

## Markham department has welcome surplus

The Engineering Department of the Town of Markham has set an example that will be tough to follow for any of the Region's other municipalities, let alone Markham's remaining administrative components.

It has turned in a financial performance for 1979 that is practically spotless. The roads budget has produced a \$52,000 surplus and it almost leaves one to wonder where the extra funds go, if Markham doesn't spend them.

Nonetheless, Engineer Dipen Mukherjee deserves much of the credit for being able to manage more than \$19 million-worth of capital expenditures with a gross operating budget of only \$511,000. His staff was able to keep within the guidelines council set — a net budget increase of only four per cent and no increase at all for roads projects.

Although his report wasn't specific, there was apparently little change in the amount of staff. That's not bad, considering total expenditures for 1977 were \$10 million, then nearly \$15 million for 1978 and now more than \$19 million.

Remember, this is only the final report of Engineering — the

town still has several other financial reports to receive.

In his brief to council, Mr. Mukherjee stresses the myth that public sector performance cannot match that of the private sector. Since this is the fourth consecutive year his department has "lived with its means", Mr. Mukherjee figures that's all it is — a myth.

"I sincerely hope that this department's performance will help to change the myth embedded in the public that municipal council and staff cannot function as efficiently as an organization in the private sector," his report states.

It's encouraging to know the business of Markham can go on with the benefit of a smooth association between its council and its engineering department.

At least that is what is observed publicly — what may go on in private sessions is another matter. Many towns across the Province wish they had some of the success Markham is reporting.

Our hats off to you, Mr. Mukherjee and we hope you aren't a mere ephemeral ray of hope after which the rest of York Region is chasing.

## Briefly, then...

### ASK NICELY

It takes a lot to bring Markham Councillor Ron Moran to a boil, especially in public. After hours of long committees and council meetings, he's usually still good for a smile.

But through his persistence, Ward 5 Councillor Ron Dancy managed to tick Moran off to the point where he almost committed an indiscretion last Thursday — he must have thought of next year's election and stopped himself.

The bickering was over a sewer being constructed for a new subdivision at 16th Ave. by Monarch Construction. The Standing Committee was told the west side of Kennedy Rd. would have to be closed for three months because the Regional Engineering department felt the sewer was too close to its watermain — it feared damage to the pipes.

"The damn Regional Engineering always seems to be interfering. As Chairman of Engineering, isn't there something you can do?" asked Dancy of Moran.

"You're constantly making those remarks and I take exception to them because you don't know

what's going on at Regional Engineering," countered Moran.

But that's as far as he went, perhaps realizing Mr. Dancy had goaded him into anger. Later, he said he'd be happy to intervene on Markham's behalf and talk to Bob Hodgson (Commissioner) about the problem — if he were asked properly.

### THEY'RE READING US

It's good to see that council members are reading our newspaper.

Councillor Dave Amos took exception to the article on page one of last week's Liberal which mentioned that Councillor Al Duffy said he planned to talk to the town solicitor about the decision to erect Ontario Hydro transmission towers at the Jail Farm property on Highway 7.

"The Minister of Housing said the delay had cost the government and Ontario Hydro over \$100 million already," said Councillor Amos and added he felt the town must "tread very carefully" and reassess the situation.

Any further delays could be very costly, he said.

## ENERGY SAVERS

Plant Manager for Ronalds Printing in Richmond Hill, Bruce Humphreys, said his company has been practicing energy conservation "long before it became popular".

In the warehouse three out of every four fluorescent bulbs have been removed and head lights installed on the lift trucks.

About half the fluorescent bulbs were removed from plant

and office areas, said Mr. Humphreys, reducing the light load about 30 per cent.

Ronalds Printing also have a system of reclaiming heat from gas operated equipment to heat the plant.

And if that is not enough, Mr. Humphreys said Ronalds' employees have been urged to take part in a special energy conservation program.

### THE WISE ONES

The brief bright summer has gone from the north;  
On their long flight south the geese set forth;  
Straight and true in a "V" they fly,  
We listen at dusk to their lonely cry.  
Follow the leader and no detour  
Till they fold their wings on a southern shore.  
They'll bask in the sun as the months fly by,  
Then up and away they will northern fly,  
Into the dark they swiftly go,  
Strange and wonderful how they know!  
We rake the leaves as the air grows chilly;  
Who was it said that geese are silly?

