

'Explosion' alerts occupants of fire

VANDORF — An "explosion" in the garage alerted Mrs. R.J. Leach to the fire that was raging in that part of her Vandorf Rd. home, Dec. 23.

She called in the alarm at about 6 p.m. By the time Stouffville firefighters arrived the garage was enveloped in flames. The blaze spread to the house, but was contained by fireman.

Fire Chief Walt Smith said that the garage was completely gutted, along with fire damage to two bedrooms and a bathroom on the upper floor of the dwelling.

Mrs. Leach was at home with her mother at the time of the fire.

Chief Smith said that the fire was under control in about 30 minutes, although firefighters attended for nearly six hours.

The chief said that the cause of the blaze is not known. He estimated damage at between \$15-\$20,000.

Neighbor sees fire in house

GREEN RIVER — A Green River man saw the main part of his house saved in a blaze early Monday morning.

Arthur Lattman, who was renting the dwelling from the provincial government, managed to escape the blaze.

A neighbor called in the alarm to the Markham Fire Department, who relayed the call to Pickering firefighters. Seven trucks fought the blaze for nearly four hours.

The main problem was water. Three tanker trucks ran relays bringing water from as far as three miles from the scene of the fire.

The fire started at the front of the house and damage is estimated at \$4,000. The cause has not been determined.

Airport demise tops 1975 events: mayor

By JOHN MONTGOMERY

STOUFFVILLE — In summing up the events of the past year Mayor Gordon Ratcliff mentioned the cancellation of the Pickering Airport as one of the most important, as far as affecting the future of Stouffville.

"The town rightly opposed the airport since it was first announced in 1972," he told The Tribune, "and obviously we were pleased to hear that it had been cancelled."

The mayor expressed confidence that the town's evidence at the airport inquiry "were considered by the powers that be, at least provincially."

The only unfinished business, according to Mr. Ratcliff, are the results of the ambient noise study. He felt the results of that study would provide valuable evidence if there was ever any attempt to revive the airport.

"I've discussed that airport so much that I've run out of words," he jokingly concluded.

"We have welcomed many new residents to the municipality during the past year," he said, "and many more will be coming into the Thicketwood subdivision in the beginning of the year."

Four new subdivisions were started during the year, he continued. These are: the extension of Felray, the Ratcliff subdivision, Thicketwood, and the Popovitch subdivision at Bloomington.

"The Planning Board has been quite active and have resolved to start the Official Plan consolidation in 1976," he explained.

He said the secondary plan for Ballantrae and Musselman's Lake is nearing completion with public meetings expected the latter part of January.

The mayor said he is quite pleased with the (see MAYOR, pg. 8)

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Adventure playground well advanced

The initial portion of the Ballantrae Public School adventure playground has been completed and as can be seen from this picture it is being made good use of. The sand lot, ringed with upended logs, has been completed and the rest of the playground equipment will be erected in the spring. It was originally estimated the project would cost \$3,000 but with donations of time and money it now seems the \$1,300 collected by selling shares will be sufficient. For the first phase the Bell Telephone dug the trench for the stockade, which was installed by parent and teacher volunteers and Dalton Hicks of Gormley Sand and Gravel donated over 200 tons of clean sand. The Home and School Association has been backing the adventure

playground and according to their presentation to the board of education, "because of busing, we have children with as much as two hours free time at school. These kids need something that will occupy their time constructively." The creative playground, which is suitable for climbing, sliding and balancing, avoids the stereotyped play provided by conventional playgrounds. Other items to be constructed include a pipe slide to be built onto the side of a mound of earth, a suspension bridge, spring seats made of car springs with rubber tires mounted on them, a tire alley for crawling through, climbing trestles and spring logs for bouncing on. A series of other pieces are to be built at a later stage. —John Montgomery.

Private day care to open soon

STOUFFVILLE — A private day care centre will open in town in February, if it receives a regional licence.

Sylvia Loftus, who is starting the centre, said she has been in contact with regional officials who told her there is no reason why she would be refused an operating licence.

The facility will move into the Christ Church on Sunset Blvd. and Mrs. Loftus is hoping for 34 full day students.

