

Rats huge cause of house fires

■ From page 1 ■

the hole behind our toilet," said Tungatt.

Tungatt ran upstairs and got the landlord. "He came down and grabbed the tail," said Tungatt. "The rat was still alive. He pulled it through the hole with the rat screaming. He hammered the rat over the head with my toilet plunger and threw it in a bag, still alive. At first I was disgusted and second, I was fed up."

Tungatt wondered if rats pose a health threat. Tungatt had "good reason" to wonder, said Murray Wood, a manager with PCO Services Ltd. (PCO), the largest pest control company in Canada.

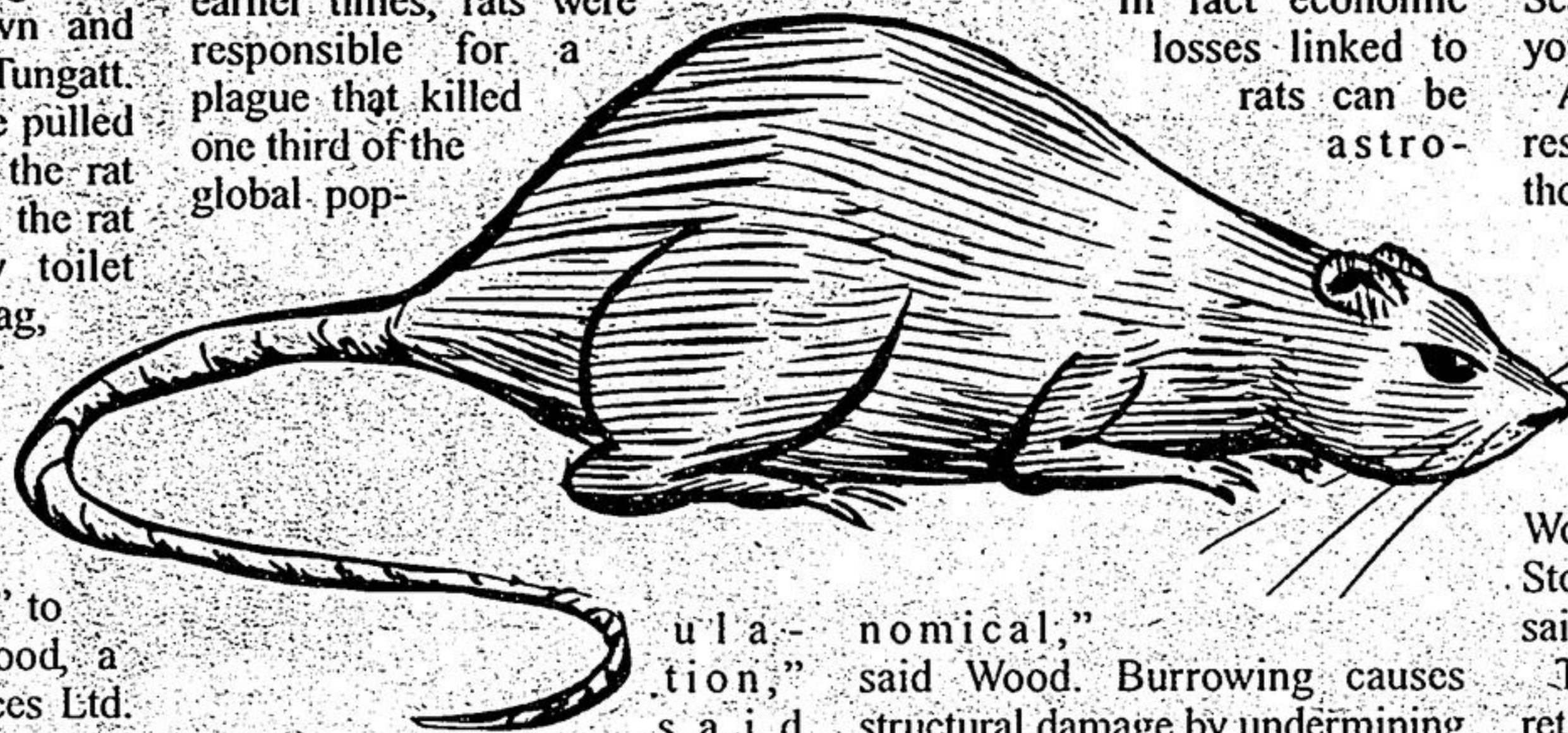
When it comes to rats, including those found in Stouffville, health aspects should not be overlooked," stressed Wood.

Not only are rats the most destructive pests known to man, they're a known source of numer-

ous diseases. "Diseases carried by rodents have played an important part in shaping civilization throughout the centuries. In earlier times, rats were responsible for a plague that killed one third of the global pop-

Wood wasn't surprised that Tungatt's rats took a liking to Q-tips. Rats gnaw and burrow their way through life.

"In fact economic losses linked to rats can be astronomical,"



ulation," said Wood

said Wood. Burrowing causes structural damage by undermining foundations, collapsing roads and railway tracks.

"Rats do an unbelievable amount of gnawing," said Wood. "They cut lead, fiber, and plastic pipes. They rip fabric on furniture and clothing. And, rats have chewed hoofs and legs of livestock, eaten eggs and the young of poultry."

Gnawing on electrical wires can cause fire, power shortages or telephone interruptions. "Fire is the number one fear. Rats are the cause of more fires than we realize," said Wood.

