

Stouffville Says

By Hannelore Volpe

Do you think opinion polls influence the way people vote?

— Asked in Stouffville

Garry SCHICKEDANZ



“Polls don’t really matter because they are surveying only a small number of people. I don’t think polls sway voters that much.”

Mike CLARKE



“People tend to listen to the polls and then vote for the person who is most likely to win. Everyone wants to vote for a winner.”

Jennet ABBOTT

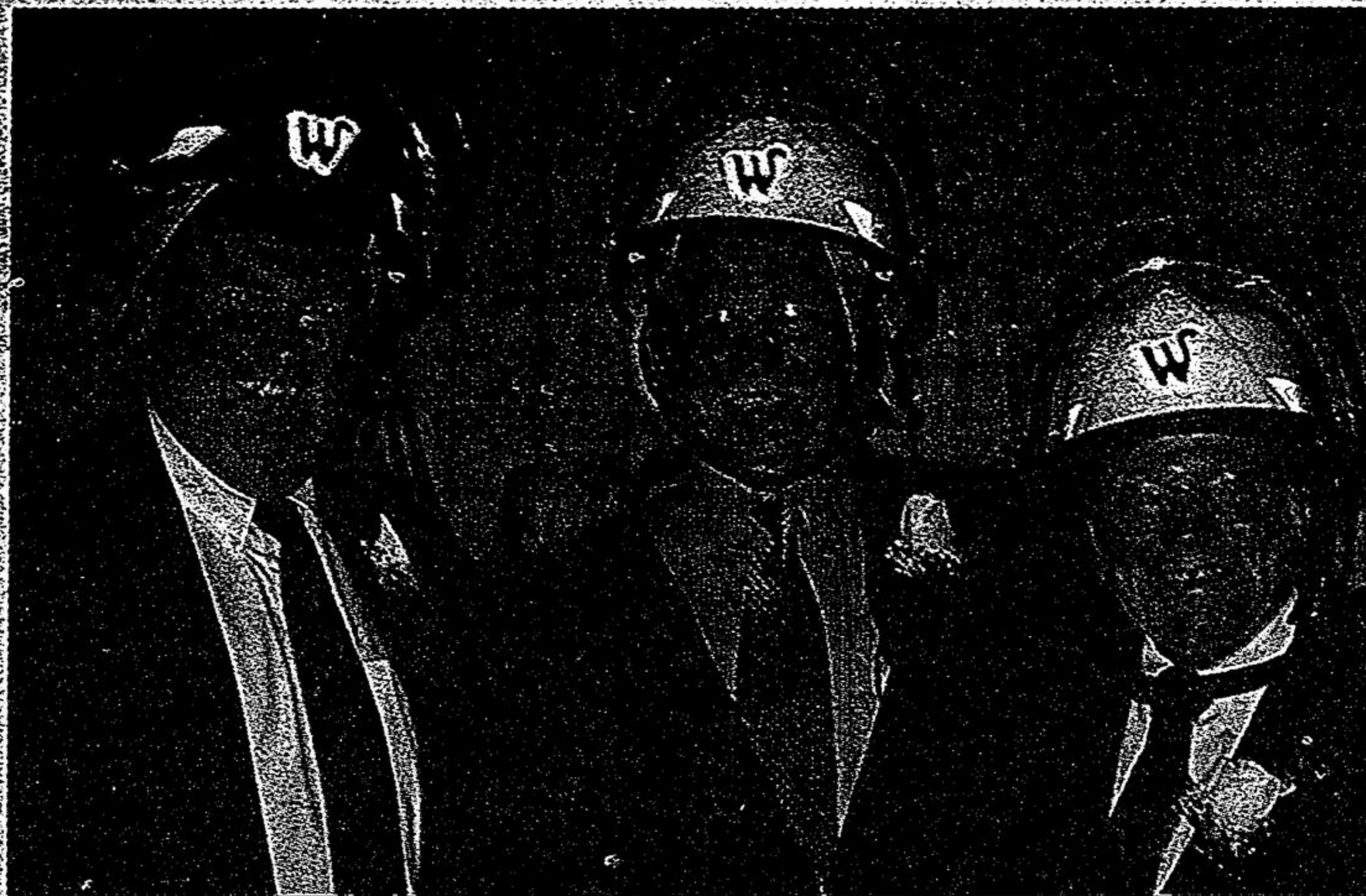


“They don’t influence me. My mind was made up weeks ago. I don’t care what the polls say. I know who I am going to vote for.”

Rebecca GRECO



“Polls are interesting, but we make our own decisions based on all the information that is in the media.”



