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Wednesday February 28, 1979

Out of the cocoon and into a vice-presidency

BY LARRY JOHNSTON
Liberal News Editor

"I was like a caterpillar," said Avril Jennings, "now I'm out of my cocoon."
Eighteen months ago, Ms. Jennings lived in a luxury high-rise apartment, making a home for a "brilliant" young husband who made her feel like a flower on the wallpaper by comparison. "We couldn't communicate," said Ms. Jennings, giving a classic reason for the marriage's break-up.

"Just like that," she found herself on the door-step of the family home at 61 Kirk Drive in Thornhill.

Two months later, she applied for a job as a sales representative in a new office in the Sheppard Centre, the same building where her husband used to live.

What followed is reminiscent of the plot of "How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying."

Something like the young man who walked through a window and wound up as chairman of the board, Ms. Jennings, 28, is now a partner and part-owner of the business where she started out on the bottom rung.

She is gambling her future on being able to capture the imagination of the Toronto area's more adventurous restaurant goers.

She is vice-president of Let's Dine Out Company, which offers club memberships for two diners for the price of one at more than 50 different Toronto restaurants. Club members may use their card in each restaurant only once.

Adventurous diners try out a variety of international foods, French, Italian, mid-eastern and even an Irish restaurant, all of which are included on the list.

The club membership also buys two books of coupons. One is good for discounts at motor-hotels across the United States, usually a second night of free lodging. The other is good for a second free admission at a number of attractions in the Toronto area, from a seat at the St. Lawrence Centre, to a cruise on The Trillium.

Let's Dine Out started 18 years ago in California and spread across the United States. Last year, the owners decided to expand into Toronto. With 4,000 licensed restaurants, it seemed like a logical move; an office was opened and a variety of restaurants were signed up.

But Ms. Jennings said the same kind of promotional techniques which worked on three million Americans were not going to succeed with Canadians.

"If I told you you could get a



AVRIL JENNINGS

free meal in 53 different restaurants for a \$22.95 club membership, you would think there was a catch, wouldn't you?"

"Americans love gimmicks, Canadians are more conservative and we have to explain to them why the concept works."

"Promotion is the name of the game," she explained.

"Restaurants want to become known so they are willing to give away one meal in the hope that you will tell your friends about them and come back again yourself."

The Let's Dine Out list not only includes name restaurants like George's Spaghetti House, but other good restaurants that are off the beaten track like the Deer Park Inn, just outside Stouffville.

There are some restrictions at the most popular restaurants. For example, at the Top of Toronto, the membership is only good for a free meal from October to May.

Ms. Jennings was running the public relations for Let's Dine Out Company when she saw that changes had to be made to get the message across to Torontonians. She found a business partner, and persuaded him to invest in a "sort of franchise" buying out the American owners and promoting the concept in Toronto. She then persuaded the American owners to give her the chance.

Since then, her life has been a whirlwind of radio interviews and business appointments. Her side of the business involves both the publicity and dealing with restaurants, not the best thing for a girl's figure.

She works with the conviction that would sell ice-boxes to Eskimos, knowing that if she fails, she will be right back where she started a year ago, "with nothing". But if she succeeds, she will be a half-owner in a successful service company. So far,

she says, things are going very well.

There was no evidence that she can recall, from her record at Langstaff Secondary School a decade ago, that she would be forging a career for herself in business. Her life was typical Thornhill teenager, to the point where she was even pursued for a photograph in the Telegram's After Four section.

She went to the University of

Guelph; took psychology; became a campus radical, and dropped out. Back in Toronto, she worked with emotionally disturbed children. Then, realizing that her friends' psychology degrees were not leading to jobs, she decided to take something practical.

So she went to Ryerson and took business administration and met her future husband. She did not pick up her business

sense from him, she says, but from her father, Kenneth Jennings, vice-president of Canadian Acceptance Corporation. Her parents, she says, regard her finding a business career so soon after her separation as an "act of God."

She says she is happy for the first time in years. "I didn't used to think of myself as a dynamic person; now I do."

Radio towers approved

Six 170-foot radio transmitter towers will soon dominate the Oak Ridges skyline.

On Monday Richmond Hill council approved a staff recommendation allowing CKAN Radio Limited, from Barrie to amend a bylaw permitting a radio broadcasting facility in town.

CKAN is a newly licensed AM radio station to be located at 1480 on the dial, set up by Aurora, Newmarket and Bradford business men.

The entertainment will be basically adult oriented, middle-of-the-road music that will be heard in Richmond Hill, although

the primary service area will be north to Lake Simcoe.

A strip of land roughly one mile wide running from just north of Bloomington Sideroad to Lake Wilcox, on the east side of Yonge Street is the only area suitable for these towers.

Representatives from CKAN seek to purchase a ten and one-half acre site on Ridge Road east of Yonge Street where they will construct six antennae and associated buildings.

