

# New welfare rules 'causing hardship'



## Combination of careers

Mother, farmworker, political campaigner, 39-year-old Elsie Roman is a remarkable woman with a sure sense of priorities. The wife of Markham Mayor Tony Roman and daughter of

European immigrants, Mrs. Roman leads a life that admirably combines an active involvement with appreciation for the homely basics.

# Busy Roman family find life's basics at farm

By Lynda Nykor

VICTORIA SQUARE — There is no such thing as an interview with Elsie Roman. Too much goes on in the red-brick, four-square farmhouse she presides over, and it's not geared to the jotting of notes on paper or the stolid tape-recording of skeletal facts.

The big sunny country kitchen is obviously the hub of the house, and its silence is punctuated by the whir of a small counter top machine turning milk into butter, the barking of the dog, the ringing of telephones from all over the farm, and outside, the sound of men working just under the window.

We drink cups of tea while the talk drifts into reminiscences of a city childhood.

There are introductions to the various people who make up this extended family, trips to the barn to see the new calves, exits and entrances of husband Tony, home between council meetings in Buttonville for a cursory look at the herd and a quick visit to the farm business office in the house.

### Busy but serene

There is a sense, in this homely place, of life being lived on its simplest, most vital terms, and this in spite of the political entanglements and the extensive cattle business of the Romans.

There is an odd combination here of the simultaneously busy and serene. Without so much as a nod of the head or a crook of the finger, Elsie manages to set this pace for her household.

Standing 5'5" tall, slight (a size seven dress probably has to be nipped in here and there to fit her), with long streaky blond hair, enviably straight white teeth and the high cheek bones that give away her Slovak ancestry, and looking 10 years younger than the 39 she claims, she appears less a farm wife than a fashion model or a city sophisticate.

Yet she has such a sure sense of what is important to her that things seem to fall into place. Elsie knows her priorities, and perhaps that more than anything else is the secret of a well-run life.

Most important are the children — 16-year-old Michael, 13-year-old Maria, 11-year-old Paula and five-year-old Edward.

"When Tony decided to go into politics, I realized there would have to be someone here to help look after the children," Elsie says, "so that's when my Mom and Dad came to live with us."

The presence of the grandparents in the home brought more than one advantage. The language and crafts of the old country were taught to the grandchildren, something Elsie considers important, "a very rich thing to have."

Katherine Kudla is a partial explanation of Elsie. The simple sensible things matter most to her. Good food. Healthy grandchildren. A garden to plant. Fresh air to breathe.

Elsie's father, Leslie Kudla, died just over a year ago, "on New Year's Day," Elsie says, and she and her mother share a split second of silence. There is a feeling that his place in this family is still empty, that he is still missed.

Zeta Trestik pops into the kitchen. She is introduced as Tony's secretary and an old friend of the family from the west end of Toronto where Elsie grew up.

### Came as immigrants

The Kudlas came to Canada as immigrants and settled at Queen and Bathurst Streets, where Elsie and one

of her two brothers were born. A few years later other friends from Europe arrived and for a while lived with the family. One of them was actively tubercular, and Elsie and her brother caught the disease. Her brother spent a year at Thistleton and Elsie was quarantined for a year at home in bed, followed by a year at Ord Street School.

The bottom part of this school was for regular classes, recalls Elsie, and the top part for children who had been sick. She remembers being given hot cocoa and brown bread and butter in the morning, and taking afternoon naps on the roof every weekday all year except when it was snowing.

Other illnesses shaped her life. Her first job after leaving Parkdale Collegiate was at Sick Children's Hospital where eclectic duties included writing letters to parents who neglected to visit their children, and interpreting for Slovak, Austrian, Russian, Polish and Ukrainian parents with little or no knowledge of English.

### Family illness

She saved her earnings for a year, with an eye to going to New York to study dress design, but her mother had a serious heart attack and her brother fell ill with encephalitis and polio. Needed, she stayed at home and went instead to dress design school in Toronto. She's still waiting to put her skills to work professionally, thinks when the children are all grown she might do that.

Asked how she and Tony met, she starts to laugh uproariously, then blurts out, "Killing pigs!"

When Elsie was eight, her family made a trip to the country to butcher a pig for the winter. Here she met Tony for the first time. "and," she adds, "he tried to drown me!" Another burst of laughter before the explanation that absolves Markham's mayor of psychotic tendencies.

"He and his brother thought they'd play a trick on us city kids. They tried to get us to walk out on the ice on the creek. I guess they thought we'd get a bootful of cold water."

