

# EASTER GRASS

## Overstrand aids Easter Bunny

by Shirley Whittington

This year the Easter bunny will get a lot of help from a group of patients from the Regional Division of the Penetanguishene Mental Health Centre.

Five patient/ workers make most of the Easter grass—that glistening shredded stuff that lines Easter baskets—that is used in Canada. Each day the workers are driven from the MHC to Overstrand industries in the Penetanguishene industrial mall.

There they put in an eight-hour day tinting, shredding and packaging the scrap cellophane which is their raw material.

It is a program that is unique in Ontario. Terry Knight, director of vocational recreational and volunteer services at the regional centre describes the community work program as "a huge step from the protected and sheltered hospital workshop."

"Patients in the program learn realistic working skills in an authentic industrial setting," he adds. "They learn to get along with a boss, and with their fellow workers, and they learn to keep themselves on a regular schedule."

### Program

Before they are considered for the community work program, workers must perform successfully for two months in the hospital workshops. "We expect them to work at an acceptable industrial rate," says Knight.

The Overstrand plant is owned and equipped by Al Simpson, a Mississauga businessman. For years, patients at the MHC packed his product.

When Simpson decided to expand, he rented and equipped the Penetanguishene facility. The MHC supplies the man (and woman) power.

Working out in the community proved to be a great incentive to the MHC patients who were

involved. "Productivity bumped up forty per cent when they moved from the MHC down to the mall," says Terry proudly.

The workers are paid about 75 cents an hour. Lunch is supplied by the MHC and the workers themselves decided to shorten their lunch hour to thirty minutes so they could leave for home half an hour earlier.

Workers are free to spend their pay packets as they choose. Some money is saved; a lot goes for treats like movies and snacks. Each week, each worker is assessed on his adaptability, production and quality of work. Points are awarded, and the wage

rate is based on these points. Terry Knight describes this as an incentive wage system. "Most are at the very top," he says.

### Production

These days the Easter grass production is almost completed, and 50 round bales of compressed purple and yellow grass are stacked in the 2,000 square-foot plant.

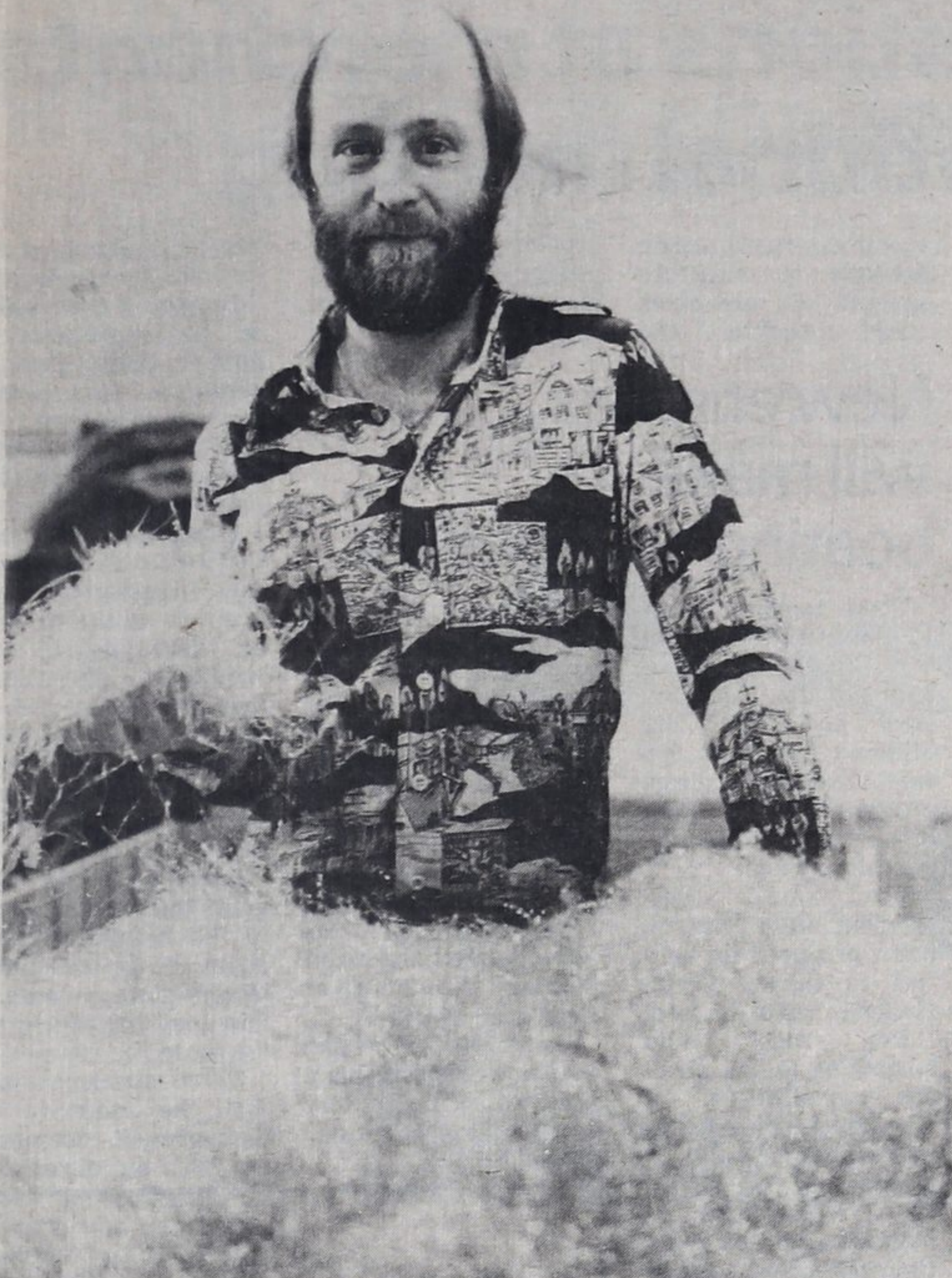
The grass can be produced in almost any colour, and the Overstrand staff are planning sales to packers of wine and cheese and other fancy food items. Overstrand is a cheerful place to work. Last week, patient/worker James

