

For metro mounted force

## Police horses trained by local men

By Annegret Lamure  
To qualify, the new recruit has to be tall, have black or brown hair, a gentle disposition, and most important of all, possess a kind eye.

"You can always tell by the eyes," explained Constable Andy Currie as he laid an affectionate hand on one of his newer charges and pointed out the kind brown eyes. Andy, a Stouffville resident, is one of several local people working for the Metro Toronto Police Mounted Division at Exhibition Park. His job is to make police mounts out of ordinary horses, a long and demanding process which Andy described with great enthusiasm.

"What we're trying to turn out is a professional product, just like a major league hockey player," he said while stroking the big black, "but of course there is no room for individualism, each horse has to respond in exactly the same way."

Horses chosen for police training are

usually Hackney and Clyde or Percheron crossbreeds between two and six years old. Since many of them are green horses that are only halter broken, Andy has his job cut out for him. "A halter broken remount (new horse) has about as much training as a dog on a leash," he commented.

Each new horse is issued a serial number, a stall and its own kit. One of the first things the horse has to get used to is the bit. "You have to convince the horse to open his mouth," grinned Andy. Like all other aspects of training, this is accomplished with much patience and gentleness.

"We baby them at first, give them affection, try to give them confidence," explained Andy, "they've got to be trained to be gentle, not aggressive." A horse that shows signs of being vicious or high strung will be weeded out.

After the horse gets used to the bit, it is introduced to the breaking harness and, at about the

same time, will get a police haircut. "All the horse get regulation and haircuts, just like policemen," Andy said, as he guided the buzzing shaver gently down the legs of a trembling new horse. No feathers or manes are left unclipped, although the forelock will be spared for a while. "That is so he doesn't feel naked" joked Constable Don Vincent. Don, a Goodwood resident, was holding the horse's head and stroking him reassuringly with his finger while Andy clipped on. Both men watched the big fellow carefully for signs of panic and were pleased when their ministrations calmly.

Like everything else about the animal, this behavior would be carefully noted in his file. After roughly three months of basic training, the new mounts are evaluated and, if accepted into the force, will have their forelock, the identifying mark of a trainee, clipped off. Schooling at this

point is far from finished. Although the horse is now used to the army, or universal two sets of reins, the double bit, and basic commands, he still has to become accustomed to all noisy and alarming things that are a normal part of a police horse's life. At first, like any rookie policeman, the horse will be accompanied by another with more experience.

"It takes about a year for the animal to get reliable in the street," said Don, "you'd be amazed at what'll scare them. A horse will go past 20 manhole covers and then panic at the twenty-first." He explained that streetcars are another problem. "They're the noisiest dang things — and then suddenly the doors fly open."

However, although a horse may be badly frightened, visions of panic stricken horses breaking wild in the streets are unfounded. A mounted constable has no trouble controlling and calming his terror stricken charge, thanks

to judicious use of the curb bit. After a horse finishes training, it is assigned to a variety of duties such as crowd control, park patrol, or perhaps, a stint at City Hall Square.

A police horse can control a crowd simply by edging sideways and gently nudging demonstrators back. One man on horseback is worth 10 on foot in large crowds.

Andy was quick to emphasize that the horses are never aggressive. All police mounts are constantly handled and patted during their training so that they get used to being touched and won't lash out in surprise. "We keep them docile. We don't try to make a riot out of a peaceful demonstration," he said.

