

**At the Mill Pond**

# This Richmond Hill resident literally lowering the swamp



By DIANE MARSHALL

N. Roy Clifton, 105 Woodlane, Richmond Hill, is a great believer in voluntary service for the community, as demonstrated by his push to start the recycling depot some time ago.

But his latest venture, at the back of the Mill Pond, is not one that is obvious to many people.

"If I saw someone doing what I am doing, I would certainly stop and ask what was going on," he said. "I think it is a bad sign when people do not ask, and most people who see me digging back here don't say a word."

So, what is he doing with shovel, pail and borrowed wheelbarrow? He says he's trying to do two things at once. He is lowering the level of the swamp so that reeds and marsh vegetation will grow, and he's moving the soil about 20 feet to the east to build up the land where trees such as birch, basswood and cedar are dying, due to poor drainage.

Before the town dredged the pond, there was a natural gradient where swamp vegetation gradually moved into a forested area as the ground level became higher, he said.

The report for the Mill Pond Park, carried out by Canadian Mitchell Associates Ltd., stated the forest was dying and should receive the ooze and organic debris from the dredged lake.

It could then be reclaimed and planted for more intensive park use.

Mr. Clifton saw that the forest was dying since trees "don't like wet feet" but he said he thinks the dredged material was pushed into the swamp area instead of filling in the forested area.

"Two things result from this change of gradient," he said. "Water from the Mill Pond Court is dammed up in the forested area and on the east side of the

'swamp', while sweet clover is growing which is definitely not normal swamp vegetation.

"The ecology has been changed," he said.

The town has constructed a drainage ditch to take the dammed up water away from the trees, which helps somewhat, he said.

Mr. Clifton estimated the swamp was roughly three feet higher than it had been before the dredging, and people can tramp through the area killing vegetation since it is drier.

"I am not the only one concerned about the park," he said. "Two residents called the town last year when they saw a bulldozer plowing right through the forested area."

Mayor (Dave) Schiller and Councillor (Marylo) Graham came over and stopped it, but it just shows that people must stay aware of things that are happening around them."

The vegetation in the pocket where the bulldozer pushed through is still noticeably less than the surrounding area.

Mr. Clifton has planted about half a dozen silver birch saplings in the forested area which were financed through Richmond Hill High School students who bought paperbacks from the school library when Mr. Clifton was librarian.

School principal at the time, George Domina, agreed that the \$100 should be spent on something for the community.

Mr. Clifton has been digging for a couple of hours each week since the pond was dredged last year.

It is a long, slow process, but he says he enjoys doing it.

"It's something you know will never be completed in your lifetime, but you can see signs of progress," he said.

## Region sells King property despite \$2,000 higher bid

York Regional Council last week honored an earlier high bid for a piece of property on Keele Street, King City, despite a last-minute tender that was \$2,000 higher.

The \$55,000 offer of William F. Garthwaite of Maple, was approved after a debate by council as to whether its obligation was to the highest bidder, or to the one who had bid highest first.

However, the engineering committee had put through its recommendation by that time and her bid was not included in the committee's report.

Acceptance of Garthwaite's bid was recommended by the engineering committee over three other bids. Included in these was one of \$45,000 from Brenda Lee Kotras of King City.

Markham's Ron Moran said he wasn't adverse to picking up an extra \$2,000, but what would happen if someone came in now and offered even more?

He said council should take the offer or "throw the thing wide open." Council took the offer.

There should be a cut-off date," Moran said.

Mayor David Schiller of Richmond Hill said that if council accepted new bids after "the recommendation had been made, it wouldn't be fair to the previous high bidder."

When it was suggested that the Garthwaite bid

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### Ecological dig

N. Roy Clifton has been slugging away in the Mill Pond area trying to correct what he says is a "changed ecology". He's lowering the swamp level and raising land east of swamp to grow trees.

### Back to municipalities

## Metric speed change still bothers Region

York Regional Council still doesn't know whether to slow down, or to go full speed ahead with the new metric system of speed limits.

As a result, it will set it aside for awhile so that it can have a closer look. The system, whose adoption was recom-

mended by the engineering committee, would convert the existing speeds of from 25 miles an hour to 60 miles an hour to their equivalent speeds in kilometres per hour.

A speed of 25 m.p.h. would now become 40 k.p.h., while 60 m.p.h.

would become 90 k.p.h. However, according to the committee's report, it was felt that, in some cases "the automatic conversion of speed limits is somewhat inappropriately high or low due to the round-off to the nearest 10 k.p.h."

It was that "round-off" that bothered council. Mayor Tony Roman of Markham, said he didn't object to uniform speeds, but felt the speed should be lower, if anything.

Councillor Lois Hancey of Richmond Hill, said she felt the latter was being "adversely affected," and that area municipalities "should have the privilege of stating their case before the bylaw was passed".

"We need time to study the plan now, or we'll have umpteen delegations up here upset about increased speeds," Mrs. Hancey said.

Elgin Mills Rd., for example, would go from its present speed limit of 40 m.p.h. to 60 k.p.h., or 37.5 miles an hour. However, the recommended speed limit in that area is 70 k.p.h., or 43.75 m.p.h.

When it was suggested by Mayor Margaret Britnell of King that the matter be referred back

to committee, engineering commissioner Bob Hodgson objected.

That would make it difficult to get the bylaw prepared in time for the Sept. 6 conversion, he said.

Municipalities have until Sept. 30 to change all speed limit signs on roads within their jurisdiction and control.

Chief administrator Jack Rettie said the one recourse for council was "to stay here all night and hammer it out".

Instead, council approved the recommendation of Councillor Ray Twinney of Newmarket to refer the issue back to the municipalities for their recommendations by Aug. 10.

Council also turned down a request from the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton to endorse its resolution for a uniform speed limit of 45 k.p.h. — 25 m.p.h. within urban areas, after adoption of the metric system.

"I don't think 25 miles an hour would be practical," said Commissioner Hodgson when asked by Mayor Britnell why council couldn't support it.

### Seniors planning extensive travel

A packed travel schedule has been planned for Richmond Hill's Senior Citizens during late summer, fall and winter, tour organizer Don Hick told The Liberal this week.

Two trips to the CNE to see the Irish Rovers and Vera Lynn on August 26 and to attend Senior Citizens' Day on Sept. 1 are planned.

September 22 is the Grape and Wine Festival at the Niagara Peninsula which includes a tour of a winery, luncheon and a performance of the Canadian Mime Theatre.

A trip to see fall colors, Oct. 4, will take the seniors to Gananogue and Clayton, N.Y., and a three-hour boat cruise.

Toledo, Ohio, is featured Oct. 31 for a four-day shop and show tour.

A three-week trip to Sarasota, Florida, in January and a three-week holiday on the Costa de Sol in sunny Spain in March are scheduled.

Mr. Hick wants any interested people to contact him about the Spain trip because a certain number is needed before the trip will be taken.

A Travelogue evening has been arranged for Sept. 15 in the clubroom where information regarding the last three trips will be presented and "Travelways" slides will be shown, said Mr. Hick.

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