the organisation as it already sees several cases of eviction per week, many of them families with children or senior citizens. "Income has simply not kept up with the rent increases we have seen over

the past 15 years," says community organiser Christopher Schwartz, "and families can no longer afford to pay the rent." The government's commitment to constructing a mere 3,000 social housing units through AccèsLogis for all of Quebec is a drop in the bucket, given the fact that almost 2,500 households are on the waiting list for low-cost housing in the borough of Côte-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce alone. The organisation, as a member of FRAPRU, demands that the government commit to constructing 50,000 social housing units over five years.

Project Genesis is also struggling to keep pace with the increasing demand for help filling out welfare applications - a service that used to be provided by the local employment offices. Given the global hiring freeze announced, the organisation fears that the process of applying for last-resort financial assistance will become even more opaque for those most in need. "The government cuts services and community organisations like Project Genesis are left to pick up the slack," says Inouye, "however we are simply unable to compensate for the government's withdrawal."