

Harry Bowes celebrated nine terms

MIKE ADLER
Staff Reporter

More than 22 years ago, Harry Bowes got himself elected to York Region's public school board because he felt trustees

weren't talking enough with teachers and parents.

Now that's he's decided not to run again, after nine terms representing Whitchurch-Stouffville, things are starting to seem like the way they were then.

"They were pretty bad and it seems that they've come along full circle now," Bowes said Friday, a day after he withdrew his nomination for a trustee position in Markham.

"There wasn't any dialogue in '74. And there doesn't seem to be any dialogue now."

The 1974 teachers strike kept one of his children out of school for 42 days, but Bowes was part of a group, Watching Educational Bureaucracy, that sided with teachers against trustees they thought were too "hardline."

WEB succeeded in replacing many trustees, including one for Stouffville.

But when the new trustee was suddenly transferred out of town, Bowes, who had managed his campaign, won the seat in a byelection.

"The people just twisted my arm," he recalled.

Once at the board — he chaired it for six terms — Bowes built a reputation as a hard worker who didn't bring any political agenda to the board table.

"He always remembered that

he was there for education," said Angela Cumbers, a former parent council chair for Orchard Park Public School.

Bowes encouraged parent involvement, met the heads of parent councils regularly and fought hard to relieve overcrowding in Stouffville schools, she said. "He's always given a tremendous amount of his time and effort to make things happen."

Bowes did more than he needed to do, sponsoring a student award and going to every meeting involving parents — and even drama and music nights at Stouffville District Secondary School, said principal Rod Leonard.

"He's never not in attendance. He makes being a trustee a priority in his life," Leonard said Friday.

The board is "losing a fine ambassador for the board and for the kids," said education director Bill Hogarth. Bowes brought a sense of fairness to the board as well as an incredible knowledge of its history, he said. "There's going to be a void"



HARRY BOWES

without him, Hogarth said. Bowes said he regrets going, but wouldn't run against other candidates in Markham's Area 4, which had none besides Bowes until last week.

The longest serving trustee on the board had already stepped aside in Stouffville for East Gwillimbury incumbent Virginia Hackson, who got his blessing as a replacement.

"After a while you do so much and you have to let someone else take over," said Bowes.

The board is losing a fine ambassador for the board and for the kids.

~ Bill Hogarth



COOKING LESSON: Bonnie Stern, author, broadcaster and store owner whips up something special at a demonstration at Angie's last week.

Regional council hears plea to start paramedic service

LISA QUEEN
Metroland Staff

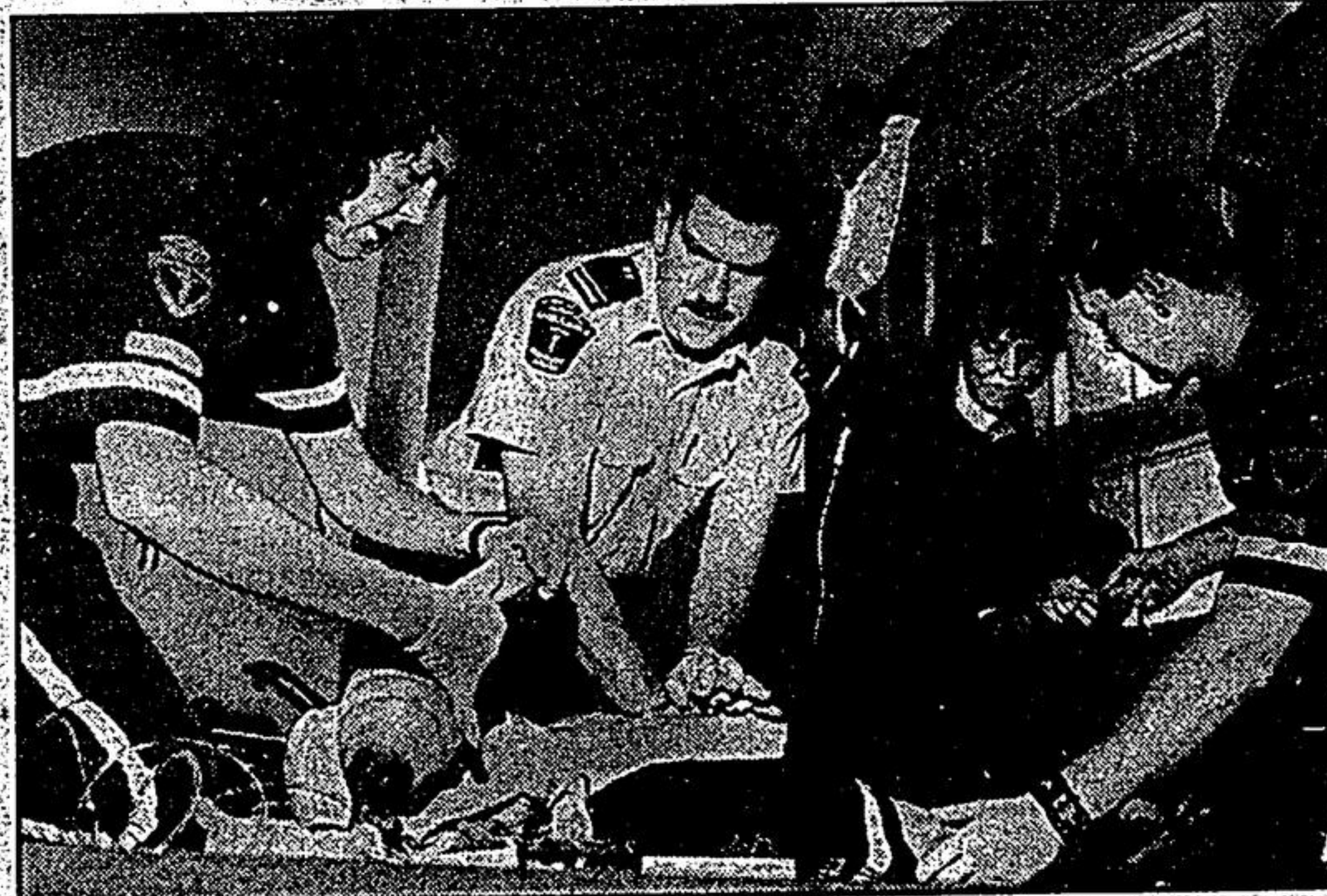
Dr. Larry Bacher watched his 44-year-old neighbor die of cardiac arrest on the side of the road five months ago because York Region's paramedics couldn't perform advanced life saving techniques.

