

Indian villages were common in Whitchurch

By JOHN MONTGOMERY
WHITCHURCH — Usually when one thinks of the pioneer settlements in the area now known as Whitchurch-Stouffville, names like Stouffer, Brillinger, Steckley, Lemon and a host of others, come to mind, but actually these families were relative latecomers.

It is estimated that more than 400 years before the first European settlers ever set foot in the area it provided a home for a large Indian population.

There were at least two large Indian villages, probably Algonquin, in the former Township of Whitchurch.

The best known site is on the east side of the 6th conc. road and just south of the Vandorf sideroad in lots 14 and 15. This property is now owned by Alf Ronneberger.

The second site is just east of Highway 48, on lot 9. This site, as well as the first mentioned, is under agricultural use. It is on Mayor Gordon Ratcliff's farm and is located just north of the road leading in to the town reservoir.

It seems the early pioneers had little respect for the Indian dead as much of the sites were excavated by curiosity seekers.

The site near the Vandorf Rd. has been examined by experts though. In 1918 the Royal Archeological Society conducted a dig there and submitted a report.

A quote from a 1944 edition of The Tribune, said "The early settlers examined it and spoke of it with superstitious awe, looking upon it as the abode of a wonderful people. It was then covered with bush, yet still showing the extensive clay elevations used for their palisades."

The village was described as a hill fort and is located on the highest piece of land in the area, on about seven and a half acres.

At the time of the 1918 report the sites of about a dozen bark houses could still be discerned. Darkened soil, intermixed with broken pottery and other artifacts, clearly indicated their location.

The village was apparently enclosed by a

trench and mound, now completely obliterated, which extended across the side of the hill.

According to the Whitchurch Township centennial book "the burying ground — was situated outside the trench on the north side — two thousand interments having taken place in the immediate spot."

The burials were made singly and "not in accordance with the usual custom of the Hurons of exposing their corpses until the flesh is eaten by birds or beasts of prey, and then interring the bones promiscuously in a pit. The position of the remains unearthed showed that the bodies had been laid down on the side with the knees drawn up towards the chin. Large numbers of these ghastly relics of mortality were dug up by the early settlers."

On the other side of the concession road, to the west, it is believed another large burying ground exists. This is supposed to be in the vicinity of the kettle lake.

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum is in possession of parts of an Indian skeleton that was unearthed in 1937, in lot 15 of the 5th conc. It is not known who unearthed this skeleton or under what circumstances.

In bygone years children collected artifacts from the site by merely walking through the field after it had been plowed. This past summer an anthropology student from Trent University spent some time collecting there.

Gordon Dibb, a Keswick resident, told The Tribune he picked up quite a number of articles which he intends on donating to the museum when he is through evaluating them.

According to Mr. Dibb the site was first noticed by farmers in the late 1850's.

The University of Toronto conducted a summer field school there in 1957 but Mr. Dibb said the site has never been systematically investigated.

There has been some speculation the village might have actually been inhabited by Iroquois rather than Algonquins as most people believe.

He said the site is located along a former

Indian trail that went right along the Holland River and was probably inhabited between 1450 and 1600 which puts it in the pre-historic class.

There is a large circular depression on the flat ground at the top of the hill which Mr. Dibb is interested in unearthing. He feels this would likely be either a midden (dump) or an ossuary, which is a common grave.

Mr. Dibb has found no human bones but he has discovered traces of bear, deer and beaver. He has picked up dice-like gaming discs, flint arrowheads, broken pots and pieces of clay pipes.

Although the site has been ravaged he feels it still would be quite valuable "as far as settlement data."

He said the site may have been abandoned because of intrusions from other tribes or because the fertility of the land had petered out. The tribe apparently depended on corn as well as hunting for their staples.

The 8th conc. village has never been investigated by archeologists but it was apparently a rich find for souvenir hunters.

According to the Whitchurch historical pamphlet the most grisly find was "a circular portion of a human skull, well worn, but in excellent preservation. It was perforated with seven holes, and had evidently been held as a trophy."

Among the artifacts removed were clay and stone pipes, animal teeth, polished and with holes bored through them, bone needles, and articles made from the shoulder blades of deer. These had six prongs about three inches in length.

According to the historical sketch "no graves have been discovered at the village, but a quarter of a mile or so distant — a pit containing many hundred Indian skeletons was found. This was opened about 1848, and large numbers of skulls and other remains removed."

