

Weekender

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AIDS cases in York double

By PAUL PIVATO
Staff Reporter

The number of AIDS cases in York Region has more than doubled in the last three months, according to the region's public health department.

But the number of cases is still relatively small, said Dr. John Hodgkinson, Associate Medical Officer of Health for York Region. There are presently five reported cases of AIDS, said Dr. Hodgkinson. Another six people are infected with the AIDS virus, making them carriers of the killer disease.

AIDS victims are likely seeking treatment outside the region — probably in city clinics, said Dr. Hodgkinson.

He said he doubted the region would establish an AIDS clinic due to the small number of cases.

But the new figures do not necessarily mean an increase in the spread of AIDS in York Region, said Karen Hoare, a health department official.

She added that as the region continues to grow, the number of AIDS carriers will jump.

So far the majority of people in York who have been diagnosed as carriers are either homosexual or bisexual, said Ms. Hoare.

In March there were two reported AIDS cases and another four people were diagnosed as being AIDS carriers.

Of the two AIDS victims reported in March, one was identified as a homosexual and the other became infected after receiving tainted blood during a transfusion.

Robber pursued as victims wait

A bank robbery in Markham last Saturday left one witness feeling angry about the length of time it took police to arrive.

But police claim they responded immediately to the alarm and tried to pursue the robbery suspect fleeing in a car.

Margaret Lowe of Kreighoff Blvd. was one of two customers forced to lie face down on the floor of a Canada Trust bank when an armed robber held up the bank at 8:57 a.m.

According to Mrs. Lowe, police cruisers did not show up until 20 minutes after the robbery.

"I think it's terrible," said Mrs. Lowe. "The response time was disgusting."

But York Regional Police Inspector George Heppell said a cruiser was dispatched 28 seconds after hearing about the robbery and was on the scene 26 seconds later.

He said response time can be "misleading" because bank alarms are sounded at the security company which installed them — not your local police station.

The security company then contacts the police switchboard, which in turn radios the patrol unit nearest to the scene of the crime.

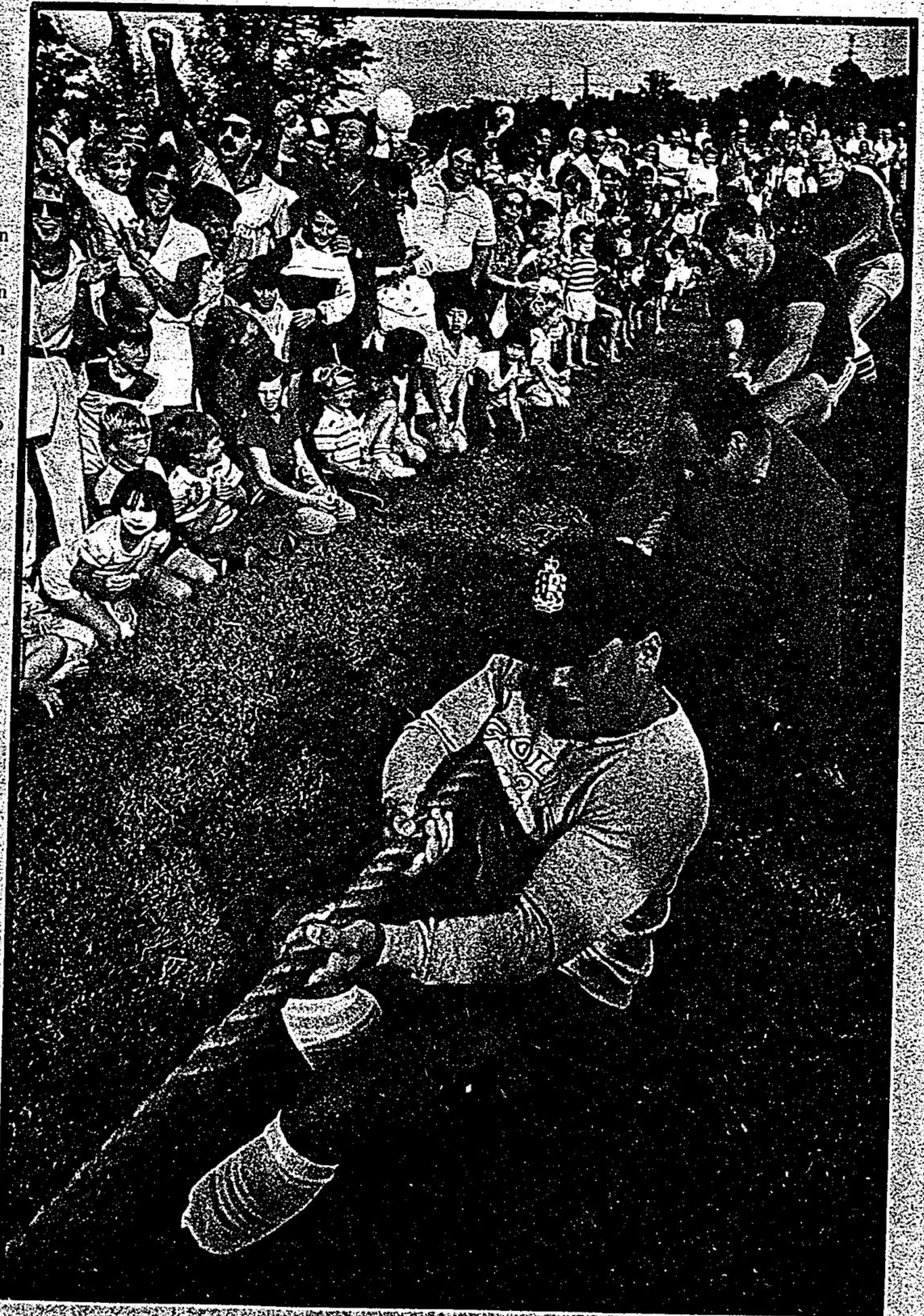
According to Inspector Heppell, data from a computer memory bank shows the police were contacted at 9:05:36 a.m. — some eight minutes after the suspect entered the bank wielding a sawed-off shotgun.