The site is presently in agricultural production and the proposed owners express a willingness to use the land for hay, clover or pasture.

Town planning staff have indicated they do not feel there will be any adverse impact from this proposal, in fact feel the municipality would benefit as they could secure a site for the Richmond Hill Fire Department two-way radio equipment.

CKAN will be able to supply tower space for installation of the radio antenna, electrical power and housing for the transmitter — all for \$50 per month which was described by representatives as "the going rate".

"This is not a commercial figure," said Wayne Bjorgan, spokesman for CKAN, "but roughly the cost of usage".

HELPMATE INFORMATION COMMUNITY CALENDAR

February - March

883-2234

883-2234

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Your community needs you. . .						
			28 Oak Ridges Public School Science Fair — 6.30-8.30 p.m. St Paul's Lutheran Church, Ash Wednesday Service, 8 p.m. Canadian Progress Club, York Central, 7 p.m. 884-3088. Curtain Up at Hillcrest — Tonite: "A Touch of Hawaii", 5.30-8 p.m. St. John Ambulance, York Central Branch Brigade meeting, Don Head School, 8 p.m. 223-3302. Opportunity Sale at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Thornhill, 10 a.m. - noon. Parent & pre-schooler program, St. Mary Immaculate School, 11 a.m. - noon.	1 Richvale Writers Club, 8-11 p.m. 79 Denham Drive, 889-6703. Needlepoint course, Chas. Connor Library, 1.30-3.30 p.m. Info: 773-5533. Block Parent Assn. executive meeting, 7.30 p.m. at York Region Police Station, Major Mackenzie Drive. Info: 881-5608. Intro to Smoke Enders clinics at Thornhill Community Centre, 1 p.m. & 7 p.m. Air Cadets, male & female, 12-18 years, Legion, Ohio Rd., 7 p.m. Info: 884-4521. Richmond Hill Youth Concert Band rehearsals, St. Joseph's School, Info: 884-8873.	2 World Day of Prayer services for Temperanceville, Wesley, St. Paul's & St. Johns at Our Lady of the Annunciation Church, Oak Ridges, 1.30 p.m. World Day of Prayer at St. Mary's Anglican, 10 a.m. Transportation: 884-2045. Y-Ballroom Dance at Richvale Community Centre, 8.30 p.m. Tickets: Call the Y. Euchre at Buttonville Community Hall, 8 p.m. Friday night youth program for kids 13 to 16 at Don Head School, 7-10 p.m. Duplicate Bridge, 12125 Yonge, 8 p.m. Info: 884-1689.	3 York Philharmonic Choir, an evening of great choral works. Edward F. Luka conducts. At Thornhill United Church, 8 p.m. Tickets: 889-2042, 225-3745. Richmond Hill Leo's Club "Jeans Dance", 8 p.m. R. Hill Lions Hall. 1st Langstaff Cubs and Scouts annual Dance at Richvale Lions Hall, 8 p.m. Tickets: 881-0771. Dance at Thornhill Community Centre, 8.30 p.m. One Parent Families Association. One day seminar at Waldorf School, 9.30 - 4 p.m.
4 Richvale Lions Bingo, Richvale Lions Hall, Spruce Avenue, 7.30 p.m. York Choral Society, assisted by York Symphony Orchestra, Mozart's Requiem, and Gilbert and Sullivan's "Trial by Jury", 8 p.m. at Mary Lake Shrine, King. Info: 884-4532. Ecumenical Lenten Service, Christ The King Lutheran Church, Thornhill, 7.15 p.m.	5 Helpmate Information annual meeting at Consumers Gas, Richmond Hill, 7.30 p.m. Info: 883-2234. York Philharmonic Choir practice at Richmond Hill Baptist Church, 7.30 p.m. Scrabble games at Richvale Community Centre, 7.30 - 10.30 p.m. Sea Cadets, RCSCC Patriot, St. Mary's Anglican, 7-9 p.m. Info: 884-3630. Lions Bingo at 7.40 p.m., Centre St., Richmond Hill.	6 Ladies Night Out, Yoga & a variety of crafts, Viking Club, Oak Ridges, 7 p.m. Scone tea, Burr House, Carrville Road, 1.30 p.m. Info: 884-0327. Income tax clinic for seniors and low income people, noon to 8 p.m. Info: 883-2234. Richmond Hill Horticultural Society meeting at the Presbyterian Church, 8 p.m.	7 Lenten Service, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 8 p.m. Richmond Hill United Church Women, Church Parlour, 8 p.m. Info: 884-1301. Curtain Up at Hillcrest, Tonite: Polka Night featuring E. Gresko, 5.30 p.m. - 8 p.m. Evening Book Discussion group, Thornhill Community Centre Library, 7.30 p.m. Parent & pre-schooler program at St. Mary Immaculate School, 11 a.m. - noon.	8 Richmond Hill Youth Concert Band rehearsals, 7.30 p.m. St. Joseph's School, Info: 884-8873. Air Cadets, male & female, 12-18 yrs, Legion, Ohio Rd., 7 p.m. Info: 884-4521. Citizen Advisory Group meeting, 7.15 p.m. Consumers' Gas building. "A Christian Approach to Effective Living" at St. Mary's Anglican Church, 7.30-9.30 p.m. Info: 884-2227. Intro meeting for Smoke Enders clinics, 1 p.m. & 7.30 p.m.	9 Twin Hills Midget B Rams sponsor a dinner dance at Oak Ridges Bond Lake Arena. Tickets: 884-4441. Friday night youth program for kids 13-16 at Don Head School, 7-10 p.m. Duplicate Bridge, 12125 Yonge St., 8 p.m. Info: 884-1689.	10 International Dance at Heintzman House, sponsored by Heintzman House Ladies Auxiliary, 8 p.m. Info: 889-9308. Soccer registration, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Thornhill Community Centre. Info: 889-8957.
11 Richvale Lions bingo, Richvale Lions Hall, Spruce Avenue, 7.30 p.m. St. Paul's Lutheran Church pancake breakfast, 9.30 - 10.30 a.m. Ecumenical Lenten Service, Thornhill United Church, 7.15 p.m.	12 "Swing Into Spring" fashion show by A.C.W. and Holy Trinity Church, Thornhill. Info: 881-7349. Lions Bingo at 7.40 p.m. Centre Street, Richmond Hill. Duplicate Bridge, 12125 Yonge St. 8 p.m. Info: 884-1689. Scrabble Games, Richvale Community Centre, 7.30 - 10.30 p.m.	13 Charles Connor Library, Aurora Cancer Unit, film on self breast examination, 7.30 p.m. One Parent Families Assn. general meeting, Thornhill Community Centre, Election night, 8 p.m. Concord Golden Era Club euchre, Concord Community Hall, 8 p.m. Info: 669-1851.	14 Combined L.C.W. meeting and Lenten Service at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 8 p.m. Medical Secretaries Assn, York Central Hospital, 8 p.m. Info: 884-5789. Canadian Progress Club, 7 p.m. Info: 884-3888. Curtain Up at Hillcrest, Tonite: "Irish Mist," featuring Jean Doench.	15 "A Christian Approach to Effective Living" at St. Mary's Anglican Church, 7.30 - 9.30 p.m. Info: 884-2227. Air Cadets, male and female, 12-18 years, Legion, Ohio road, 7 p.m. Info: 884-4521. Richmond Hill Youth Concert Band rehearsals, 7.30 p.m. at St. Joseph's School. For further information, call 884-8873.	16 Duplicate Bridge, St. John's Anglican Church, 12125 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill, 8 p.m. For more information, call 884-1689. Friday night youth program for kids 13-16 years at Don Head Secondary School from 7 to 10 p.m.	17

