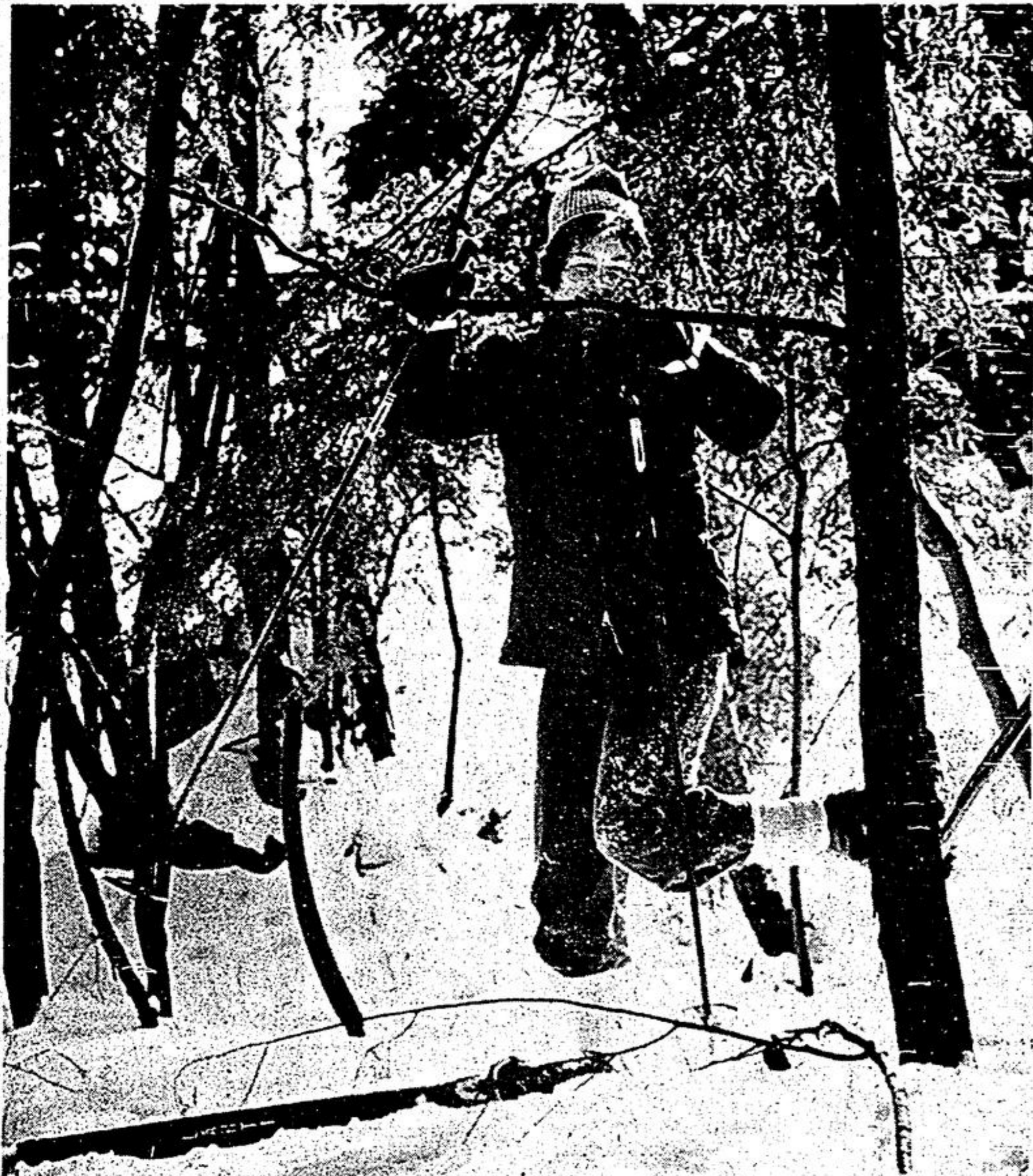


Winter fun at Bruce's Mill



Although a skilled cross-country skier can make the sport look ridiculously easy it can occasionally cause a few difficulties for

the novice. This lady, who shall remain anonymous, came out second best in her encounter with a tree. — John Montgomery.