Robert D. Little  
Richmond Hill



(Photo by Bruce Hogg)

## By BOB RICE Rice was checksummed

By RON WALLACE  
Liberal Editor

Hi there, my name's not Bob Rice. It's Ron Wallace, the brunt of most of these columns. I don't know where Rice is, but he was supposed to be here and the reason he isn't is my fault.

So, I'm doing penance. Perhaps, I should start at the beginning. Rice went away a couple of weeks ago — to St. Lucia, I think — to sip on Pina Colodas, twist his toes in the sand, and soak up some sun. Before he went — that clever fore-thinking sun-of-a-gun — he gave me two advance columns to use while he was away.

You read the first one last week. You'll never read the second one. I lost it.

Y'see, we've entered the computer age here at The Liberal, and I could dazzle you with computer-ese, the likes of which you've probably never heard before.

It means nothing to you, but Rice was "checksummed". To be "checksummed" is serious, indeed. Even the checksum says so: — "this is a very serious message, consult with your key operator or your system supervisor. DO NOT ignore the message."

Well, if there's a key operator or a system supervisor around here, I guess I'm it.

Armed with three days training in Wichita, Kansas, I lurched into action, demanding the computer show me what it could do. I asked it to read, to write, to hardcopy, to xerox, to do things that under normal circumstances it can do, and do quickly.

The system refused. Made a muffled noise, then went blank. Kept flashing "checksum" at me.

Okay, computer, do this — and I ordered an update. An update is like a pencil eraser . . . and it works the same way. It erases stories. It couldn't, I argued, do the other things I asked, so why should it do an update?

It did, without hesitation, an update. . .

And in doing so, dozens of stories magically disappeared from the system . . . including the slightly-magnificent Bob Rice Column.

Today (Saturday) as I continue to enter this column into a now subdued system, I do so with my fingers crossed, because we never did find out why the computer elected to "checksum" Rice.

Was it trying to tell me something? Was it jealous because Rice is in the south seas? Did the computer really want to be a traffic reporter? Stay tuned, folks, the tension is terrific.

I did have the opportunity of reading Rice's column before it disappeared (maybe I answered my own questions), and he was on about his Christmas Present.

The cards are, in fact, pouring in, but there's still room for more. To bring you up to date (is that like an update?) Bob is giving away a portable pop-up television by Panasonic, which comes complete with radio.

There's no truth to the rumor that the radio part of the machine is designed to come on only when Rice is giving his traffic reports on CKEY.

But another CKEY announcer, Ed Luther, who lives in Stouffville, told me the station is looking for more listeners and that might be one way to do it. (Plug time: You can hear Eddie from 2 to 7 p.m. weekdays).

Geez, it's easy to get off the track. Deadline for Bob's contest is Midnight, December 9. Cards must be mailed (as many as you like), but each entry must be in a separate envelope.

My computer friend says you have 11 more days to get your entry in, and grab a chance on this hot item. Wish I could win it.

And I'm sorry, Bob. But I'll do anything to get to write a column.

## LIBERAL SPRINKLINGS

### Christmas bazaars...crunch

By MILLIE STEWART  
Liberal Staff Writer

It happens every year at this time. Here we are on the brink of December with only 27 days left until Christmas, and I'm not anywhere near ready for it.

It's just that I don't like Christmas . . . I do. Please Santa Claus . . . I really do like Christmas.

It's just that I always find myself stumped for gift ideas for the special people on my list. I want each and every gift to be special, and that's where my problem is.

At the beginning of November, I began receiving notices from various Churches and organizations in the community telling me of upcoming bazaars or craft fairs.

The notices promised all sorts of wonderful goodies to be had . . . hand-made gift items, unusual decorations and of course, all the home baking treasures synonymous with the upcoming festive season.

So being a very smart young lady, I figured if everyone else could benefit from attending these bazaars and such, so could I.

The gift items to be found at local bazaars are endless if you can get near them, but that, in itself is a tough task.

Nowhere on earth is it more crowded than at a church bazaar. There seems to be somewhere in the neighborhood of a million people everywhere you look.

Picture this if you will . . . a four year-old tyke enters the church hall hanging onto mama's coat tails. All of a sudden, mommy reaches for an item at one of the booths, and junior is left stranded in a forest of arms and legs and pushing, shoving humanity.

Mom is nowhere to be found and out of the melee of people comes a blood curdling wail "MOMMY, I want my mommy."

If that isn't enough to bring people to their senses, nothing is. No one can scream louder than a little kid looking for his or her mommy.

