



Twins Hailey and Jordan Vesh, 2, play with Lisa Relf, 16, at the Stouffville District Secondary School parenting class Christmas party Dec 17.

Photo by SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Teens get fun taste of parenting at party

Stouffville teenagers got a taste of Christmas-time parenting on Wednesday.

Members of the Stouffville District Secondary School's parenting class threw a Christmas party for a room full of pre-schoolers.

"Everyone had a great time," said course member and student Michelle Hulshof.

"The children sang songs, played games, made crafts and had a snack. Of course, there was also a special appearance from Santa Claus," said Hulshof.

The school's parenting course explores topics such as preparation of parenting, stages in child development, child guidance and such child-related issues such as special needs, adoption and divorce, explained Hulshof.

"The students apply what they learn and develop parenting skills in practical activities such as the parenting Christmas party," said Hulshof.

Environmental review set for new highway

MIKE ADLER
Staff Reporter

Ontario's transportation ministry has adequately followed the law in assessing the environmental impact of the proposed Hwy. 407 extension to Pickering, the province's environment ministry has concluded.

In a review released this month, the province has put into Environment Minister Norm Sterling's hands the chance to approve what would ultimately be a 10-lane freeway and separate transitway from Markham Rd. to Hwy. 7 just east of Brock Rd.

Sterling's approval of the project would allow a route 15.9 kilometres long, one that has seven interchanges and bridges six watercourses including the Rouge and Little Rouge rivers.

Until Feb. 16, people can send their comments on the proposed extension, the environmental assessment of it or the review. After that, Sterling can approve the project, scrap it, or allow either a hearing or mediation on certain issues.

Federal, provincial and local agencies are not opposed to the extension, and have indicated their concerns can be addressed at the design stage, the review said.

The province's environmental assessment process was not needed for the other sections of the 407. Its 63-kilometres of expressway was built from Oakville to Markham Rd. under an exemption from the law.

The transportation ministry's traffic analysis, ordered in 1995, demonstrated that ending the highway at Markham Rd. without a further easterly extension "would result in significant traffic related impacts in the Town of Markham," the review said.

This finding, plus the ministry's conclusion that more road and transit capacity is needed east of Markham Rd., are the main reasons it has supplied for proposing the extension. (Surprisingly, the ministry announced this month that the 407 would stop at

McCowan Rd. until an eastern extension is approved.)

The transportation ministry argued a combination of improved transit services, better traffic management and other measures, such as a campaign for ride-sharing, won't solve the area's short term transportation problems.

But the ministry added there is also a need to justify the Brock Rd. extension within a wider context: "In assessing the need for the facility, engineering, social and natural environment, and economic factors must be recognized and addressed," it concluded in the review.

But that is exactly what the ministry has not done in its assessment, Jim Robb, a Scarborough resident and opponent of the extension, said last week.

The review notes comments from the public questioning the need for the project and urging the ministry to look at alternatives, but concludes these concerns "are related more to government policy/direction with respect to transportation and are beyond the scope of the EA and this review."

The review is a "whitewash" of public concerns about the extension, since it dismisses them by taking a very narrow interpretation of the Environmental Assessment Act, responded Robb. "What the government is doing bends the EA Act to the point of breaking," he argued.

Robb pointed out the act includes an almost limitless range of features, including "social, economic and cultural conditions" of a community, as well as all forms of life, air, land and water under its definition of "environment."

The review notes the proposal might also need approval under the federal Fisheries Act because of possible effects on watercourses the extension would cross. Details of the crossings haven't been developed yet, so "it is not known at this time if the construction methods or the structures proposed will impact fish and fish habitats," biologist Wayne Hyatt told the ministry on behalf of Canada's fisheries and oceans ministry in June.

Bad hair day? York school board has the solution

MIKE ADLER
Staff Reporter

Have a curl that won't curl? A head full of frizzies? Get into the classroom, where a night school class from the York Region Board of Education can help.

The latest crop of general interest courses starting at many of the board's schools next month include several sounding truly illuminating — or a little odd.

For a fee, students can find out how to avoid freezing to death in a wilderness.

Or they can learn how to build a 10-inch pink mohair bunny, decorate a cake, wire a cottage, improve their self-esteem or pick up some bass catching techniques.

Bad Hair Day? Tricks of the Trade, will introduce pupils to a

professional stylist who can teach them "quick morning fix-ups" and home hair-colouring.

"Learn to jazz up your hair using various common items (pipe cleaners, popsicle sticks, etc.) and the new Tap Teaser, Hairdini, Braidini, clips, scrunchies, etc.," the course description promises.

There's a course called Healing Touch - Introductory, where students can "learn and practice a collection of energy-based treatment modalities."

Another, Mathematics for Gambling, shows counting techniques for card games and studies lotteries and rolling of "standard and non-standard dice."

There's a course for budding (and apparently, very serious) ecologists called, Our

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Environment: Will the World Survive the Next 50 Years? Residents in search of a more relaxing topic may wish to take another, Stretching for Better Everyday Living.

For those more inclined to the conventional, there are courses offering instruction in languages; art, sports, computer skills, and of course, welding for beginners.

People can register for a general interest course by phone 24-hours a day until Jan. 5 at 416-969-7170, ext. 2800., or by dropping off a form at the host school by Jan. 4.



CHEQUE THOSE RAILS: On Monday the final Jobs Ontario grant cheque was presented to members of the York-Durham Heritage Railway at the Stouffville train station. Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson holds the cheque, with a pleased railway

president Ken Harding standing by, and Jim O'Mara from the Ministry of Economic Trade and Development representing the provincial government.

Photo by CHERYL JOHNSON



THE PRICE IS RIGHT: Marion Wells (left) and Sandra Carson of Claremont are all smiles as they skate hand in hand during the Adult Skate Christmas Party at the Recreation Centre in Stouffville last week. The skate club's annual party brought out numerous participants.

Photo by SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Rates set to change Jan. 1

From page 1

"Our customers have been requesting expanded local calling so that they can reach many neighbouring residents and businesses by telephone without paying long-distance charges," said Terry Mosey, vice president of marketing at Bell Canada.

Effective Jan. 1, 1998, Bell will eliminate the extra mileage charges that about 200,000 customers have been paying in addition to their basic service price in order to get single or two-party service.

These changes ranged from 30 cents to more than \$40 a month.

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