

After 30 years of service

Surprise resignation shocks regional council

SPECIAL TO TRIBUNE

NEWMARKET — After 30 years of service to York County and York Region, Jack Rettle abruptly resigned last week — and it appears highly unlikely the region's top civil servant will change his mind.

His departure may touch off more resignations by senior regional staff, some of whom have stayed on the job primarily because of Mr. Rettle's leadership and commitment to the regional government concept.

A startled regional council heard Chairman Garfield Wright read Mr. Rettle's letter of resignation at a closed meeting Thursday morning. After a sometimes heated debate, council gave the Chief Administrative Officer a month to reconsider his decision.

Mr. Rettle made the decision to quit the previous Tuesday. He did not attend the meeting Thursday.

In an interview Friday, Mr. Rettle said he "will think it over" until September, as council requested, but the tone of his comments indicated he is resolved to let the resignation stand.

He declined to give council or the press his reasons for quitting. But it is known that his frustration has been mounting, particularly during the past year, as a result of council's posture on two issues:

1. In Mr. Rettle's view, councillors have taken a parochial attitude towards regional government, and have refused to take firm policy stands on important matters affecting York's future. Some regional politicians oppose the very concept of government their council represents, he feels.

2. Council has taken a suspicious and sometimes belligerent attitude towards its department heads and staff, making for a continually tense working relationship, Mr. Rettle feels. That tension has not eased since it climaxed earlier this year when council made drastic cuts in proposed salaries for department heads, and refused to give non-union staff the same mid-year cost-of-living pay increase. It granted to unionized employees.

Council's action gave Mr. Rettle York's highest-paid employee, the lowest percentage increase of any department head. He got a 4.9 per cent raise to \$42,500.

Although Mr. Rettle told the press there was "no specific catalyst" for his resignation, he reportedly was annoyed early last week when he learned that York's police commission had given Chief Bruce Crawford a 19.7 per cent raise and the deputy chiefs 24 per cent.

He stressed in an interview that he did not resign for salary reasons. Newmarket Regional Councillor Ray Twinney, a police commissioner, told the press Thursday that he understood Mr. Rettle quit because "he thought he was not treated fairly, wage-wise."

"I don't know if a chief of police is worth \$39,500, I just don't know that," Mr. Twinney said. "The job is a very important job, and he has 313 employees. And so for the CAO here (in the region) to be upset and resign over what happened in the police department is sort of stupid, if you ask me."

The next day, Mr. Rettle said. "Twinney's statement is entirely inaccurate. That (the salary issue) is not the

reason for my resignation. The police commission should know how much the job of chief of police is worth."

Pressed on his reasons for quitting, Mr. Rettle said: "I'm not prepared at this time to start another newspaper controversy between council and myself."

"I think the region made a lot of progress in the past five years. I think the concept is sound. There were growing pains, of course, in making it operational."

"I just felt it was in my best interests, and probably in the best interest of the region, if I changed at this time."

Mr. Rettle, who will be 54 on Oct. 1, joined the former Toronto and York Roads Commission as a projects engineer in February 1946. When Toronto and York County split in 1954, on the formation of Metropolitan Toronto, Mr. Rettle became the TYRC's chief engineer, and York County's engineer.

He was intimately involved in planning and promoting the regional government concept for York, and became the new region's first chief administrative officer when York Region was formed in 1971.

Aurora Mayor Evelyn Buck, who has engaged in a number of council battles with the CAO, said she was shocked and saddened by his decision to quit.

"He is, in my opinion, irreplaceable," Mayor Buck said in an interview Friday. "There is no way to replace 30 years of absolute dedication and caring, and with a hell of a little credit for it."

"You can fill a chair with a body, and it might be a competent body, but you just can't replace that kind of experience."

"I've had many a powerful disagreement with Jack Rettle, but never at any time have I ever questioned his integrity and dedication."

During Thursday's closed meeting, Mayor Buck rebuked those councillors who speculated that Mr. Rettle quit because he didn't get his requested salary, or because of the pay increases given to senior police officials.

