

# Township surplus will cover provincial shortfall

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The Rockwood Miller

Eramosa staff and Council are confident that they will not have to raise taxes to make up for the shortfall in provincial funding, at least this year.

The funding shortfall of \$89,000 would translate into a 6.75 per cent tax increase, if Township Council and staff were not able to offset the increase.

"We had a surplus in our operating budget last year," Township Treasurer Terry Noble explained.

"I don't have the final figures yet, but the surplus will be enough to cover the funding reduction for this year."

Noble said the "crunch" will be dealing with not getting any more supplementary roads funding for things like road construction, bridges and equipment.

"We're going to have to inject more money into our capital budget to do the work that we expected to be able to do and that will require even more efficiencies in our operation," Noble explained.

The Township's proposed capital budget for this year is between \$300,000 and \$400,000 and last year's operating budget was \$1.7 million, with \$1.3 million of that coming from property taxes.

Reeve Rick Hughes said Council can't look for a 'quick fix' to the provincial funding shortfall because they have been warned that there will be further cuts next year.

"We're hoping that we can, for 1996, maintain the same level of service by delivering those services in a more efficient manner," Hughes explained.

"The taxpayers would dearly love to see a tax reduction, but I

don't think that is possible," Hughes said, as he noted the services the Township provides are basic "bread and butter" ones.

"The largest portion of our operating budget is in the roads area - for snow ploughing and road maintenance - and in order to reduce that, you're talking about reducing the level of road maintenance or ploughing on some secondary roads."

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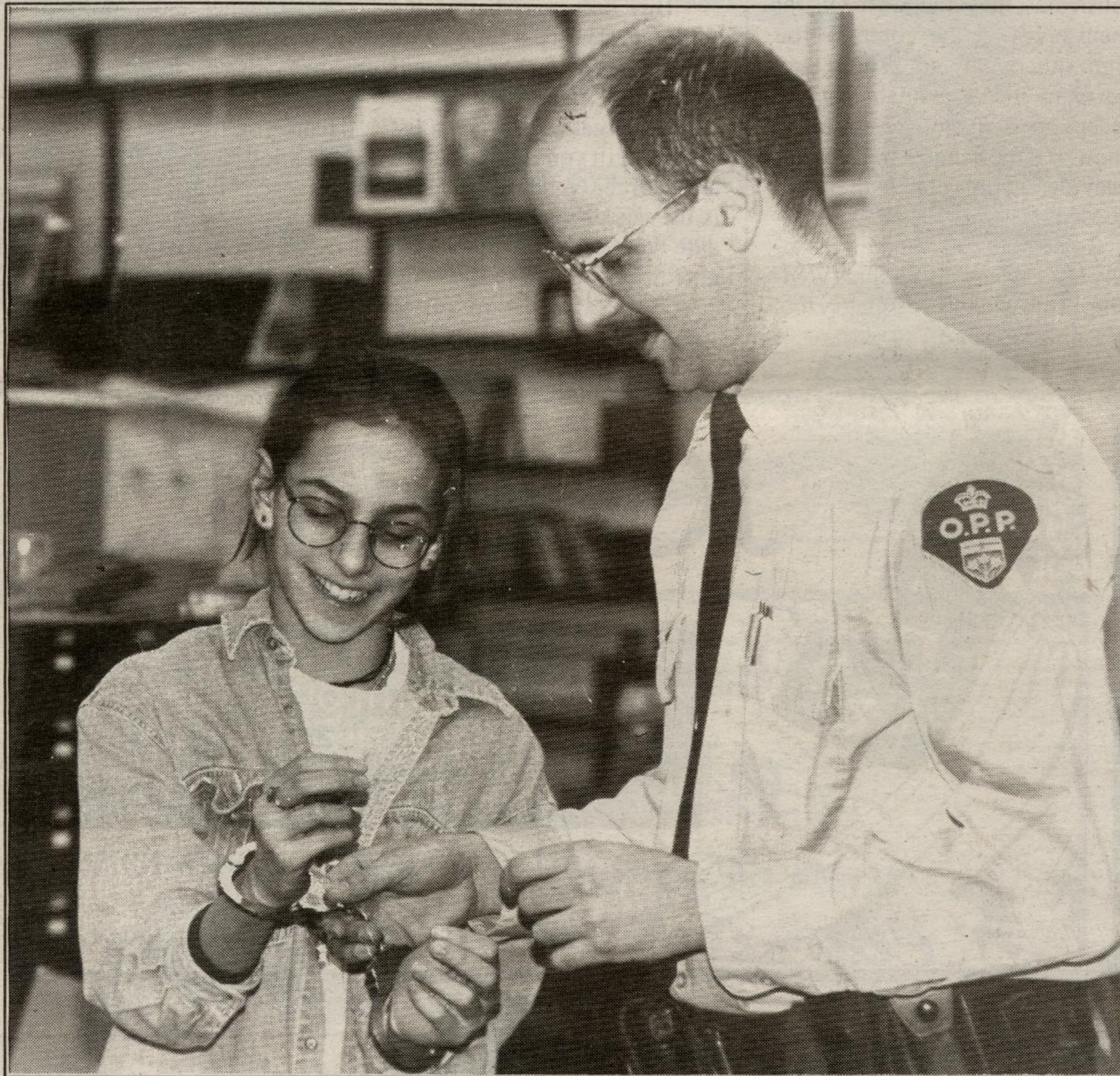
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**HOW'S THE FIT?** Twelve-year-old Bianca Hall tries out a pair of handcuffs, supplied by OPP Constable Mike Gordon, who visited Rockwood Centennial last Wednesday. While younger grades learned about bus safety, Bianca's classmates asked questions regarding law. (Karen Wetmore photo)