Once Mom has rescued the poor wail, she decides to check out the bake table. Now this is where the fun really starts.

Can you picture 10 people all reaching for the same pie?

It happens. A friend visited the bake table at a church bazaar recently and spied a beautiful apple pie. As she reached for it, a little old gentleman turned to her and told her to get her hands off his pie. He was quite indignant about it, too.

Most bazaars feature a tea court, where you are supposed to be able to sit down and have a nice cuppa in peace and quiet.

Sometimes that too is almost impossible. Not only is there no available space, but everyone else has the same idea . . . so much for peace and quiet.

A lot of people leave the bazaars never having bought a single item, but for many, they are a treasure house of gifts.

Some people buy all their gifts and all their holiday baked goods at local bazaars.

Nice if you have the patience.

I don't. I just want to get out of those church halls as fast as I can, so that's why I am sitting here still wondering where I'm going to find the time to get all my shopping done and where I can find enough Christmas goodies to stock my freezer without having to slave over a hot stove.

For some strange reason, I know deep down inside all will be well.

Come Christmas Eve I will have all my gifts bought, written a letter to Santa . . . see I didn't forget; and my freezer and cookie jars will be well stocked with goodies.

Come on Christmas . . . I'm not afraid of you. . . not really.

### Letter

Mississauga  
a warning,  
reader says

A lot of people are worried out there about what happened over the weekend during the explosion at Mississauga. It was a warning from Jesus Christ to repent; that the hour is at hand and to believe in him before it's too late.

No one was killed so Jesus spared them.

A Christian doesn't worry about gloom and doom because they have Jesus Christ in them and they read the Bible and know that these things are to come in place by prophecy.

We haven't much longer for Jesus Christ to return for His Church. The Church is the believer and Jesus Christ is the head of the Church and no one else.

He helps us when we pray to Him. He protects us from our enemies. He is a loving God.

When we get saved, our families get saved as well. Our lives change and people notice the difference.

Prisoners are saved right in the jails. Jesus loves everyone.

Read John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son. Whosoever believeth will not die but have everlasting life."

Fran Sargeant  
Box 861  
Oak Ridges

## Surveying the town

Richmond Hill council and staff are presently puzzling over the implications of comments received from 166 residents of the town.

In October the Finance Department mailed a survey to 50 households in each political ward, asking for comments about the quality of service provided, use of optional services and reaction to the municipal spending restraint program.

Results show the average householder in Richmond Hill agrees with the restraint program being followed by the town and is reasonably satisfied with services such as road condition, snowplowing and garbage collection, although they would like to see improvements in some areas.

Generally, respondents from the Oak Ridges area were less happy with services provided by the town especially in areas of drainage, street lighting, and both water supply and quality. Mr. Rice pointed out the town was presently attempting to improve service in all three of these areas.

Most replies pointed out animal control in town was less than satisfactory. Again Mr. Rice pointed out the town had already undertaken to improve this situation by changing the company responsible for service and was in the process of changing the hours under contract.

Householders were also asked to rate usage of optional services such as the local transit service and local and major parks.

About 75 per cent of the citizens who replied in wards 1,2,3, and 4 indicated they do use local and major parks, but in wards 5 and 6, usage was about 33 and 54 per cent respectively.

Mr. Rice said he felt the reason

for these figures might be that there are few parks in these two areas, but the town is working with developers to establish local parks in all new subdivisions.

Libraries were considered the most utilized of optional services with parks, swimming pools, transit, arenas, recreational programs, ball diamonds, tennis courts, and meeting rooms, falling in behind, in that order.

Of the facilities available results of the survey show people in the Oak Ridges area do not utilize these optional services to the same extent.

Priorities for services requiring greater attention were different from ward to ward.

Ward 2,3 and 6 wanted greater attention to roads, 1 and 4 want better dog control and ward 5 wants street lights attended to.

When asked if the person filling in the questionnaire would be prepared to accept an additional tax increase, and at what per cent, the average response was a one per cent increase would be tolerated — if there was improvement — if there was improvement to the services identified.

Mr. Rice said he was pleased with the level of response from the survey, 40 per cent, and said he thought it demonstrated a keen interest in local government.

The commissioner said he felt the information obtained from the survey supported the areas the town was attempting where to improve service and it brought attention to a couple of other areas that should be given consideration.

Councillor John Birchall, chairman of the finance committee in town, said the committee plans to circulate a similar survey next year to judge response to current programs.