



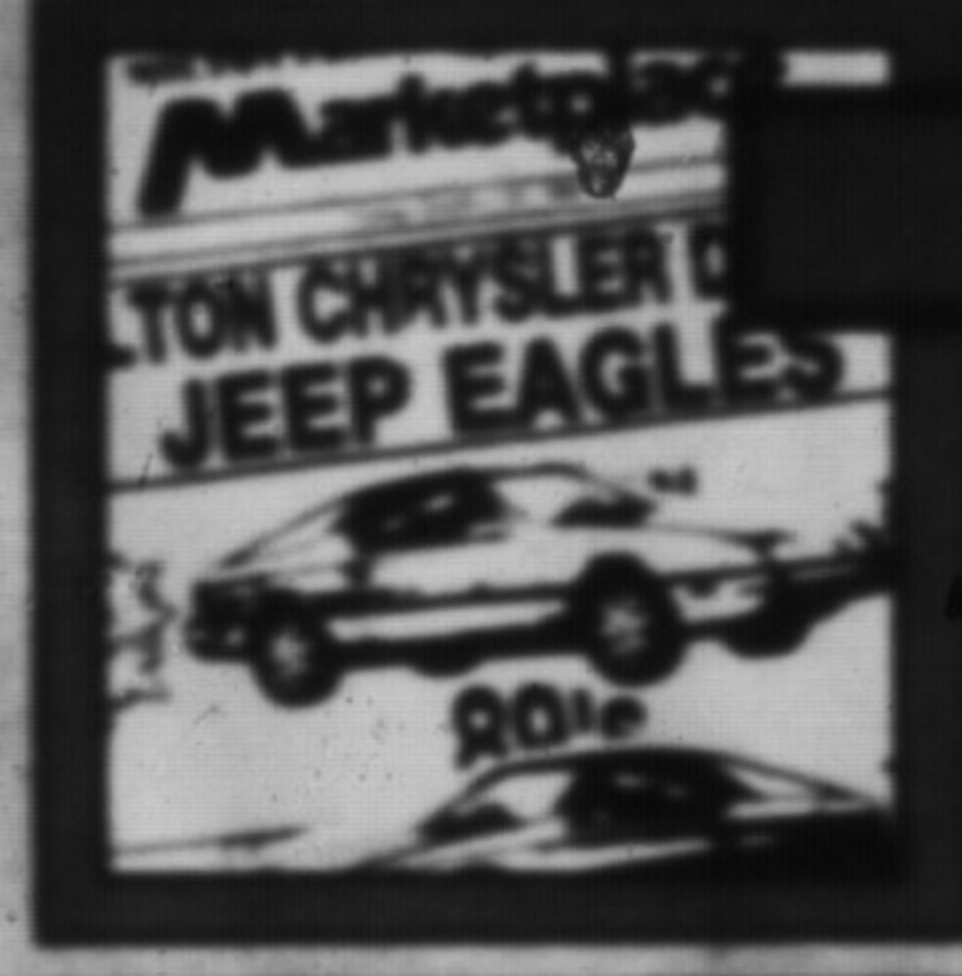
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# The Canadian Champion

Weekend edition

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Photo by JOHN WARREN

## Pumpkin patch kids

It's a Halloween tradition for this group of tots to dress in matching costumes. They and their moms have been getting together every Wednesday morning for a "play group" session for the past three years. From left the pumpkin patch kids are Kyle Scott, Luke Woods, Katalynn Thibson, Jeffrey Aspdon and Teri Parker. They're all three and a half years old.

## Maplehurst guards settle with province

By BRAD REAUME

The guards will return to Maplehurst. The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) reached agreement with the provincial government to negotiate solutions to problems in the correctional system.

The terms were hammered out early Thursday morning by OPSEU President James Clancy and representatives of Ontario Premier David Peterson. The agreement calls for the union to discontinue the job action in return for a government commitment to immediately negotiate overcrowding and understaffing problems at provincial jails.

"If the government is foolish enough to renege on these commitments then there will be trouble down the road," said Mr. Clancy after the agreement was announced. "There's no question things will blow."

Suspended correctional officers will lose a day's pay but there will be no criminal contempt action taken against OPSEU members for defying a court injunction to return to work.

The province also committed to bringing in early retirement for correctional officers. Under the direction of the Ministry of Labour OPSEU and the province will jointly investigate threats to the health and safety of officers. "We have reached commitments that correctional officers will be able to retire early. Recourse has been made available to deal with other issues," Mr. Clancy said.

Officials from both sides have laid out a schedule of meetings to deal with the immediate issues of overcrowding and understaffing. The government has promised to make the necessary money available to meet the problems, according to the union.

"I expect the officers to return to work for tonight's (Thursday's) evening shift," said Maplehurst Superintendent Gary Commeford. The settlement requires guards to return at midnight he added. He was unsure of the details of the settlement and felt any comment was premature.

"Suffice it to say that the institution ran very smoothly. The entire program of the institution ran to its capacity," Mr. Commeford said. He admitted that there had been a small

fire at Maplehurst on Tuesday but that it "was nothing that got out of hand." He said the fire issue was far reaching and refused further comment.

Wednesday evening a Ministry of Corrections "ghost bus" passed Maplehurst with 29 prisoners on board. According to union officials the bus left a Sudbury institution with the prisoners because there was not room to house them. They were travelling to each correctional facility in an attempt to find space for the prisoners but the bus driver refused to cross picket lines.

Those picket lines had been set up since 6:30 Monday morning when 21 guards phoned in sick to protest overcrowding at the institution. The "job action" as it was termed by union officials began when a number of guards phoned in sick at the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Detention Centre and the rest of the corrections officers locked the prisoners into their cells and refused to turn over the keys to the facility to management.

The action spread to correctional centres across the province. At Maplehurst 32 beds had recently been added bringing the prison population to 412, that's 400 more than it was originally designed to hold. The action also caught OPSEU officials by surprise. A union spokesperson said that with the college teacher's strike the action by the guards made for a manpower problem for the union.

A correctional officer, who refused to be identified, said that the guards had received a lot of support from the community. "Truck drivers are honking lights on OPP cars are flashing as they go by, and people are waving," he said. "Visitors coming out say that the prisoners are supporting the union action because we are supporting them. We all exist in the same environment."

Union members have been without a contract since December 1988.

## Proposed science centre worth \$56 million

By BRAD REAUME

Imagine Ontario Place situated beside the ship canal along Burlington Beach. That gives you a good idea of how the Great Lakes Science Center might look.

The ambitious plan, first considered a year ago, was presented Wednesday to Halton's Planning and Public Works Committee in a preliminary report from the consultants, Jack Diamond and Associates.

Mr. Diamond informed the committee of initial design options and the feasibility of such a project as well as an economic analysis and an administrative review.

Within two hours drive of the proposed site there are more than nine million people according to Mr. Diamond. This represents a large enough base for the major tourist attraction the Great Lakes Science Centre will be. The location is particularly visible with the Skyway bridge running beside the site.

Considering other attractions in the area Mr. Diamond concluded that an annual attendance of 600,000 could be anticipated. In fact he said this figure errs on the conservative side. The Royal Botanical Gardens draws 750,000 visitors each year and the Ontario Science Center attracts 1.1 million.

The interactive observation area proposed for the Centre will be the main draw according to Mr. Diamond. "It's a big part of the Centre and it meets the growing public interest in the environment," Mr. Diamond said. "The economic impacts are very significant for the Region."

The Centre itself is not expected to generate funds but to move away from subsidies until it pays for itself.

There are a number of possibilities for the site. Mr. Diamond favours an offshore development much like

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