

Workfare will aid 300 in '98

Three local companies — two public and one private — have signed on to put York Region welfare recipients into paying jobs.

A consortium combining social services agencies COSTI-ILAS and Georgina Job Skills with the private sector First Interactive Computer College, is aiming at 300 placements in 1998.

That's about one placement for every 10 people who had signed up for the region's workfare program by last month. The others are supposed to get training or volunteer posts.

The college will be matching people on welfare to appropriate jobs, most of them full-time, while COSTI-ILAS and Georgina Job Skills provide counselling to the clients.

"The longer they've been out of workforce, the more critical that counselling is," said Mario Calla, COSTI's executive director.

The chance to practice for the

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interview and work on their "presentation skills," will help clients go to a job interview with a positive attitude, Calla said last week.

"A lot of our self-worth is tied into what we do for a living, being productive in our lives," he said. "It's a question of feeling less than whole."

The placement target was set under provincial guidelines. The region expects to pay an average \$1,200 for each placement, with the province picking up four fifths of the cost.

COSTI's locations in Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill will be available to serve workfare clients when the operation starts Jan. 2. The Georgina group will see clients in Keswick and Newmarket, Calla said.

~ Mike Adler



THREE TIMES THE ENTERTAINMENT: The Golden Mile Gospel Singers were the featured performers at the Stouffville/Goodwood Christian Women's Club Christmas Coffee at the Stouffville Blind Mission on Wed. Dec. 10. From left are: Laurretta Luff, Caro Wiles and Ruth Fockler. Photo by SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Staff, council under fire after group nearly dumped

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this far. So, staff wants the committee gone — well, who cares?"

The committee is a volunteer group of "dedicated, responsible and caring individuals," said Cundari. "We come from all walks of life and basically, do not have a background in municipal procedures." Cundari then suggested town committees be given an orientation session to help members better understand the workings of the town.

"Council had one for 13 hours. Why not the committees?" asked Cundari.

Pat Tompson, a professional arborist, reminded council that one of the committee's concerns is trees.

"As an arborist, I can tell you that the trees along your main street are hazardous. It's a hazard waiting to happen. People are going to get hit with falling limbs," warned Tompson.

The Kettle Lakes, including the health of Musselman's Lake, also concerned this committee, added Tompson. "This is not the time to get rid of the committee. You need this committee. You've got a problem. But, it is not with the committee," she said.

Sophie Angelis, defeated Ward 3 candidate, pointed out that during the recent election, candidates listed the environment as an important issue.

"I hope you follow up on your campaign promises," said Angelis.

The committee needs a clear mandate, some councillors suggested.

"Maybe it didn't have mandate," noted Ward 3 councillor Peter Dobrich.

The environmental Committee's projects included lake testing programs for local lakes as well as Musselman's Lake, initiating mapping of areas within the town, reviewing the waste management programs and recycling programs, holding Earth Day celebrations included tree plantings at schools, giving away tree saplings to the public and having green space articles published in newspapers.

In total, the environmental Committee spent \$150. "We aren't exactly a drain," (on taxes) said Cundari.

Committee member and former councillor Ivanka Bradley said the move to dump the committee was regressive.

"Considering what's being done all over the world, this is backwards," she said.

Allegations 'disturbing' in police chief investigation

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Board member and newly-elected Markham councillor Tony Wong said he could not recall any specific policy requiring the chief to inform the board about such a deal, but added: "Personally I think it would have been prudent of the Chief, or any senior officer, to at least advise the board about such transactions, even in the absence of a policy."

York Regional Police Association president Paul Bailey said the recent allegations are "disturbing," but his members still believe in the presumption of innocence.

"It has raised some hue and cry among the officers," he said. "Anything the chief does dur-

