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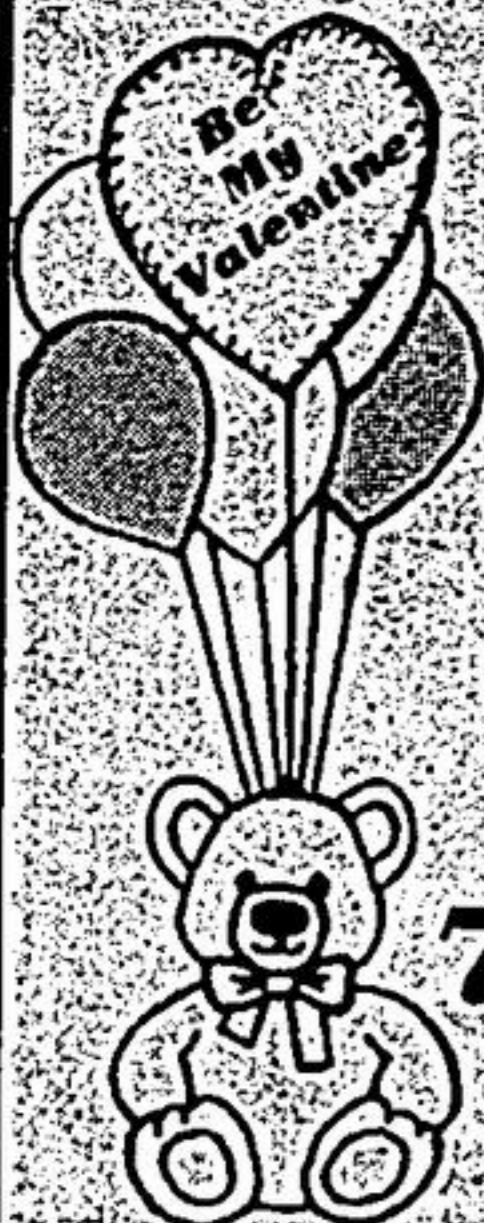
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Karen Richards & her staff would like to thank everyone who helped make her first birthday sale a great success.

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REAL ESTATE TIPS

SHOULD YOU BUY A HOUSE WITH AN IMPORTANT DEFECT?

If you like it in all other ways, then it depends on whether the price is right. We are reminded of the case of a home with a wet basement - a sure drawback to any property and sure-fire fault to turn off the enthusiasm of otherwise ardent buyers.

The cold dollars and cents facts of this kind of situation, however, are that more than likely the fault could be remedied for far less money than the owner would ask for the property if he corrected the fault himself.

In this instance, the buyer was able to purchase the property for two to three thousand dollars less than it otherwise would have sold for if the basement had been repaired by the owner.

The cost to the purchaser for repairs? Less than \$1000. for the installation of drain tiles that made the basement absolutely dry.

Your most reliable guide, if you are considering a home with a significant defect, is the counsel of a conscientious Real Estate Agent who is in daily touch with property values and whose experience can guide you to an economically-wise decision. Don't let a defect blind you to a substantial bargain.

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Leather leaders

By DENISE McDONALD
What does the King of Saudi Arabia's private 747 have in common with former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's office? Or the original interior of the CN Tower with the company producing Lear jets? Each has an association with Whitchurch-Stouffville, thanks to leather supplied by Spinneybeck Enterprises Ltd.

"We have evolved from a importer of shoe leather to a leading importer of fine Italian calfskin for upholstery," says Spinneybeck vice-president Stephen Manchee.

According to Stephen, Spinneybeck was founded by his father Charles Manchee in June, 1962, and is located in the former Hillcrest Public School (S.S. No. 8), a half-mile south of Bloomington Road on Kennedy Road. Charles had previously been the sales manager for the Davis Leather Company on Davis Drive, Newmarket. His three sons later joined the firm after schooling in Europe; Philip as president, Stephen as vice-president, and Michael as treasurer.

"Spinneybeck was named after my parent's farm across the road," says Stephen. "Spinney comes from the old English word for a stand of woods and beck means a stream. Not really intended, it's ironic these words are the two key ingredients in the old-fashioned leather-making techniques."

Although Spinneybeck is a warehouse, not a manufacturing firm, it caters mainly to business focused on the contract industry, such as architects and interior designers. However, he claims, "as the renaissance of leather gains momentum," they may soon begin dealing with the residential sector.

"Sometime during the post World War II era we became a vinylized society," he says referring to it as the plastic perfect syndrome. "But these days, people no longer seem as interested in a throw-away society and the trend is going back to a mass interest in the beauty and value of good quality, natural leather."

According to Stephen, all the premium select, calfskin leather comes to Spinneybeck already tanned and dyed, ready to be shipped to their clients.

"The best upholstery leather hides are from the bovines of Central and Southern Europe," Stephen says. "Of these, the finest are the veal calfskins of Northern Italy. Italian veal animals are protected from the weather, fed a milk diet and washed regularly. They also have smaller farms, don't brand their animals and have no barbed wire fences."

Priding themselves on the finest imported leather, Stephen feels it's unfortunate most people misinterpret the term "genuine leather" and accept this as a mark of quality.

"This is equal to saying a car is a car, and comparing a Hyundai Pony to a Rolls-Royce Corona," he says.

According to a leather manual supplied by Spinneybeck, most people are confused by the term "top grain." However, this definition is used when the grain is not genuine but has been sanded away and an imitation grain stamped on. Spinneybeck claims to only import "full grain" or "full top grain" leather.

Just as the grain, texture and markings of wood should reveal the nature of the tree from which it comes, leather should display the natural markings and grain characteristics of the animal. reads the manual. "One should see the fat wrinkles and rib lines and it should feel supple and natural to the touch."