

HELPING HAND Matthew Trump pulls Paul Reading on the half pike at the town park Saturday.

Photo by STEVE SOMERVILLE

Officials worried about social costs

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improve the existing situation. Everything's in the discussion stage," he said. Still, the union, many local governments and private citizens are unconvinced that there's no need for concern.

A "closely guarded" government report, to be released soon, includes the option of closing 322 stores, creating agency stores and contracting out, the union has reported.

Selling booze over the counter in the grocery store is not a harmless, simple issue, said Sullivan. Introducing a full range of alcohol products in food stores will further normalize alcohol as just another consumer product, Sullivan told council.

"Studies across North America clearly indicate that alcohol normalization increases alcohol use and abuse," he added.

Stouffville's liquor store could be affected, said Sullivan. If alcohol is sold by private enterprise, it'll mean less will be sold at the government-run outlet.

"If that's the case, the store here could eventually close," said Sullivan.

Private enterprise is already involved in retailing liquor, Layton stressed. Currently, there are 100 agency stores open in northern Ontario and nine

operating in other parts of the province, said Layton. Alcohol policies affect public health, rates of crime, social services and economic productivity, Sullivan stressed.

Minors buying alcohol is a concern, said Ward 4 Councillor Cliff Dunkeld. Some have suggested that government workers are apt to care more about youth and less about profit.

A host of problems would arise if the government got out of the booze business, said Sullivan.

While Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations and Markham MPP David Tsubouchi reviews council's message, the liquor store workers will continue to drive home the same message.

"Alcohol isn't like other products," said Sullivan. Although enjoyed in moderation by many Ontarians, alcohol is still an intoxicant with many health, safety and social costs including motor vehicle crashes, murder, suicide and chronic illness, the union pointed out.

The sale of alcohol requires careful regulation and handling only by trained people, stressed Gibson.

Alcohol abuse carries a hefty price tag. Social costs of consumption including health, corrections and the attorney general's office exceeds \$1.5 billion.

Students disagree about mandatory community service

MIKE ADLER
Staff Reporter

Mandatory community service is a topic students don't agree on, but for York Region Catholic students it's nothing new.

Education Minister Dave Johnson started student leaders talking in area public high schools this month when he announced students must volunteer 40 hours before graduation as part of the province's new plan for high schools.

Local Catholic students in Grades 9 to 12 already perform 10 hours of community service a year as part of their religious education program.

"It's not anything new to us," said Justin Giancola, the district Catholic board's student representative for academic affairs.

"It's not (only) a Christian thing," he added recently. "It's something you do just out of respect for other people."

But in the public high schools, where small groups of students tend to commit themselves to charity work, teens are not all convinced mandatory time in food banks, nursing homes and hospitals is a good idea.

"You'll have a significant amount of people that will laugh at it," and some may end up not graduating, said Shawn May, student council dance coordinator at Stouffville District High School.

Naheed Bardai, prime minister of a student presidents' council for the region agreed that volunteering "molds character," but said making it mandatory "defeats the purpose of volunteering out of the goodness of your heart."

Volunteer experience can be beneficial, but it might not be for everyone, said Shaun Pohani, student trustee for the York public board last year.

But Pohani's successor, Rohit Ramchandani, thinks mandatory service is a great idea. "It gives students a chance to give back to the community."

Some people feel such work shouldn't be forced, others say it's a good opportunity, said Shaneeza Nazseer, student president at Middlefield Collegiate in Milliken.

Other student leaders said volunteer work at well-known area institutions is already hard to find, and wondered how the requirement will be enforced.

Plan aims to attract new firms

A plan has been launched to spruce up the appearance of the "entrance to the community" of Stouffville, local Mayor Wayne Emmerson announced yesterday.

Emmerson has issued an invitation to all business people, including merchants from Ringwood at Hwy. 48 to the Ninth Line, to help put an improvement plan in motion.

A brain-storming meeting is slated for Monday beginning at 7 p.m. at the Stouffville Station on Main Street.

