

WARMING THE BENCH: Al Taylor enjoys the sunshine as he whiles away the day on a bench in front of his apartment building on Elm Road in Stouffville Tuesday.

Photo by LISA DIAMOND

Use bank to pay bills during strike

JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Reporter

Despite the postal strike, the bills must be paid, Stouffville residents are reminded.

While postal workers and the government are both optimistic that a tentative agreement will be reached over the weekend, local banks are reminding everyone that banks, automated tellers and telephones are the best way to continue making payments in the event that contract talks between the two parties get bogged down.

Maureen Ratcliff, Stouffville's Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce's customer banking representative, said Stouffville's electronic banking system is such that almost all bills can be paid without involving the post office.

USE BANK MACHINES
All major credit card companies and telephone companies such as Bell Canada and cable companies are advising customers to use the bank machines and the telephones to pay the bills.

Letter carriers abandoned the picket line Wednesday and delivered government cheques.

If the strike drags on, letter carriers are expected to return to work at least for Wednesday to help get pension, welfare and unemployment cheques to Canadians.

Anyone waiting for a federal cheque can call 1-8878-440-7744.

If there's no quick end to the strike, arrangements are being made to have December's welfare cheques, not automatically deposited into bank accounts, picked up.

Here in Stouffville at the post office, located on Main Street, picket lines were set up for a few hours each morning for the past three days.

Schools scramble to make up lost time

Plans to make up the time lost to teachers' strikes in local schools will stay hazy until next week.

Trustees for both area school boards have argued over the best

ways to create more instructional days. Board meetings next week are their next opportunity.

Trustees did decide to cancel Nov. 28 as a PA Day, except for public ele-

mentary schools.

And Catholic principals have been asked to find ways to save time by cutting out or reducing non-instructional extras like field trips, Christ-

mas concerts or fundraising during class time. A school's Christmas play, for example, could be replaced by a brief religious reading, the separate board suggested.

Field trips for public board students are not being outlawed, but they should specifically be connected to the core program of study, a spokesperson said.

'Honour system' used to recoup \$40-a-day parental strike costs

MIKE ADLER
Staff Reporter

An honour system will be used so parents can claim up to \$40 for every day the walkout closed local schools, the government suggested this week.

But don't go looking for claim forms yet at York Region school boards or schools, school board officials are warning.

The province's Fairness for Parents and Employees Act has just been introduced, they said, and it could change.

But a draft claim form has already been posted at a government Internet site. It says one claim will be allowed from each family, no matter how many children in it missed school.

Parents can only collect for children under 13, or secondary school

children with a disability that "requires care or supervision," or children prevented from entering a day-care facility they attend at a school.

Children of teachers would not be eligible unless they were at work during the provincial strike.

"Today, we are keeping the promise we made to help lessen the hardship caused by the teachers' strike," Ontario Labour Minister Jim Flaherty said before introducing the bill.

But board staff said much about what the legislation will do is unclear. For instance, the draft form says parents should not include receipts but adds: "you should keep receipts and details of costs incurred."

