

INSIDE: Opinion . . . 6
 Community . . . 7
 Sports . . . 23
 Classified . . . 24

22 Red Riding Hood visits Granny (and Whitchurch-Stouffville) in March 5-6 pantomime.

ARTS & CULTURE CALENDAR

EVENT: Movie *Shiloh* playing
WHEN: Saturday, Feb. 27 at 2 p.m.
WHERE: Stouffville public library, \$2 a person



14 A convincing business card will often break the ice during client transactions.

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TO REACH US: (905) 640-2100

POLICE: Force is understaffed, audit finds

Chief seeks budget boost

BY RICK VANDERLINDE
STAFF WRITER

York Regional Police Chief Julian Fantino is asking regional politicians to increase the force's budget by about 8 per cent this year.

Fantino said the increase will allow the department to hire 58 more police officers and civilian employees.

Hiking the annual operating budget to \$76 million will also help update aging technology.

Fantino said the budget responds to needs identified by a provincial audit of the force in 1997.

The audit showed that the force was understaffed and under-equipped.

"There is no way that I can see us continuing down the same road," he said.

"Either we do this or we'd better pare down what it is that we expect from our police service."

The 8-per cent increase will translate to an approximate 1.5 per cent increase on the regional portion of property tax bills.

The police services board voted unanimously in favour of asking regional council for the increase.

"I think this is most reasonable given the circumstances," police board chairperson Margaret Black said. "I'm quite willing to fight for this at regional council."

The budget includes money for a new Keswick police station and new mobile computers for police cruisers.

The budget is expected to go to the region's finance committee next week.

HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN

Jean Price celebrates her 100th birthday today with a family party at her home at Parkview Home for the Aged. Born in Owen Sound, the daughter of an itinerant clergyman, Robert McLaren, she lived in Stouffville for a short time in the early 1900s when her father was a minister at the Christian Missionary Church. She moved back to Stouffville 20 years ago and has lived at the Parkview Home for five years. Mrs. Price has two children, Rev. Robert Price of Stouffville and Lorna Pal of Port Perry, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Erasing regions debated

Eliminating one level of government on agenda for GTA board

BY LISA QUEEN
STAFF WRITER

With the preliminaries out of the way, the Greater Toronto Services Board gets down to business tomorrow.

And as the first business meeting kicks off, many York Region politicians are wondering how long regional governments will last.

Fueling the fire is a new discussion paper from the City of Burlington, which advocates killing Halton Region and replacing it with a co-operative services board.

The board, which would have no policy-making powers or direct taxing abilities, would bring councillors and senior bureaucrats together to administer some services.

Local municipalities would become far more powerful. The GTSB would also evolve over time to take on more authority.

The report, written by city manager Tim Dobbie, said the new governance model would be less confusing for residents, who don't know which level of government to call for services.

It would also be more accountable and provide more efficient services, although the report doesn't estimate how much money would be saved.

Many York Region councillors support the model — although at least one rural mayor said small towns will suffer if it goes through.

"Absolutely, put my name up there (in favour of Burlington's plan)," said Vaughan Mayor Lorna Jackson. She was part of a coalition of mayors who last year demanded the province give the GTSB many of the services regions now provide.

"There are those of us who say we don't need two levels of government doing the same thing. We will always protect



Wayne Emmerson, Mayor, vows to protect best interests of town.

See CARVING, page 2.

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