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False alarms costing taxpayers

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Staff Reporter

It cost Whitchurch-Stouffville taxpayers more than \$17,000 for a 120-day period to answer the 26 remote alarm calls the local Volunteer Fire Department responds to, Council in committee learned Tuesday.

And although the calls are slowing down a bit, the department is still "getting a regular call vol-

ume," Fire Chief Bill Brown said.

"It costs \$600 to \$700 answer one of these. What can be done? It seems it's a benefit to put (an alarm system) in but it's not the insurance people who answer them," Councillor Emmerson said.

"I question the fact that people pay big dollars to a monitoring company but when the alarm goes off they don't do the leg work - we do," Chief Brown said.

He also pointed out that although every citizen or company may not be able to afford an alarm system, the cost (to answer them) is spread over a large span of people who don't have them.

"In my recollection, only one remote call turned out to be a real fire. Since I have never been to one that was an actual fire emergency," Chief Brown said.

He added that 29 per cent of all

province-wide calls are remote, whereas, here, 17 per cent of all calls are remote alarms.

"We're well below the provincial average by a long shot."

He added that a recent response to a remote call, outside of town, turned out to be a burglar alarm.

He said this endangers the lives of the firemen, who are not equipped to deal with criminals who may be armed and dangerous.

The Chief sent a letter and an invoice for \$600 to the company which admitted in a letter it wrongfully dispatched the fire department instead of the police. Chief Brown added that the company refused to pay the \$600 bill.

"How do I pursue this. We're making a conscious effort to deter this from happening but it's difficult to charge back."

In light of the Chief's ongoing concerns, Ward 1 Councillor Margot Marshall made a motion to have the department continue monitoring remote alarms for a further 120 days and have the Chief talk to the Town's solicitor to see what recourse the department has.

Local boy injured in dog attack

A Summitview Public School student was attacked by a dog Sunday while delivering flyers in a Stouffville neighborhood, say York Regional Police.

Trevor Fogal, 11, approached a home on Church Street North Sunday morning at about 10:30 a.m. when a full-grown Black Labrador jumped on him, says Corinne Fogal, the boy's mother.

"Trevor is scared of dogs as it is and often is chased by canines while on his regular paper route, she says.

According to Mrs. Fogal, her son went up on the porch and when he turned around to leave, the dog jumped on him, threw him to the ground and bit him on the back of his left shoulder.

The bite was not bad enough to require stitches, she says, but the skin was broken and he was bleeding.

"He had on a nylon jacket and I think this protected him somewhat," Mrs. Fogal says.

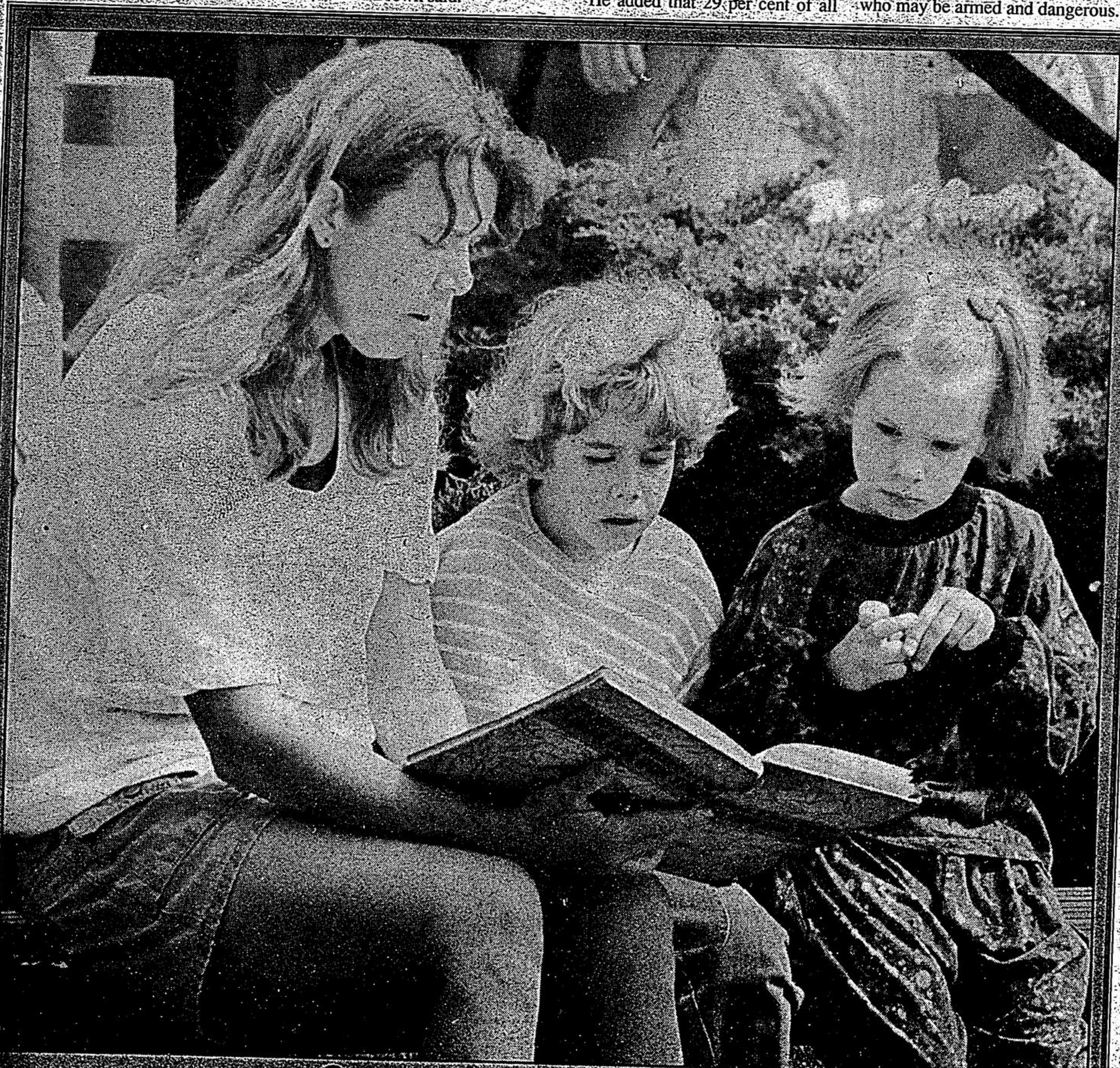
Also, when Trevor fell to the ground he may have fractured his elbow.

He received x-rays and his arm is now in a sling until it can be determined if the elbow is just severely bruised or fractured, Mrs. Fogal says.

The dog retreated from the boy "when he screamed terribly," she adds.

Police were notified, and say the owner is not sure when the dog last received immunization shots.

The animal will be taken away for a mandatory 10-day quarantine period at a nearby kennel to ensure he does not have rabies, police say.



Once upon a yard sale

Photo/RICK MADONIK

A crowd of bargain-hunters turned out on Saturday for Latham Gallery's first annual Trash and Treasures Sale. A wide array of items were donated and put up for sale at the event, organized

to raise money for the Gallery. This trio found the treasure they were looking for at the sale - a book of fables. Faith Ozan (left) reads to son Aydin, 5, and his friend Teegan Jones Webb, 6.

UNITY



BASEBALL



OPINION