Mayor Ratcliff told The Tribune that during the 1930's commercial sand and gravel was doing some excavation just west of the village and several skeletons were unearthed.

The mayor said that when these were discovered the ground was not disturbed anymore.

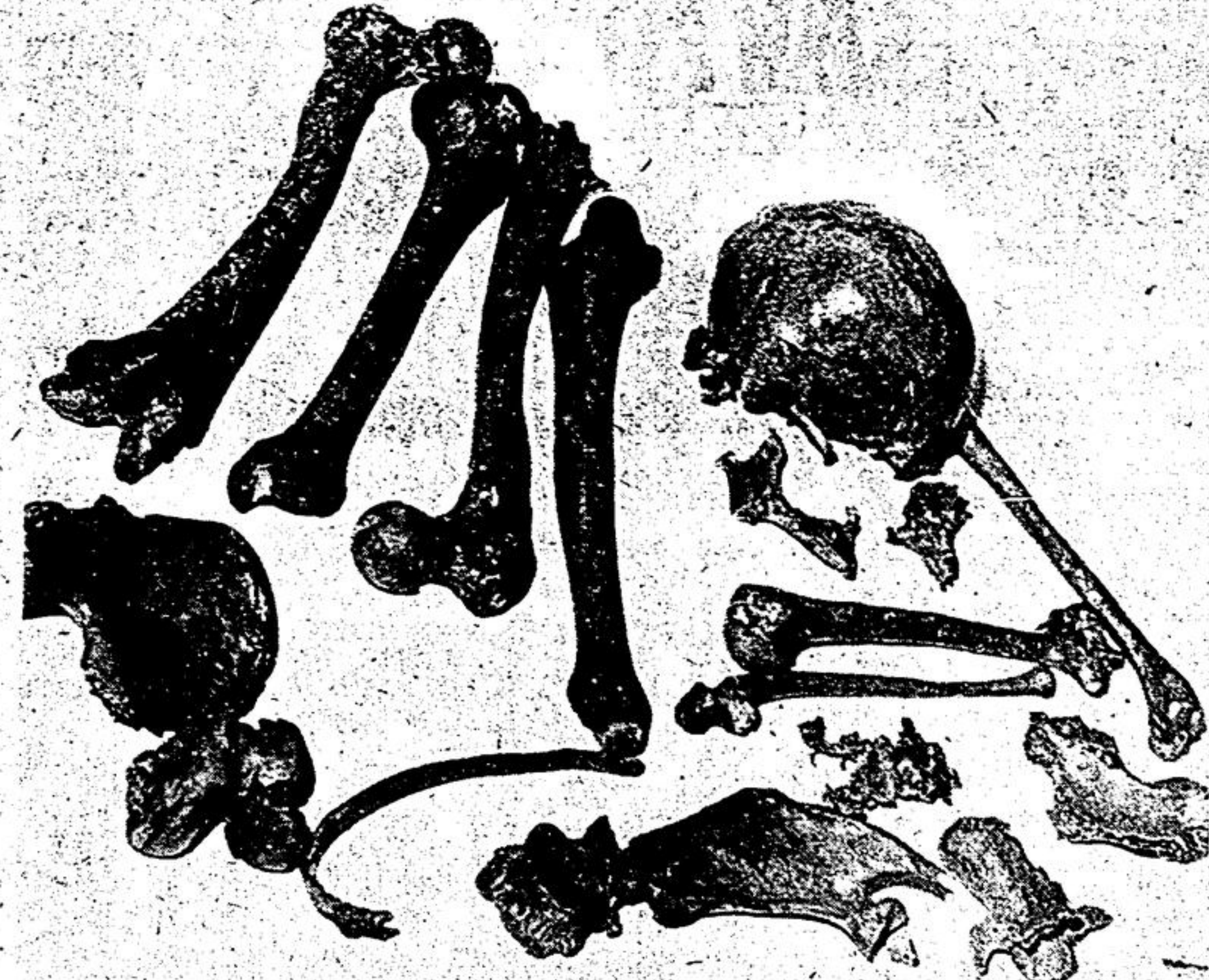
Of the rich trove of artifacts taken very little remains today. Only a few of the residents of the community are even aware of the locations of the villages.

For a short period, sometime between 1912-18, there was again an Indian settlement in the area.

Lambert Stouffer, a 71 year old life-long resident of the community, remembers the encampment.

He said that an Indian family by the name of Bigcanoe moved down from Lake Simcoe and lived north of Stouffville in what is now the flood control area.