### Surprise proposal

A marriage proposal a few years later when Tony was getting ready to go off to the University of Guelph came as even more of a surprise. Elsie had only gone out with Tony once, in high school, though the families had remained good friends. He phoned one evening, Elsie remembers, and asked if he could come over and speak to her.

"Don't get serious about anyone," he instructed. "When I graduate we're getting married."

"And we did," Elsie concludes, and somehow looks as surprised as she must have been those 18 years ago.

Mrs. Kudla remembers the wedding best of for the gown Elsie designed and made herself.

"It was so beautiful," she sighs. "There was even a picture in the Globe and Mail!"

Many of the years since have been political ones, with Elsie "as involved as you can get." Numberless hours have been spent talking to people with problems that range from the international to the purely personal.

"I sometimes think, 'Am I the only person they can turn to?' Something's lacking in our society, but I don't know where," Elsie says.

### Social causes

Her own immersions into social causes have included a stint as area president of the auxiliary of York Central Hospital in Richmond Hill, and as a part of the Committee that got

NEWMARKET — With a drop in welfare spending, which means employable adults will now have to accept any job for which they are physically capable, welfare administrators in York Region have been made the scapegoats, according to Alan Wells, social services administrator.

"We have to place hardships on people to force them to do other things," Wells said. If people were able to dig ditches, they would have to dig ditches. Before welfare recipients had to take positions suitable to their backgrounds.

He said York was limited to a 5.5 per cent increase in welfare spending this year; the region approved spending estimates of \$456,700, up 6.9 per cent over 1975's actual expenditures.

### Fewer eligible

Under the revised regulations, Wells has more discretion in the amount of a welfare grant to a family.

Formerly absolute amounts were set out by the government. Now, fewer people will be eligible for welfare — any employable single person under 18 is

ineligible, except under special circumstances — and York recently approved policy changes cutting back supplementary aid.

Wells said that supplementary aid for shelter and food has been eliminated, and supplementary payments will be restricted to emergencies. No such payments will be made to cover the cost

of special diets; drugs are restricted to approved items.

Supplementary aid will be available to the unemployable only, he said.

There were no increases this year to welfare recipients. Also, a 90-day time limit had been set for homemakers and Victorian Order of Nurses services, he said.

## The Liberal Section C community news

Wednesday, May 12, 1976

# Students' play a big hit

Correspondent  
Millie Stewart  
773-4424

OAK RIDGES — Students of Lake Wilcox Public School performed The Adventures of Goldilocks for parents and friends recently.

After weeks of work by the students, director Sarah Hoover, pianist Rosanne Hoover and many adult helpers, the play turned out to be a tremendous success.

The cast: Goldilocks — Penny Davey, Mother — Sandra Desbois, Father — David Wright, Pan — Denise Brin, Baby Bear — Billy McArthur, Mama Bear — Nadine Baker, Papa Bear — Andy Backlow; and bouquets of daisies, violets and bluebells as well as neighbors and playmates.

### Visit outdoor centre

Students in Grades 2 and 3 at Lake Wilcox Public School visited the Burlington Outdoor Resource Centre. Their activities were somewhat curtailed due to the rotten weather, but they did get out into the forest and they learned to use a compass. Rain doesn't seem to bother them too much.

When you go to the spring fair at the arena on May 29, keep an eye open for the booth from the school. Students will be showing some of their creative efforts as well as a really beautiful mural made by students in the elective program.

Music Festival '76  
Oak Ridges School will hold Music

## oak ridges lake wilcox

Festival '76 in the gym on May 19 from 7:30 to 9 p.m. There will be songs, a gymnastic display, art and plays.

Recently Oak Ridges School held a chess tournament. The champion is Randy Gilchrist; placing second was Jim Jenkinson, and third place is held by Winifred Ardel.

The Grade 1 students were proud to invite their parents to visit them in class and see their display called Space Station and Planet One. The parents saw films of the space study unit and heard narrations on the subject as well.

### New books arrive

Avid readers, take note. The Charles Connor Memorial Library has received a huge supply of new books.

Some of the books are current best-sellers, including the newest novel by Leon Uris, Trinity, A Man Called Intrepid by William Stevenson; and The Verdict by Hildegard Knef.

The film program for children will be Saturday at 2 p.m. Please reserve your tickets in advance. They are free and available at the library.

Films to be shown are Shark by Jacques Cousteau, The Wonderful World of Wheels and The Foolish Frog.

The last story time for pre-schoolers for the season will be May 26 at 2 p.m.,

and if the weather is nice there will be an outdoor picnic.

