

Painters busy in Stouffville

By BRUCE STAPLEY
College Pro Painters has come to see its presence felt more and more in the Stouffville area. The company is predominantly student staffed and managed, and was created by Greig Clark in 1971. Clark, then a student at the University of Western Ontario, got together with some of his friends in the Thunder Bay area, and began to offer their services to pay for college expenses. By 1976, Clark had turned the enterprise into a full-time business. He has since expanded across Canada and into the U.S. The operation employs 375 people as managers assigned to individual territories. Most of the managers are university students, as are the majority of the employees. Donna Bradley, a Stouffville-area resident, is the manager of the Markham-Stouffville area. Stouffville's Baha Soltanzadeh manages an area in Toronto. Soltanzadeh, who has completed two years of college, has been working full-time with College Pro for a year, but plans to return to school this fall. College Pro customer service representative Jennifer Shearson claims that the idea is a great one

for university students who are willing to work hard and make good money. "The hourly wage is good," she claims. "One student made \$8,000 last summer from May through August, putting in 60-70 hour weeks." Shearson, a fourth-year English major at Western, says all employees are thoroughly trained, and work is guaranteed for two years. Prices are competitive with independent professional house painters, she says, and the company does commercial and residential work. Shearson says the company has established a good working relationship with the independents. "Sometimes they will subcontract work out to us when they are too busy to do it," she notes. While the managers and employees come and go, lasting an average of two years, the office staff is full time. Most work is done during the summer months, but there are some students who will take a year off school, painting full-time, and return after saving enough to put themselves through another school year. According to Shearson, recruit-

ing drives are aimed at university students, but anyone willing to work is considered for employment. "It's strenuous, and a lot of employees simply burn out after a year or two," she says. "It can get pretty hot out there." Shearson reports that the company, which employs 3,000 painters nation-wide, will do over \$25 million in work each year. "It's a great company to work for," she insists. "And it's exciting because it's growing."

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