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9 Next week marks the celebration of small business, and York Region hosts a number of events.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EVENT: St. James Presbyterian Church bazaar
WHEN: Today, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
WHERE: 6432 Main St.



18 Learn how an enterprising child made her Halloween costume for less than \$25.

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COURTS: Police stand by arrest of Rocco Romagnuolo

Charge that led to shooting dropped

BY RICK VANDERLINDE
 Staff Writer

A routine impaired driving charge that eventually led to the police shooting death of Tony Romagnuolo last year was dropped Wednesday.

The charge laid against Romagnuolo's 18-year-old son Rocco Dec. 20, triggered a tragic chain of events that culminated with a shooting at the family's Sunderland home eight days later.

In the end, Tony was dead, Rocco was shot in the abdomen with a police bullet, and two York Regional Police officers faced criminal charges, including second-degree murder.

Crown attorney David Russell withdrew the impaired driving charge in Newmarket court, telling Mr. Justice Michael Caney "there was no reasonable prospect of conviction."

But York Regional Police aren't apologizing for laying the charge, arguing there was ample reason to arrest Romagnuolo at the time.

"There certainly were sufficient grounds," Staff Insp. Paul Sorel said.

"The party in question did show signs of impairment."

Sorel added while it may have been difficult to prove the case in court, compassion was also behind the decision to withdraw the charge.

"Because of the tragedy that has come to the family, we agreed

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CANINE CURIOSITY



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN

Gordon Wright, 11, of Ballantrae, meets police services dog Thunder (handled by Const. Jim Hilton) while Police Chief Julian Fantino addresses a crowd at a town forum on crime Wednesday. The meeting, held at Glad Park Public School, focused on the force's plans for the future. For the full story, see page 3.

Greens back ousted Gilchrist

Troubled MPP considered friend of environmentalists

BY MIKE ADLER
 Staff Writer

The police investigation into MPP Steve Gilchrist sidelined an ally in the Conservative government at a crucial time for the Oak Ridges Moraine, local environmentalists believe.

In recent years, Gilchrist, a Scarborough MPP known for his stubborn approach to issues, became known to local conservationists as a potential supporter. At tree plantings and at Rouge Park events, Gilchrist told them not to worry about the moraine and insisted he would make certain it was saved, several environmentalists have said.

Gilchrist made encouraging statements, they added, even after he was sworn in as municipal Affairs Minister this summer.

"He has always said he will protect the moraine," Murray Johnston, president of the Rouge Valley Foundation, said. "He's been very vocal on that."

On July 17, Gilchrist suggested he was going to use his



STEVE GILCHRIST: Police probe triggered by developers' complaint.

ministers' power to freeze development on the moraine with a zoning order, Save the Rouge Valley Systems president Glenn De Baeremaeker said.

According to De Baeremaeker, Gilchrist then added "You just watch me," and seemed serious.

The environmentalist, who like Gilchrist is a voting member of the Rouge Alliance that governs Rouge Park, said he walked away scratching his head but thinking Gilchrist might pull it off.

"Steve Gilchrist is just the kind of bulldog guy that would do it," he concluded.

See COMPLAINT, page 9

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