

Lee asks staff to sniff around compost site

By ROB KELLY
The Champion

Milton regional councillor Barry Lee says he wants some answers, soon, that will address complaints about the Scott Farms composting operation in rural Hornby.

But Brian Kent, the operations manager at the facility, says odors are nowhere near the problem they used to be, and will be lessened further once the ongoing installation of new air circulation mechanisms is completed, probably by Christmas.

Mr. Lee called for a report from the Town planning department, perhaps as early as next week, about the issue at town council Monday night.

People in the area are "extremely upset with what's going on," councillor Lee said. "Calls are continuing to come to me. I went down (to the vicinity) Saturday. The situation is extremely serious."

Complaints from a neighbouring plant nursery involved "nauseating" odors, Mr. Lee said, to the extent workers are no longer active in the part of the nursery closest to the composting centre. "I think this has gone farther than it should," Mr. Lee added. "It's no joke. I think we really owe an explanation to the people down there."

The Ministry of the Environment, which largely oversees such matters, has been working with Scott Farms, but so far "I don't think a hell of a lot has been done," Mr. Lee noted.

"We're doing everything the Ministry would like to see," Mr. Kent said. "The odor we had this summer has been greatly diminished." In fact, odors have probably been cut by 75 per cent, Mr. Kent judged.

As well as installing a new aeration system, the firm has varied the mix of compost material to minimize odors, Mr. Kent said. "We're getting up to speed. We want to be responsible citizens. There is a lot of good being done here, too. We're diverting 15 to 20,000 tonnes a year that would otherwise go to a landfill."

"This is not something just thrown together," Mr. Kent continued. "This is a long-term, viable answer to a large problem that we have. And it costs a lot of money."

"The whole site should be up to the technology we want by Christmas," Mr. Kent estimated.

Mr. Lee, said Mr. Kent, did not inspect the composting facility in his tour last weekend. The farm operators would happily explain and demonstrate ongoing efforts to minimize odors, the manager added.

Mr. Lee asked Town planning director John Fior if the scope of activity at Scott Farms "complies with agricultural zoning?"

"When I did a site check, I was quite surprised," Mr. Fior admitted, noting that there is a four-acre concrete pad at the farm to act as a compost platform. "I never anticipated that size of operation," Mr. Fior added.

"I don't know why they would say they've been surprised," Mr. Kent said. The company asked Town officials whether any permits were necessary for such construction and were told "no", he recounted.



