

Council Asks Clerk Kerr For Resignation

Provincial Police Report Says More Irregularities Still Secret In Whitchurch

By HAROLD BLAINE
There are more 1968 irregularities in Whitchurch Township affairs than have as yet been revealed to the public, according to police investigating arson May 1 at the Vandorf municipal office.
Council is still withholding information about these irregularities, in spite of the fact that a secret \$910 shortage was revealed last fall by a former deputy-reeve.
Absent from work for 12 weeks due to stomach problems, Whitchurch Township Clerk Treasurer Thomas Kerr has been asked for his resignation. Only Councillor Mrs. Betty van Nostrand opposed the council action. Mr. Kerr can still ask for a council hearing.
Whitchurch Council September 8 decided not to extend Mr. Kerr's leave of absence any further. His leave of absence was extended August 17, even though an expected medical report was not available to council.
Mr. Kerr was appointed clerk in 1964 and has been a member of the township staff for 13 years. The job has carried a salary of \$12,000 for more than a year. The clerk-treasurer lives about 2 1/2 miles from the township office at Vandorf.
According to a police report tabled in council on the same evening, Mr. Kerr failed to return to work in mid-June after being questioned by police a second time about arson and missing funds at the township office.
"Among other matters delved into (between June 15 and 17), Mr. Kerr was re-examined. He appeared very distraught and nervous. Following this interview (Mr.) Kerr did not return to work.

He was absent until July 9, when he approached Reeve Burnett and stated he was under a doctor's care for stomach problems, and would be absent for another four to six weeks. Council subsequently approved a five week leave of absence," said OPP Criminal Investigation Branch Inspector John McKendry in his report to council.
The OPP report was submitted along with a report from Sergeant Donald Hillock of the Whitchurch Township Police Department.
Involved in the investigation of township records to determine the reason for \$910 being missing from 1968 tax payments. Arson is suspected in a May 1 early morning fire that police believe was aimed at destroying the 1968 tax records so the lost money could not be traced.
Inspector McKendry reported to council, in part, as follows:
"Following the municipal election in December 1969, a Mr. Lawrence Hennessey, Vandorf, formerly deputy-reeve, had been defeated in his bid for reeveship of the township. During his short speech, thanking those who had supported him, he made public the fact that the 1968 township books had disclosed some irregularities and shortages, and that he felt there should be a full public inquiry into the discrepancies.
"It would appear that little, if anything, was done by the new council to locate the shortage, which appeared to be somewhere between \$900 and \$1,000. I subsequently interviewed Stewart Burnett, RR 2, Aurora, who was serving his third term as reeve. "Mr. Burnett informed me that

following Mr. Hennessey's disclosure of irregularities, on January 13 he, along with Councillor Mrs. Betty van Nostrand and Deputy-reeve Norman Barnard, met with the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs for guidance.
"It was first decided to have department auditors recheck the 1968 books. However, shortly thereafter Richard Hector of Cossor, Hector, Payne and Company of 207 Main Street, Newmarket (who had previously audited the books) requested a short extension of time to re-examine the books. He proposed a system whereby he felt the discrepancy would show up.
"Mr. Hector felt the error was one of a clerical nature, rather than a shortage in the account. As this theory sounded reasonable, the Department of Municipal Affairs was advised accordingly.
"It is also of interest to note that these irregularities, as well as others, had been brought to the council's attention in July or August 1969.
"The council had met and decided to withhold this knowledge from the public and to attempt to straighten out the problem with the 1968 tax accounts. It therefore came as a complete shock and surprise when Mr. Hennessey made this fact known to the public in December, 1969. And of course, many attributed this to a vindictive effort to discredit those re-elected to office.
"On March 19, in an attempt to discover the area of the error, a Mrs. Patricia Muir, RR 3, Newmarket, was employed by the council as a telephone receptionist and typist. During her first