They subsisted by selling baskets manufactured from strips of ash wood but only stayed for a few years before returning to Lake Simcoe.



These bones were unearthed in 1937 and now reside at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum. Early pioneers and later farmers disinterred many Indian remains but to our knowledge these are the only ones that have been preserved and are still in the neighborhood. —Ted Wilcox

'Milliken Mills' erased from regional report

YORK REGION — The name "Milliken Mills" will be deleted from a planning and engineering report to be submitted by York Region to the provincial government asking that the capacity of the "big pipe" servicing scheme be increased to accommodate the development.

The regional staff, in a report, stated that the proposed South-Central York Servicing Scheme (known as the Big Pipe) is "being designed to service a population of 416,000."

However, addition of proposed Ontario Housing Action Program developments would boost the projected regional population by 70,000.

Three major areas are designated in the regional submission to the province. As the report was presented, Dec. 30, the three major proposals would be — Milliken Mills (Kennedy Rd., north of Steeles), Thornhill-Vaughan and Pine Valley (adjacent to Woodbridge).

If developed, the three proposals could add 70,000 people to the regional total, bringing the number of people on the servicing scheme to 486,000.

Regional staff want the Big Pipe to be designed to accept the added population.

Markham Mayor Tony Roman stated that, "we're not disagreeing with what you are trying to do here. He merely stated that the name Milliken Mills not be used in the regional submission, nor should the name be marked on an accompanying sketch map."

He wanted the designation to be "Markham OHAP".

Planning Commissioner Murray Pound explained that the intent was not to recommend the population be increased to 486,000, but to allow for such a figure in construction of the big pipe.

Whichurch Stouffville Mayor Gordon Ratcliff questioned whether increased numbers in the servicing scheme might limit growth in the areas not serviced by the Big Pipe.

Mr. Pound assured the mayor that the proposal would not affect areas such as Stouffville.

Councillor Bob Adams felt that, "if we allow 80,000 people under OHAP, the region will never recover."

Newmarket Mayor Bob Forhan said that he was against the Milliken Mills proposal and that it had never been brought before regional council or any of its committees.

"I don't see why we have to insist on using the name," he said.

Mayor Roman said that the use of general names and less specific mapping would not affect the engineering aspect of the submission.

Finally, it was agreed to designate Milliken Mills as the Kennedy Rd. area and Pine Valley as Woodbridge area. The map was to be redrawn with the areas rounded and more symbolic.

Manager Roberts guides Clippers to victory, loss

STOUFFVILLE — With coach Don McBeth stranded in Jamaica, manager Ken Roberts took the helm of the Clipper ship and guided the team to a win and loss last week. Cobourg beat the Ken May Real Estate crew 7-4 Dec. 29 but the Clippers rebounded to

defeat Port Hope 8-5 on Saturday.

The Cobourg contest started like a barn-burner with both teams scoring twice during the first period. Goals by Kernaghan and Oliver were offset by an unassisted tally by Chris Clarridge and a goal by Kevin Barrick from Ted Assinck and Mike Wightman.

Things changed in period two as Cobourg scored five unanswered goals. Only two markers by Ted Assinck saved face for the Clippers.

Assinck has been on a scoring rampage of late, along with team mates Barrick and Andy Leitch. The Barrick - Assinck - Wightman line have developed into one of the league's finest.

Saturday's contest was a crowd-pleaser for the large crowd on hand at the 8-5 win. Dave Mumford scored twice for the Clippers with singles going to Andy Leitch, Mike Splonnick, Kevin Barrick, Chris Clarridge, Brad Hunt and Peter Fitzpatrick. Fitzpatrick

also collected four assists.

Contributing to the Clipper success have been Clarridge and Splonnick on defense as well as goaltenders Rick Harshman and Jack Holder.

The Clippers play in Lindsay tomorrow night and here Saturday, 8 p.m., in the game for the third place. Port Perry will be the visitors and currently lead by one point.

Stouffville plays Bowmanville here on Tuesday at 8 p.m.

New ski resort in Uxbridge area

MARKHAM — Former Markham residents, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Spademan, have opened a cross country ski area near Uxbridge.

The area offers eight kilometers of wooden trails to accommodate both novice and expert skiers.

The trails, called the Spademan-Tree Farm, are located north of the Durham County Road 21 on the W. Uxbridge's sixth concession.

Anyone wishing further information may contact 649-3044.

There are no rentals available.