STAFF PHOTO/HANNELORE VOLPE

Three amigos

Retiring Whitchurch-Stouffville politicians Mayor Wayne Emmerson (left) and councillors Peter Dobrich and Cliff Dunkeld wear fire helmets presented to them at party at Station Creek Golf Club in Gormley Monday. For more on the farewell party, see Jim Mason’s column on page 6.

Region’s fire calls centralized but two big towns opt out

BY SIMONE JOSEPH
Staff Writer

York Region plans to move ahead with a central fire dispatch system without Richmond Hill and Markham.

Regional council voted to form a central fire dispatch service for the seven other municipalities.

“It’s a step in the right direction,” said Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson, who has led the move to a central service.

The amalgamated service will be housed in a building in the Bales Drive industrial park, in the south end of East Gwillimbury, which will also house the region’s 911 emergency call centre and police dispatch.

Combining the region’s dispatch services has been discussed for years but has repeatedly been abandoned because of squabbling between municipalities. Amalgamating services is seen as a major step toward housing all of the region’s emergency dispatch services in one centre.

One reason the region wants to gain control over two provin-

cially run ambulance dispatch centres, which it says are badly managed and cause dispatch delays.

Amalgamating the fire dispatch services will save the seven municipalities \$3.1 million by 2026, according to the region’s report.

But Richmond Hill’s politicians opted out of the system because they believe the region overestimated the town’s savings.

“We’re staying out of it until we can be sure they (Richmond Hill residents) will get better service at the same or lower cost,” Richmond Hill Regional Councillor David Barrow said.

The region predicts it will cost Richmond Hill \$887,800 to run its dispatch service next year. Richmond Hill estimates it will cost \$685,000.

“If we don’t start with accurate numbers, I don’t think (cost and savings) projections are accurate,” Mr. Barrow said.

Richmond Hill’s mayor called the region’s projection “a myth.”

“We’re telling people you are going to pay more under this unified service,” Bill Bell said in a phone interview Thursday.

But Mr. Emmerson believes Markham and Richmond Hill face extra costs in the long run by not joining the central fire dispatch service.

“Five years down the road, they will have to add people and equipment,” he said.

If Markham joins the service, it will have to give up state-of-the-art technology it has purchased over the past three years as well as training it has given its dispatchers, Markham Councillor Bill O’Donnell said.

“We don’t want to throw it away,” he said.

If Markham joins the central service, it will have to adopt new technology along with the other municipalities, Mr. O’Donnell said.

Markham’s fire dispatch service is responsible for more than just sending out fire trucks. It also takes after-hour emergency calls to the town switchboard and monitors alarms at municipally run buildings.

If Markham joins the central service, Mr. O’Donnell is concerned the union would not agree to firefighters taking on these extra duties and Markham would have to hire new staff.

Briefly

For latest election results log on to yorkregion.com

It’s election day in Ontario and if you’re looking for our coverage, click on yorkregion.com

We will be providing up-to-the-minute updates from noon on on the York Region Newspaper Group’s website.

Our team of journalists is reporting from Markham, Oak Ridges, Thornhill, Vaughan-King-Aurora and York-North, with breaking stories and anecdotes from the campaign trail.

You can read about the candidates’ reflections on the campaign, voters’ opinions and what the pundits think will happen.

As soon as the polls close at 8 p.m., we’ll be bringing you regular updates of results, photographs and reactions from the candidates.

There’s an election message board that lets you share your opinions and you can take our election day opinion survey.

If you still haven’t decided who is getting your vote, there is an archive of our previous stories about major campaign issues such as education, health, transportation, justice and environment.

“This is the start of an exciting new phase in our coverage,” editor in chief Debora Kelly said.

“We have been filing breaking news stories to yorkregion.com practically everyday for the past few weeks, but we have never attempted to provide online coverage on this scale. We expect yorkregion.com will soon be our daily newspaper.”

So check out yorkregion.com today.

Quoteworthy

‘Admittedly, we don’t have the facilities of a Markham, a Woodbridge or an Uxbridge, but we do have the expertise.’

Columnist Jim Thomas, on Whitchurch-Stouffville getting its own fall fair. See column on page 7.

Contacting Us

Have a news tip? Please:

- phone us at (905) 640-2612
- e-mail us at jmason@yrng.com
- visit us at 34 Civic Ave., Stouffville

Markham Farmers' Market

8 am — 1 pm

Dairy • Honey • Crafts • Flowers • Art

APPLE DAY & GARAGE SALE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4TH

October 4th Garage Sale will be the rain date from Aug. 30
Last Day on the Market October 11th