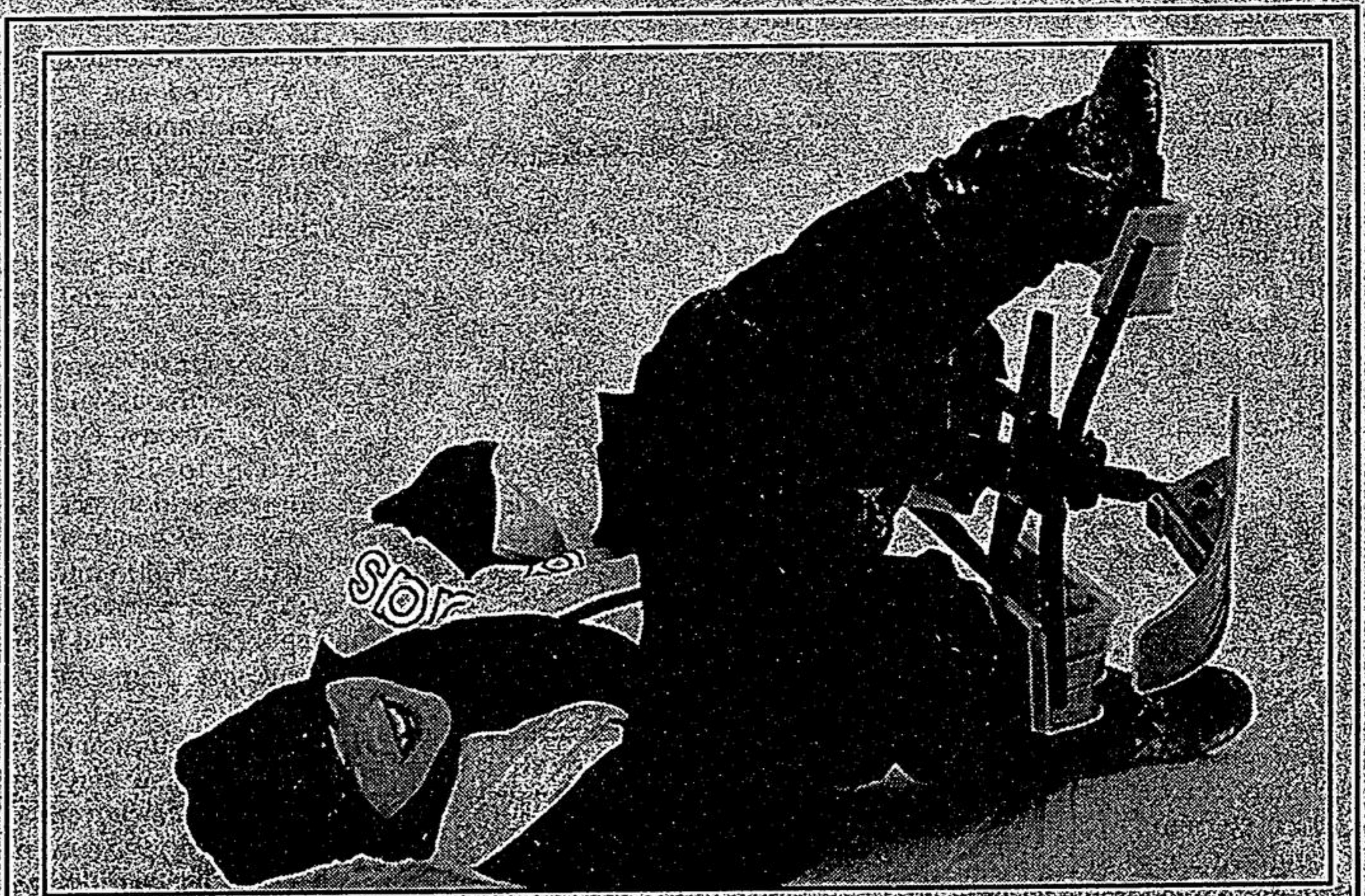
As well as spit and polish, paint and flowers, other ideas will come out of the brain-storming session.

The town has a revitalization committee in place. Meanwhile, last week, council gave the project \$10,000 as "seed money,"

said Emmerson.

"This committee has been formed to revitalize our downtown area and hopefully attract new businesses and also to improve our tourism appeal," explained Emmerson.

Emmerson said he's keen on having others attend the meeting to "exchange ideas, and make recommendations to the committee."



SLIDE WINDER Jesse Jeffries loses his balance and tumbles off his toboggan into the snow last Saturday at Thicketwood Park.

Photo by STEVE SOMERVILLE

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