Mrs. Loftus, who has 15 years day care experience, was the supervisor of the Trillium Nursery in Markham. She told The Tribune that after making an unsuccessful bid to purchase that business she decided to open her own in Stouffville.

She said if the centre cannot get 34 full day students they would be willing to take some morning and afternoon students.

"I love children" is the reason she gave for opening the school.

She hopes to employ another qualified instructor, an assistant and a cook.

She said she would rather see children in day care "than pushed from one babysitter to another."

In spite of the poor response to the recent regional day care survey Mrs. Loftus is confident the service is needed.

Confidence is necessary as a considerable expenditure will be required to outfit the facility. The yard at the church must be fenced, canvass cots, bedding, toys and dishes will all have to be purchased.

Mrs. Loftus said she will save money by building some of

the toys and equipment herself. She hopes to construct painting easels, toy cupboards and some wooden toys.

She can't commit herself to applications until she receives her licence but she said she would be interested in hearing

from parents who need this service. Mrs. Loftus can be contacted at 640-2109.

Parents sending their children to private day care centres are still eligible for regional subsidy — if they qualify.

Planning board heaps praise on pit owner

STOUFFVILLE — In a rare change of pace planning board recently had words of praise for a gravel pit operator rather than criticism.

James Sabiston appeared with his attorney Don Hindson to ask the board's permission to expand his gravel pit onto the eastern half of his property at Bloomington Rd., and extending from Highway 48 almost to the 9th.

Mr. Hindson showed slides of the part of the property which has already been reclaimed and he told them the part they now want to excavate will be reclaimed within four years. He

said the topsoil would be kept for berms and then spread back over the land.

"This is probably one of the few gravel operations in the municipality that does this kind of a job," remarked Councillor Cathy Joyce and Councillor Merlyn Baker also commended Mr. Sabiston.

Planning Board are concerned as the eastern portion of the pit borders on the hamlet of Bloomington.

The board voted to allow the pit to operate as a non-conforming use as it was estimated it would take a year to get a re-zoning. A site plan agreement will be required.

Markham men arrested in theft

STOUFFVILLE — Two Markham men have been arrested and charged with stealing a Lincoln Continental from Grant Ford Mercury Sales on Main St.

On December 24 the car dealership was broken into and the car, along with some other property, was removed. Emerald Isle Motors was allegedly entered by the same pair.

According to York Regional Police the men dropped some of the goods off at their residence and then drove to Toronto.

They were stopped there

and one of the men was charged for impaired driving and for driving while under suspension.

Toronto police discovered the other man was wanted on a bench warrant by York Regional Police, for failing to appear in court on a charge of causing a disturbance.

Through an investigation by regional police it was learned the two were in possession of the stolen car and other articles from the car dealerships.

One of the men was discovered to be in possession of a quantity of marijuana.

Christmas day they were

transferred into the custody of York Regional Police.

Patrick Lindsay, 18, of the Markham Motel, has been charged with break, enter and theft, possession over \$200, possession under, failure to appear and possession of marijuana.

The other man, Roderick Jones, 20, also a resident of the Markham Motel, has been charged with break, enter and theft, possession over \$200, possession under, impaired driving and driving while under suspension.

Trustee Harry Bowes Fight goes on for school addition

STOUFFVILLE — Local trustee Harry Bowes termed provincial capital expenditure cutbacks, "a severe set-back to all our hard work," in a year end statement to The Tribune.

Mr. Bowes said that the reduction in provincial grants has effectively killed three projects in Stouffville. These include — renovations to Summitview Public School (ordered by the Ontario Fire Marshall's office in 1974), an addition to Orthard Park and the addition of a gymnasium and resource centre at Summitview.

"It is a difficult blow and we will have to work all the harder to achieve our aims and objectives," he said. "It seems to me that the Premier and the minister of education have abdicated their responsibility for equal educational opportunities for the children of Ontario."

"Anything not passed in sketch plans by Nov. 1, 1975 will be re-examined," the trustee said of the provincial government's move.

Mr. Bowes was critical of the way cuts are being affected in the education field. He suggested that the ministry has approved grants for things that are unnecessary.

He pointed to a recent decision by the York County Board of Education to hire a special co-ordinator for community use of schools. Mr. Bowes felt that the only reason the board hired such a person, was that a provincial grant is available to pay the salary.

