

Stouffville Tribune

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Province reforms judicial system

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Staff Reporter

A speedier court system is on the way for York Region.

Attorney General Ian Scott has announced an overhaul of the provincial court system to begin Sept. 1, aimed at making the system simpler, faster and more convenient.

This move follows cases last year when between June 1 and Nov. 21, 77 people facing 155 charges had their cases thrown out of Newmarket Provincial Court due to the long waiting list for trials. Sixty of the accused faced a total of 100 impaired driving charges.

Under the Charter of Rights, an accused person has the right to be tried "within a reasonable time" and judges may toss long-delayed cases out of court.

Mr. Scott was informed in the spring of 1989 of the backlogged system in York Region by a committee of judges, lawyers and court officials. They documented the need for three more judges and four Crown prosecutors in Newmarket.

Phase 1 of the reform will see the creation of the Ontario Court of Justice which will have two divisions. The Ontario Court (General Division) will combine the existing District and High Courts as well as Small Claims and Surrogate Court. The Ontario Court (Provincial Division) will amalgamate the current provincial criminal and family courts.

Under Phase 1, judges with superior court jurisdiction will be available in all districts and people outside Toronto will not be forced to wait for a judge to be sent from Toronto to their area to hear certain types of cases.

The province is divided into eight judicial regions. York Region, with its one court in Newmarket, is in the Central East Region which includes Muskoka, Haliburton, Simcoe, Victoria, Peterborough, Durham and Northumberland.

A regional senior judge along with a regional courts management advisory committee will be assigned to each of the eight regions. These committees, composed of judges, lawyers, Crown Attorneys, court administrators and members of the public will work to ensure the courts operate smoothly.

The existing trial courts will also be modified to combine the General and Provincial Divisions of the Ontario Court of Justice into a single trial court.

Stouffville man charged in Metro knife incident

A 35-year-old Stouffville man faces two charges after a knife was pulled on an off-duty Toronto police officer Saturday, according to Metro police.

A Geoffrey Crescent resident was arrested at 7:34 a.m. following an incident involving two motorists on Markham Road, police say.

According to reports, a man was driving his vehicle near Markham Road and Sheppard Avenue in Scarborough when he began yelling and gesturing to an off-duty police officer, who was driving his own car.

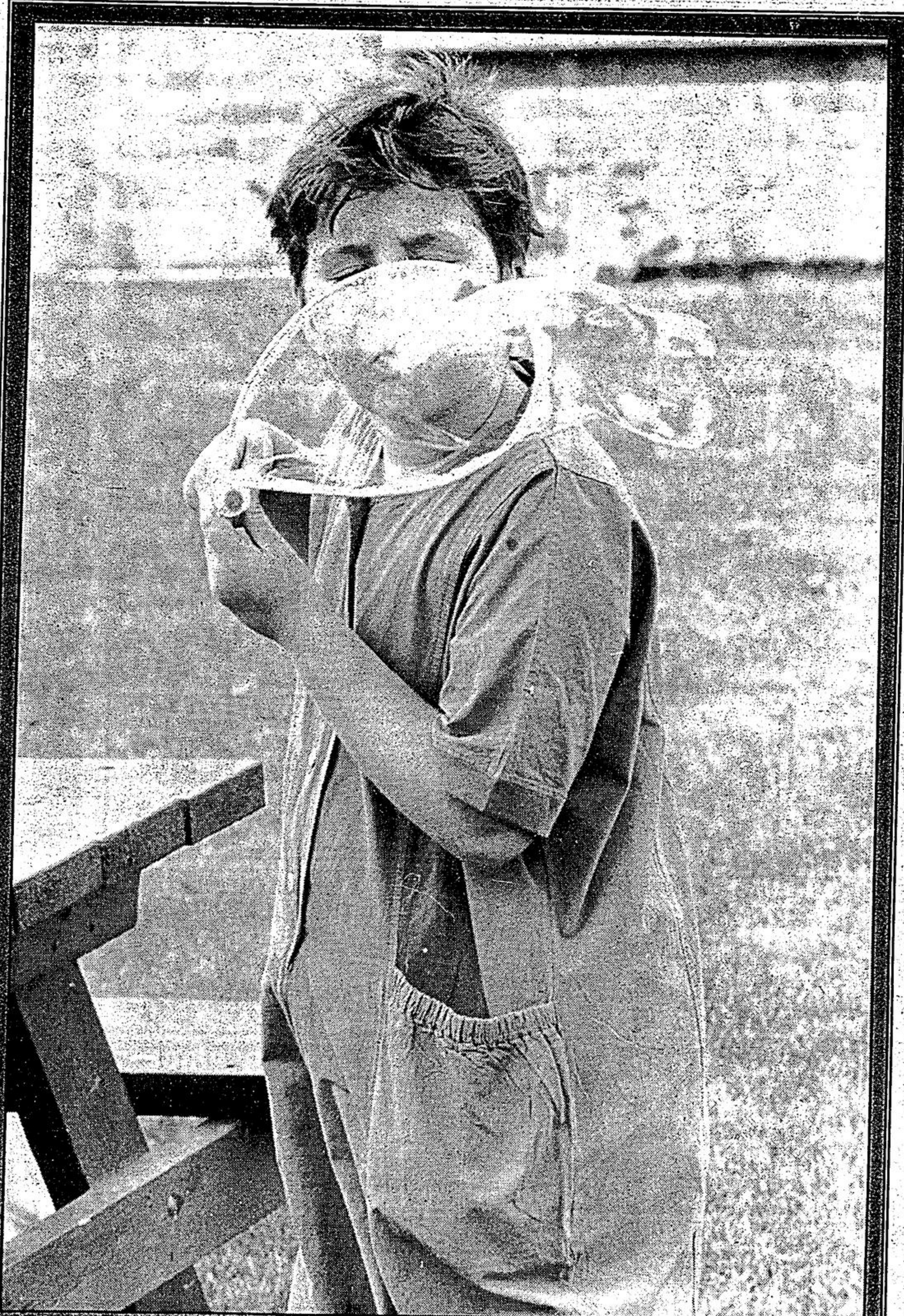
Police say the motorist also cut the officer off several times, pulled in front of him and hit his brakes.

When the two drivers pulled off the road, the man produced "an open knife hidden behind his back," and wanted to fight the other driver, say Metro Police.

When the victim identified himself as an off-duty Metro police officer, the other man got back into his car and drove off.

The victim summoned two on-duty officers, who arrested the accused a short time later.

A Stouffville resident is charged with dangerous driving and possession of a dangerous weapon.



Double bubble

The annual antique car show held in Stouffville last Saturday once again showcased the craftsmanship and styles of cars that were driven on area roads in years gone by. A variety of activities at the annual event, held at the

Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum in Vandon, included a lesson in bubble-blowing by Naomi Gordon, 7. The day also included demonstrations and other fun events, and was attended by people from around York Region.

FEATURE



SPORTS

Merchants 4th annual championships
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CLOSE CALL