week of employment, she was given the assignment of setting up ledgers. She was to post the individual tax payments made during 1968 from the carbon copies of the tax bills, and to cross-check and post the individual tax slips. This procedure, when checked against the bank deposits, would have narrowed the period of shortage or error to a particular day or week, depending on the frequency of bank deposits.
"Prior to the fire the ledgers and deposit slips, which were the subject of question relating to the shortage in 1968 tax returns, had been stored on top of the filing cabinet. These ledgers, along with cancelled cheques and property transfer slips, had been placed on the floor at the north end of the vault and ignited.
"There is no doubt that the person responsible for the fire was attempting to destroy the questioned records. There is also evidence that the attempt was made to make it appear as though someone had first ransacked the various offices.
"During the fire investigation, Fire Investigator Powell obtained certain exhibits from within the building. These were subsequently examined at the Centre of Forensic Sciences and were found to contain fuel oil, positively establishing that the fires were purposely set and rulling out all other causes.
"The investigation disclosed further, that on Saturday, May 2 at 9:55 am, Chief Inspector Cresswell, duty officer, received a message from Downsview OPP requesting that he contact Clerk-

Treasurer Kerr. Chief Inspector Cresswell contacted him by telephone at 10:10 am.
"Mr. Kerr requested that the OPP conduct the investigation into the arson, inasmuch as the Chief Constable, Fred Mason, had a key for the municipal office and knew the vault combination, casting a reflection on Chief Mason.
"Inspector Cresswell informed Kerr that requests for assistance should be made through the office of the Crown Attorney, the council as a body, or the chief of police.
"Therefore, he would not authorize detailing OPP personnel to the investigation at this time.
"Mr. Kerr stated he would contact the Crown Attorney and seek the necessary authority. When unable to locate the Acting Crown, Mr. Leggett, he again contacted Inspector Cresswell at 11:20 am, and again at 12:23 pm.
"At the latter time, he was asked what details the investigation had disclosed, and admitted there was a member from the Ontario Fire Marshall's Office on the scene. Sergeant Hillock was working with him, and he had never thought it necessary to confer with either of the investigators or with Chief Mason regarding the progress being made.
"It was also of interest to note that Kerr had not conferred with the members of council before soliciting the assistance of the OPP," said Inspector McKendry in his interim report to Whitchurch Council.
Inspector McKendry said at the end of his report that the investigation is continuing and a further report would be made in due

course.
Whitchurch Police Sergeant Hillock reported the following facts established during the investigation:
"The building was secure when the fire was discovered and reported.
"There were two fires in the building, one in the vault and one in the upstairs storage room.
"When the fire was discovered, the door into the main office was locked.
"The vault main door and fire doors were open completely when the fire was discovered.
"Ledgers, transfer slips, 1968 deposit slips, and new internal audit ledgers, all had been removed from filing cabinets in the vault and placed on the floor before the fire was set.
"The vault door is always kept locked during closed hours and was, in fact, locked at 5:15 pm April 30, the night before the fire.
"There was no apparent forced entry to the building or vault.
"There was nothing apparently stolen.
"There was no malicious or wilful damage done prior to the fire.
"The fire was set prior to 6:45 am May 1 and after 5:15 pm April 30.
"The vault combination was written on two separate cards which are kept in the front of the ratepayers card file. Neither of these had the details of which way to turn the dial, etc.
"In possession of keys to the rear door of the township office building were Reeve Burnett, Clerk Kerr, Road Superintendent Ernest Davis, Chief Mason, Mrs.

Margaret Bowser, Mrs. Gertrude Baycroft, Mrs. Boocock, Mr. Edward Blackburn, Mr. Miller and Ted Ricker.
"There is also the possibility that other keys may be in existence, as the lock has not been changed since approximately October, 1966.
"It is probable that all of the people who had door keys, as well as the newly hired Mrs. Muir, and other members of council, etc., would know how to electrically open the door into the front office.
"It is known that the vault combination was also changed approximately October '66. The people authorized to have the combination to the vault at the time of the fire were Mr. Kerr, Mrs. Bowser, Mr. Blackburn and Mrs. Baycroft.
"It is obvious the suspect or suspects made a very feeble attempt to leave the appearance in the building that the place had been ransacked prior to the fire.
"The 1968 tax account books are out of balance with the bank deposit figures in the amount of \$901.76. The 1967 and 1969 books are apparently in balance.
"There was an internal audit being done on the 1968 books and it was to the point where they should have pinpointed the missing money at any time. This was apparently known by all the township employees. Mrs. Muir, being a newly hired employee, was given the assignment of locating the date the money went missing, by following the steps that were laid out by the township auditor, Mr. Hector.
"No flammable fluid container was located during the crime scene search investigation."

