

Education Board defends schedule of school fees

MARKHAM—Members of the York County Board of Education have agreed that local trustees and a representative from the board's use of schools committee should meet with Markham Guide and Brownie leaders to explain the board's policy on the use of schools.

Twenty-three signatures were appended to a letter protesting the \$1 per night charge to Guide and Brownie groups using schools. The letter charged that the decision to revise the fee structure for use of schools had been made at a closed meeting of the board and that as a result "fees would have to be raised which could prove a hardship to some families."

Trustee Margaret Coburn, chairman of the board's use of schools committee, refuted this and pointed out that the fee schedule was not adopted at a closed meeting. Board meetings are always open to the public, she stated, except when matters concerning personnel and the acquisition of property are to be discussed. The fee schedule was arrived, she said, after 15 meetings, five of which were held with municipal recreation committee personnel present, five with various school personnel present, and five with the committee members alone.

"The decision was the result of a study brought about by one municipality's concern that our existing policy created inequalities from municipality to municipality," stated Mrs. Coburn. She noted that in some municipalities where no caretakers were on duty in the schools, groups wishing to use these schools had to pay \$15 per night.

"The conflicting pressures from both the government and the public to scrutinize the budget with care on the one hand and yet to open the schools for more community use on the other, resulted in the introduction

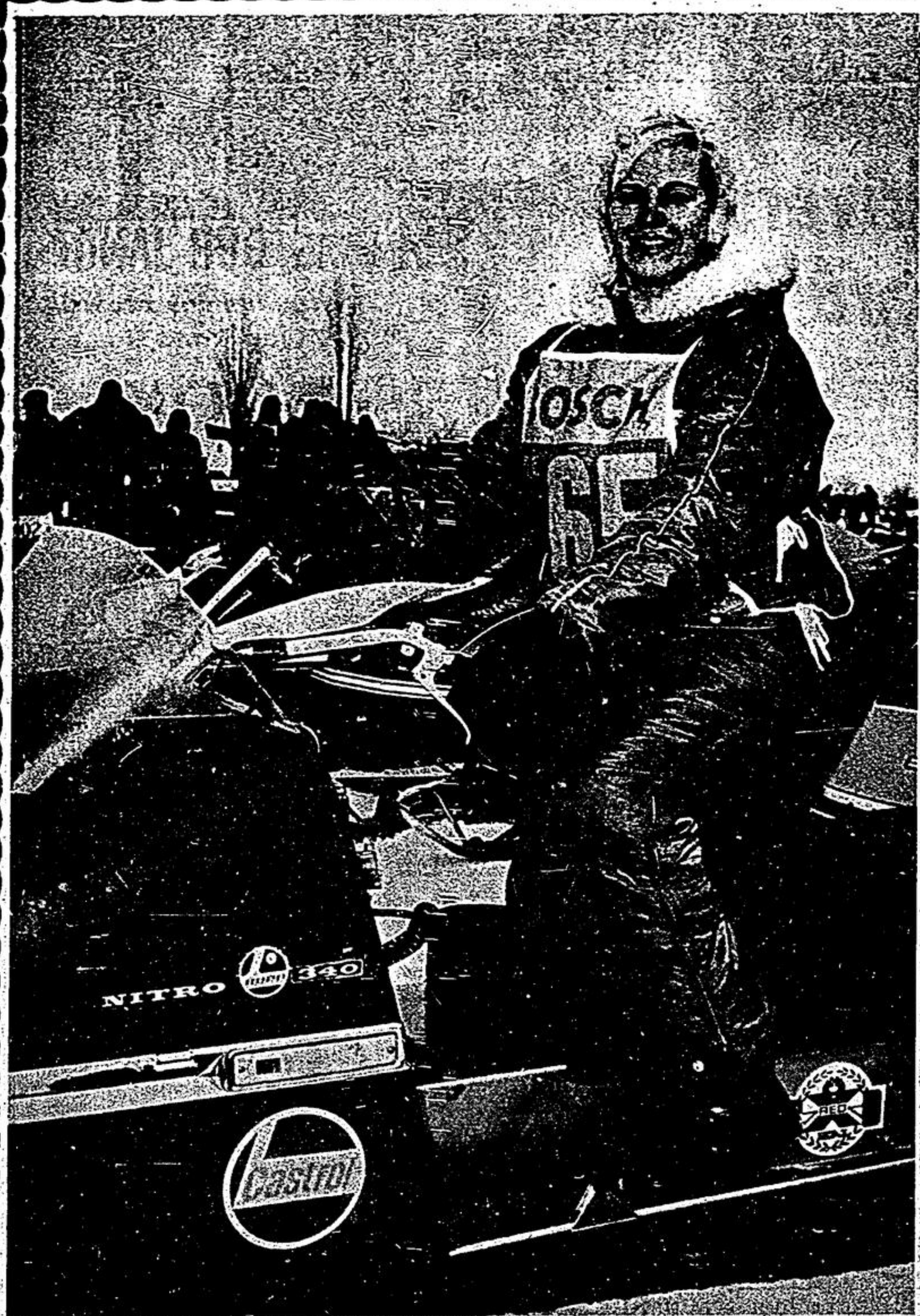
of this fee structure," Mrs. Coburn explained. "The intention is to allow more use of schools without taking financial support from the educational program."