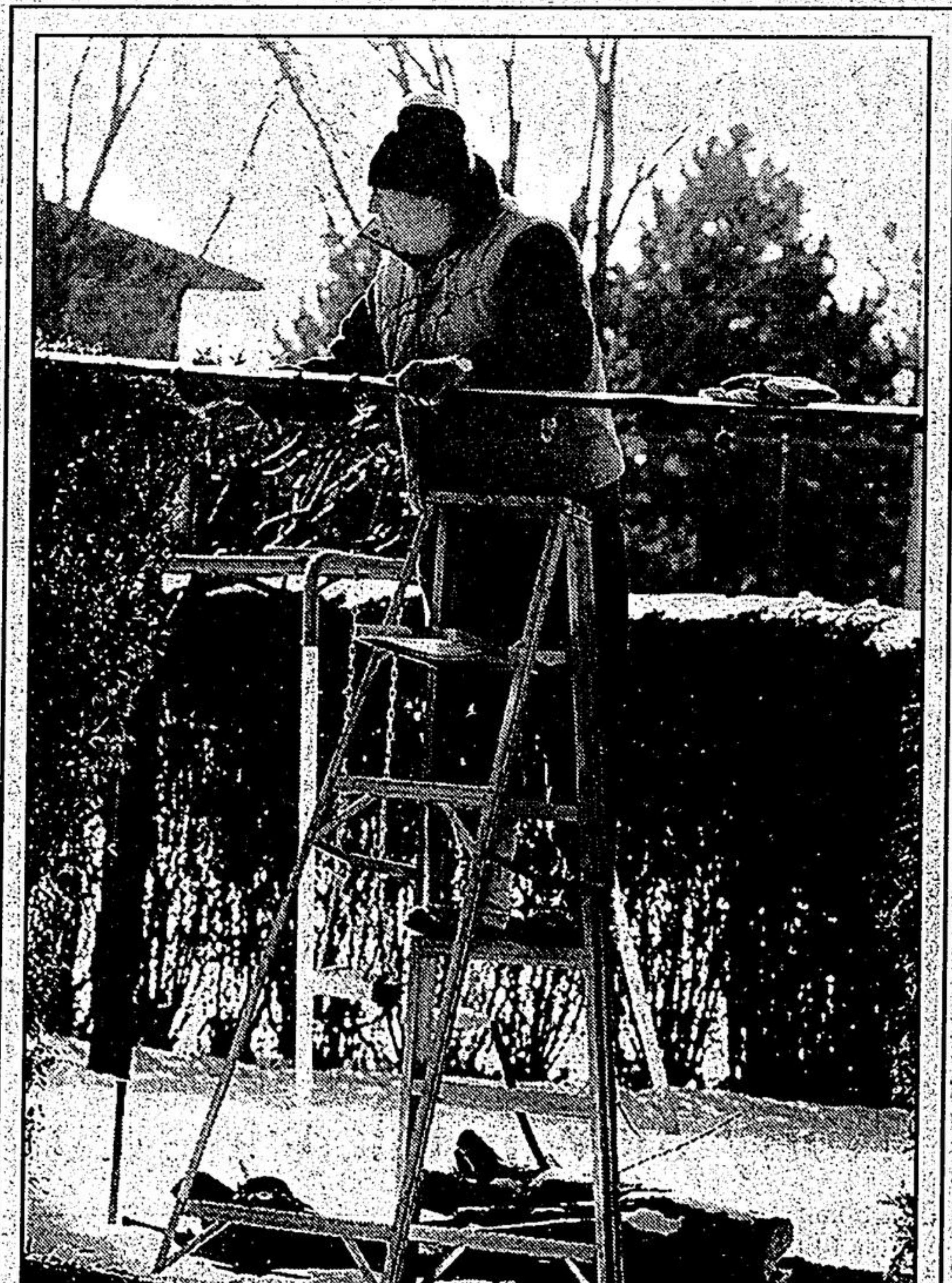
Hang on to your receipts, advised John Sabo, the separate board's

finance director, until the final version of the bill passes. "If it's required, no harm done," he said.

The draft legislation says the boards are responsible for sending out the cheques — which in itself will become a big expense and headache, said board staff.

And York Region's separate board is singled out in the bill as being eligible only for the first week of the walkout. It says Catholic parents here can't collect for missed days starting Nov. 3, because that's when the board's teachers started a legal strike. The education ministry has a telephone line for enquiries at 1-800-263-7965.

Meanwhile, both boards expect to pass plans next week to make up for days lost. Nov. 28 is no longer a PA day for Catholic students and public secondary students, they said.



BALANCING ACT: Micky Hunt balances on a ladder Tuesday as he decorates outside his home in Stouffville just in time for Christmas.

Photo by LISA DIAMOND

Optimists promote student writing

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and third place winner. Local first-place winner will automatically be forwarded to the Optimist district contest where it will be judged against other club winning entries.

The district winner will receive a four-day trip to the Freedoms

Foundation in Pennsylvania in July. Also the winners will be offered scholarships.

All entries must be submitted by January 12th.

For more information, call Catherine Sword at 642-0342. Optimist International is one of

the largest and most active service organizations, with more than 150,000 members in 4,200 clubs in the world.

Promoting the motto, "Friend of Youth," Optimist clubs conduct service projects which reach 6 million young people each year.

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The Tribune Stouffville

Watch for these Flyers on Saturday, November 22, 1997

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