Former P.M. writes of early Greenwood days

GREENWOOD — The early recollections of John G. Deffenbaker about the village of Greenwood are included in the first volume of the former prime minister's memoirs, "One Canada," recently published by MacMillan of Canada.

Here are some excerpts:

"Father in 1897 got a school in Greenwood, a most beautiful part of Ontario. There, I have

more in the way of recollections. Times were hard but not desperate. A look at the minutes of the school trustee meetings indicates that the very small salary paid to Father was often long overdue (firewood being supplied on occasion as part of the salary). Sometimes credit for the purchase of groceries would be provided at the local store by resolution of the school board.

"There were, however, many things to sustain us in the more difficult period of our life. In our home in Greenwood, as in all our subsequent homes, Bible reading and family prayer were daily and rewarding experiences. No meal was ever begun until grace had been said. On Sundays we went to church and Sunday School in Uxbridge.

"Our place in

Greenwood had a tremendous growth of lilacs and was most attractive every spring. I remember also that there was a hill by our house. It must have been a quarter of a mile long with a very sharp gradient. In winter, older boys went down it on double-deck sleds. I thought I could do this too. Down I went. All at once there loomed in front of me a team of horses pulling a milk cart. I passed between their front and hind legs, scraping the top of my head on the cart tongue. Had I raised my head, I could have been decapitated.

"Another recollection is that we children were very frightened of a most distinguished man, the greatest criminal lawyer of his time, T.C. Robinette. He came out on Sundays to visit his girl friend, Miss Green, whose father ran the store at the foot of the hill. We were frightened of him because we had heard that he defended men who had killed others. We thought he must be very wicked to do this. When, many years later, I was honored by being called to the bar of Upper Canada, his son the distinguished counsel, J.J. Robinette, Q.C., was Treasurer of the Upper Canada Law Society.

"I might add that I have raised strong objection to the government of Canada taking over the fine agricultural land and magnificent old homes of the Greenwood area for a new airport. The face of this countryside deserves to remain unspoiled.

—Don Bernard

Skating finals Jan. 14

STOUFFVILLE — Jan. 14 is the day Peter Mellon of Tindale Road takes part in the junior men's figure skating finals at London, Ontario.

Peter, 16, is a member of the Stouffville Figure Skating Club.

All-star girls' team loses in exhibition

STOUFFVILLE — An all-star girls' hockey team from Stouffville was defeated 5-2 in an encounter with Sharon all-stars last week.

Scoring a hat trick for Sharon was A. Clarke,

In closing league games Juveniles take a pair

STOUFFVILLE — The Stouffville juveniles have been closing their hockey season with some excitement, whipping Newcastle 4-3 on Dec. 23, and demolishing Pickering Village 9-2 on Dec. 30.

Two goals and an assist went to Dave Mumford in the Newcastle contest as Blair Emerson collected a goal and two assists. Ken Smith accounted for the other tally, with single assists going to Dave Middleton, Cam McKay and Bill Meakes.

Midget players Nazio

Three players short, bantams victorious

STOUFFVILLE — Being three men short seemed a definite advantage to the bantam A hockey club last week as they defeated two teams they had never beaten before.

The local lads produced a solid team effort in downing Port Perry 4-3 here on Friday as Ted Waite, Gary Carr, Kelly Burrows and Dave Raymer tallied. Richard Bartley played a sound game in goal.

Once more short players at Uxbridge on Sunday, Stouffville came out on top by a 4-3 score again. Team work and hard-checking was evident in each team.

Brent Nichols, Dave

Final games for peewees

STOUFFVILLE — With just three league contests remaining, the Birkett-Hassard peewees lead their Lakeshore B league rivals with a 10-1 record.

Leading the team are goaltenders Mike Rehill and Kevin Berry and, in the scoring department, Robert Gierkink.

The peewees play tonight at the arena against Uxbridge, starting 7 p.m.



A large number of enthusiastic young people took part in the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association skate-a-thon recently. While the amount of money collected has not been announced, a number of skaters finished the gruelling 24 hours. The oldest skater, Earl Crowder, completed 17 hours and likely earned the most money of all the skaters. —Don Bernard

In SDSS basketball

Triple-header

STOUFFVILLE — A triple-header basketball evening against Huron Heights Secondary School of Aurora takes place tomorrow at SDSS.

The midget boys' team plays at 6 p.m., with junior and senior games following at about 7:15 and 8:30 p.m.

Coach Jim Rehill predicts the games will be close. "We can't afford to lose any," he added.