Mrs. Coburn pointed out that the amount to be charged to youth groups is \$1 per night in total whether there will be one, two or three groups in the school, in sequence or side by side. "It probably represents two to four cents per Brownie. This is the figure we are all talking about," she said.

Mrs. Coburn noted that boards all over the country are concerned about the drain on their finances from recreational uses of school buildings. She reported that an item in a national magazine dealing with education, concerning the York County board's newly developed policy on the use of schools had resulted in 14 requests from all across Canada for copies of the board's policy within the space of 3 days. Since that time a total of 29 requests have been received from points as far distant as Corner Brook, Newfoundland to Victoria, B.C.

Trustee Louise Almone suggested that local board members should meet with the Guide and Brownie leaders and with the Markham recreation committee. "There are alternatives these people are not aware of," Mrs. Almone said. "The recreation committee has said publicly that it is willing to sponsor groups wishing to use the schools. A face to face discussion would cause problems to evaporate." Even with the new schedule of fees, she pointed out, the board is only recovering half its costs for recreational use of schools this year.

Trustees made it clear that they appreciated the educational value of the Guide and Brownie program but pointed out that they get no grant for the support of these organizations.



Snowmobile racing, big league style, opened Saturday on the half-mile track at Markham Fair. One of the participants was Sharon Lapp, R.R. 1, Markham. She scored a second and a third. —Jim Thomas.



The first turn posed the only real problem for drivers, Saturday. There was only one major collision, but many close calls as machine like this one, climbed the high side bank. Entries for the afternoon totalled 299. —Jim Thomas.

Race drivers exceed crowd support

MARKHAM—Although numbers of entries exceeded expectations, (299 on Saturday and 186, Monday), the crowd was less than anticipated. At the first weekend of snowmobile racing on the track at Markham Fairgrounds, Dec. 30 and Jan. 1.

Warner Berger of Cedar Valley, chief organizer of the meet, said he was pleased with the turnout of drivers, but somewhat disappointed in the spectator attendance. He attributed this to inclement weather.

Mr. Berger described track conditions as "good", but expressed concern for the safety of operators if too many machines were permitted to go at one time.

In one race, eleven "took off" at the starting line and two collided on the first turn. He observed that it was unfair to match "local" drivers against "factory" teams, the "amateurs" had done exceptionally well. He said mis-matches of this kind would not occur at every Markham meet.

Markham's holiday mail presented no problems

MARKHAM— "This Christmas season we put out more work, with less people helping, than we have done over the same period in previous years," was postmaster Cecil Rowe's capsule comment on the December bustle at Markham Post Office.

Mr. Rowe credited the 'bundling' of Christmas cards, by the public, into local and out-of-town categories, with easing the postal workload. He estimated that 50% of mail sent through Markham, preceding Dec. 25, was bundled.

Two hundred thousand 6 cent stamps were sold at the Town P.O., mostly over a 10 day period in December; 250,000 envelopes went through the cancelling machine; the parcel flow was heavy. The postmaster feels, however, that volume did not reflect the population increase in the area. "I think people are cutting back in the amount of cards they send," he commented.

The Markham office handles 10 letter carrier walks, 2 rural routes and a mobile service to the industrial area at Woodbine and Steeles Avenues.

Fifteen part-time workers, about ten less than last year, were required to augment the postal staff during the seasonal rush. Mr. Rowe explained that the regular letter carriers continued to do all their own processing, by working on an overtime basis, thus eliminated much confusion in delivery.

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For over a year the local bureau has operated one of the Canada Post Office philatelic sales centres, set up in 15 branches from Niagara Falls to Bowmanville.

In addition to the specially packaged stamps, ranging from the 1966, to the latest 'Kreighoff' issues, the Markham centre sells albums, mint sets, wall maps of Canada and the world, various sizes of Canadian and provincial flags, a selection of books by the Queen's Printer, Canadian and R.C.M.P. calendars. The most popular item on sale is a \$2 pocketbook, which colorfully illustrates every stamp ever issued in this country, the related stories, and dealer prices.

Cecil Rowe, Markham postmaster, estimates that their philatelic centre grossed \$5,000 this year, with \$1,000 in sales coming before Christmas.

Stamp collectors' delight

MARKHAM—A philatelic fantasy of plate blocks and first day covers occupies a permanent corner of Markham post office.

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Committees

MARKHAM—Pending last-minute changes, the committees within the Town of Markham Council, are established for 1973. The first-named in each will serve as Chairman. The breakdown follows: Planning — Bob Adams, Alma Walker, Bylaws — Gary Kay, Alma Walker; Finance — Roy Muldrew, Gary Kay; Fire — Bud Bonner, Roy Muldrew; Personnel — Mayor Tony Roman; Negotiating Team — Harry Crisp, Bob Adams, Mayor Roman; Property — Ron Moran, Harry Crisp; Roads and Works — Harry Crisp, Ron Moran; Public Relations — Carole Bell, Gary Kay. Markham's inaugural meeting is Tuesday, Jan. 9 at 7 p.m.

