



A puppet show at Richvale Library last week attracted plenty of attention from youngsters. Here puppeteer Anna Marchione of the Richmond Hill Library puppet group demonstrates her talents to Jennifer Ashman, 4, of Castle Rock Drive. (Liberal photo by Bruce Hogg).

Council reverses Epic's decision

A decision of council has been reversed by council only two weeks after it was made.

December 18, Bruno Arseni, operating Epic Real Estate, was granted a reprieve by council regarding a court case which ensued from a bylaw violation.

The real estate business was being prosecuted by the town for using a dwelling in an area zoned

residential as a commercial establishment and for having an illegal sign.

Because the property had been used commercially before purchase by Mr. Arseni and because the new official plan designates the area commercial, councillors decided to drop all charges.

Councillor John Birchall did not agree with

the decision on a matter of principle and expressed surprise that council did not indicate to Mr. Arseni that he would have to apply for a zoning amendment.

"If council is not prepared to prosecute, they should amend the bylaw," he said.

Councillor Birchall suggested that by quashing the prosecution

and not amending the bylaw, council was permitting an illegal use to continue.

January 2 Councillor Birchall asked the issue be reviewed resulting in an amendment to the motion which asks the town solicitor to go to court and request a remand while the matter is reviewed by the bylaw committee.

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Child abuse is topic

The Newcomers Club of Thornhill will hold their monthly coffee party this Thursday at 10 a.m.

If you are planning to attend, please call the hostesses. North of John Street, please call Andrea Clark at 881-8166 and if you are south of John Street, please call Jetta

Jensen at 881-4530.

The regular monthly meeting for Newcomers will take place on Wednesday, January 24 at 8 p.m. The guest speaker will be a representative from the Crisis Centre and the topic will be child abuse. Again, you are asked to contact the hostess.

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Town Bylaws should be non-political

Clerk of the Town of Richmond Hill Dave Weldon, made a plea to a council committee last Wednesday evening asking to keep the enforcement of bylaws in the town out of the political arena.

As a result of two motions of council made at the December 18 meeting, Mr. Weldon presented a request for clarification as to what policies council members would like staff to uphold on complaints about alleged violations of municipal bylaws.

One case in question was the matter of the illegal sign and contravention of the zoning bylaw by a company operating as Epic Real Estate on Yonge Street in Richmond Hill, which upon representation at council by the owner was removed from the list of prosecution procedures.

Councillor John Birchall, agreeing with Mr. Weldon on this issue said, "bylaw infractions or prosecutions are no longer administrative matters, but now political decisions."

The present policy of the town requires the bylaw enforcement officer to act only on complaints from residents of the town about possible bylaw violations.

Complaints are investigated and if a violation exists the violator is asked verbally to comply with the bylaw, followed up by a written request. The alleged violator is then given a time period, usually 14 to

30 days to comply.

In the event the bylaw is not complied with at the end of that period a second notice is sent to the individual.

If the violation continues to exist a report is made to the mayor advising of the circumstances and the mayor is asked to grant authority to prosecute.

"To receive directions from council not to prosecute a particular violator of a bylaw, once the prosecution has commenced, represents a considerable wasting of municipal man hours," said Mr. Weldon. "We are here to enforce the laws as set out by council," he said.

The clerk said he felt if council members did not feel the charges were realistic or fair, then rather than dropping the charges they should amend the bylaw.

The Bylaw, Procedures, Fire and Personnel Committee passed a resolution last Wednesday to be passed on to council January 15 referring to a section in the Municipal Act which states: "It is the duty of the head of council to be vigilant and active in causing the laws for the government of the municipality to be duly executed and obeyed."

Mr. Weldon said the resolution reinforces the fact that past procedure should be confirmed by the present council and staff should submit reports to the committee and the council of bylaw violations, as it has been done in the past.