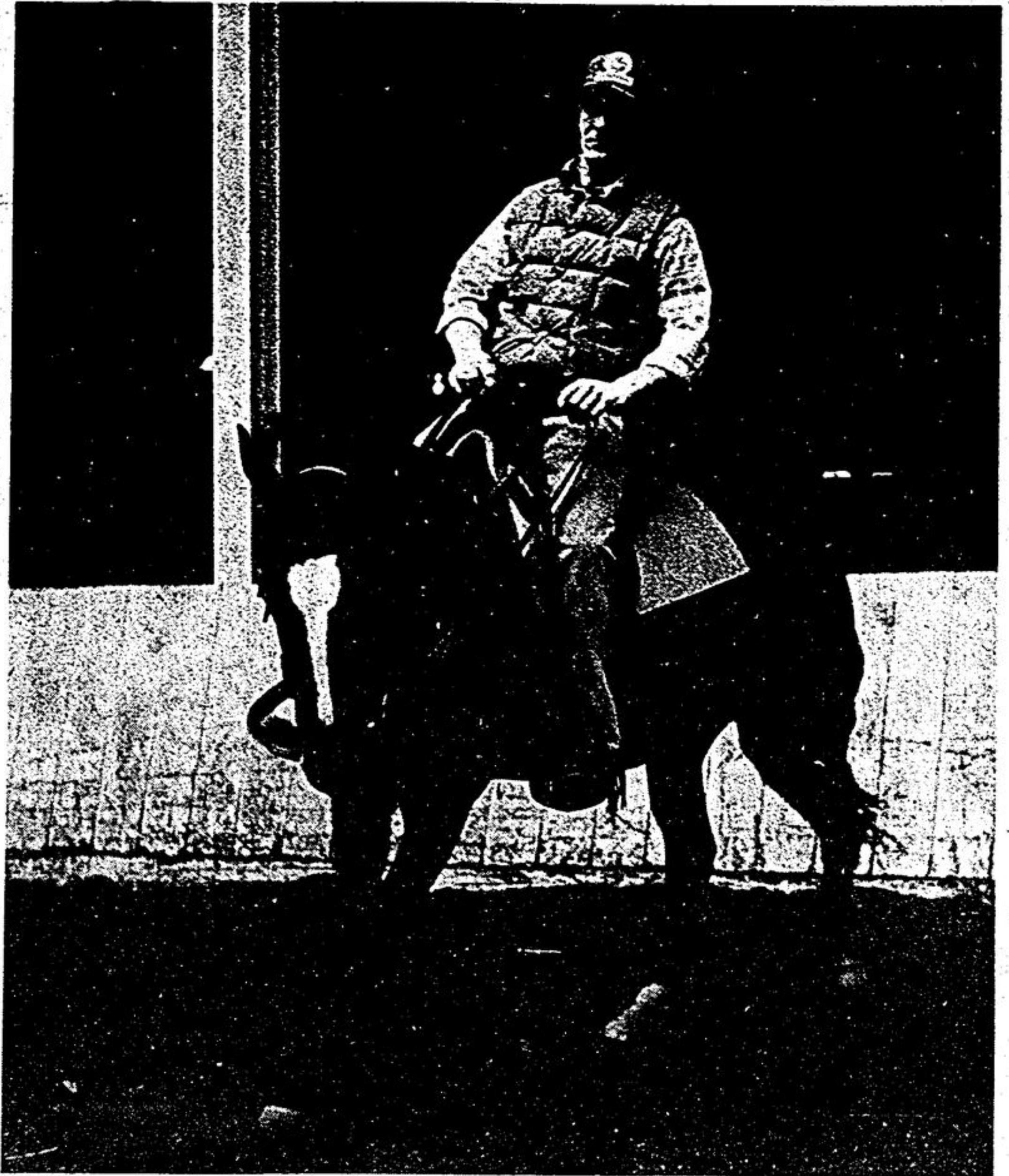
Andy feels that the most useful role a police horse plays is probably one of catalyst between police and public, a view shared by other members of the force.

"People can start asking you about your horse and then gradually

get around to what they really want to talk about," said Constable Bert McKewen, a Mt. Albert resident who fully uniformed in fur hat and flowing tunic looked most impressive seated on his steed. "They ask questions they think are too minor to go to the police station about."

Bert especially enjoys his stints in the Civic Square. "People from all over the world talk to you," he said, "they come from Hong Kong, Mexico — all over. And of course you get people bringing their kids to pet the horse. To them at first it's a big frightening animal, but they can see that it's not going to hurt them." Bert recalls a few cases though, where the kids were not exactly fearful. "Kids sometimes go right under the horse," he explained with an incredulous shake of his sandy head, "and some even try to swing on the tail." When that happens you hold your breath and sort of ask quietly "Whose child is this?"

He also remembers a little Chinese girl who wrapped her arms affectionately around the horse's back legs. "One wrong move, and the kid could have gone flying across the square," he said, shaking his head. "In a case like that you just thank God you got a quiet horse."



Dolly, a young horse in training to become a police mount, is still a little skittish, but Don Vincent, a Goodwood resident, has her well in

hand. The hard working pair was photographed at the Metropolitan Toronto Police Stables in the Exhibition grounds.



