

Town agrees to grant in lieu of tax refund

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

A small local business may be forced to lay off one of its nine workers because of a revenue ministry tax assessment error, local politicians heard this week.

Trim Steel Ltd. president John Gurr told Stouffville councillors that a \$3,800 error made, and later acknowledged, by the ministry could result in one more "tough time" layoff at its Gormley office.

Gurr asked officials to help his company get out of a tight spot by refunding its share of a wrongly-assessed tax bill.

"As a new business in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, we are seeking your understanding in this matter in

awarding us some form of fair tax adjustment: we just can't afford this," Gurr said.

Gurr said the ministry's York Region tax assessment office wrongly classified his business this year as a manufacturing company and will be changed to a service classification for 1994.

In a report to officials, the town's tax collector, Ruth Armstrong, explained that the town's share of the \$3,824 error is \$737.

York Region wants another \$470 and the education board requires the largest chunk at \$2,618.

Armstrong said the Municipal Act doesn't allow for "assessment judgement errors" and added the company should have appealed the discrepancy

within the 30 days allotted.

She said the town cannot write-off the taxes, but officials could give the company a refund cheque for its share.

Finance director Ed Blackburn cautioned officials that they may be setting themselves up for a "lot of lost dollars" if they choose to ignore the appeal laws available to business and which are laid out by the ministry.

Ward 5 councillor Bob Ancheril, however, said the town should "pay back" its portion of taxes which were wrongly

assessed regardless of what the region and education boards decide.

"It's his money. These are tough times for business and the money should go back into his pocket where it belongs. It's not ours to keep," Ancheril said.

Officials voted to "grant" Trim Steel its portion of the tax error and suggested Gurr approach the other two agencies to appeal the remaining amounts.

Municipalities act as tax "collection agencies" for the region and both education boards, which is a "frustrating" and thankless job, officials stated.

Ratepayers often think the total tax bill they receive is all paid to the municipality, which in fact collects the smallest portion of the three; councillors pointed out.



ANCHERIL

Orchard Park School holds fun fair today

Orchard Park Public School holds its annual Christmas Fun Fair and Craft Sale today (Saturday) between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. at the school.

Santa will be visiting the fair from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. and photographer David Street will be on hand to take photographs of your child with the jolly red giant.

The silent auction and the raffle will feature a host of fabulous prizes and there will be great games with special prizes for the kids throughout the day.