The board is budgeting \$29,000 next year for a librarian and books for the professional library in the new administrative building. A French program will cost \$100,000 next

year and rise to \$300,000 in three years. Mr. Bowes felt these projects could have been delayed.

"That's the type of thing they should be cutting down on," he said.

Limiting the mill rate increase will not be easy and could well provide the biggest challenge for the board in 1976.

"I think it's going to mean a tightening up and re-evaluation of some of the programs that I have always felt were questionable," the Whitchurch-Stouffville trustee said.

He said that to hold a 10 per cent increase in the mill rate would mean cuts of greater than 10 per cent in the budget, as teachers salaries are fixed by contract.

Providence saves barn

STOUFFVILLE — It was only providence that saved the barn of Jake Grove Saturday night.

Mr. Grove and his wife were returning home and as they pulled into the driveway, Mr. Grove looked toward the barn and saw one corner on fire.

Mrs. Grove quickly called the Stouffville Fire Department which easily extinguished the blaze. A heat bulb, used to keep pipes from freezing, is believed to have caused the blaze.

"They were very lucky," it just burned off some boards," fire Chief Walt Smith said.

He estimated damage at \$400. The Grove farm is south of Stouffville Rd. on the 7th Con.

Provincial cuts could hit SS board

STOUFFVILLE — Reduction in provincial grants for capital expenditures in 1976 could have grave consequences for the York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board, board chairman Jack McDermott told The Tribune last week.

Mr. McDermott was one of a number of board chairmen from Ontario attending a meeting with Education Minister Thomas Wells in Toronto Dec. 18.

Grants for building (capital expenditures) will be cut from the 1975 figure of \$125 million to \$89 million next year.

Mr. McDermott expressed concern at the cuts because the York Region board is undergoing major expansion. It is one of six boards of education in the province experiencing significant growth.

He said that between September 1974 and September 1975, the YRCSB enrollment increased by 1,000 students bringing the total to about 6,800. This current school year, enrollment increase is estimated at about 800, Mr. McDermott said.

"Our worry is that we will have to build more schools," he said.



Earl Crowder, 58, skated 16 hours in the "skate-a-thon." He probably earned the most money, with 48 sponsors. Earl skated 17 hours last year but said he should be allowed to skate one hour less for each year older he gets. —Don Bernard.

Some of the big local stories of 1975

By DON BERNARD

STOUFFVILLE — At year's end we often look back on events of past 365 days and some of the milestones in our lives.

It is the same with a newspaper. Often looking back through the pages, one comes away with an impression that the year was one full of interesting and varied news.

And 1975 was a year of some big stories in The Tribune's readership area. Looking over them, one has the feeling that the one news story, the biggest of the year in our opinion,

dominates the others in significance.

The cancellation (postponement) of the Pickering airport made us feel we were part of an event that could have great historical significance.

The story itself bobbed to the surface early in 1975 when the government published the report of the Airport Inquiry Commission, headed by Justice Hugh Gibson.

The commission, not surprisingly, favored the Pickering airport, but opened a can of worms with a suggestion that Malton be expanded until the

full pickering project could be built. Hidden in the report's bowels was the suggestion that property in Claremont be expropriated and that property in Stouffville should be acquired by the government.

The report raised more questions than it answered and the People or Planes group took up the fight, now joined by the newly formed Save Stouffville Committee. A march along Stouffville's Main St. in February dramatized the opposition.

On Feb. 20, the federal cabinet decided to build the

Pickering airport, but with only one runway. Later the federal government agreed to fund an ambient noise study of Stouffville, to be conducted by noise expert Andrew S. Harris, whose evidence had been cited in the Gibson Commission report in relation to noise levels in Stouffville. He had been hired by the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville to present evidence at the commission hearings.

In the summer, the provincial government asked the federal government for a two-year delay in the airport to work out cost sharing for ser-

ving the airport. The federal government declined, and a group of local women vowed they would offer passive resistance if construction was begun on the airport.

Demolition work began on some of the houses and a confrontation was brewing. Then the provincial election intervened. The government of William Davis was returned with a minority and at the first cabinet meeting after the election, the decision was made to refuse to provide services for the airport.

The next day, Sept. 25, 1975, (see NEWS, pg. 3)