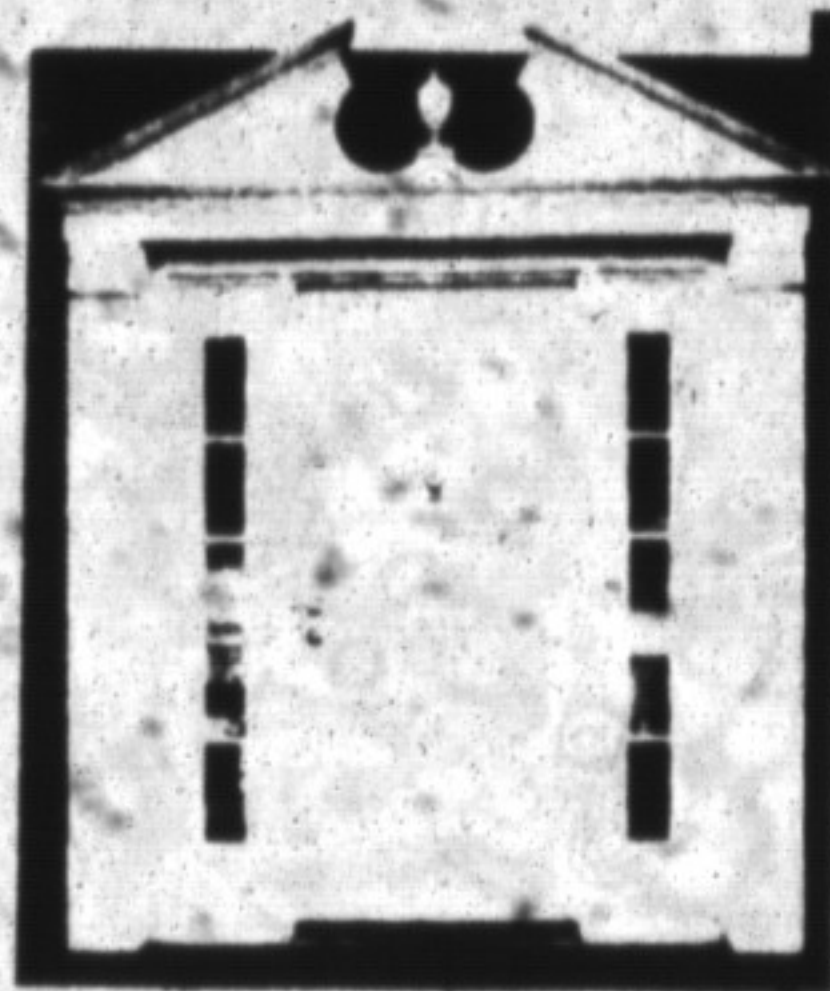
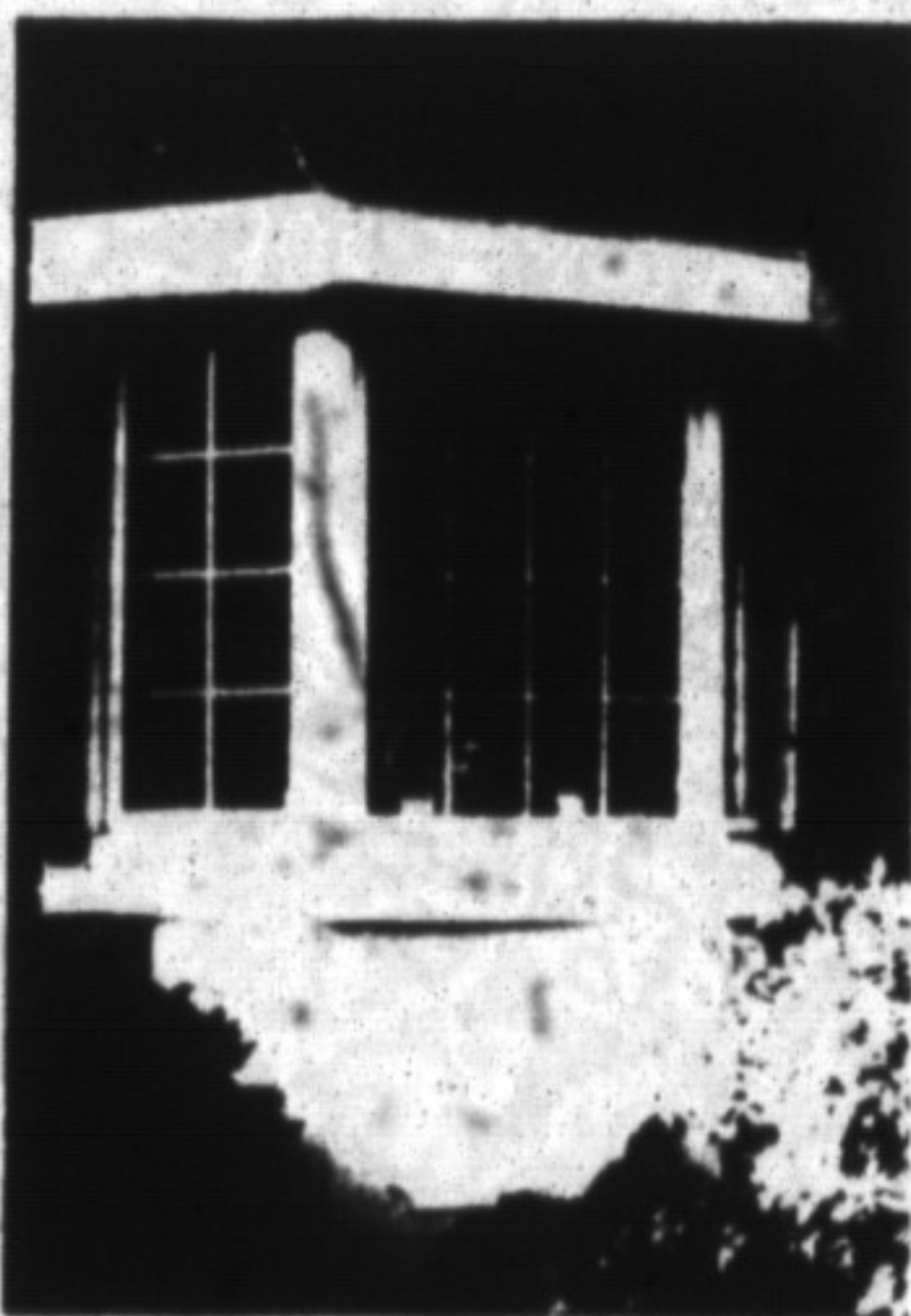
Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Driver trapped

Firefighters used the jaws of life to rescue trapped driver Elizabeth Kreutzberg, 33, of Cambridge following a single-vehicle accident on the westbound Highway 401 Monday afternoon. The car went out of control after driving onto the north gravel shoulder at about 4 p.m. The vehicle crossed two lanes and flipped over in the grass centre median after rolling 55 metres, said Milton OPP Constable Vince Arlemma. The driver, who was wearing her seat belt, luckily only broke her wrist in the accident. She was charged with failing to drive in the marked lane.

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