



Queen's Park

by Ken Black, MPP,
Muskoka Georgian Bay

Clean up the air

Muskoka-Georgian Bay residents, along with people across the province will welcome the news of a fundamental reform of Ontario's air pollution law as proposed by Environment Minister Jim Bradley this week.

Bradley released a discussion paper inviting the general public, environment groups and industry to comment on the package of proposed reforms.

Copies of the discussion paper will be available and written submissions on the proposal to reform Regulation 308, under the Environmental Protection Act, should be sent by March 31st, 1988, to the Minister of the Environment, Jim Bradley, at 135 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P5.

Over one million Ontario seniors should receive an early Christmas present this week with the mailing of \$50 Sales Tax Grant cheques. Those who turn 65 between October and December 1987 will receive their cheques early in 1988. No application is necessary for seniors who receive federal Old Age Security or who have previously established their eligibility with the Ontario Ministry of Revenue.

Elinor Caplan, Minister of Health, provided further details of the increase in

operating grants for Ontario hospitals in the past week. The total overall increase for the fiscal year 1988-89 totals 6.9 per cent. This includes a basic grant increase of 4.4 per cent and a further 2.5 per cent for growth in hospital programs, such as life-support programs in major hospitals like chemotherapy, cardiovascular surgery and renal dialysis. The increase for growth will also include funding for workload increases due to hospitals treating more patients.

At the First Ministers' Conference in Toronto last week, a report which proposes a framework to increase Canada's Research and Development spending to 2.5 per cent of gross domestic product within 10 years was introduced. This report was announced by Monte Kwinter and outlined our government's belief that Research and Development is of paramount importance if we are to continue to improve our productivity, and increase our competitiveness in order to maintain our strong economy.

The report recommends a national target should be adopted. A five-year interim target should also be established and it is suggested that it might be 1.8 per cent of gross domestic product by 1992.

The proposal to adopt a national Research and

Development target represents a commitment to support long-term economic growth by assisting companies to develop and use technology to improve Canadian competitiveness.

With the agreement of all three parties, a Select Committee on Constitutional Reform was approved this week. The main purpose of the Committee will be to receive input from the people of Ontario and study the Meech Lake Accord. The establishment of this committee meets a commitment by the Premier to provide that opportunity.

Minister of Health, Elinor Caplan, announced that the first Women's Health Centre in the province will be established at Women's College Hospital in Toronto. Several such centres are planned for across the province. They will offer a wide range of services to women including medical, social and financial counselling, family planning and birth control information, pregnancy counselling, and menopause education and support. In addition, the centres will handle referrals for therapeutic abortions to one of the hospitals co-operating in providing that service.

Lots of room to ski at Wye

Ski Wye Marsh will be a highlight for hundreds of Ontario school children and their teachers this winter.

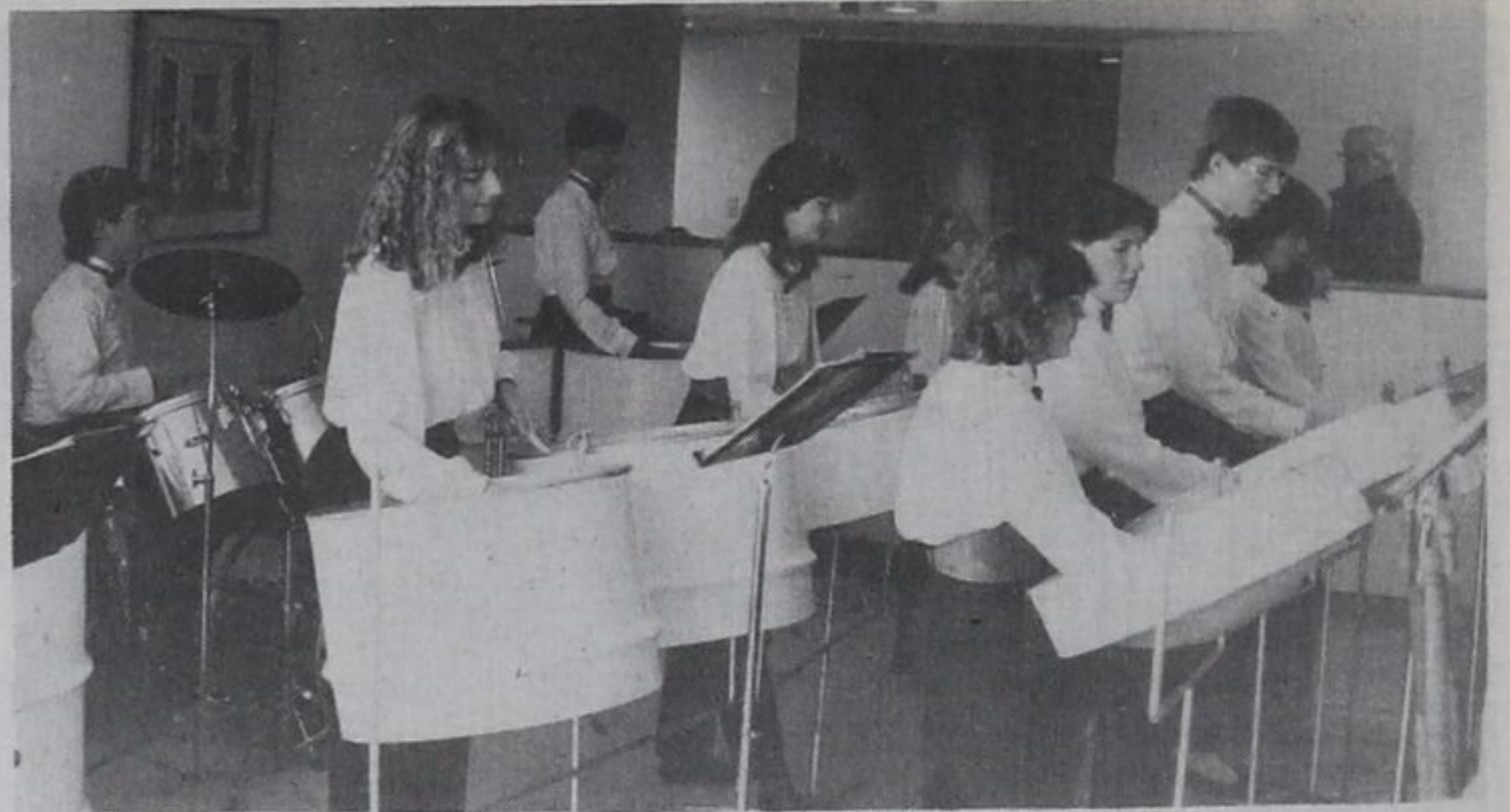
Fun in the snow and learning about nature are combined in this unique new program at the wildlife centre.

"Judging by the bookings we've already received, the program is going to be very popular," says John Lister, development officer at Wye Marsh. "One Toronto school board has booked every Wednesday all winter."

Ski Wye Marsh offers 15

km of groomed cross-country trails and equipment rentals, with qualified ski patrol staff on hand. The trails are self-guiding, with signs pointing out animal tracks and burrows as well as interesting features in the landscape of the Wye Valley.

But most attractive to science teachers is the education program. Outdoor nature study is Wye Marsh's specialty, and a top-notch wildlife interpretation program has been designed for student groups.



Strike up the band

Midland's newest retirement centre, 750 last Sunday. Here, the Touch of Class King Street, held its grand opening house Steel Band performs for the crowds.

OPP out for safety

The holiday season is here and the Midland OPP detachment is RIDEing high again.

Spot checks began Nov. 15, said an OPP spokesman. They'll continue until Jan. 9.

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