

Weekender

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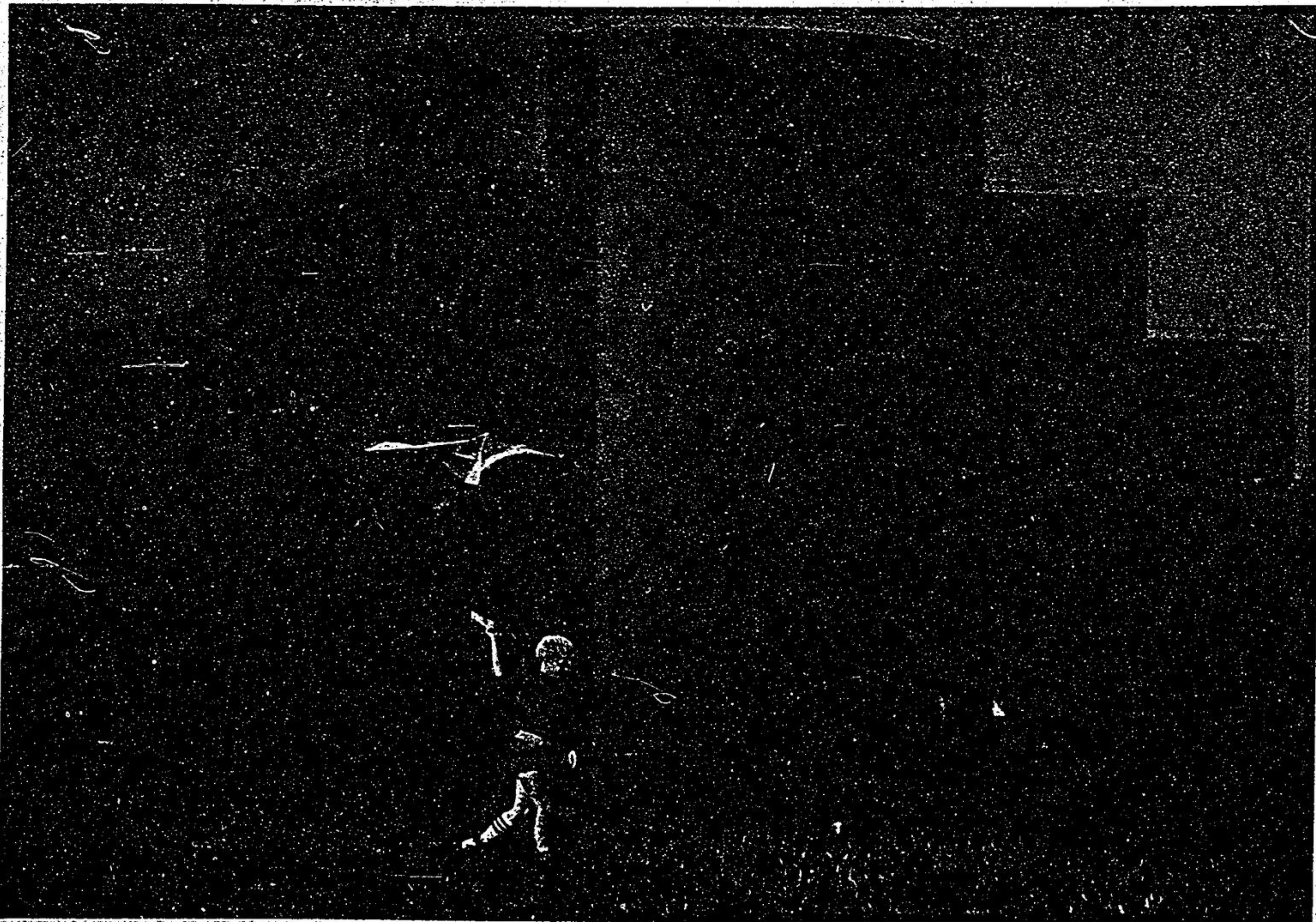
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Hospital moderates win big



Up it soars....higher than a highrise

Nine-year-old Robbie McGarrigle of Markham flies his kite with the goal in mind of topping the new Allstate Insurance headquarters building (which officially opens next Thursday). The building is one of Markham's highest.

ing (which officially opens next Thursday). The building is one of Markham's highest. — Sjoerd Witteveen

By PAULA CROWELL
Staff Reporter

Anti-abortion forces suffered a major setback Thursday in their efforts to take control of the Markham-Stouffville Hospital board.

A clean sweep by official candidates at the annual meeting blocked pro-life candidates from gaining a majority on the 27-member board.

Despite an effort by the York South Right to Life organization to elect eight anti-abortion candidates and gain control of the hospital Board of Trustees, the board's 11-member slate ran away with the show.

There were 11 seats up for election, two for two-year terms and the remaining nine for three years. There are 27 seats on the board of trustees. Nine come up for renewal each year.

While the votes weren't counted until almost midnight, the outcome was predictable by 9 p.m. judging by the applause and show of hands in support of raising annual memberships from \$5 to \$40 a year. Although several association members asked that the fee be increased to \$20, their motion was lost and the \$40 charge will stand.

Turnout at the meeting was an overwhelming five times more than last year. Hospital officials counted 2,142 members who registered to vote and about 1,500 of them stayed for the meeting.

Determined campaign

The hospital board ran a determined campaign to keep what trustees defined as special interest candidates off the board.

Board officials were on the rebound from a devastating turnaround last year which saw nine pro-life sympathizers elected to replace long-time experienced trustees.

Had the eight candidates on the pro-life slate been successful, the anti-abortionists would have had a comfortable majority on the board for the next two years.

Guard down

"We did exactly the same thing as we did two years ago. What happened last year is we let our guard down," he said.

The nominating committee's report recommending their slate of candidates and literature paid for by the recommended candidates themselves was readily available at the meeting.

Hospital President Michael

See page 3

Membership fee jumps 800%

An 800 per cent increase in the annual membership fee for the Markham-Stouffville Hospital corporation will create an elitist hospital, a critic has said.

Peter Huizenga, president of the York South Right to Life Association, made the comment in an interview after the hospital's annual meeting Thursday.

He was referring to a motion made by the hospital Board of Trustees to increase the annual

membership from \$5 to \$40.

Board Secretary Rod McLeod explained the increase saying the board wants to avoid the last-minute purchase of large blocks of memberships by special interest groups.

During the first few days of March, before the membership deadline for this year's trustee elections, the hospital office was deluged with bulk purchases of \$5 annual memberships.

Mr. McLeod said it's unfair to life members (who pay at least \$100 a year) to have the same voting privileges as annual members who pay \$5.

During the meeting, several association members questioned the increase.

Trustee Alan Cormack pointed out that many people, especially senior citizens, are on a fixed income and would be hard pressed

to afford the \$40 annual fee.

The board held a show of hands vote on the suggestion for a \$15 increase. When that motion was lost and the \$40 fee was approved some people started calling out for a ballot vote, only to be drowned out by applause from other members.

Mr. Huizenga commented, "The younger people can't participate anymore. It's an elitist hospital now."

WHAT'S INSIDE



Greg Williams
Drives to 3rd
place/23

Directory	
Comment	P-4
Church Page	P-10
Children's Page	P-13
Entertainment	P-18
Sports	P-21 to 23
Real Estate	P-24 to P-28
Classified	P-29 to 35



He builds boats
Tom Rimmer/7