

# Chamber of Commerce Winterfest '98



And we'll have fun, fun, fun



In photo far left, Jane Morgan and granddaughter Aura Lowe, 3, perform their own special ballet on the icerink. In photo top right Heather Lee and son Eric, 5, race downhill while Casey O'Dell-Ewens, 14, takes her Lab-Husky puppy Kyeli onto the snowcovered beach in photo left. In top photo Jassen Benedict, 15, (left) and Troy Maillet, 14, serve scrumptious BBQ dogs at the Optimist Club stand.

Photos by SJOERD WITTEVEEN

## Apprenticeship program needs fresh, new blood

MIKE ADLER  
Staff Reporter

Reforms for Ontario's apprenticeship system come as too many skilled workers are retiring and not enough young people are ready to take their place.

But charging tuition to enter apprenticeship programs is "ludicrous," says Robert Brady, a local teacher who once worked in a trade himself.

"You're dumping costs on those who can't least afford it," warned Brady, technical department head at Markham's Brother Andre Catholic High School.

Standing in a machine shop last month, Education Minister Dave Johnson announced changes he said will make it easier for people

to enter trades and for industries to get more skilled workers.

Besides charging apprentices a fee for classroom training, Johnson said he'll drop the minimum age requirement — now 16 years — for apprentices and let related industries help shape the training process.

"But although the visiting Johnson pointed out tool-and-die specialists can make \$100,000 a year, Brady said apprentices start with low wages and their employers demand hard work.

"If they don't show the smarts to do their job, they don't have it any more," he said recently.

The shortage of apprentices is a growing problem. "A lot of small machine shops are crying to bring new people on board," Brady said.

And a construction union consultant said his local, the largest in North America, started a high school outreach program in September to attract young people to trades.

"The average age of our membership is about 55 years old," Lito Romano, based at the Labourers International Union of North American training centre in North York.

The local is losing 40 or 50 members a month at a time when more work is available, he added.

"The construction industry has never been considered a glamour industry," said Romano.

"We're trying to change that." Disappearing or neglected technical programs in schools may partly account for the lack of interest in trades, some suggest.

At Brother Andre, Brady is setting up one of only two pre-apprenticeship programs in the region's separate schools.

The public system has only one, at Thornlea Secondary in Thornhill.

As part of its plan to change high school education, Johnson's ministry said schools will work with a "partnership council" to give students chances to "explore and pursue" apprenticeships.

The district public board wants to expose more students to skilled trades and make more opportunities available. Avis Glaze, its associate director said last week.

"We do not have many students involved in apprenticeship programs who could be involved," she said.

## Cube van destroyed in blaze

Fire completely destroyed a cube van which was equipped with a mobile tool set at Kennedy Lane and Stouffville Road on Friday afternoon, a fire official reported.

The driver and the lone occupant of the 1989 vehicle managed to get out without injury, reports Whitchurch-Stouffville fire chief Murray Emerson.

Damage is estimated at more than \$20,000.

The van is used to go to work by the self-employed contractor at construction sites.

No charges were laid in connection with the fire.

## King heads Go Transit

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three-year experiment in 1967 with a single line along Lake Ontario shoreline. It has succeeded and expanded beyond all original expectations.

Today, GO is made up of 49 stations, 45 trains and 329 bi-level railcars.

In 1997, GO Transit carried 33.5 million passengers. Less than 30 per cent of GO's operating costs are now paid by public funding.

## Deputy chief Wilson retires after 30 years

York Regional Police's second-in-command, Deputy Chief Robert Wilson has retired after more than 30 years on the force. Wilson began his career in Newmarket as a foot patrol constable and continued as a general duties officer when the region-wide force was

formed. In 1973, he was promoted to Detective and worked in the criminal investigation branches of both Aurora's 1 District and Richmond Hill's 2 District. In 1975, he took over the newly formed drug unit as Detective Sergeant and after four years he took over as offi-

cer in charge of the Intelligence Unit and Special Services. Wilson attained the rank of Inspector in 1982 and worked out of the Aurora detachment as head of the Emergency Response Unit, Intelligence and Morality. Four years later he became Acting Staff Inspector

and Officer in Charge of Support Services and a little more than a month later he was confirmed in that rank. In 1987 he was promoted again to Superintendent and worked as the head of operations before he was promoted to Deputy Chief in 1992.