After receiving the call police dispatched a car at 9:06:04 a.m. and a cruiser was on the scene at 9:06:30 a.m.

But after arriving at the bank, police immediately sped off in an attempt to hunt down the robbery suspect by using a description of the get-away vehicle.

Insp. Heppell said York Regional Police used to monitor alarms years ago but alarms no longer ring directly into the station.

"Today police couldn't begin to monitor all the alarms out there — there are so many of them," said Inspector Heppell.



What a party!

The Economist and Sun Canada Day picnic drew crowds of about 15,000 people Wednesday. This classic tug-of-war struggle between York Regional Police shown here and Markham Firefighters was

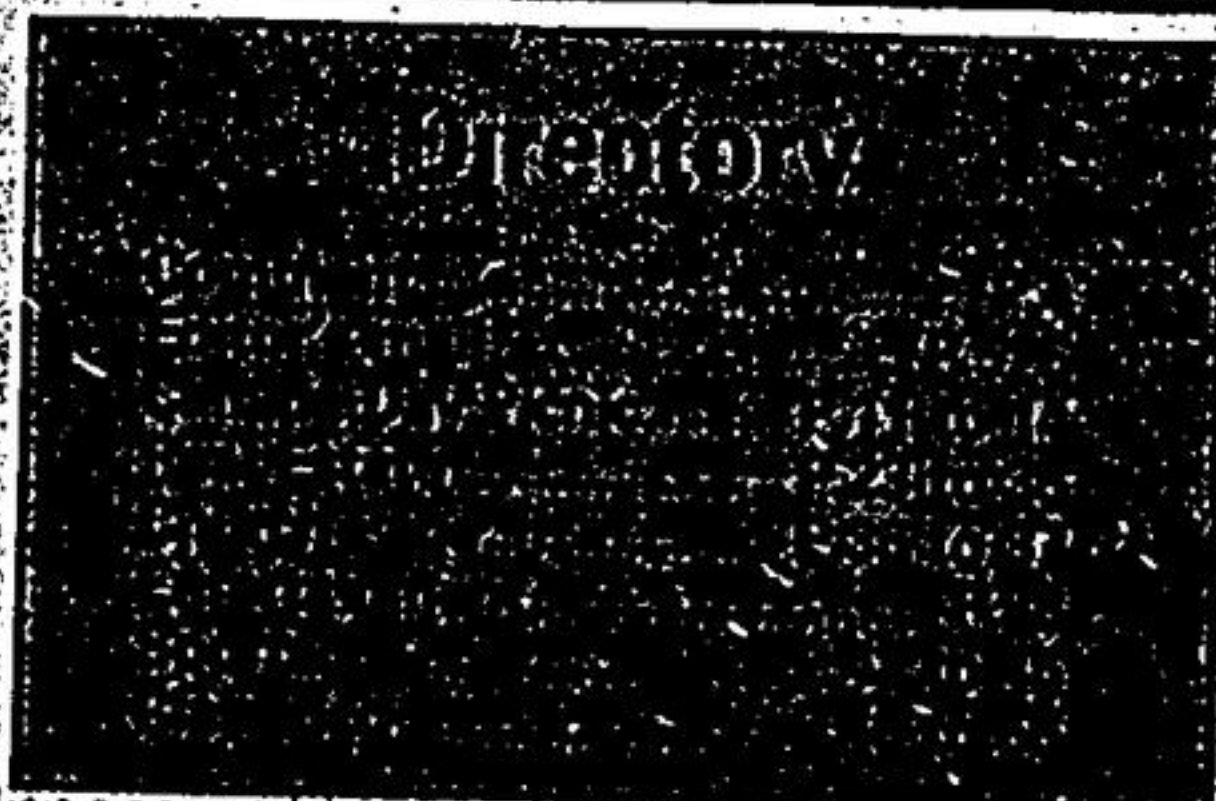
one of the highlights, as were spectacular fireworks courtesy of the Town of Markham and set off by the Markham Kiwanis Club. See photos on pages 11 to 14.

— Sjoerd Witteveen

WHAT'S INSIDE



Vinny Puri
is junior chess
champ — again/40



Martha Gombita
Has a yellow ribbon
on her oak tree/21