Region Study shows 300 less farms in York

YORK REGION — There are 2,190 individual farm properties in the Region of York, 300 fewer than in 1967, reports Alan A. Wall, Agricultural Representative at Newmarket.

Crop acreage during the same five-year period, has decreased by 2,190, or about 15 per cent.

Mr. Wall points to the changes in individual crops, illustrating a current trend. Since 1967, wheat cultivation stayed about the same; barley went up a little; mixed grain doubled and grain corn tripled.

The really big drop occurred in oats and pasture. Oats nosedived from 33,000 acres to 13,000. Pasture took a beating too, from 41,000 acres to 18,000.

Livestock numbers, the census reveals, have held their own quite well. While herd numbers have decreased, the ones that

are left are larger, with production levels improving.

Milking cows are down by 3,000; pigs and poultry have increased, and sheep remain about the same.

There has been strong competition for farm land in York. Properties have succumbed to industry, houses, roads, hydro lines, parks and airports.

On the brighter side, the change to a regional form of government, with long-term planning at this level, is a big advantage, says Al Wall. The Toronto Centred Region Plan should maintain a viable farm industry, with Zone 2 established for future agriculture, open space and recreation use.

Hopefully, concludes Mr. Wall, these changes will make it practical for a farmer to plan and invest for a future on his farm, for as long as he wants to stay.

Debate 'open concept'

MARKHAM — Concern of parents, living in the north-east section of the old Town of Markham, has not abated, concerning a Board of Education plan to introduce the 'open classroom' system into the new Resor Park Public School, now under construction.

One lady told The Tribune that many mothers were apprehensive, while others wished more information.

While not confirmed, a meeting has been tentatively planned for Jan. 23, in an effort to have the 'open concept' program fully explained. A panel of experts will be invited to offer their professional opinions.

Divided opinion

MARKHAM — A request by the local news media to have Markham Council dates switched from Tuesday to Monday, to afford up-to-date and complete coverage, has been rejected.

The vote, in committee, The Tribune learned, was 5-4 against the change, with councillor Bud Bonner supporting both.

In favor of Monday were Alma Walker, Ron Moran, Roy Muldrew and Bud Bonner. Agreeing with Tuesday were Carole Bell, Harry Crisp, Garry Kay, Bob Adams and Bud Bonner.

Region approves own pension plan

YORK REGION — Regional Councillors authorized their participation in the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) at their meeting last week.

The plan will cover a councillor's five best years in regional office and the former county level of government, effective Dec. 1, 1972.

But, the legality of council's move was questioned by Aurora Mayor Dick Illingworth.

According to municipal law, a council may not pass a bylaw on certain issues after the day of a municipal election. This pension proposal, according to Mayor Illingworth, is one of these specified issues that was passed by council after the Dec. 4 election.

He went on to say, "This

council has neither the moral right or legal right to pass this bylaw." The mayor pointed out that the Town of Aurora voted against the pension participation.

"All we're doing is putting our hands into the taxpayers' pocket without their knowledge," he thundered.

Councillor Don Plaxton maintained his stand from the council meeting prior to Dec. 28. "It's wrong for a council, whether it's on the eve of its dissolution or on the eve of taking council, to vote itself a pension."

However, any arguments against the issue were in vain as council voted 10 to six in favor of participation in the OMERS retroactive pension plan.

Problems of alcohol described as 'serious'

YORK REGION — High alcohol consumption has become a serious problem among the people of York Region and the creation of detoxification centres was earlier recommended by the Health and Social Services Committee.

At the York Regional Council meeting, Dec. 28, the Committee reported that it had asked the Commissioner of Health and Social Services to "explore the possibility of setting up such centres in nursing homes."

However, under the Liquor Control Act, the term "detoxification centre" means a public hospital, thus ruling out this possibility.

According to letters received by the committee from York County and York Central Hospitals, "they are too crowded at this time to undertake this responsibility."

Councillor Don Plaxton defended the need. "The problems of alcohol are very serious," he commented.

But the committee recommended to council that until

such time as the hospitals enlarge, the establishment of detoxification centres in York Region are abandoned.

Entered school 'after hours'

UNIONVILLE — Footsteps in the snow, has led to the arrest of a 16-year-old Unionville youth, charged by York Regional Police with seven counts of break, enter and theft at St. John 23 Separate School.

It is alleged that Paul Ailen Nitchie, Fred Varley Drive, entered the building by breaking windows and crawling through.

The thefts occurred during a period extending from Sept. 6 to Dec. 27.

Reported stolen were tape recorders, a television set, radio, a public address system and other miscellaneous articles, amounting to over \$1,000. All items have been recovered.