A great deal of the attraction of cross-country skiing derives from the quiet enjoyment of the open countryside. This idyllic picture portrays a mood that is nearly impossible to capture with most other winter sport.

The several trails through Bruce's Mill offer several options and give people an opportunity to avoid contact with other people.



Lisa Merbs of Toronto is shown here cross-country skiing at Bruce's Mill Conservation Area. The prohibitive cost and dreadful lineups at ski resorts have helped

make cross-country skiing an increasingly popular alternative to down-hill skiing. The local conservation areas are open for this purpose.

Former councillor appears

Local pit control his concern

UXBRIDGE — This township should retain control of deciding how and where gravel should be mined within its borders, council was told last week.

Former Uxbridge councillor Clark Muirhead said in a deputation that drafts of the regional official plan, as they now stand, would place the power over gravel mining in the

hands of a regional body. He said the philosophy behind the draft plan is "If there's gravel there, mine it."

Mr. Muirhead added that because of their experience and closeness to the issues involved, council should fight to retain control over the gravel industry.

Councillor Bill Ballinger, a regional

planning and development committee member, disagreed, saying some of the measures governing the aggregate industry "might not even go through because they are too tough."

He said there was no sense in passing restrictive measures if they would only be overruled by the province.

Mr. Muirhead also questioned the whole criteria for mining gravel from Uxbridge, for Toronto uses. "The fact that the resource is there — is no justification for destroying the landscape," he said.

Uxbridge mayor chairs committee

DURHAM REGION — Among appointments made Wednesday, Uxbridge Mayor Carl Puterbaugh was named to be chairman of the regional public works committee.

Pickering Mayor George Ashe will continue as finance chairman.

Uxbridge regional councillor Bill Ballinger will continue with the planning committee, while Pickering's Jack Anderson will serve on the public works and the police commission.

Elected by council to the Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority were Mr. Anderson, Mr. Ashe and Mr. Ballinger among others.

Interest write off request

Board says charges stand

AURORA — Aurora's request to write off a \$2,815 interest charge for late payment of its educational levy was rejected by the York Region public school board Monday night.

Since the town was assessed the interest as the result of delays in striking the 1975 mill rate, council argued the penalty for interest should be forgiven.

But Newmarket trustee Craig Cribar noted that only Markham and Aurora had failed to either pay on time or, when they did pay late, assumed the interest payment.

"If somebody paid it on time, somebody had it

on time," said the Newmarket trustee. "If they had it on time, how could they blame us."

The school board must assume responsibility for the problem, said Aurora trustee Norm Weller.

"This board has created the problem because we were late," he noted.

The board's failure to act on the Aurora request could create difficulty in the future, he warned.

Mr. Weller said several municipalities are considering distributing special bills if the board levy is late.

The cost of the added billing and collection will be levied against the board, he said.

Education director Sam Chapman said municipalities have historically held the edge when it comes to education tax.

Under provincial legislation, municipalities collect education tax throughout the year but only turn

over the money to the board at specific times during the year, he said.

While a homeowner is assessed a penalty for late payment of his educational taxes, the penalty is not turned over to the board, Mr. Chapman added.

"They get the advantage of tens of thousands of dollars as a result of the cash flow arrangement the law sets up," he explained.

The board approved maintaining its established policy and asking Aurora to meet the requested payment. Mr. Weller, Markham trustee Chris McMonagle and East Gwillimbury trustee Joy Horton opposed the motion.

Concert series set for Latcham Hall

STOUFFVILLE — The first of a series of Winter Night Concerts will be held this coming Friday (Jan. 16) at Latcham Hall.