KING CITY, OAK RIDGES LAKE WILCOX

"The Liberal" is always pleased to publish items of interest regarding people and events in the Oak Ridges - Lake Wilcox and King City districts. Our news correspondent in Oak Ridges - Lake Wilcox is Mrs. Elisabeth Orton, Yonge Street, 773-4635, in King City Mary Dawson, 884-1105.

Oak Ridges - Lake Wilcox News



BETTY VAN NOSTRAND

Housewife Seeks Whitchurch Post

Whitchurch Councillor Mrs. Betty van Nostrand 38, has announced she is running for the Ward 1 seat on the new Whitchurch-Stouffville Township Council.
The election takes place October 5.
Ward One is the northwest corner of the new township, generally bounded by the Vandorf Road, the Highway 404 right-of-way, the north boundary of the township, and on the east by Highway 48.
Mrs. van Nostrand has served two terms on Whitchurch Township Council.
Born in King Township, she lived in Aurora for five years. She then moved to Whitchurch Township after her marriage to Michael van Nostrand. The couple has three sons.
She has lived in Whitchurch Township 19 years. Before running for township council she worked in the township assessment office.
Mrs. van Nostrand says it is important to have many of the available experienced council members elected to the new regional and local councils.

King Region Candidates

Some 60 citizens and eight candidates attended last week's "Meet Your Candidate" night held at Kettleby under the sponsorship of the Concerned Citizens of King. For full news report see story on Page 20 of this issue.

Whitchurch Township League with teams from Lake Wilcox, Vandorf, Pine Orchard and Ballantrae competing all season. Lake Wilcox had four teams entered in the league - squirt and pee-wee girls and squirt and pee-wee boys.
All members of the championship team received crests and championship crests were entertained by Coach Mrs. Pat Duck at a wiener roast. Pony rides rounded out the evening.
Members of the champs are: Pitcher Edna Cook, Catcher Jackie Duck, 1st Baseman Lori Lancing, 2nd Baseman Shannon Friend, 3rd Baseman Joan Riley and Fielders Laura Lloyd, Mary Hutchinson, Janet Dubois, Jackie Holman, Diane Lamers, Elaine Provost and Sheila Boone.
Once again, congratulations to the girls and their coach!
Our Lady's Guild
The first meeting of the 1970-71 season was held at Our Lady of the Annunciation School, Bond Avenue, September 8. Rev. Father John Weber of St. Mary Immaculate Roman Catholic Church, in Richmond Hill, offered a mass for the repose of the soul of the late Mrs. Frances Scott, who passed away in August.
An ambitious calendar of events is planned up to the end of October.
A bake sale will be held following each mass on September 20. Convenors are Mrs. Rene Cassidy and Rika Mennen.
October 3 is the date of a wine, cheese and auction party at the school. Guests are invited and asked to donate an item to be auctioned.
A Halloween dance is planned for October 31, which happily falls on a Saturday.
Neighborhood Notes
Registration night for Cubs, Scouts, Venturers and Rovers will be held September 24 at Our Lady of the Annunciation School at 7:30 pm.
The corn and wiener roast for the baseball playing youngsters, cancelled last week because of inclement weather, was held on the evening of Labor Day at the Lions Park. The event was hosted by the Oak Ridges Lions who sponsor baseball in the community each year. Children who didn't take part in the ball program were also included in the entertainment and several bushels of corn, pop and wieners were devoured.
Trophies were presented to the following outstanding players: John Cummins, Gary Burns, Rusty Smith, Wally Wensley, Vern Theiran, Terry Pantling, Janet Orser, Brenda Robson, Kim Smith, Barbara Cook, Patti Judge and Sandra Orser.
Sympathy is extended to Russ Andrus and family of Bond Avenue on the passing of his father. Funeral services were held September 8.