"I think that salary arguments could be a convenient excuse for councillors to use, but I think it (the resignation) is the culmination of a great many injustices not only to Jack Rettle, but to the people he felt responsible for," Mayor Buck said in an interview.

Mr. Rettle said he was not in a position to predict his future occupational plans, although he left the clear impression they do not include working for the Region of York.

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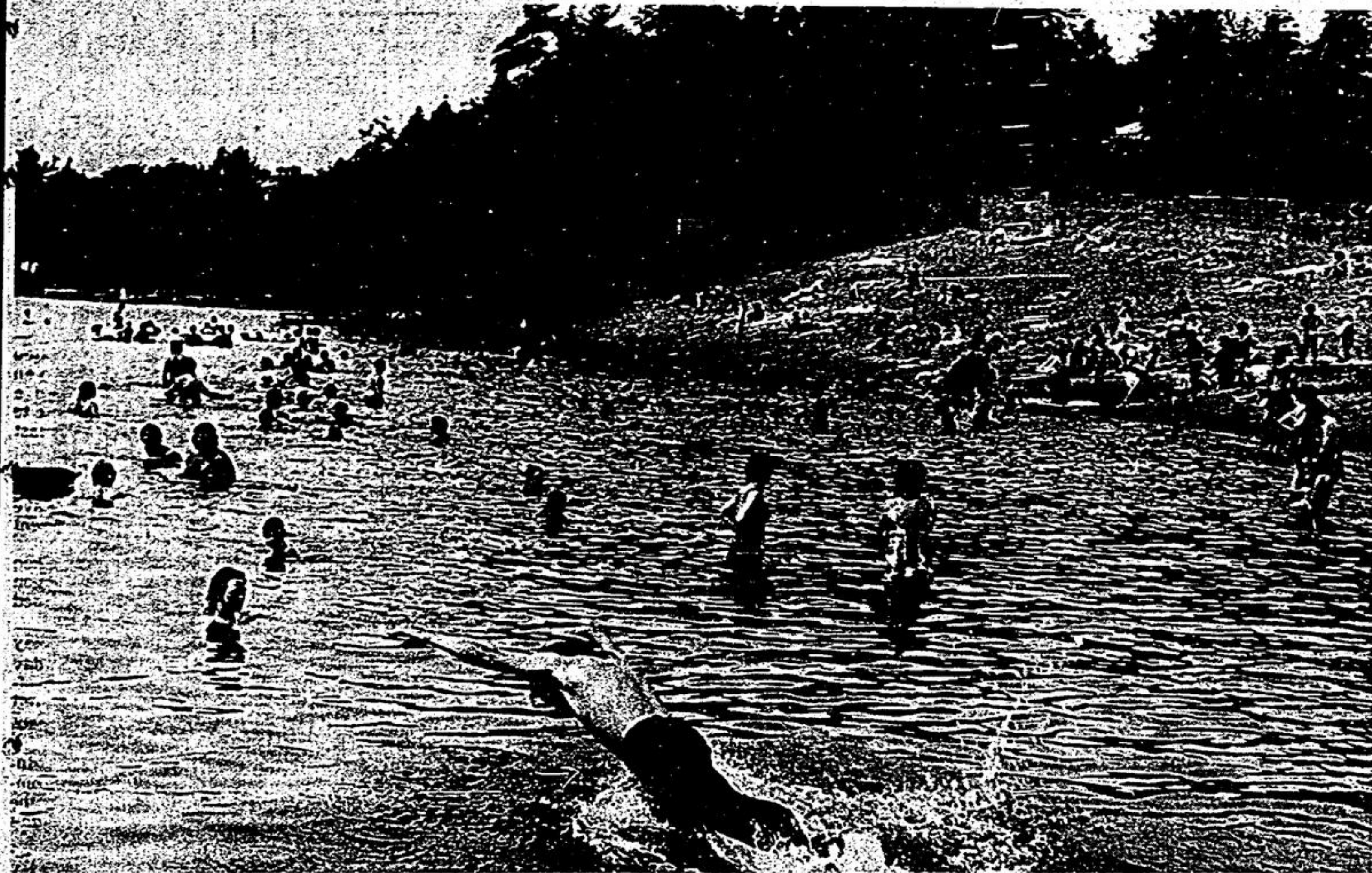
