

# A year of change

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official response, Boynton said. "We need to petition our MPPs to make government aware of our displeasure about the amount of tax to be paid, and the timing of such payment puts an unreasonable strain on business owners who are already saddled with much more bureaucratic red tape," Boynton said.

Stouffville's economic development officer Eric Lismanis is quite optimistic about the future of the town close to the city.

"Nineteen ninety nine will be a banner year as we continue to promote our rural lifestyle and make Whitchurch-Stouffville a desirable place for new residents and businesses," Lismanis said.



**ERIC LISMANIS**  
Need to make town desirable to new residents

The town's retail and service sector will "hopefully experience increased activity as local residents and new residents realize the importance of supporting each other," he added.

"Efforts will, once again, be made to enhance Stouffville's downtown core."

If all goes as planned, residents of Ballantrae and Musselman's Lake will not only feel safer, they'll be safer in '99. The year will see the completion of a \$410,000 fire hall and ambulance station in Ballantrae.

While local developer Gino Testa ran into trouble when attempting to get financial backing to build a \$10-million, 85-unit seniors apartment building in downtown Stouffville, Emmerson remains confident that such a facility will be built in 1999.

### STRONGER POLICE PRESENCE

If the community pulls together, Stouffville should see a stronger police presence in town in the new year, Emmerson said.

A rash of vandalism and other crimes triggered outrage and concern. Emmerson has suggested establishing an information-style police station in the Stouffville train station as one way to combat crime.

And the chamber has joined the fight against local crime and vandalism.

"We must look at zero tolerance

concerning thefts, break-ins and vandalism," Boynton said.

"No business will want to locate in an area that cannot promise a certain degree of safety. The additional cost of making your business premise safe can be a very expensive proposition when looking at the balance sheet for a business."

### EVERYBODY INTO THE POOL

This summer, the battle cry in Stouffville will be 'Everybody into the pool.' Finally, after a decade of lobbying, it looks as if Stouffville will get the pool valued at \$3 million. Construction of the facility is high on Emmerson's list.

A plan is before council to build a complex involving the pool and a \$2-million library on lands south of O'Brien Avenue.

However, some people prefer the library remain where it is, undergo a major expansion and remain separate from the swimming pool.

Soon after the new year, council can expect to hear from the downtown business community. Taking the library out of the downtown will be a major blow, critics have said.

A "vibrant downtown should be in the cards" for '99, Boynton said. "I want the town council to keep this in mind when planning any future projects," she added.

Recreation will attract even more attention in 1999. Before everyone jumps into the pool, Stouffville's youth will take their first turn on the \$25,000 skateboard park to be built at Thicketwood Park in early spring.

Never before has Stouffville spent so much on high ticket items all coming together at one time.

While most of the money for the expenditures comes from reserves, some people worry the spending trend will continue and eventually be reflected in the tax bill.

Emmerson is hoping the employment outlook for Stouffville residents improves next year. The new employment centre, located at the Stouffville Secondary School, is predicted to help 500 people find jobs in 1999.

### SECONDARY PLAN FOR VANDORF

Emmerson is keeping his fingers crossed, hoping every vacant commercial and industrial site will be filled in '99. As well, the mayor expects to have a secondary plan for Vandorf on his desk in a few months.

Construction of a golf course and the first 100 of 900 homes will begin at Hwy. 48 and Aurora

Sideroad in Ballantrae this spring. As well, industrial parks, particularly in Gormley and Vandorf, will continue to clean up while a number of new businesses will move in in '99, Lismanis said.

Stouffville residents can expect the provincial government to stay on course in '99, York Durham MPP Julia Munro said.

"My caucus and I are working to build an Ontario where our health services will be there for us when we need them; where the education system puts our kids first; where criminals are punished, victims respected and police have the resources to keep our streets and neighbourhoods safe; where the welfare system helps those in need while providing the structures to help find their real jobs; and where a strong economy stimulated by tax cuts is creating new jobs for Ontario," Munro said.



**JULIA MUNRO**  
Province trying to make Ontario better place to live

Province trying to make Ontario better place to live

### INTERNATIONAL APPROACH

Encouraging Stouffville's business owners to take an international approach to doing business is on Oak Ridges MP Bryon Wilfert's agenda.

"I've got the names of Stouffville companies that might want to consider establishing an exporting alliance with the Middle East," he said.

The MP is adamant an international airport will not be built on federal lands in Pickering.

Early in the new year, Wilfert will spend time assuring residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville that jets aren't about to occupy the sky over Claremont and Stouffville.

