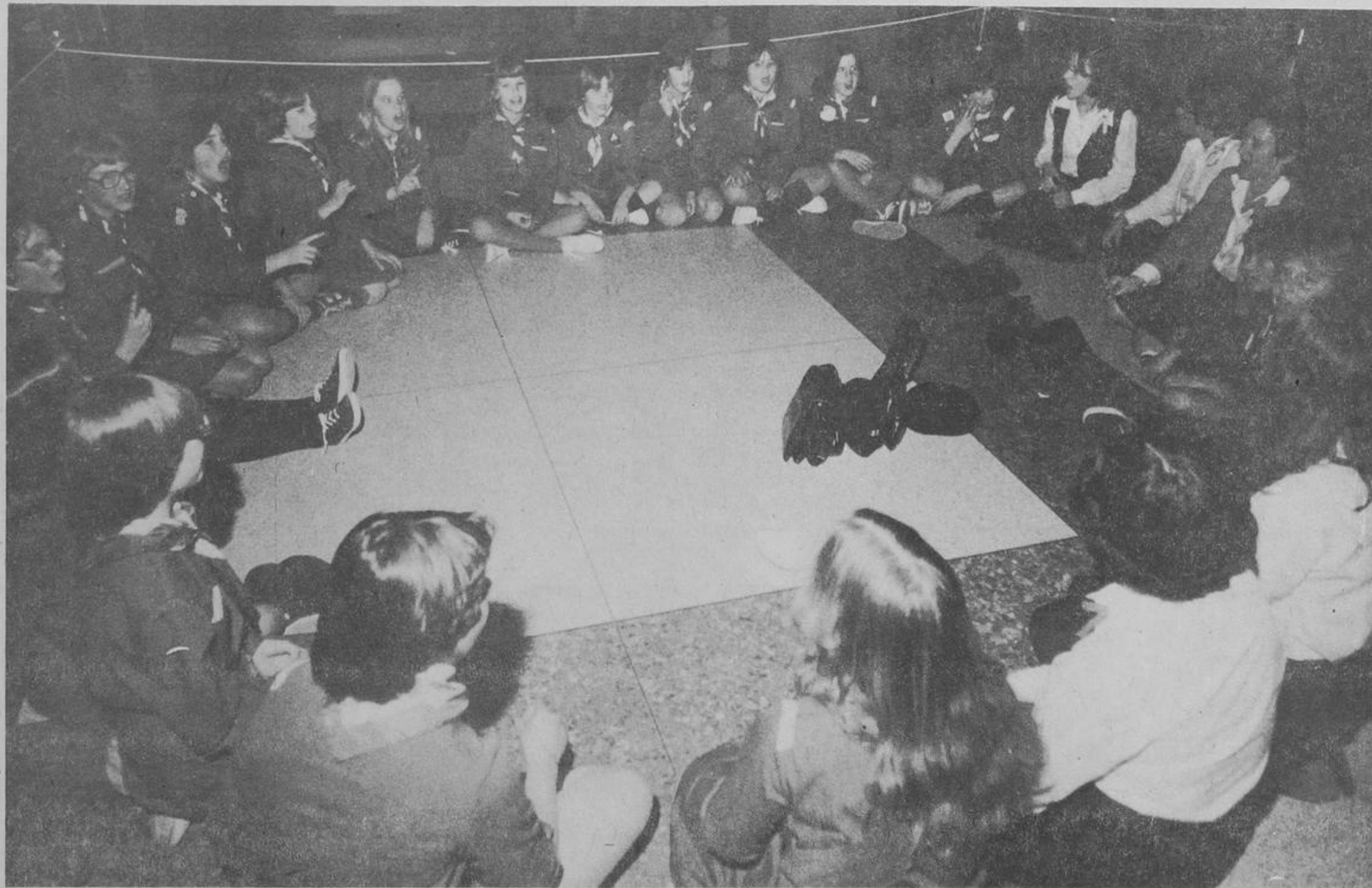


Wednesday February 28, 1979



Scout-Guide Week

There was plenty going on at Markham Place Mall last week as area Cubs, Scouts and Guides celebrated their special week. Above, Guides from Richvale had everything but the campfire, as they re-enacted the traditional campfire sing-song. At left, Norman Miles, 11, of the 11th Richmond Hill Scouts demonstrates a game played by the handicapped. (Liberal photos by Bruce Hogg).



Busy week for Guides and Scouts

By CHRIS McBAIN
Guides and Scouts were certainly in the public eye last week as they celebrated Guide-Scout Week throughout the community.

The Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Venturers got the ball rolling when they held their annual Hobby Show Saturday, February 17 at the Thornhill Community Centre. They filled two rooms with their displays of handiwork ranging from woodworking and models to knotting and even baking.

The Community Centre then hosted the Brownies, Guides and Rangers from the Thornhill North and South Districts on the evening of Monday, February 19. From 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. the large auditorium was hopping with entertainment put on by the individual Brownie Packs and Guide Companies.