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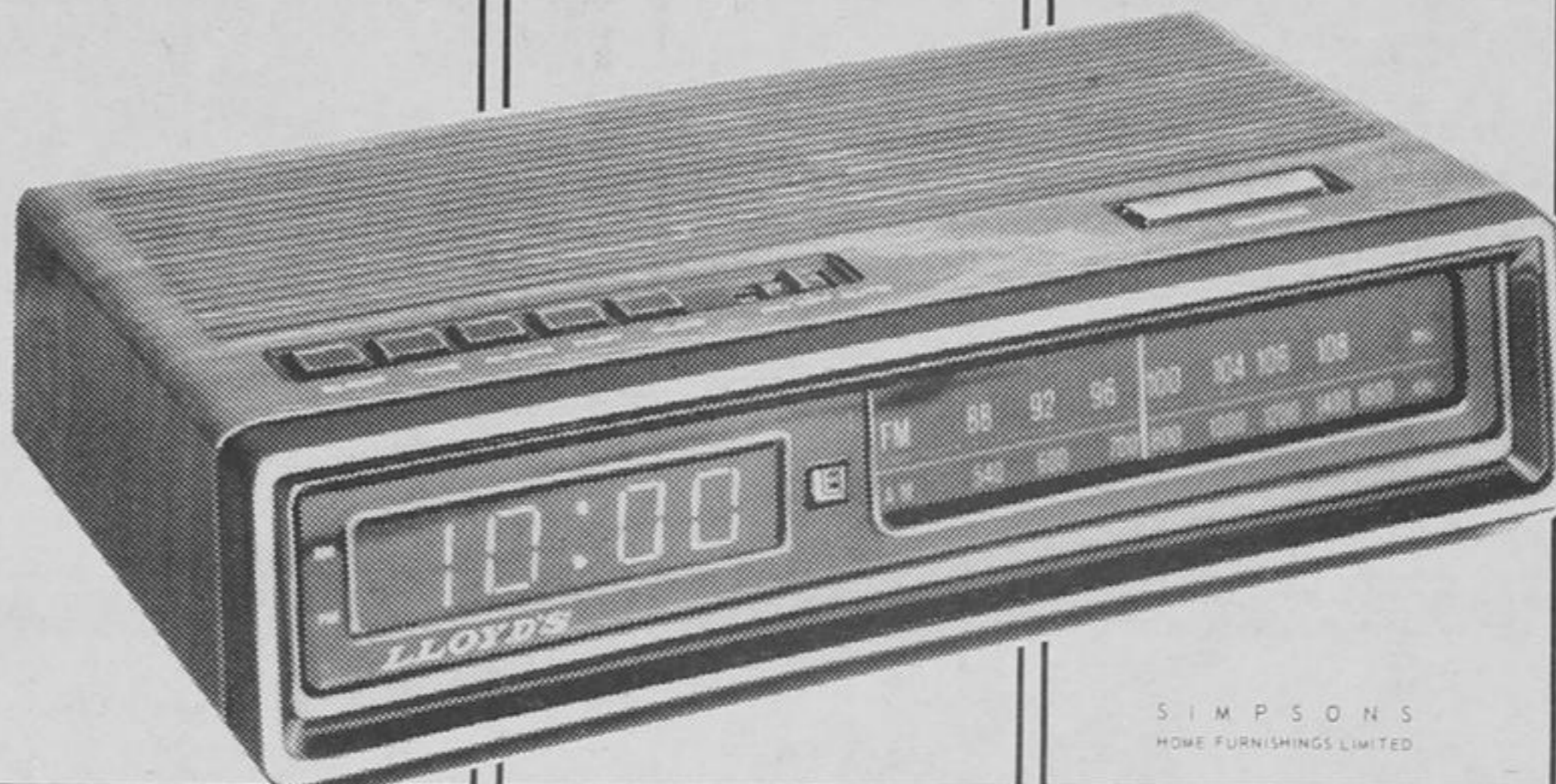
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