



In and out of prison and penitentiary since 1958, Bob Neilson of Stouffville, stands a free man. His parole period ends in August with a total

pardon in five years. He wants to manage a "half-way house" for boys, a project, he feels is badly needed in the Stouffville area.

—Jim Thomas.

"Half-way house" is needed in town claims ex-convict

By JIM THOMAS
STOUFFVILLE — A "half-way house" is needed in Stouffville; a place where teenage boys who've run afoul of the law, can go for help and eventual rehabilitation.

The advice comes from one who's been "all the way and back". Bob Neilson, currently on parole from Kingston Pen, would like to see one of the local service clubs "start the ball rolling" towards such a project. He'd gladly manage the program when suitable accommodation is found.

Bob Neilson, in and out of prison and reformatory "for more years than I care to remember", says too many 17 and 18 year olds are shunted off to penitentiary, then returned to society, far worse than when they went in.

"I know what goes on there—

I've seen it all," he said in an exclusive interview.

Every boy, he says, reaches a point in life where he can turn away from wrong-doing and get on track or continue breaking the law until there's no turning back.

A "half-way house" could provide a worthwhile purpose through volunteer work programs, group meetings and professional counselling, Mr. Neilson says.

While self-supporting for the most part, it would have to involve the total community and even beyond, extending as far distant as Newmarket, Aurora, Unionville and Markham.

Bob Neilson doesn't buy the argument that environment turns kids to crime. "That's a cop-out," he said. He uses his own background as an example—

—a good home and three square meals a day.

"But I wanted it my way—quick money, fancy clothes, the whole bit"; the end result, a broken marriage, years behind bars and five children he seldom sees.

Bob Neilson isn't bitter. In fact, he readily admits he has only himself to blame. Still, he feels the system's wrong and must be changed. He's confident that, if given the chance, he can help change it; and Stouffville is a good place to start.

Landfill site legal

Garbage battle lost stresses Town mayor

STOUFFVILLE — York Sanitation's government-licensed landfill site is located in Whitchurch-Stouffville and Mayor Eldred feels the Town should use it.

The mayor re-affirmed his position at a press meeting, Friday.

"I refuse to become emotional," he stated firmly, "I deal in logic."

At present, all garbage collected here (6,000 tons a year), is trucked out of the municipality. He feels this could be costing the Town \$12,000 annually.

Mayor King agrees an application may be received to expand the site. This will result

in another hearing. In his opinion, the Town's position will, in no way be jeopardized by using the facility.

"We lost the battle and they'll expand for their benefit, not ours," he stressed.

Mayor King said he had attended a meeting of the POWR organization (Protect Our Water Resources), Jan. 24 and while interested in what people had to say, he was concerned that newcomers, in attendance for a first time, might have gone away with the wrong impression.

"At the present time, that operation is a legally licensed use and we have every right to use it too," he concluded.

Penitentiary - a "hell on earth"

By JIM THOMAS
STOUFFVILLE — "Hell-hole of the world". That's Bob Neilson's description of Millhaven Penitentiary.

The convicted bank robber, now out on parole and living near Stouffville, says no words

can correctly describe conditions there.

"You can cut the tension with a knife," he said, adding that Kingston Pen isn't much better.

It was back in 1958, over 20 years ago, that Bob Neilson, now 44, was convicted by

Magistrate O.S. Hollinrake in Newmarket Court. He's been in and out of prisons ever since.

Handsome and clean-cut, despite his ordeal, he talks freely about past experiences.

At Millhaven, two high walls circle the compound with guards on constant patrol. German Shepherd dogs, some weighing as much as 130 pounds run between. There's little personal contact with anyone.

"That I survived was a miracle—it was hell," he said.

At Kingston, convicts include murderers, rapists and those he described as "crazy people". "Look at someone crossways and you're liable to get a steel pipe across the head". It wasn't uncommon for someone to be stabbed in the back while attending a movie, he said.

Bob Neilson's start down the "wrong road" began when he issued a phony cheque for a gallon of paint. "It was all so easy. I failed to consider the consequences".

Although he has some harsh things to say about officials on the inside, he retains the greatest respect for police. "They're our best friends. I'm responsible for what happened to me. The officer only did his job and did it well".

Bob Neilson was released

from custody, Dec. 22 and firmly states he's never going back. His parole period ends in August with a total pardon in five years' time.

"Freedom," he said, "while often taken for granted, is the greatest thing we have".

For parolee

Starts new life

STOUFFVILLE — "Give me a chance". That's what 44 year old Bob Neilson's asking of the people of Whitchurch-Stouffville—a chance to prove he's a new man, anxious to start a new life.

The one-time bank robber, now on parole, is looking for work. But to date, with the exception of one day's employment since Dec. 22, all doors have been closed.

"I'm honest about my past because sooner or later they'd find out anyway. But they look at me and wonder what's my game," he said.

Bob Neilson's certain there's work available. He says money is secondary. "I just want to be happy".

The Stouffville man says he's made welcome when applying for positions. "But it's surprising how fast the doors close when I tell them where I've been".

Municipal employees receive wage hikes

STOUFFVILLE — With the Anti-Inflation Board no longer wielding an influence over wages, some Town municipal employees benefitted through increased salaries, Mayor Eldred King told The Tribune this week.