According to a poster put up by the organizers, "The Winter Nights Concert Series has been organized to bring to the Stouffville area some of the finest established and emerging Canadian musical talent."

This week's concert is by Bruce Miller, who is

Man badly burned by exploding gas

STOUFFVILLE — Howard Ratcliff, owner of Ratcliff Industrial Lumber, was badly burned Jan. 8 when a gas can exploded.

The accident occurred at the Ratcliff yard on the Stouffville Rd. at the 6th Conc. Because of the cold weather gasoline was being used to start one of the trucks.

A spark ignited the gas. The driver, tossed the flaming can away and it hit Mr. Ratcliff, who was walking nearby. The fire was extinguished with snow, but not before Mr. Ratcliff received severe burn on his face.

Heavy clothing and mitts prevented burns to other parts of his body. Another man, Jack Quinn of Richmond Hill was also burned, but not seriously.

Mr. Ratcliff was rushed to Scarborough Centenary Hospital. According to his wife, the burns were not as deep as first feared, and he "really is coming along," she said Tuesday.

Tools, furniture, barn destroyed by blaze

PICKERING — Over \$100,000 worth of tools and finished wooden furniture was destroyed Saturday afternoon in a blaze that razed a barn on the Markham — Pickering Town Line.

The barn, on the former Norman Reesor farm, had been expropriated for the Pickering airport. Tenant Raymond Cowan had been operating a small wood-working factory in the barn.

Mr. Cowan said that he was having lunch in the house when his helper came in to say the barn was on fire. They tried to put it out but it, "flashed and away it went!"

Markham and Clarendon firefighters attended.

Mr. Cowan said that his fully-equipped workshop was completely destroyed, including power tools, as well as over \$10,000 worth of finished furniture ready to be shipped.

There was no insurance on the contents.

The factory manufactured pine furniture such as tables, chairs, hutches, and rolling pin beds.

Cause was a furnace backfire.

Metro expansion north only at York's request: McKeough

BARRIE — Any boundary north into York Region will come only at the request of the region, Darcy McKeough, Ontario Treasurer and Minister of Economics

and Intergovernmental affairs said here last week.

— would form a more natural political boundary.

Durham officials see Barrie trip as 'joke'

BARRIE — A special trip here by Durham Region officials to meet with provincial representatives about spending guidelines has been termed a "joke" and "a total waste of time" by some of those attending.

Uxbridge Councillor Bill Ballinger said that it was "highly political meeting" with little opportunity to ask provincial officials specific questions.

In Pickering councillor Jack Anderson's view, "nothing came out of it, really" that was not known already.

Ontario Treasurer Darcy McKeough and Education Minister Thomas Wells made presentations to the delegates, among others.

The province announced they planned to increase their assistance to local governments by no more than eight per cent, or \$230 million in 1976.

The minister's statements came during a press conference following a meeting between school board and municipal officials from York and three other counties and regions.

"We've made it clear that the boundaries stay the same," Mr. McKeough replied when asked about Metro growth into York. He noted, however, that government policy can change.

The provincial official was asked if the Parkway Belt — a greenbelt utilities transportation and no-growth corridor along Highway 7

— "Certainly there's been some thinking that the Parkway Belt might form a better boundary," he said, "but I think Mr. Davis is on the record as opposed."

Noting that the Roberts Commission on Metro Toronto has considered Metro expansion into York, Mr. McKeough said, "I think it would only happen at the request of York."

"I wouldn't want to go publicly on the record as disagreeing with a former premier of Ontario on a report that hasn't been made public yet," he said.

Political leverage over solid waste

PICKERING — Some municipalities would like the region to take over the handling of all solid wastes as well.

"There is no advantage to us of a regional sewer rate," Mr. Anderson said, "unless we don't lose our present solid agreements."

He pointed out that without support from Pickering and Ajax, the regional sewer rate would have little chance of being passed.

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