Merlyn Baker Running For Seat Whitchurch - Stouffville Ward 3

"I don't believe assessing land at market value will ever work in York County," says Whitchurch Township Councillor Merlyn Baker, 54.
Mr. Baker was commenting to "The Liberal" after announcing he would be a candidate in Ward 3 of the Township of Whitchurch-Stouffville in the October 5 municipal elections.
Ward 3 is generally bounded by Highway 48, the Vandorf Sideroad, Highway 404 and the new Whitchurch-Markham Townline to the south.
"I think that the elected councils of the new local municipalities will have to pressure the Department of Municipal Affairs to remove the abuses and inequalities that have arisen from the new assessment," said Councillor Baker.
In his opinion market value assessment won't work in York because of disparities and fluctuations in market value of land.
"Land should be assessed at reasonable rates on a schedule basis until such time as it is rezoned for a specific (development) purpose.
"I would also submit that a fair and graduated capital gains tax would be much superior in offsetting large profits from land speculation, to unfairly assessing and taxing land. And I refer to any parcel of land larger than a good sized house lot.
"I believe that, regionally, we must elect representatives who will take a strong stand for regional and local autonomy.
"Otherwise, the new regional government will engage administrators and other highly responsible people who take their directions from higher levels of government.
"The regional representatives will take the blame for distasteful things that may happen,

even though they may have no control over these things. This applies particularly to planning and assessment," said candidate Baker.
Councillor Baker won his seat on council in the election held last fall.



MERLYN BAKER Whitchurch Candidate

He was New Democratic Party candidate in the riding of York North (Northern York County) in the October 1967 provincial election.
Mr. Baker trailed the Conservative and Liberal candidates in the voting.
He has been very active in farm and community organizations.
Find a buyer through a classified ad in "The Liberal" on sale every Thursday. It's easy to place your ad. Just call 884-1105 or 884-1106

TEMPERANCEVILLE NEWS

CORRESPONDENT: MRS. W. G. JENNINGS - PHONE 773-5892

Church News
The thanksgiving meeting of the United Church Women will be held in the Sunday school room of the church October 7, at 8 pm. The evening unit will be in charge of the program. All women are invited to attend this meeting.
The afternoon unit of the UCW will meet at the home of Mrs. Everett Phillips, September 17, at 2 pm. Members please note the change of meeting place.
The UCW will be having its autumn used clothing drive, and anyone having good clean clothing to donate is asked to have it at the church by October 17. This will allow it to be packed and ready for shipment before the turkey supper date.
The annual turkey supper will be held at the church on October 26. Please keep this date in mind, and get your tickets early, as only a limited number will be sold.
Sunday school sessions will be re-resuming, and Superintendent William Skerratt will welcome any children. There is a great need for assistance in the teaching department of the school.
Now that the holiday season is over, Rev. Earle Stotesbury

would be pleased to see many of our members back in their regular place each Sunday morning.
Neighborhood Notes
Our very best wishes go to Mrs. Clayton Beynon who has moved to her new home in King City.
Master Gordon James celebrated his 10th birthday by entertaining a number of his school pals at supper September 11.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Alex Gallacher (Ann Paxton), who were married in Temperanceville United Church September 7.
Mr. and Mrs. Wilbert Jennings spent a few days last week at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey Lloyd of Delhi.
Norman Rumble spent his 87th birthday with some 35 members of his family, at a picnic supper in Humber Trails Conservation Park, September 6.