The audience was treated to a display of various ethnic dances, a colourful Maypole, a wooden shoe song from Holland, a puppet show and other delightful presentations by the Brownies. Campfire and other songs seemed the order of the day by the three Guide Companies and they ended with the new song developed to help promote the sale of their cookies this year.

While the entertainment continued on stage, set up all around the room were booths put up by the units to present the country that they chose for the evening. The auditorium became in effect a mini-Expo and visitors presented their passports at each booth to be stamped.

Some of the units went to the extent of asking their country's consulate for display material and say they received a great deal of help that way.

Every booth also offered their guests samples of foods from their country. English beef and kidney pie, Danish cheese, Austrian strudel and many more delicacies were prepared. To sample everything was almost impossible but so tempting.

There was a good turnout of visitors, and organizers were pleased with the evening.

Before leaving, Brownies, Guides, Rangers and Leaders formed a circle around their guests, sang Guide and Brownie Taps and

then wished everyone goodnight with the Zulu Farewell.

From there Guide and Scout activities turned to Hillcrest Mall on Tuesday evening when a Scout Troop arrived to construct an archway out of rope and logs. It took the boys and their Leaders all evening to weave this enormous project but the finished product was very impressive.

Brownies from Richvale and Guides from Richmond Hill held their meetings in the central area on Wednesday evening. The younger girls were visited by a firefighter from the Richmond Hill Fire Department with a message about fire safety. Then the girls entertained the shoppers with a singsong. The Guides followed with an enrolment of four girls and then a very lively campfire with many action songs, yells and a demonstration of lemmi sticks.

That was the last event held at Hillcrest for the week. Lack of facilities forced the organizers to cancel the remaining activities and divert them to Markham Place. Any inconvenience to the public caused by the change of plans is deeply regretted by the Scouting and Guiding communities but unfortunately it had to be a last minute decision.

At Markham Place, where display cases of crafts, badges, camp mementos, and an information centre had already been set up for shoppers to see, things were running smoothly.

One of the highlights of the week took place on Thursday evening February 22 when the Scouting and Guiding communities gathered at Markham Place to celebrate the joint birthday of the late Lord Baden-Powell, their Founder and his wife the late Lady Baden-Powell, World Chief Guide.

The second highlight took place Saturday afternoon. The Villa Scouts, also having been diverted from Hillcrest, arrived at Markham Place and set up a very informative and attractive display for the public. Handicapped Scouting and Guiding events were illustrated on picture posters and games and activities were demonstrated by the Scouts and Scouters.

FWTAO vice president says

Education system guilty of abuse

Ontario's public education system stands guilty of child abuse, a leader of the province's women teachers told a public forum in Aurora last week.

Large classes, inadequate funding and misplaced priorities mean that "we are abusing kids, and the needs of children are not being met," said Pat Carson, vice-president of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario.

An audience of about 40 persons — roughly 75 per cent were teachers — heard Mrs. Carson blast the Ministry of Education for spending cutbacks that eliminate "vital services to our children."

Despite declining enrollment and fiscal restraints, school boards are being asked by the ministry to provide more and more specialized services, Mrs. Carson said.

She said the public must decide "which of the essentials are less essential."

"And please, when we do it, let's not rob Peter to pay Paul," she said.

Mrs. Carson was a guest speaker at the forum entitled "Let's Talk About Children" last Thursday night. Sponsored by York County elementary teachers, the discussion at Aurora High School was a prelude to Friday's county-wide professional activity day.

Two themes emerged from the 2½-hour discussion: a plea for more money from Queen's Park, and a consensus that greater communication — without confrontation — is needed among parents, teachers, trustees and the education ministry.

Instead of "fighting each other," teacher and trustee groups should unite and take their common concerns to the education ministry, said William Higginson, principal of Maple Leaf Public School in Newmarket.

He said the question of cutting services is particularly difficult in York. "When we start to cut, we really bleed in York County," he said.

Mr. Higginson said he feels York is maintaining a good quality of education at a relatively low cost (\$7 a day per student), but noted that new priorities are bound to put extra pressure on the local taxpayer.

NEW EMPHASIS

The new emphasis on special education, French and physical education — coupled with a static pupil-teacher ratio — means "we've got a real dandy situation," Mr. Higginson said. "Something has got to give," he said. "The real problem is that up until now, the only meaningful dialogue (between teachers and the board) has been in a confrontation situation," Mr. Higginson said, referring to contract negotiations.

"The air is too highly charged in those settings" to make significant progress on classroom priorities, he said.

The Newmarket principal added, however, that he sees signs of an improved atmosphere between elementary teachers and the York board.

Improvement also is needed in the communication between teachers and parents, said another panelist, primary teacher Phyllis Cannon of MacKillop Public School in Richmond Hill.