Bacher pleaded with regional councillors last Thursday to improve York's emergency medical service, which lags behind other areas such as Toronto, London, Peterborough and Lindsay.

Bacher, backed by Vaughan Councillor Bernie Green, another doctor and a dozen paramedics, presented a 5,000-name petition from residents demanding better service. They want to see paramedics receive advanced life saving training to improve their chances of saving critical patients.

York's ambulance personnel can now administer five drugs in the field — compared to 15 in areas with advanced service — but they can't insert the breathing tube or inject the intravenous drugs an unconscious cardiac arrest victim needs.

The group also wants to see defibrillators — machines that shock a cardiac arrest victim's heart into beating again —



Paramedics perform a mock rescue prior to the meeting of York Region Council on Thursday.

installed on fire trucks because firefighters are often the first emergency personnel on the scene. The group is encouraging residents to take CPR courses because trained bystanders are often able to keep someone's heart beating until emergency crews arrive.

They'd like to see mandatory CPR training in high schools.

But officials suggested they won't be

able to afford to beef up service because they are being hit by provincial downloading and pooling health and social services across the GTA.

However, Bacher argued better service could save dozens of lives a year in York. He told them how his Thornhill neighbor, real estate agent Allan Sidofsky, was shooting hoops in the driveway with his 15-year-old son in May

when he suddenly felt dizzy and collapsed.

Sidofsky's wife asked Bacher to save her husband, who had no pulse. He started CPR while someone called 911.

When paramedics arrived, they hooked him up to a defibrillator and tried CPR again. "Advanced-level paramedics could have delivered needed drugs at the scene," Bacher said. "However, advanced-level paramedics are not currently available in York Region."

Ambulance workers continued to work on Sidofsky in vain.

"Horror was building. During the third and last set of shocks, the heart electrical activity completely disappeared. From there, there was no return," Bacher said. "Although he was pronounced dead at the hospital, he really died lying on the side of the street in front of 50 family and friends."

Dr. Earl Teitelbaum pointed out York paramedics responded to 303 cardiac arrest calls last year but could only save the lives of eight. With advanced care, he argued, as many as 50 would be alive today.

"Fifty York Region residents who died last year might well have been resuscitated and gone on to live productive lives," Teitelbaum said.

Paramedics with advanced training could have provided better treatment to another 2,200 patients suffering other ailments, he added.

But while councillors said they want to improve service, they suggested they can't afford to. The region is being forced to take over funding of two provincially operated ambulance services in the south part of the region in January, at a cost of \$11 million a year.


Over the next two years, council will decide how it wants to run ambulances throughout the region on a permanent basis.

Options include operating the service directly or hiring a private contractor.

Meanwhile, provincial plans to share health and social service costs across the GTA beginning next year will see York contributing \$4 million toward ambulance service in Metro. Councillors are furious they have to pool costs, especially since Metro's service is far superior to York's.

In Metro, where paramedics have advanced life saving training, there are 8.4 ambulances for every 100,000 residents compared to 3.4 in York.

Georgina Mayor Rob Grossi said any increase in York's ambulance service will result in higher property taxes.



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