paused in his job of weighing and packaging small bundles of shiny purple grass. "It feels good," he said, "to think of all the kids that will find their Easter goodies in this stuff!"

### Instructor

Director Terry Knight and staff instructor Rita Laurin are proud of their Overstrand workers. "From a work point of view," says Knight, "these patients have made it."

And when you're shopping for your Easter grass to bed down the kids' chocolate eggs, watch for packages marked Flopsv Easter Grass. Your neighbours made it.



### Easter trimmings

Terry Knight, director of vocational recreational and volunteer services at the regional centre of the Penetanguishene Mental Health Centre has his hands full-of Easter

grass. Most of the grass used in Canada is produced at Overstrand in the Penetanguishene industrial mall, by patients from the MHC.

### Takes dim view

## Darby wonders why media gets first word

A temporary freeze on further development along both sides of Highway 27 between County Roads 25 and 2 between Midland and Penetanguishene came as a surprise to Reeve Morris Darby of Tiny Township.

In a telephone interview this week Darby said he also took "a dim view" of the local media

to know if Tiny had also been informed.

At the same meeting it was agreed both the township's planner and solicitor would look into the matter and report back to council at a later meeting.

Darby called the situation "frustrating for not only developers but for us."

He said an amendment to the township's official plan had been sent to Queen's Park pertaining to that section of Highway 27 but to date the township hadn't received any word on the amendment's fate (until news of the zoning order was announced this week).

The reeve noted there have been about two dozen amendments to the township's official plan in recent years and most of them have been approved by the province.

The reeve repeated his concern as to the manner in which the township was informed of the "freeze," saying he was surprised the local media was informed of it "before us."

St. John Ambulance teaches that you must not move an unconscious person until you are sure there is no injury to back or head.

At least we could have been told at the same time or better still we could have been told first."



Reeve Darby

being informed first of the Ministry of Housing's zoning order which was brought down last Friday by Housing Minister Claude Bennett.

Members of Tiny Township council were meeting in caucus at Perkinsfield when word of the freeze came from a reporter for this newspaper who wanted

## Oil in bay concern of Councillor Baker

The problem of oil in the water around the Penetanguishene town dock and litter on the shore in the area in which a hotel may be built was discussed at Wednesday's meeting of the town's public works committee in Penetanguishene.

Committee chairman Ray Baker said yesterday he is concerned that the oil that leaked out of the Aburg while it was on the bottom of the bay at the dock will soak into the wooden underside of the dock.

The smell from the oil in the water around the town dock has stimulated people to complain to town officials. Baker said the smell may not be discernable at the dock, but it is obvious downwind from the dock, as far as a mile away.

The public works committee has

been prompting the government, which has the equipment to remove the oil from the water, Baker said, since the first of the year to see that the problem is corrected.

Litter on the land in the area over which negotiations for a multimillion dollar hotel are underway between the town and a group of investors is another problem that was discussed Wednesday evening.

Baker said the public works department is working on cleaning the area with the parks department.

Workmen hired by Sub Services Ltd., the owner of the Aburg, started to strain the spilled diesel fuel and engine oil from the water around and under the dock last week. By Monday, using two submersible pumps, 100 gallons of oil had been recovered.



### Fez full of fun

In just over a month, on May 7, Midland District Shrine Club will be staging its 15th annual Shrine Circus at Midland Arena. Two shows are planned, one at 4 p.m. and

the second at 7:30 p.m. at the King Street Arena. That's local Shrine Club president Murray McComb, at left, drumming up

support for the circus. At right is one of the many clowns connected with the popular Shrine Club circus.