Prospective ball players for this year's Stouffville Juvenile team were out on the field last Saturday, loosening up their muscles and getting back into shape. The two players above are going through some of the exercises that took place in this first practice. This year's Juvenile team

should do very well, as it is basically from the same Midget boys team that had such a successful year last season. Also both coaches Gerry Ratcliff and Peter Sanderson are back at helm.

## Last chance for ball in Claremont

Claremont's softball organizers have taken a cue from Stouffville and have put their foot down on late registers.

Mary Borland, one of the organizers, com-

mented that there has been a good response for house league, but things are lacking quite a bit in the all stars teams.

She says those who want to play all star have

until this Saturday, April 22 to contact Mary and register. After that it's too late, and no-one will be allowed in.

Mary stated that very few Bantam and Midget

boys have signed up, and that there is also a lack of Bantam and Juvenile girls.

She's hoping that players will realize this is their last chance, and if

they really want to play they'll get out and register.

To register, call Mary at 649-2047 any time during the day.

## Pete Sanderson to coach

There will be a familiar and welcome face behind the bench of this year's new Stouffville boys Juvenile team, that of Peter Sanderson.

Peter, a well-known sports figure in town, left Stouffville last year to take a teaching position at Fenelon Falls.

However, he'll be back this summer helping coach Stouffville's entry

in the North York Juvenile League.

Peter, along with co-coach Gerry Ratcliff, will take what is basically the same Midget team they coached last year and pit them against North Bendale, Bramalea, Don Mills, Amesbury, Bay Ridges, and Willowdale.

Both Peter and Gerry are optimistic about the coming year, partly due to the enthusiasm shown by the numerous players

**Summer bowl**

The summer bowling leagues are still looking for bowlers. Anyone interested can sign up anytime at the Stouffville Bowling Centre.

that showed up for the first practice last Saturday.

And partly because of last year's highly successful season with the Midgets, as the boys now

move up to Juvenile age.

The team, which will once again feature star pitcher Jim Chilvers and catcher Rob McBeth, will be entering the Sarnia tournament later this

year, that same tourney that they won last year as Midgets.

The next practice for the team is this Sunday, April 23 at 1 p.m. in the town park.

### High school champs

## Sheffields win again

It seems there is no stopping the Sheffield family when it comes to judo awards, as they proved that once again last week.

Their latest victories came at the Ontario High School championships, held last week in Peterborough. And along with the Sheffield's ac-

complishments, a number of judo students from SDSS also placed well.

For the Sheffields, it was Cathy taking first place in the black belt division, and Karen winning the brown belt heavyweight class. The other Sheffield, Steven, was top in his brown belt under 132-lb class.

The performance of the SDSS students, who were coached by Karen and Steven, was highlighted by Gyl Langley, who won in the white yellow division.

Two other students, Carolyn Carr and Karen Newman, were competing in their first tourney. Carolyn placed second in the white yellow lightweight, and Karen also placed second, in her

white yellow heavyweight class.

The next stop for the Sheffields is this weekend as they travel to Webster, New York, for the New York state championship.

### Hockey meeting

Tonight (Thursday) at 7:30 p.m. the Whitchurch Stouffville Minor Hockey Association takes over Latcham Hall for their annual meeting.

The meeting will deal with the election of officers and any amendment proposals to the constitution. If you haven't got your proposals in by now, it's too late.

## CRM win consolation in Novice house play

In final Novice house league play CRM knocked off Kinsmen to win the consolation trophy.

That win pitted CRM against the champion Commercial Sand and Gravel in the final game of the season. The exhibition match saw the Commercial team down CRM 3-1.

Commercial goals

came from Sean Wynn, two, and Jerry Shields. CRM's lone goal was scored by Jamie Leighton, with Jeff Byner and Ben Holiday getting the assists.

In Atom house league it was Cards Hardware winning their championship, beating the Firemen team in two out of three games.

### Baseball tryouts

Any girls aged 16 and over who want to play baseball for the Stouffville Intermediate ladies' team please be at the main park on Monday, May 1st at 7 p.m., or contact 640-3905.

## Figure skating results

Test results from the Stouffville Figure Skating club last week are as follows:

Preliminary Figure: Tanja Gunor, Maureen

Ferguson, Debra Gold, Denise Lamure.

1st Figure: Stacey Lintner.

Dutch Waltz: Paula Harding, Cindy McNeil.

