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New Age store has churches outraged

□ 'I'm not evil' says owner of new Main Street store, the Magick Serpent

BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

A newly-opened Stouffville store has become cause for concern for many among the local Christian community.

And even though the owner of the Magick Serpent on Main Street insists she is not trying to fly in the face of traditional Christian taboos, several local pastors suggest the merchant is playing with fire.

Stouffville resident Heather Southgate, who opened her store May 1, told *The Tribune* her business is a "cross between a New Age bookstore and a naturalist shop."

The store sells New Age books, which Southgate said offer, "a spiritual alternative based on nature." The merchandise also

includes incense, gems, candles, bath products, jewellery, and herbal tea. In addition to her merchandise, Southgate said she is offering tarot readings, numerology, and astrology services.

She acknowledged there have been concerns about her outside sign, which contains a controversial five-pointed star symbol known as a pentacle or pentagram.

"Some people associate it (the symbol) with Satan," she said, adding that while the Satanic symbol has two points pointing upwards, hers only has one.

"Mine is a man with arms and legs outstretched, surrendering himself to the wills of heaven. It was originally a symbol of Christianity."

Southgate said she hasn't been

directly approached by people who disapprove of what she is doing, but that she has heard of the negative response "through the grapevine."

"I find it amusing that people won't come in to check me out,

but they judge me."

"I have no part in the occult," added Southgate. "I'm not evil. I don't sacrifice animals."

Southgate insisted the positive response to her store has far outweighed the negative.

Gene Clarke, the head pastor of the Penecostal Church, said that while he has not been in the store, he has seen a flyer distributed by the business.

"The flyer said it was the store

(See page 3)



Photo: LORI EMMERSON

Heather Southgate's New Age store on Main St. has attracted complaints from several local church groups.



Crime

Tires slashed at four locations

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

More than 30 tires were flattened this week during a rash of tire slashings in local parking lots, *The Tribune* has learned.

York Regional Police officials said 16 vehicles had at least one tire on each car slashed during Monday and Tuesday night this week at four different locations. Inspector Ivars Vitins said six cars parked at a seniors apartment complex on Elm Road were damaged by "some idiots" toting knives. Culprits, who neatly sliced the top of each tire with an inch-long clean cut, also slashed tires from several cars parked in lots on Aspen Crescent, Success Square Plaza and the Ninth Line and Main Street, Vitins said.

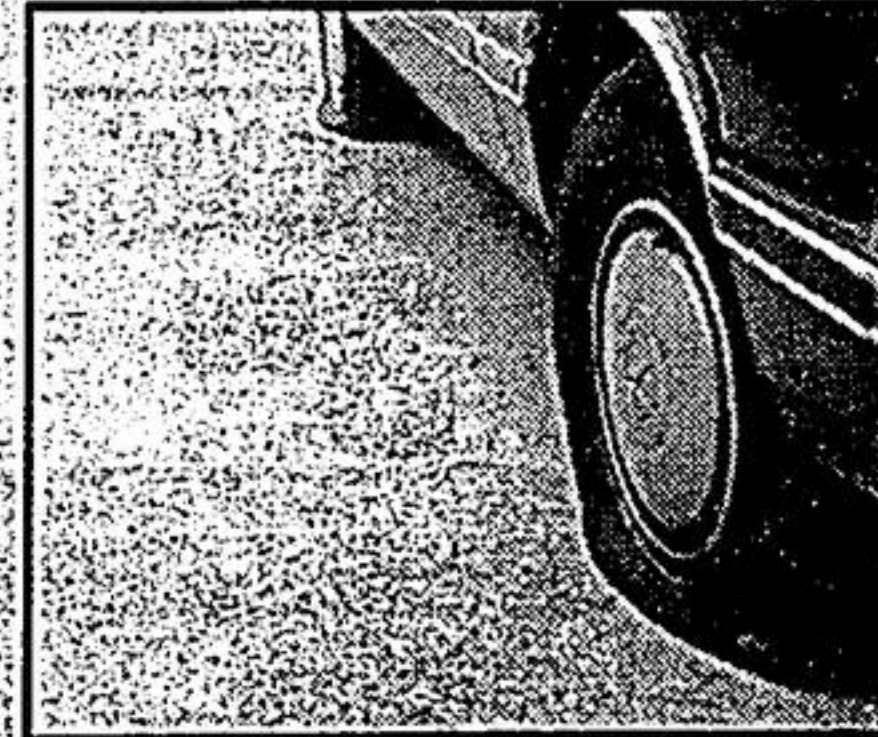
The incidents took place during the evenings of Mon., May 25 and Tues., May 26 between 10:30

p.m. and 11 p.m. and "have to be related," he said.

Vitins said police will be keeping a close watch on local parking lots during the next few weeks, and advises residents to keep their cars in well-lit areas. Local residents have also

been advised, through the local PC Cops computer telephone alert service, to be on the lookout for a light blue car, possibly a Chevrolet Chevette, which was seen in one area shortly after an incident.

He said the crime warrants a malicious damage arrest, but confirmed there are no suspects to date.



These tires were slashed at Elm Rd. apartments

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