

THE TRIBUNE

Vol. 109, No. 86.

Wednesday, December 31, 1997

20 Pages .50¢ (GST incl.)

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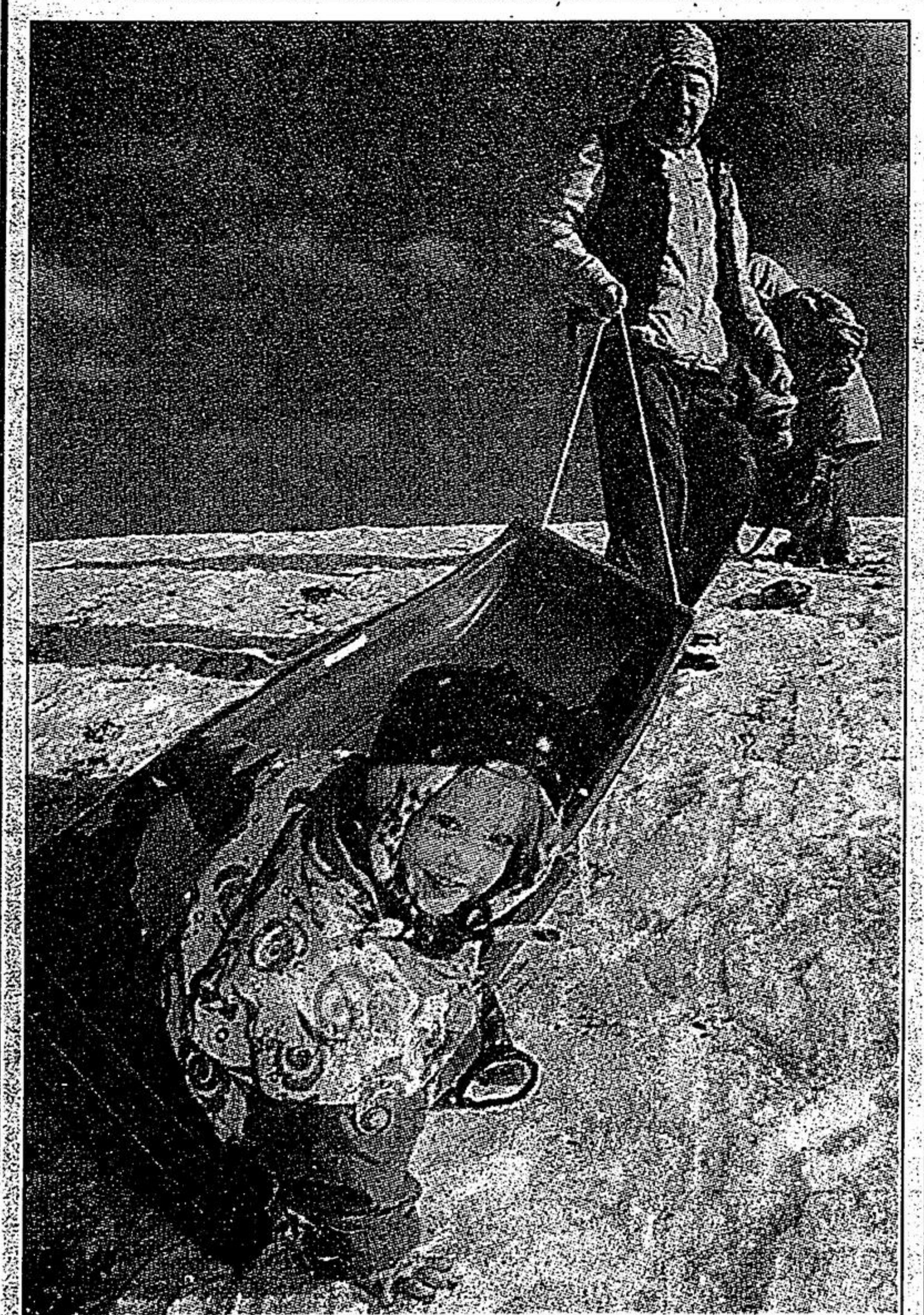
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Have a Happy New Year!



MUSH, GRANDPA: Samantha Clapperton, 4, enjoyed an uphill toboggan ride on Sunday at the town park hill, thanks to the efforts of her grandpa, Bill Clapperton. The two and Samantha's older sister Rebecca, 8, enjoyed a sunny day of sledding.
Photo by LORI EMERSON

Police chief suspended

KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
Staff Reporter

York Regional Police Chief Bryan Cousineau was officially suspended, with pay, last week after accepting a \$125,000 contract for future services with Magna International.

The Police Services Board decided to suspend the beleaguered chief after a three-hour closed-door meeting Tuesday.

He will still get his \$135,000 annual salary, but he is no longer able to use equipment paid for by the force, including his \$1,000-a-month Mazda Millenia.

Paul Bailey, president of the York Region Police Association, said his membership welcomes the suspension.

"The suspension is the first step to hiring a new chief," he said. "In our view, as a result of the audit and Cousineau's poor performance in the last five years, it's time to hire a new chief for the next five to 10 years."

Bailey is advocating a broad selection process that would comb the country looking for the right person. And he said if someone interested in the job is currently a member of the York Regional Police, he or she should be subjected to the same selection process.

"We don't want just a rubber stamp," he said.

Cousineau is already on a paid leave of absence, as the OPP wraps up its investigation into allegations of criminal misconduct. The investigation has been completed and the case is now in the hands of the provincial Crown attorneys who will determine whether there is enough evidence to lay criminal charges.

Cousineau has been on paid leave since March after senior officers made several allegations against him during a routine provincial audit. The auditors contacted the OPP, which began an investigation into criminal wrongdoing. York Region has been paying double salary for Cousineau and interim chief Peter Scott since then.

A 1994 trip to China by Cousineau paid for by the Inter-Canada Far East Trade Centre has been reportedly part of the investigation, as have irregular use of cell phones, Air Miles and the purchase of a souped-up Camaro.

Recent reports about a \$125,000 payment to Cousineau from Magna International for future security services in 2002 is the latest in the sea of speculation. The OPP will not confirm or deny the reports.



BRYAN COUSINEAU

@random

Ring in the New

A reminder that Whitchurch-Stouffville families are invited to celebrate the start of the New Year at the third annual town bash today.

The Recreation Complex will be open from 1:40 to 3 p.m. for family skating.

Horse-drawn sleigh rides, courtesy of Bill Hassard and his family, begin at 6 p.m. in the park.

Members of the Stouffville Lions Club will serve hot chocolate and donuts, donated by local merchants, and free hot dogs and refreshments will be offered by Whitchurch-Stouffville firefighters.

Don't forget the fabulous fireworks display at 8:15 p.m.

Tree collection

Residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville are reminded that collection of Christmas trees will take place starting the week of Jan. 5, on the regularly-scheduled collection day.

Trees must be placed out for collection by 7 a.m. and all decorations must be removed. Please, no plastic bags.

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642-2100

Casinos stalled in York

Companies hoping to establish permanent charity casinos in York Region are no closer to their goal.

Three months after being announced as "final proponents" for lucrative clusters of gaming clubs, Star of Fortune Management and

Trillium Gaming Inc. have not signed their contracts with the province. Lydia Boni, co-ordinator of charity gaming clubs for the province's Gaming Control Commission confirmed last week.

■ Please see page 12 ■



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Saturday	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Sunday Closed	
RETAIL	STORE
Monday - Friday	8:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Saturday	8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Sunday	10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.