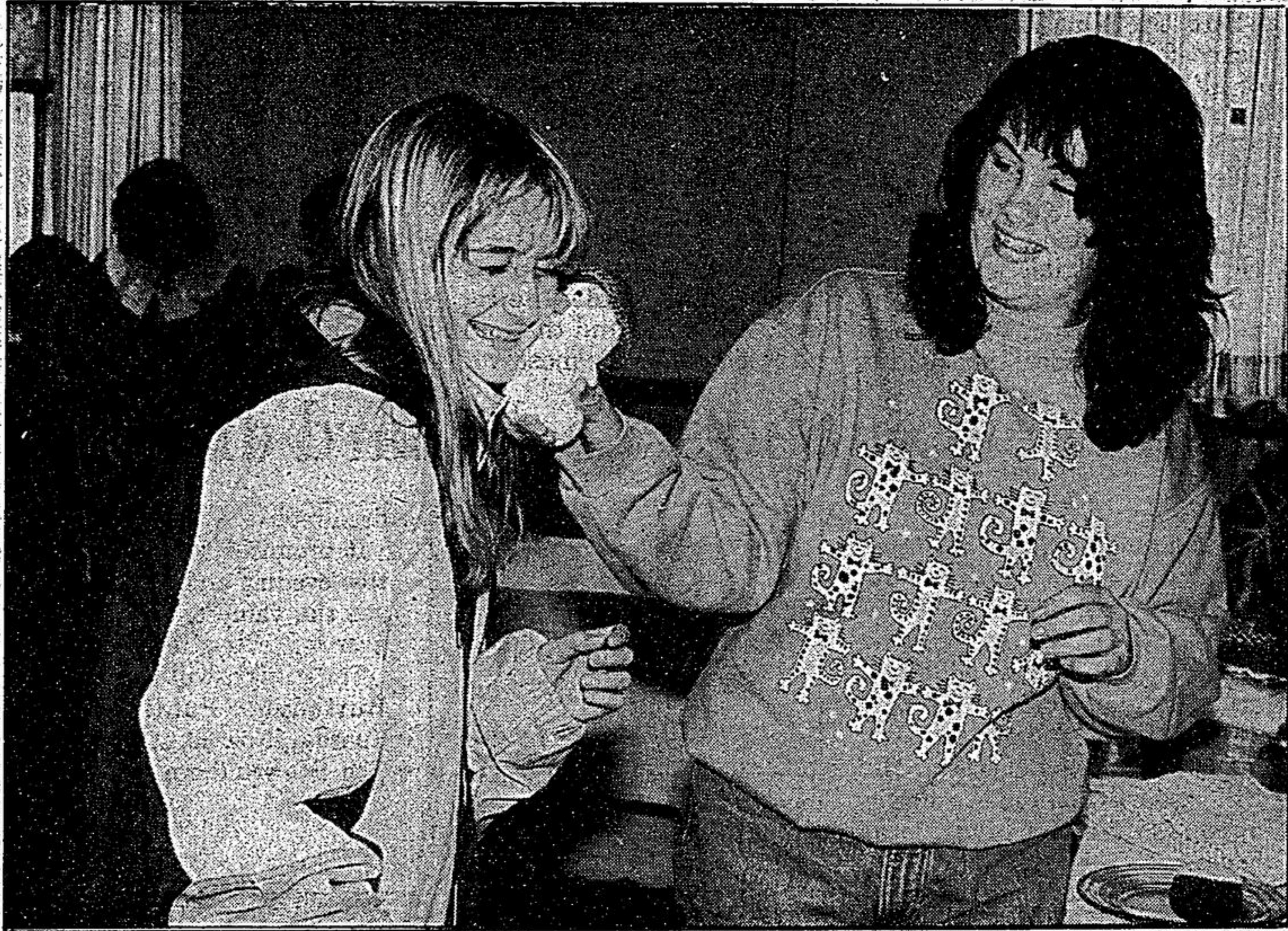
Craft tables and a bake table will be set up in the gym and visitors can visit the 'cafe' in the intermediate wing, where pizzas and other refreshments will be on sale.



PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

What an earful

Jim Kearsley gets an earful from daughters Sarah and Emily after winning a Sharp stereo system in the grand opening draw at Stouffville Sounds. Also on hand were Jim's wife Marlene and store owner Bob Woods.



PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Just ducky

St. James Presbyterian Church held a bazaar last Saturday. Above, Kristen Payne, left, shows Julie Hazlewood a crocheted duck at the knitted goods table.

Unity week

Stouffville recognizes diversity

Local politicians have proclaimed the next seven days as Unity in Diversity Week on

behalf of the 15-member Bahai's of Stouffville organization. Bahai member, Dr. Farzad Katirai asked the town to officially proclaim the week of Nov. 7 to "celebrate the growing diversity in Stouffville society."

Katirai expressed sentiments of democratic freedom through "harmonious integration" and the need to "foster fellowship

by accepting all races, creeds, religions and basic differences that link our "social fabric."

"The world is standing in awe at Canadians and the achievements we have made in diversity," Katirai said.

During the week, Stouffville's Bahai's will celebrate the "achievements and strides in diversity and an understanding of one another."



PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Needles fly

Irene Baker keeps on knitting as Lorraine Harman looks on at the Craft Wonderland on Wednesday, Nov. 3 at Parkview Village Auditorium. The craft sale was held by the Christian Women's Club.

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