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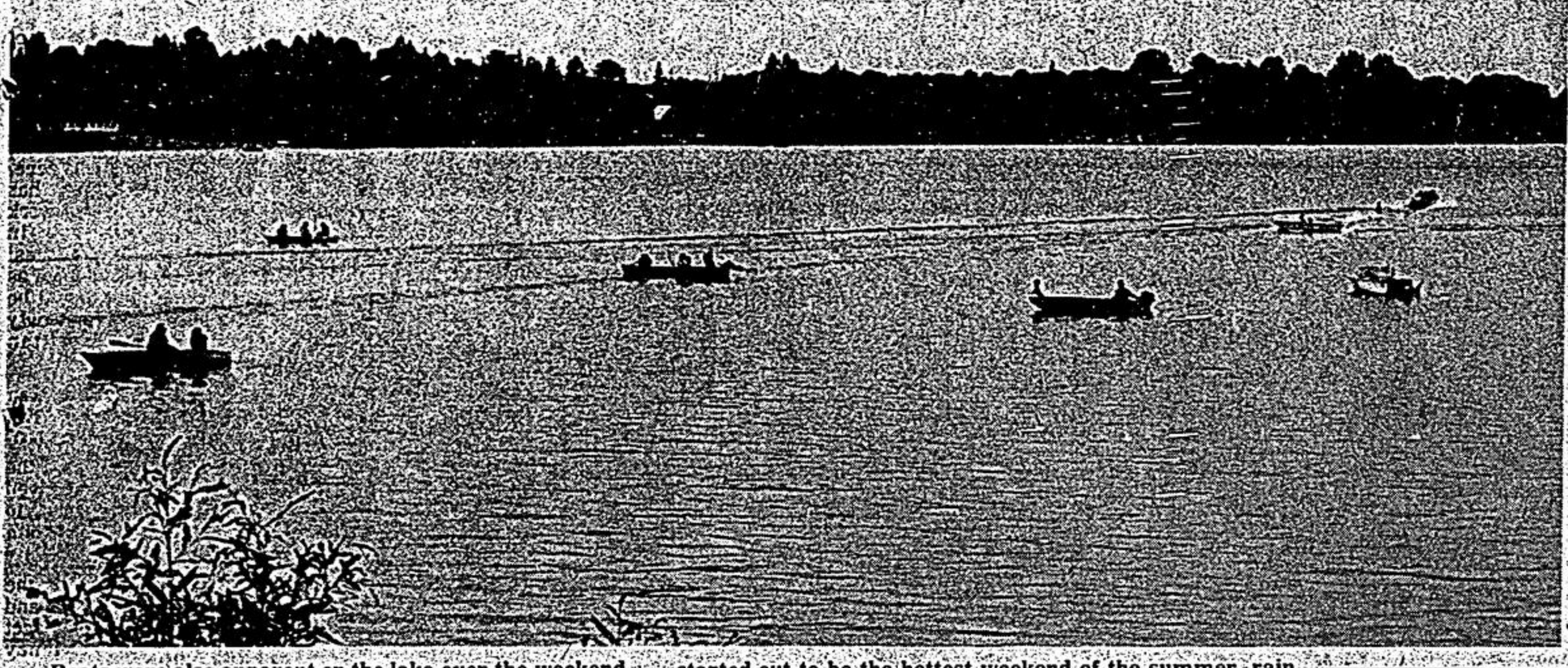
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Although Monday was not the hottest day of the summer, it was still warm enough to attract a goodly number of people to local beaches. Here, Glendale Beach is a hive of activity as people searched for ways to beat the heat. Cooler temperatures this week, relieved some of the worst affects of the mid-summer hot spell.