Without revealing specific figures, he said "the top got less and the bottom got more". A hike of nine per cent was mentioned, but with certain staff people, re-classification was a consideration. The same policy held true for those in the

Public Utilities Commission, the mayor said.

Mayor King pointed out that several new people on staff, started in at a low wage level and were held there due to A.I.B. regulations. This year, with the controls off, these employees were raised to a standard that seemed fair, the mayor explained.

Nab fraud suspect

STOUFFVILLE — On Dec. 15, a man entered the Stouffville Branch of the Toronto Dominion Bank and made a deposit of \$20.

Three days later, two cheques were cashed, one for \$184.60 and another for \$198.45.

Both were later returned, marked "signature irregular".

At the Bank of Nova Scotia Branch in Oak Ridges cheques totalling \$393.10 were deposited. Later, a withdrawal in the amount of \$293.10 was made.

This cheque, like the two in Stouffville, was sent back marked "signature irregular".

On Jan. 26, following intensive police investigation, James Edward Turner, 21 of Marybay Crescent, Richmond Hill, was arrested. A warrant has been issued for an accomplice.

Lake home destroyed

MUSS LAKE — An early-morning fire, Tuesday, the second on Mitchell Drive in little more than a week, destroyed a single-storey home owned by Dean Falgman, Stouffville, RR 2.

The lone occupant of the residence escaped the flames wearing only pants and a T-shirt. When fireman arrived, he was standing bare-footed in the snow.

"It was an inferno when we got there," Chief Walter Smith told The Tribune. Falgman, he said, was lucky to get out.

Although the walls were left standing, the interior was gutted. Chief Smith said he understood the owner had gone to live with his father in Newmarket.



"Progress" levels another Town landmark

Brierbush Hospital, a Stouffville landmark almost one hundred years, has been demolished to make way for a residential subdivision at the site. The hospital was first opened by E.R. Good and

later operated by Ella Malcolm. Previous to that, it was the residence of village reeve, R.P. Coulson and councillor A.J. Ward.

—Jim Thomas

Build-up premature says Region-Town

STOUFFVILLE — A 128-unit, single-family subdivision, proposed for a 26 acre site on the west side of the Ninth Line, south of Main Street, has been turned down by the Region of York.

Their rejection coincides with a decision handed down earlier by the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Lack of adequate water and sewage capacities were given as main reasons for not supporting the draft plan application.

Ownership of the property is claimed by Ronald Femson, Bayview Avenue, Thornhill. An extension of Sunset Boulevard was to serve as an exit-entrance to the development.

Commenting on the decision, Mayor Eldred King said the Dulverton Subdivision is a priority project in town and must be dealt with first. He said that undoubtedly the time would come when the proposal would be considered in a more favorable light. That time, however, isn't yet.

Hip-high waders required by bride

YORK REGION — "The bride was radiant in a white satin gown that was caught up at the waist and tucked neatly inside a pair of hip-high rubber boots".

Such a description could have been applied to a wedding ceremony planned for the courthouse, last week, in Newmarket.

However, Justice of the Peace Ivan Bates refused to put the couple through that kind of ordeal. He shuffled the party over to another section of the building.

Why? Because the floor of his office was under water.

The J.P. didn't shift the proceedings without a fight, however. He continued to do a mop-up almost to knot-tying time, then gave up in disgust.

The source of the water supply was from the roof. Not only was his office inundated by the continuous drip, but others below as well. The flow trickled down through a light fixture. It also flowed down the stairs into the cell block, prompting one

prisoner to comment wryly, "I hope you can swim".

The scene was a repeat of last year that saw employees dodging around pails, placed at strategic locations.

Although construction on the new courthouse is underway, it's not likely to be completed for at least twelve months.

In the meantime, young couples, prisoners and the general public, utilizing this facility, are advised to dress in keeping with conditions.

Cable Tech Company threatened by strike

STOUFFVILLE — Strike action looms at the Stouffville plant of Cable Tech Wire Co. Ltd., 500 Main Street West.

At a recent vote of inside factory workers, 90 per cent are said to have favored a walk-out if management refuses their demands to bring in a union.

Dom Martino, an employee with the firm for three years, said he's been trying to get the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (Local 1590) into the plant since last May, without success. Three other attempts met with the same result, he stated.

The workers, The Tribune was told, have applied for conciliation, which means the company has 16 days from the date written on the official document, to begin negotiations. If it doesn't, employees will take another strike vote and act on the outcome.

According to Martino, management is offering a 60 cent an hour raise. He claims, however, that certain departments would be receiving 80 cents and others 45.

Company spokesmen here declined comment and the president wasn't available at press time.

Gong Show

STOUFFVILLE — A Kinsmen-styled gong show is coming to Stouffville.

Amateur talent will put their skills to the test, Sat., Feb. 24 on stage at Stouffville Dist. Secondary School.

Time of the event is 8 p.m.

Auditions are being held Feb. 1 (to-night) at Latham Hall from 7 to 10:30 p.m.; Feb. 12 and Feb. 19. Single acts or groups are welcome.

The program organizer is Ted Coward, 640-1076.

Guest entertainers at the show will be the Thornhill Barbershop Quartet with all proceeds going to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and community service.