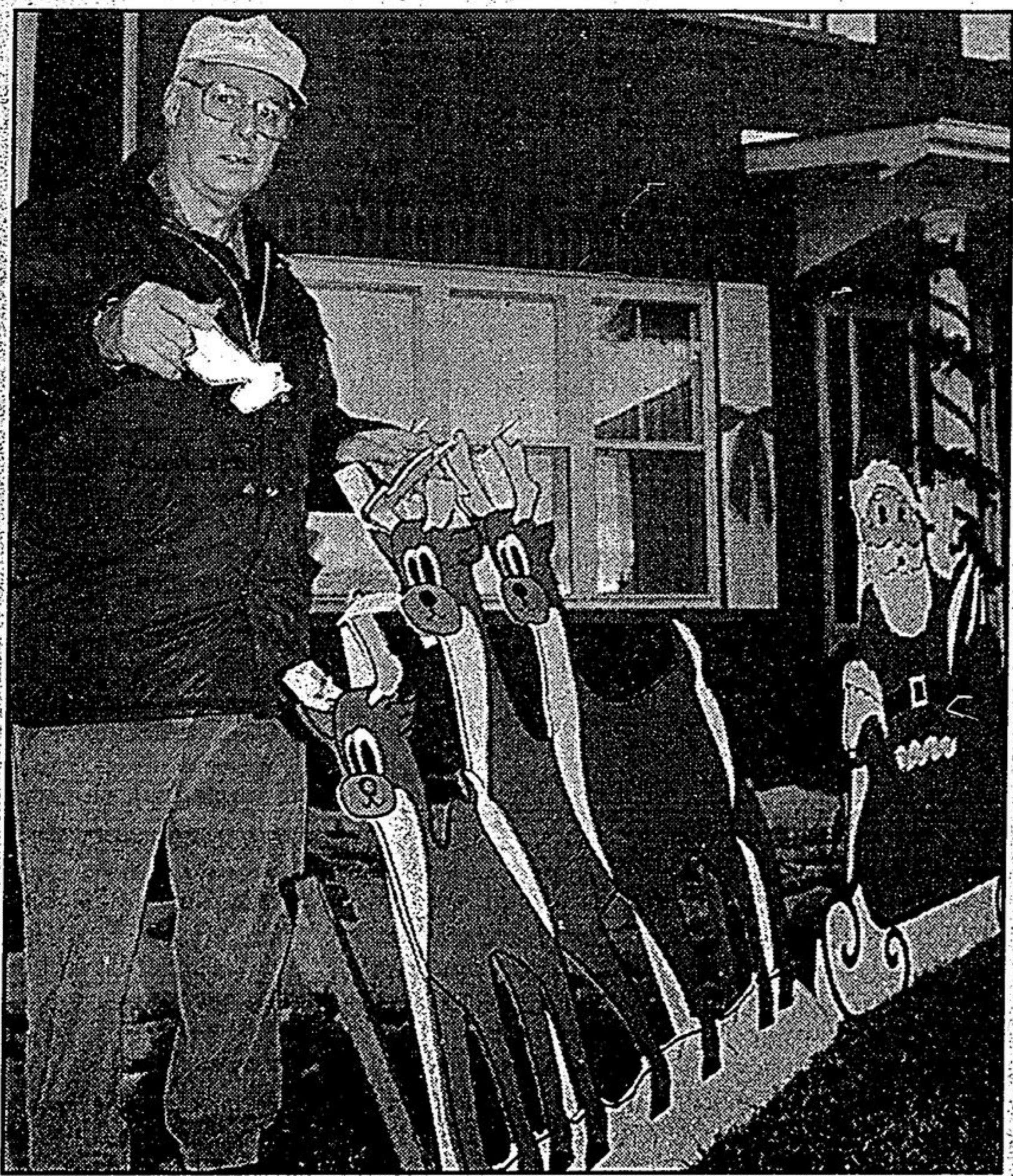
ing his term of office should have been approved by the Police Services Board and I have no idea why it wasn't."

Bailey added the Crown's office could take up to a month to review the OPP's case.

"I think the OPP has taken so long because they want to do it right the first time," Bailey said.

"Now the Crown's office will have to review the case law, the Charter, and the impact and ramifications of which way to proceed. If the allegations have merit, they will have to decide if it's a Police Act matter or a criminal code matter."

"This is a very high-profile case and they will be taking a very careful look," he added.



Reg Matthews shows part of his vandalized Christmas reindeer display yesterday.

'Senseless' vandalism destroys Santa display

Vandals put a damper on Reg Matthews' Christmas.

In the spirit of the season, the Stouffville resident worked for days making a Santa display for his front lawn.

Matthews put the display up, stood back and admired his work. The next morning, to his dismay, he found his labour had been vandalized during the night. "I just don't get it. Why on

earth do people do this? It's Christmas. It's senseless and it's sad to think that we have this in our community."

Matthews wouldn't let the vandals get him down for long. He fetched his tool kit and carried out the necessary repairs. "Let's hope all is well now" said Matthews.

~ Joan Ransberry