— John Montgomery



Boats were also apparent on the lake over the weekend and here, Tribune photographer John Montgomery managed to catch seven of them in one picture. While it started out to be the hottest weekend of the summer, rain Sunday brought cooler, dryer air.

Despite co-owners statement

Picnickers cause problems

COPPEN'S CORNERS — Despite recent protests to the contrary, problems at the Macedonian picnic grounds here are not solved, a nearby resident told The Tribune last week.

The Tribune had printed comments by Paul Nanoff, a co-owner of the grounds, last week saying that toilet gar-

bage and other complaints by neighbors had been taken care of. Jean Ward, who lives adjacent to the ground, disagrees. "They always put a nice face on it," she said, "but problems continue."

She said that even after new rented toilets were installed, that trespassing by children onto neighboring property continued.

"Maybe it's not as bad as it used to be because they're smaller than usual," Mrs. Ward added. The fences referred to by Mr. Nanoff, she said, are just "stump fences" made from extracted tree roots. The only proper wire fence was recently installed by a neighbor, she said.

Public meeting

Houses planned in deserted quarry

COPPEN'S CORNERS — A public meeting regarding a proposed official plan change for a portion of land about 1,000 feet west of here was to be held Tuesday night at the Uxbridge municipal building.

The Colicchia Group developers are requesting that 24 acres of land be redesignated from "rural" to "hamlet" status, so that development of a 32 lot subdivision may proceed.

The subdivision would be located in a small abandoned gravel pit, with vacant lands to the west and north and a regional forest to the south.

Durham Region Current Operations Branch prepared a report stating that the location was a poor one for a residential development at this time.

Reasons given included the large licensed gravel operations nearby, which would create noise, dust and traffic hazards for future residents; and the prevention of extraction of aggregates which exist on the site as well as making extraction difficult on adjacent lots.

SSC activities for summer, fall

STOUFFVILLE — Save Stouffville Committee has organized a number of fund raising activities for the summer and fall.

A third activity will include a "Bye Plane Ball" to be held Oct. 10 at St. Lawrence Hall in Toronto.

There will be a lottery offering \$2,000 worth of food as prizes. Winner will receive a coupon redeemable for \$750. Second and third prizes will be vouchers for \$500 and \$350.

The winning tickets will be drawn at the SSC corn and Weiner roast Sept. 5. It will feature square dancing and music by the Stouffville Stompers.

Fake cheques hit four banks

THORNHILL — Close to \$2,000 worth of counterfeit travellers cheques were passed to four Thornhill banks in a two and a half hour period last Tuesday.

A man presented himself as Sam Haf of Ohio to four banks and at three of the four he cashed 10 \$50 Bank of America travellers cheques. At the fourth bank only nine cheques were tendered.

Scugog, Uxbridge for penitentiary

UXBRIDGE — "One way or the other, it's going to end up in Scugog or Uxbridge." That was how Uxbridge Councillor Bill Ballinger described the prospects for a proposed federal penitentiary reception centre.

At the July 31 meeting of council, it was learned that Federal Penitentiary Services representative John Bennett had contacted Mr. Ballinger saying he would be happy to meet with council.

Earlier, council had requested a visit by Mr. Bennett to discuss what the proposed penitentiary would entail.

Apparently, the reaction being received by council has not been strongly negative, according to two members. Mayor Carl Peterborough said he was "not getting very negative replies," while Councillor Eleanor Todd said that after sending out 125 letters concerning the penitentiary, she received only three replies.

Beer steins stolen

MARKHAM — Two 17 year old Markham area youths, who pleaded guilty to the theft of 45 beer steins last week, were granted a conditional discharge and placed on a one year term of probation.

Kevin John Cuning and Steve James Botham were charged March 12 after they stole the beer mugs from a barn. The glass mugs, belonging to the Markham Rotary Club, were being stored at a local barn.

Mr. & Mrs. McCurdy are on a vacation.

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