"The people have nothing to worry about. I'll tell them, don't get your socks in a knot," Wilfert said.

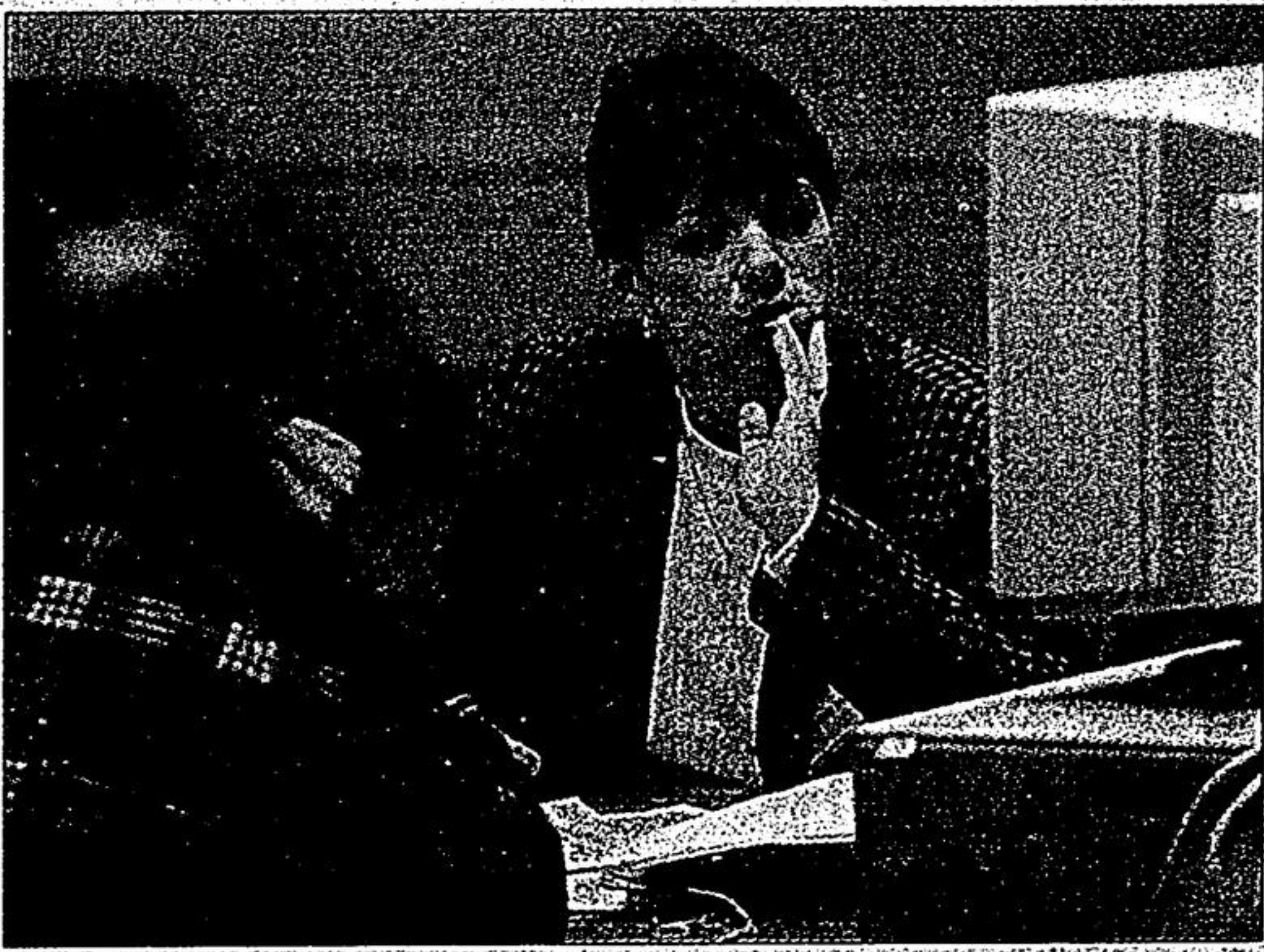
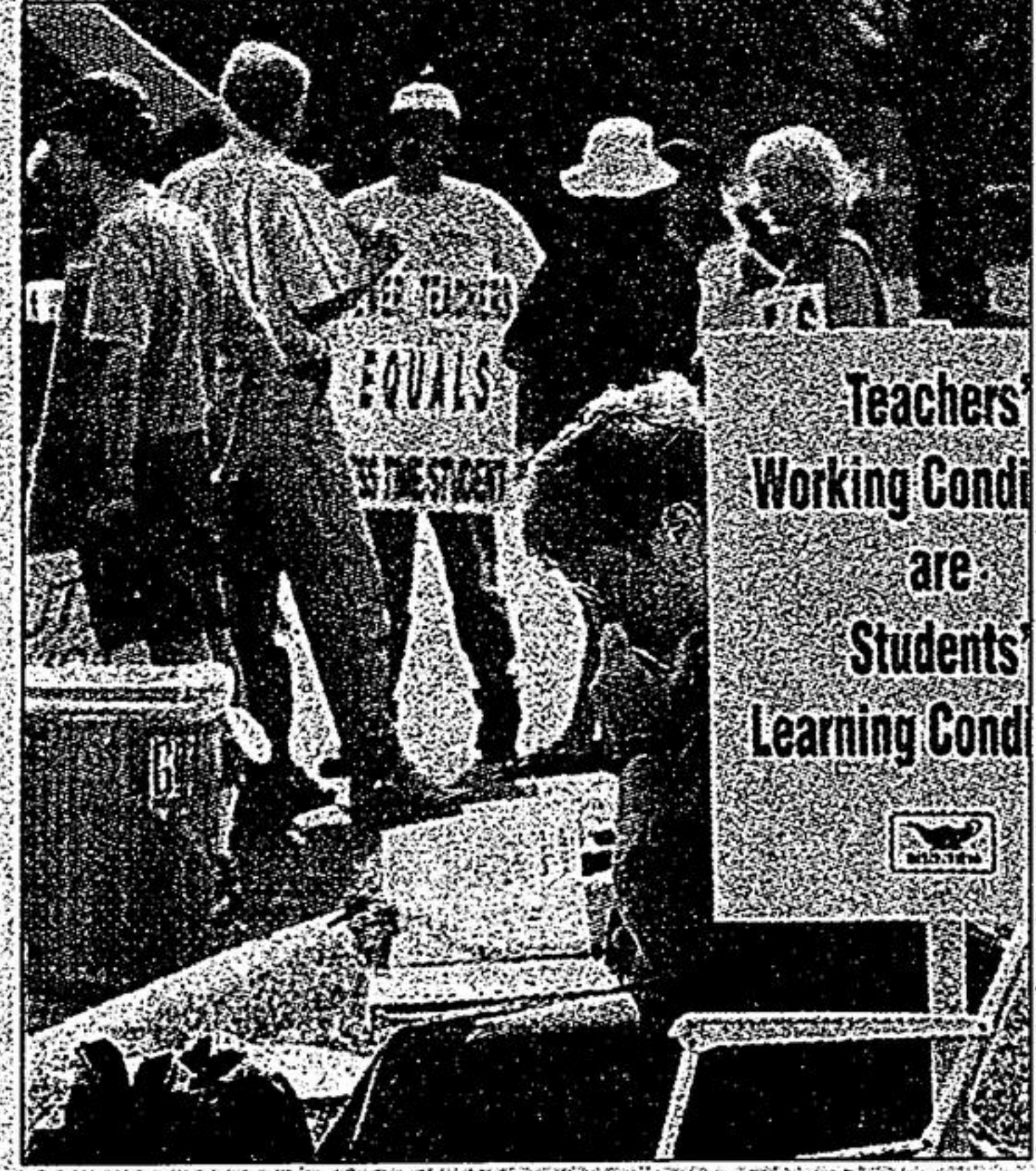
Since the dreaded Y2K bug is expected to bite on the last day of the century, governments are taking measures to Y2K-proof all computer systems. Y2K teams are in place in York Region and at the Stouffville municipal office.

Wilfert's plan is to visit the business community and outline what help is available from the federal government. Many believe the biggest challenge facing our high-tech society is to ensure computer systems are kept up and running.

## THE LOWS OF 1998

Our photographers captured Stouffville's top news on film

Stouffville didn't escape its share of lows during 1998, including the horrible dog attack death of Courtney Trempe, 8, in April (in photo right.) The dog, a bull mastiff, was destroyed. The year was challenging and frustrating for students, parents and teachers as they fought with the province and their boards for more prep time and better salaries. In photo below, local teachers take to the picket line to make a point. And the year proved to be a roller coaster ride for small business as the province tacked assessment change. In photo at bottom, residents had an opportunity to discuss assessment with government workers in Ballantrae.



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