Jinna Findlay, Elizabeth Tosney, Debra Gold, Kerri Wynn, Lisa Lamure, Charmaine Lintner, Linda Hackey.

Canasta: Charmaine Lintner, Jinna Findlay, Kerri Wynn, Jane Tosney, Maureen Ferguson, Ruth Thorne. Swing: Denise Lamure.

Ten Fox: Roni Marie Price.

Willow: Roni Marie Price.

Fiesta: Roni Marie Price.

Europena Waltz: Barbara Van Maris.

Jr. Bronze: Free Style: Julie Malanchuk, Mary Catherine McDermott, Cheryl Simpson.

The executive of the skating club would like to thank the arena staff for their co-operation and patience during these test days and for the use of their facilities.

## Aurora teams to go overseas

Alfons Rubbens, past-president of the Stouffville soccer league, is now preparing to send Aurora's Mosquito and Pee-wee teams to Scotland and England this July.

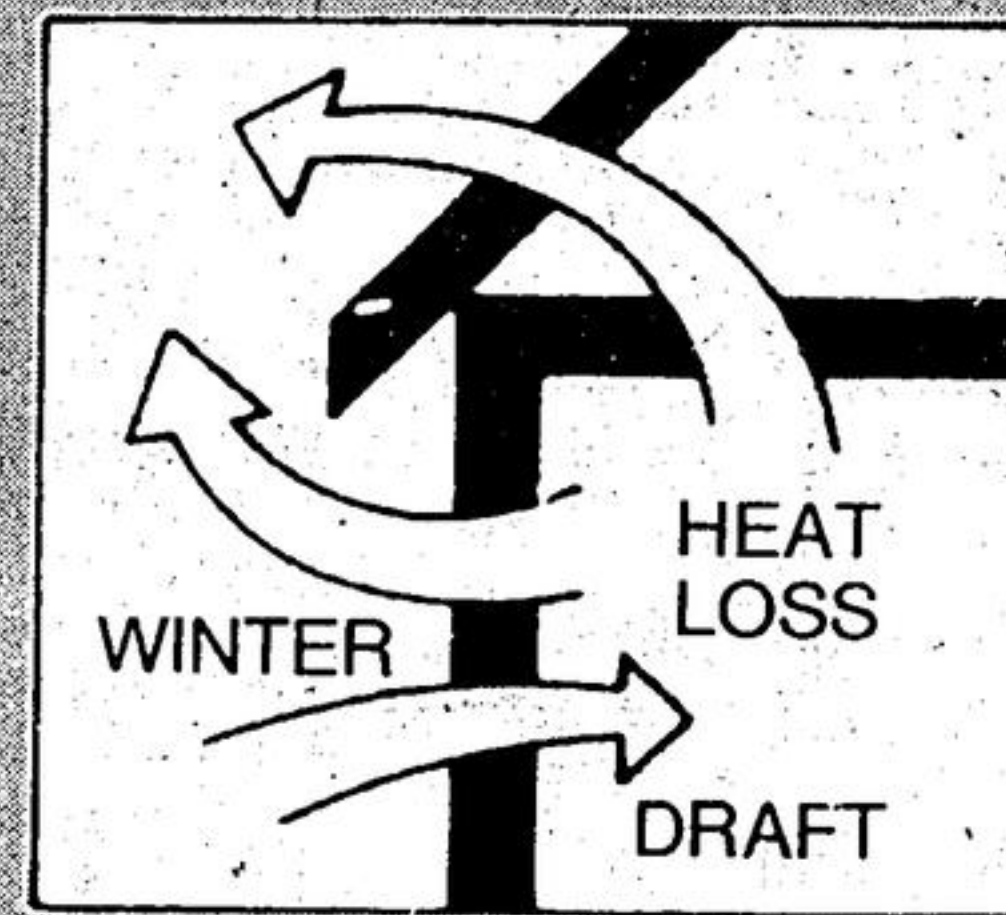
Mr. Rubbens, tournament director of the excursion, has been involved with the Aurora soccer league for numerous years before starting Stouffville's own league.

The clubs will be holding many dances and raffles to finance the trip, and they are also offering the official full colour Scottish World Cup team poster.

The posters have been donated by Wadlington's Subuteo of Bramalea. The cost is \$3 including postage and handling and can be obtained from Aurora Youth Soccer Club, c/o Alfons Rubbens, R.R. 3, Newmarket, L3Y4W1.

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