### Coaches needed

Applications for coaches and managers for the next season must be submitted by May 30 to Oak Ridges Minor Hockey Association, care of Ray Harris at 276 Harris Ave., Richmond Hill.

### Farewell dinner

Anyone in the Oak Ridges-Lake Wilcox area interested in attending a farewell dinner for Rev. and Mrs. Robert McElhinney and family is asked to call Freda McQuarry at 773-5316 or Helen Laing at 773-5493 by June 1.

St. Paul's Church is planning an auction the first week in June, and suitable items are needed. Call Ken Blyth at 773-5832.

### ACW to meet

Today (Wednesday) at 7:45 p.m. will be the monthly meeting of the A.C.W. in the upper room of St. John's. The theme will be The Third World and You. Glenys Latham will be initiating and directing a discussion.

Instead of the usual refreshments, each member is asked to bring a new tea towel to replenish the supply in the kitchens. Tea towels, like humans, don't live forever.

Tonight at 8 p.m., Rev. Earl Gerber will speak on changes in the Canadian Arctic in the past 25 years, using slides, tapes, carvings and a model igloo. This will be for the North York Historical Society at the old Gibson House in Willowdale.

# Separate school board supports local block parents' movement

RICHMOND HILL — The Block Parent movement has now come to the separate school system in York Region. Last week, a meeting of the separate school board agreed to back the establishment of such a movement in the area.

Director John Zupancic said there had been representatives from Richmond Hill and Unionville who had expressed a wish for the programs.

He said the parents involved would make their homes available at various points in the area to be used as emergency centres for children en route to and from school.

Emergencies, he said, covered such things as "fights, big dogs — presumably attacking or scaring children — and illnesses.

If children felt the need for help in

any of these situations, they could go to the houses designated and ask for help. The parents then would contact the proper authorities.

"It seems like a wonderful idea to me," said Zupancic.

When asked by Trustee Malcolm

Peake of Richmond Hill why the matter was coming before the board, the director said that, although the people involved would "try to get the financing" required themselves, there would still be some financial involvement by the board.

# Seneca King having housewives' break

KING — June Callwood, one of Canada's most respected Journalists, will be keynote speaker May 19 at a day-long Housewives' Spring Break at Seneca College's King Campus.

The program includes group

discussions of women and the law, political action, day care, sole support mothers, media image of women and educational and employment possibilities.

In addition, the event will provide opportunities to question representatives of local volunteer groups, community agencies and educational institutions.

Advance registration is required. Forms are available at local libraries, or can be obtained from Kaaren Bell, 889-2873.

A \$6 fee covers day care, coffee, lunch and conference materials.

Among groups participating in the planning of Housewives' Spring Break are Family Life Centres, sorority chapters, Canadian Housewives' Register, University Women's clubs, York Central Hospital, Seneca King Campus and housewives not affiliated with any particular group or organization.

## King Historic society meets

KING — Dr. John Scott of the Royal Ontario Museum and the University of Toronto will be guest speaker at the King Historical Society's general meeting Thursday at 8 p.m. in Eversley Church.

Scott, speaking on "the inside story," will discuss some behind-the-scenes events related to the museum's exhibits.

The society will hold its executive meeting May 20 at the home of Enid Peddie, Lloydtown, at 8 p.m.

## civic corner

RICHMOND HILL — The following meetings of civic interest have been scheduled during the next two weeks:

Wednesday, May 12, 7:30 p.m. — Council chambers — planning committee meeting.

Monday, May 17, 7:15 p.m. — Council chambers — regular council meeting.

Wednesday, May 19, 7 p.m. — Committee room "B" — by-laws, procedures, fire and personnel committee meeting.

Thursday, May 20, 8 a.m. — office of the commissioner of works — engineering committee meeting.

Monday, May 24, — Municipal offices will be closed.

Wednesday, May 26, 7:30 p.m. — Council chambers — planning committee meeting.



(Photo by Hogg)

## Space travellers

Yesterday's fantasies of space travel are just another reality of modern life for today's students, such as the Grade 1 class at Oak Ridges public school which recently put together a display called Space Station and Planet One. There were films, narrations and the students themselves were dressed in costume for the presentation attended by parents. Shown above are David Carson, Tracy James, Jim Clark, Ruth King, Stephen Beaumont and Donna Roseblode.

The talk meanders again, until, just before calf-feeding, it's time to go, loaded down with freshly made cottage cheese, sweet white butter and brown eggs direct from the hen-house. A last glance shows Elsie and her mother, arm-in-arm, going back into the house.