Stouffville has an ongoing battle with rats. Rats traps are a popular item at the Stouffville Coop, said manager Steve Pope. "Yes, we sell a lot of rat traps. We always have."

Because of this year's climate, the rat population is up this year, said Wood.

Since rats like to get inside for the winter and since there are more of them, Stouffville residents are faced with an extra burden.

Pope even takes measures to keep rats at bay at his Edward Street business. Because of the nature of the agriculture business, the threat of rats always exists. Twice a year, a PCO technicians

arrive and carry out measures to keep the rats out.

PCO has a district office at Markham Rd.-Finch Avenue in Scarborough. "We do business in your area," said Wood.

As well as co-ops, PCO treats restaurants, industry, especially those with warehouses and plenty of homes.

When urban development moves into rural area, special features come with it.

"Rats are one of them," said Wood. "It doesn't surprise me that Stouffville is bothered by rats," he said.

Tungatt and Crozier haven't returned to their apartment. While the landlord has plugged some holes, the women aren't convinced all is well. "We're not comfortable with the thought of rats running around, especially considering how fast they breed," said Tungatt.

If you find poop the size of jelly beans, you've got rats, warns a pest control specialist.

And, if you find cloth, paper and wires have been chewed, you have both a disease and a fire threat, stresses Murray Wood, spokesman for PCO Services Inc. who offers this advise to keep rats away: Get rid of all garbage, especially food immediately; store food goods in jars, plug hole with steal wool and seal off all openings to the outside.

Since rats are almost blind and they can't control their bladders, they're not that hard to find, especially if you're a rat specialist. Rats can't see you coming and they urinate non-stop. Pest control technicians, using black lights to illuminate the urine, track the rats to their nests.



ENTRAPMENT: Darlene Currie, Co-op employee shows off rat poison and traps for sale at the co-op to Jennifer Tungatt, whose Stouffville apartment was infiltrated by rats. Currie claims sales of rat riddance paraphernalia is up significantly this year.

Photo by STEVE SOMERVILLE

3,000 set to work for welfare

MIKE ADLER Staff Reporter

York Region's workfare program has already met its "very ambitious" target for client volunteers, says the region's social services commissioner.

And on Thursday, the region is set to choose an agency that will start placing some of those welfare recipients into jobs, kicking off the next stages of the program.

"If council approves that, then we can motor, we can move," Commissioner Joann Simmons said yesterday.

Staff are recommending that a consortium led by COSTI, which has an office in Markham, get a three-year contract to place welfare clients in volunteer positions and paying jobs.

The group, which also includes Georgia Job Skills and a private company, the First Interactive Computer College, has said it will open six "access sites" in the region for the program's clients, some of whom could also try starting a business of their own.

Between Oct. 1 and the middle of this month, almost 3,000 welfare recipients entered the program by signing a "participation agreement."

The region set 3,000 participants as a target for the end of this year, and considered that number "very ambitious," Simmons said.

Meeting it so soon suggests "people want help and they want to be independent and they want to get work," she concluded.

Under workfare, employable welfare recipients who aren't placed in a job or volunteer position will be given job-seeking training or similar activities.

Vaughan Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio, a supporter of the program, said she's encouraged by the number of people who signed up.

"I think it's absolutely awesome," said Frustaglio, a member of the region's social services committee. "It opens doors for them that would otherwise be closed."

32 per cent of Gr. 3s are adequate readers

■ From page 1 ■

Smith, volunteer chair for the Education Quality and Accountability Office.

But Smith said she had faith "that when the dust settles people will look at this seriously" and work together to make some improvements.

Both York boards did fairly well, she said last week, since they finished slightly above provincial averages. Across Ontario, 39 per cent of

participating students read at Level 1 or at Level 2, which is considered adequate. Fifty per cent read at the higher levels of achievement, 3 and 4.

In York Region, 32 per cent of public school third-graders read at 1 or 2, and 55 per cent were ranked in the top two levels. Thirty six per cent of Catholic students read at Level 1 or 2, 58 per cent ranked at Level 3 or 4.

The numbers don't add to 100 because some students — more at

the public board — were exempted from the assessment period, and some were missing.


For math, the provincial scores were less impressive. Sixty per cent were scored as Level 1 or 2, and only 29 per cent reached the upper levels. In the region, 51 per cent of public board pupils performed math at Levels 1 or 2, and 39 were ranked as Level 3 or 4.

Catholic third graders were in the bottom two levels 57 per cent of the time, but 39 per cent were in Level 3

or 4.

About half the parents who responded to an EQAO survey said they were not involved in their children's education — and there were probably more who just didn't admit it, Smith said.


Parents need to know that children do better when parents are involved, she said. The scores in math should raise concern, added Smith, who noted the EQAO survey found that few teachers had university training in math.



HOUSTON
Ford Mercury

BILL HOUSTON FORD MERCURY SALES LTD.
11769 Highway 48, Stouffville 640-4541

USED CAR CLEAROUT
Taurus - Contour - Windstar - Ranger
Sable - Mystique - Villager - Explorer
AND MANY MORE TO CHOOSE FROM
2-YEAR LEASES LOW LOW LOW PRICES
SEE DEALER FOR DETAILS



MERCURY

BLOOMINGTON	HWY. #48
STOUFFVILLE RD.	NINTH LINE
MAJOR MACKENZIE	

OUR CUSTOMERS ARE THE FOCUS OF EVERYTHING WE DO