## Gas conversion to be started at Rockmosa

BY DOUG HARRISON  
The Rockwood Miller

An agreement between the Eramosa Parks, Rec. and Culture Committee and Town Council, that will see the former receive \$44,500 toward finishing the conversion to natural gas at Rockmosa Community Centre, was approved in principal last Monday.

Gary Martin, chair of the Parks, Rec. and Culture Committee, said on Friday they would be getting quotes in the next couple of weeks for the project he said would save \$7,000 a year in hydrocosts.

"We're quite happy. We appreciate Council's support," Martin said on behalf of the 10-member committee. He added they requested \$60,500, which included repairs to the Rockmosa floor and other "small" items. "Rockmosa is a priority this year. It's the only place we have a deficit in the mandate of Parks and Rec."

Parks and Rec. will borrow the money now rather than spend from their budget. It will be paid back over a five-year period.

With the \$44,500, natural gas will replace electrical heat in the building's basement and the stoves in the kitchen, while remedial heat upstairs will be upgraded. Martin noted their budget was cut by \$10,000, over 10 per cent.

"Hopefully the conversion will make the basement more attractive," stated Martin. "Our subcommittee wants a zero per cent operating budget by 1997, and this is

the first leg in getting those costs down."

Meanwhile, Martin will step down as chair after a one-year term at the next Parks, Rec. and Culture Committee meeting slated for Feb. 15. Committee member Doug Breen will take over.

**NOTES:** An asphalt surface to cover the winter rink and Pioneer Day dance area at Lloyd Dyer Park will not be a priority of the committee at this time, Martin said.

"Two Council members felt it was not a priority at this time. The basketball facility at Centennial school will do for the time being. We will arrange for funding maybe in the future," commented Martin.

## No skiing

### WELLINGTON HALL ACADEMY

BY TRAVIS VANRYAN

This week has been very busy at Wellington Hall. In science we have started a unit about the moon. We have to look at it each night, but so far it's been too cloudy.

In art, each student is making a bird feeder.

In language arts we have started two new books, *Rescue Josh McGuire* and *Island of the Blue Dolphins*.

We didn't get to go skiing last week because of the weather. We went to the park for recess during the warm weather. Many of us got very wet when we fell.

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