In dealing daily with children, parents and teachers "try to do their best, but far too often, and quite unintentionally, we

do so in isolation from, or in opposition to, one another," said Mrs. Cannon.

'NUISANCE'

Many parents believe teachers don't want to hear from them and feel they'll be regarded as "a nuisance" if they try to communicate with teachers, Mrs. Cannon said.

"This is a myth I hope we can dispel," she said.

Later, during a question-answer session, she conceded that some teachers don't encourage communication with parents. But she said "honest dialogue" is essential.

"Both groups need to learn to listen carefully to each other, because after all, we're all on the same side, and that's the side of the child."

Don Cousens, chairman of the York County Board of Education, agreed that greater parental involvement is needed in the education process. He also admitted that the board itself doesn't spend

enough time dealing with what's happening in the classroom.

But "the classroom seems to be caught in the middle" — between overtaxed local property owners and a stingy ministry of education, he said.

However, Mr. Cousens said he's convinced York students are getting a good education.

Very few boards and their teaching staffs have made as much progress on curriculum development as York has, he said.

"It's good quality stuff that's going on in the classroom. I'm really proud of what has been done in programming in York Region."

"TURN THE KNIFE" But he also revealed his frustration with a small minority of teachers who don't meet the standards.

"Sometimes as a trustee I'd like to turn the knife on some teachers — the 10 per cent or so that you can identify — and make them more professional," he said.

This idea would save the station and help program

By SHAARON HAY
Liberal Staff Writer

Dave Porter, Attendance Counsellor for the York County Board of Education, has a vision for the old CN Station House on Station Street — something that will be a source of pride for Richmond Hill and something no town has done before.

Mr. Porter sees the station fully restored, either at its present location or moved to the town's proposed major park site at 18th Avenue and Leslie Street, and used as a restaurant, completely staffed by students in the Operation Catch-up program.

Operation Catch-up (OCU) is a "social-academic support program" to help students who are having difficulty learning in a traditional classroom setting.

It is offered to elementary and secondary students in York Region.

OCU serves students with problems at home, trouble adjusting to a new school, learning disabilities, or those who slip through the system from grade to grade without grasping the essentials along the way.

At this time most students receive instruction in informal settings either mornings or afternoons each day with the balance of their day in regular classrooms.

Mr. Porter said he feels the station would offer some of the older students a unique opportunity to acquire valuable "on the job" experience.

He sees it as a community facility that would offer support to students whose circumstances necessitate obtaining part-time employment, an aid for OCU students and a profit making venture for OCU to finance additional small group programs.

When he became aware of the fact the CN station was abandoned and soon to be removed, the idea was already formulated in his mind, said Mr. Porter.

His vision includes hiring a chef and a teacher to train students of the OCU program to work at buying, preparation of food and serving the public.

"They could learn all aspects of running a business," he said.

Mr. Porter said he feels the project could be financially feasible in either location.

"On the tracks, in the present location, it would be "a monument to CN", said Mr. Porter and at the town park it would fill a need in all areas.

The proposed park is totally accessible and will be well utilized, said Mr. Porter, picturing residents of Richmond Hill combining a gourmet meal with a baseball game.

The attendance counsellor working with the OCU program will make a presentation to Parks and Recreation Committee tomorrow night when they come up with their decision about the feasibility of relocating the station to town park.

Even though Mr. Porter does not have a firm commitment from the town or CN about the station, he has applied for a Young Canada Works Program grant he calls "The Right Side of the Tracks", in the amount of \$16,458.

Should he obtain a grant the intends to utilize the money to hire students and other young people to completely renovate the station, giving the opportunity of gaining practical training in the fields of carpentry, refinishing, plumbing and electricity.

Mr. Porter is also hopeful of being able to obtain some financial backing from service clubs in the area, and have "socially conscious" tradesman to oversee the work.

"If we can do it," he said, "it will be far better for the town than a plaque."

Look who's arrived

The past week was fairly quiet in the baby department at York Central Hospital in Richmond Hill.

Monday, February 19
Jo-Anne and Frank Mansillo, Thornhill, a son at 3:14 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21
June and Gordon Houston, Richmond Hill, a son at 8:46 a.m.
Deborah and Steve Dzurko, Thornhill, a son at 12:01 p.m.

Susan and William Laidlaw, Richmond Hill, a daughter at 10:05 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22
Elizabeth and David Beattie, Richmond Hill, a daughter at 2:03 p.m.
Judi and Steven Clarke, Oshawa, a son at 3:37 a.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24
Leslie and Kevin Coughlan, Stroud, a daughter at 12:46 p.m.
Christina and Christian Briet, Aurora, a son at 10:07 p.m.



Adam Matthew Mansillo arrived at York Central Hospital on Monday, February 19 and his mother, Jo-Anne will introduce him to dad, Frank; brother Frankie 4, and sister, Alicia, 2, at their Dudley Avenue, Thornhill, home. (Liberal Photo by Bruce Hogg).