

Ambulance driver strike still on hold

The strike position of Stouffville-Uxbridge ambulance workers remains on hold pending further mediation, on demands of wage parity with Ministry of Health employees.

The Ontario Public Service Employees' Union is negotiating a wage hike and benefit improvements for the nine full-time and six part-time workers.

"It's a possibility that we may settle for wage parity," said union staff representative Pat Rooney. "And we'd catch up on the benefits later."

He said little progress was made during Monday's two-hour bargaining session with the service's private, caretaker controller, Whitby-Bowmanville Ambulance Services.

A "total compensation" offer was rejected because benefits such as a dental plan would have been "costed" against the proposed three per cent hike, according to the negotiator.

Mr Rooney claimed that the Whitby-Bowmanville service isn't a licensed operator here, so therefore the Ministry has real control over the Stouffville-Uxbridge unit.

The Ontario government, through the Ministry (of Health), is reneging on its responsibility to the Uxbridge-Stouffville ambulance service," Mr Rooney said. "Our strike position is on hold pending advice from our lawyers."

The Stouffville-Uxbridge ambulance workers, members of Local 302, have a strike mandate but requested the union to first seek mediation. A walk-out would include a coverage area extending from Hwy. 404 to Port Perry and from Steeles Ave. to Mount Albert.

Their present salary average is \$10.50 an hour, compared to \$11.78 for Ministry of Health ambulance personnel and the \$11.85 an hour earned by their counterparts in Whitby and Bowmanville.

A strike could also affect ambulance service in Markham, which is patrolled by Ministry of Health workers.

From 4 p.m. to 8 a.m., there is only one ambulance on duty, so the Stouffville service stations one backup vehicle at Hwy. 48 and Major Mackenzie Dr. after 4 p.m.

It's available in case Markham's ambulance is out on call.

Women's club opening soon in Markham

Markham women will soon be able to jump, dance and stretch their way to fitness at a new fitness centre.

The Toronto Women's Club is scheduled to open in late September or early October in the new Markham Village Lanes development on Main St. It is a fitness centre exclusively for women and is geared toward the mother at home.

Toddler sitting will be available. The club's hours will be 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekends.

Facilities will include a Universal gym, sauna, double-sprung aerobic floor, exercise bicycles, sun tanning beds, private showers and change rooms, as well as a whirlpool.

There will be 12 to 15 instructors, all university graduates with degrees in physical education.

Halina Cleland, a spokeswoman for the club said Markham was a natural choice to locate. "There was nothing in the east end and we had already blanketed the west end," she said pointing out that there are clubs in Kitchener, Mississauga and Oakville as well as three in Toronto.

She explained the reason behind a club just for women.

"Research has proved that a high percentage of women are more comfortable working out in a club exclusively for women."

Women can pre-register with the club at an information centre set up at 74B Main St. or by calling 294-7764. It's open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



More than a fender bender

This grey Chrysler took the brunt of a collision with a tractor-trailer last Wednesday when the driver, a Rexdale woman, attempted to make a left turn from Hwy. 7 east onto Galsworthy Rd., in Markham last Wednesday. The tractor trailer driving westbound on Hwy. 7 was unable to stop and collided

with the car. The driver of the car was charged with failing to afford reasonable opportunity to avoid collision. She was taken to York Central Hospital and treated for minor injuries.

— Donna Cox

Town erects barricade

Residents relieved laneway closed

When a child was nearly hit by a car entering a soccer field through a laneway, residents of Smithy St. became fed up.

Resident Albert McKenna said, "Four cars entering the laneway in a convoy came within a matter of inches of a child."

Several people approached the Town to complain about the danger to children using playground equipment located beside the soccer field.

Drivers using the laneway off Smithy St. to gain access to the field park near the playground. Nearby residents don't know why the lane was made, but it has been there for about a year and a half.

Mr. McKenna spoke with the Town's Engineering department about a year ago and was told that it was a temporary entrance to the field which would be closing shortly. Daniel Evans of the Parks and Recrea-

tion department said the lane was put in as an emergency access to the field. The original entrance was blocked by construction on Norwich Dr.

He and his crew were at the site on Thursday to lay curb stones across the laneway. He also instructed the crew to dig up and remove a sand and gravel ramp from the road curb.

Until this action was taken, Mr. McKenna was frustrated by the Town. "There's no

point in waiting until a child is killed."

Susan Destine, another resident agreed. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." She said the lane is narrow and if a child was walking in the lane while a car was coming, there would be no room for him to move out of the car's path.

The Parks and Recreation department has issued a tender for a gravel parking lot at the Norwich Dr. entrance and expects it to be ready in about two weeks.

Teens nabbed at scene

Two Markham teenagers have been charged with several counts of theft after York Regional Police apprehended them on the roof of Shannon's Pantry at 72 Main St., in Markham.

The 16-year-old and 18-year-old youths broke into a vehicle and several Markham businesses in July, including Senator Homes Ltd., Squire Homes Ltd., and Carlaw Music Company.

Stolen was a stereo, furniture and musical equipment.

At 1:45 a.m. on August 14, police responded to an alarm call at Carlaw Music and Shannon's Pantry. The youths were found at Shannon's Pantry in possession of house breaking tools and arrested.

The two were charged with three counts of breaking and entering and theft with intent, two counts of breaking and entering and theft, theft over \$200, possession of stolen goods over \$200, and possession of burglary tools.

Dogs will be shot on sight

The operators of a Musselman's Lake horse farm have been directed to shoot all dogs that come on to their property, following confirmation of a rabid fox there.

Agriculture Canada test results showed Thursday that the rabies virus was present in a fox shot Aug. 9 at Jim and Stella Coultice's Wagon Wheel Ranch in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

"All animals should have their shots, and be tied up and kept away from our property," Mrs. Coultice said Thursday.

A main concern is that a dog in contact with the rabid animal may transmit rabies to one or more of the Coultice's 73 horses.

And many canines in the lake district do have a "bad habit" of biting horses, she said.

No quarantine has been placed on the Wagon Wheel trail riding facility, located on the east side of Musselman's Lake.



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