



R.R. 1, Stouffville couple win framed wildlife print

Chester Pearse (left) of R.R. 1, Stouffville won a framed Marc Barrie wildlife print as first prize in a draw sponsored by Thickson's Woods Heritage Foundation. Mr. Pearse and his wife Emily accept 'Out For The Afternoon - Red Fox' from the artist's mother, Kar-

rine Barrie (right), operator of his Gallery Brougham. Mr. Barrie donated a total of four recent releases to help pay off the foundation's \$55,000 mortgage on a white pine forest preserve in Whitby. The tickets were drawn Saturday at the gallery. -Chris Shanahan

Father jailed in fire death of two sons

EPSOM — The father of two boys who perished in a 1984 house fire near Uxbridge has been jailed for six months.

John Arthur Begin, 46, was convicted in Whitby District Court Feb. 26 of two counts of criminal negligence causing death.

Judge John Hoolihan ruled that Begin was guilty because he made no attempt to save sons Jeffrey, 6, and three-year Michael from the family's burning Epsom house on Jan. 29, 1984.

The boys died of smoke inhalation. Begin also received a two-year term of probation as part of his sentence.

Testimony established that Begin was in a drunken stupor when he turned the kitchen stove to its highest setting the night of the blaze. He then passed out on the floor and later awoke to thick smoke.

Despite hearing one of his sons cry out, the father crashed his way out of the house without making any rescue attempt, court was told. He and his former wife argued that evening and she had left the scene several hours before the fire.

Volunteer firefighters from Uxbridge and Scugog Townships testified during the trial that precious minutes were lost when Begin gave emergency officials an incorrect address.

Judge Hoolihan said the most valuable lesson in this case is that "persons in charge of young children must take great care and caution for the lives and safety of those too young to care for themselves."

Crown Attorney Ed Bradley requested Begin be jailed for at least two years because the convicted man has yet to come to terms fully with his alcohol problem.

However, the judge stressed a six-month sentence was sufficient because Begin had "punished himself."

Defence lawyer Bruce Affleck called for a suspended sentence, claiming his client became "morose and depressed" after the death of his sons.

The boys' father blamed himself and tried on several occasions to commit suicide, according to Mr. Affleck, who said he intends to appeal both the sentence and the two convictions.

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 Samantha Travel, Main St. Markham

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