STOUFFVILLE MONUMENT WORKS

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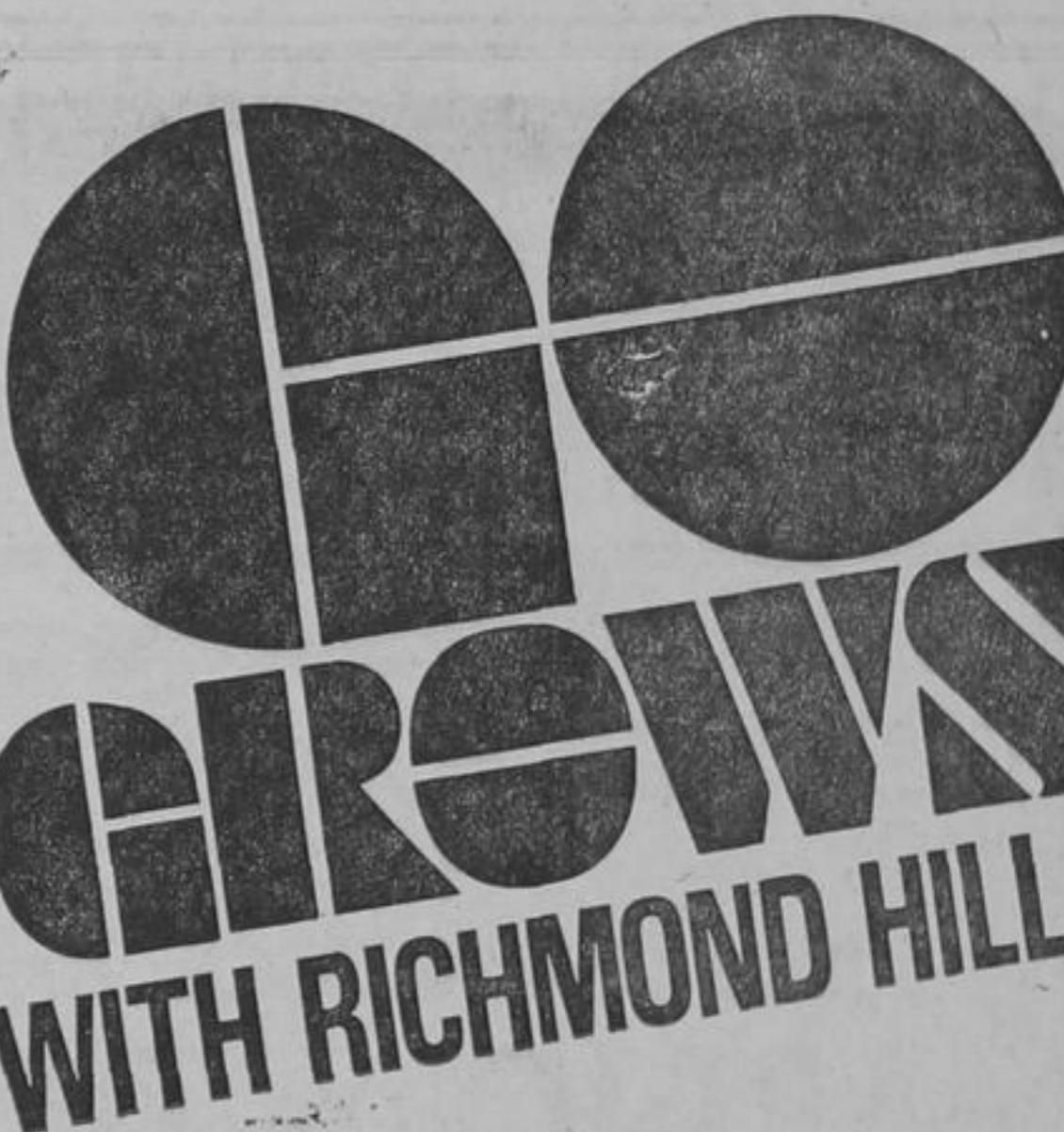
Thursday & Friday September 17, 18.

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Yonge Street South Aurora, Ontario

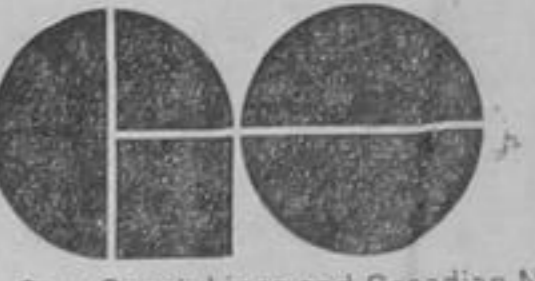
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