REGULAR EVENTS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Saturday
Yoga, Richmond Hill United Church, 7.15 to 8.30 p.m. for beginners; 8.30 p.m. to 9.45 p.m. for intermediates. York Philharmonic Choir practice, R. Hill Baptist, 7.30 p.m.	Legal Aid Clinic, 7 to 10 p.m. 884-9148. Mother's Break, Richmond Hill United Church, 9.30 - 11.15 a.m. 884-4294.	Unit for information and appointment: 884-1133; 887-5245; 832-1384; 297-3324. Thornhill Lions Bingo, Thornhill Community Centre, 7.30 p.m. Parent Concern, 8 to 10 p.m. Call Joyce, 884-3503. Counterweight, Richmond Hill Public Library, 7.30 p.m. Duplicate Bridge, St. John's Anglican Church, 12125 Yonge.	information and appointments: 884-1133; 887-5245; 832-1384; 297-3324. Richmond Hill Legion Bingo, Legion Hall, Ohio Road, Richmond Hill, 7.35 p.m. Yoga Classes at Thornhill Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 8.45 to 10 p.m. Yoga Class, Richmond Hill United Church, 9 to 10.15 a.m. for beginners and 10.15 to 11.30 a.m.	for intermediates, 884-2671. Weight Watchers, Concord Community Centre, 7.30 p.m. 669-2173. Thornhill Recycling Depot, Bayview and Green Lane, 7 to 8.30 p.m. Maple Leaf Accordion Band, McKillop School, 7 to 9 p.m. 884-8390. Navy League, St. Mary's Anglican Church, Wrixon Hall, 6.45 p.m. Boys 10 to 13 welcome. 223-8868.
				Richmond Hill Recycling Depot, Elgin Mills Road at Leslie, 10 a.m. to noon. Thornhill Recycling Depot, Bayview and Green Lane, 10 a.m. to noon.