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COURTS: Doctors removed gunshot pellets from victims

Traces of blood, soil, pot found in vehicle

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
 STAFF WRITER

Shotgun pellets, blood stains, soil and marijuana were found in a car occupied by two men, both victims of shotgun wounds, a jury heard yesterday.

York Regional Police Det. Richard McVeity was one of a number of witnesses testifying at the lengthy second-degree murder trial of John Murray Bolender at the Newmarket courthouse. The Stouffville resident is also facing narcotics charges linked to the Aug. 21, 1996 incident.

Bolender was arrested at his father's Hwy. 48 property, after two men told police they were shot while fleeing the property at 1 a.m.

Police were alerted by doctors at Markham Stouffville Hospital after shotgun pellets were removed from the heads, arms and chests of the victims. A search of the Bolender property — conducted a few hours later and involving the York Regional police tactical unit and the Ontario Provincial Police helicopter — uncovered about 80 marijuana plants, some two metres high. As well, police found 12-gauge shotgun shells and footprints nearby.

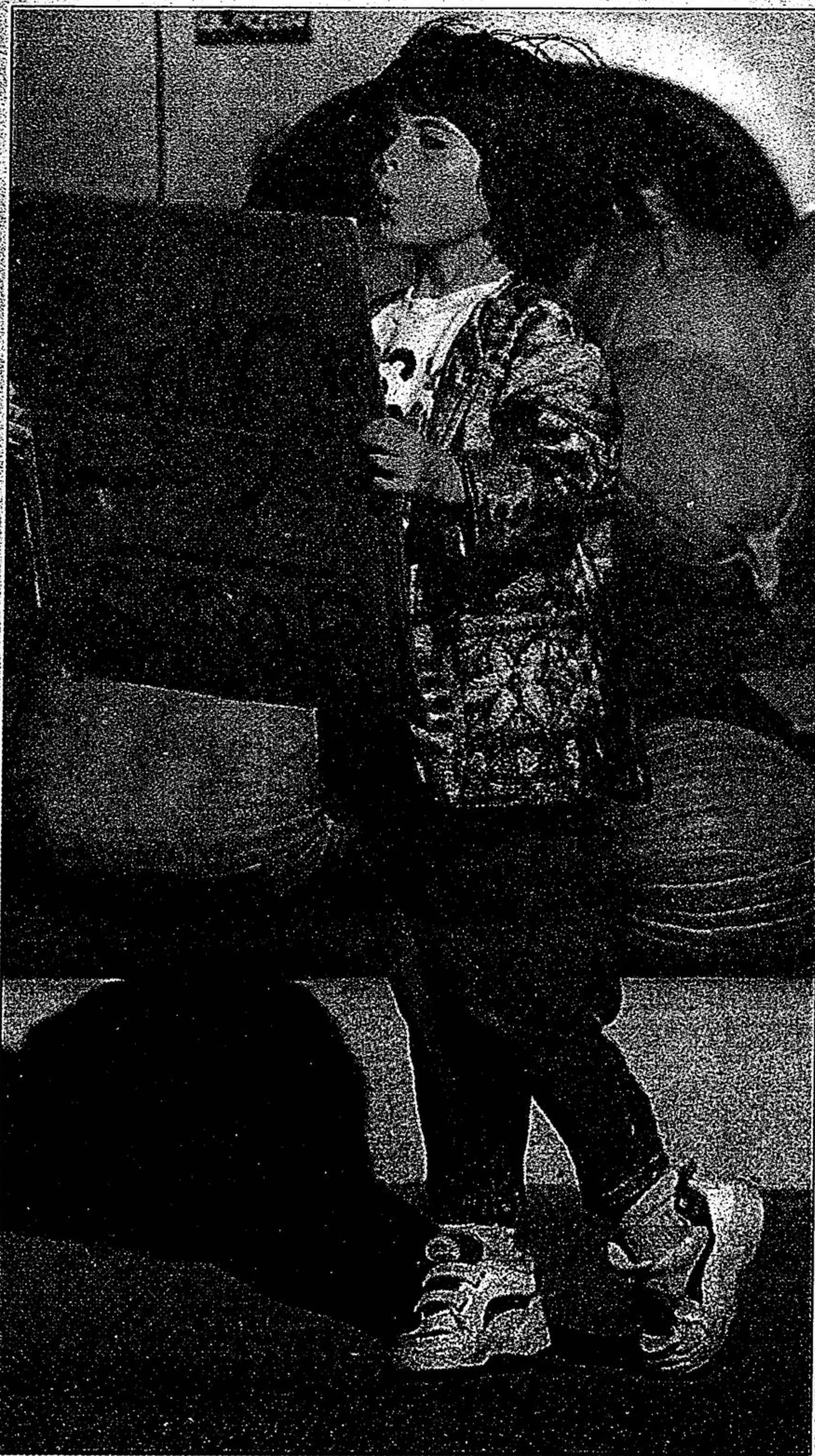
McVeity testified an examination of the police-seized 1987 Ford Taurus, owned by victim Kevin Cowie, 28, of Musselman's Lake, indicated it had been showered with gunshot pellets.

Small dent marks covered parts of the vehicle, while about 40 pellets were found in the car.

As well, two car windows were smashed and stains, resembling

See DIDN'T, page 3.

GOURD SALES JOB



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Emily Stevens tries to flag down vehicles on their way to the rec centre Saturday, hoping to sell some pumpkins to raise funds for her brother's rep atom hockey team.

Teachers discuss strike date

Union wants financial information

BY JENNIFER BROWN
 STAFF WRITER

Elementary teachers in York Region are expected to up the ante by announcing a strike deadline today, even though new talks with the board are set for next Friday.

The union representing 2,700 teachers would not divulge the strike deadline date to reporters yesterday, but leader Phyllis Benedict said it would give the board "a generous" amount of time to react.

She added the strike action will begin with rotating strikes, rather than a full-scale walkout.

"If we do have to disrupt the lives of students, this way would be minimal," she said.

Tonight, the teachers will be rallying at the board's headquarters in Aurora, demonstrating their determination to defend working conditions.

The main issues in the dispute, which has dragged on since the summer, include reduction in preparation time, a salary increase and contract language that protects salaries.

The union has again asked for detailed financial information from the board, in an attempt to find money it says the board is hiding.

"Our trust level with this board is extremely low. We need to see these dollars," said Benedict.

The union's request for audited financial information has been repeatedly rejected by the board.

"I'm baffled," said Karen Barker, head of the board's negotiation committee, insisting the union already has most of the information it is requesting.

"We keep finding possible avenues to find a solution to this but it is the board that puts the wall in front of us," Benedict said.

The union wants a number of documents, including the latest version of the board's budget, audited financial statements for 1997, as well as the following items:

- a table showing the existing salary grid for teachers.
- a detailed calculation of all grants for the current fiscal year.
- information on how grants have been allocated to the different expenditure items. For example, French teachers can be funded from more than one provincial grant.

See UNION, page 3.

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