

Class is in session for ice anglers

As an award-winning outdoor writer, Wil Wegman has extolled the virtues of angling and tried to help those with a thirst for knowledge by revealing some tricks of the trade.

In recent years, Wegman has extended his boundaries of thought by offering courses on angling at community colleges in southern Ontario.

With another ice fishing season underway, Wegman plans to assist hard water piscatorial enthusiasts enhance their success rates by providing a course at Seneca College.

On Feb. 8 and 22, Wegman will provide a one-evening class devoted to yellow perch and black crappie fishing through the ice.

Wegman feels the species have gained in popularity among the ice angling fraternity.

"A lot of anglers realize they enjoy the challenge that perch and crappies have to offer. There are times when you can't do anything wrong to catch these fish and they're a good species for beginners and especially youngsters to catch."

"Then there are times when you need a certain skill level to catch these fish when they get finicky."

"And as compared with going after whitefish or lake trout, you're usually hoping for one bite. With perch and crappies you can have more consistent action."

The Feb. 8 course will be conducted at Seneca's Richmond Hill campus while the Feb. 22 class is slated for the King City campus.

The program will be comprised of a classroom seminar, handouts, the opportunity to win door prizes and entry into the amBASSadors Cup Ice Fishing Competition at Lake Simcoe Feb. 26.

Students will learn how to use live maggots for bait, about specialized ultra-light rods, light line techniques, imported tackle such as Russian marmoskas and even about lethal homemade baits.

Students will also be taught about the safety aspects when travelling on a frozen surface as well as deciphering fish activity level and adjusting to weather patterns.

Wegman, who works with the Ministry of Natural Resources Aurora District Office, said teaching remains a rewarding experience.

"I learn a lot from the students and I hope they can learn something from me. I love to share information that I've gained over the



Mike Hayakawa

years and I love to see people catch fish," he said.

Cost of the program is \$70. For further information, call Seneca College at (416) 493-4144.

Bait clarification

Ice anglers hoping Lake Simcoe ice hut operators will supply salted minnows can forget about that.

Ian Buchanan, a Ministry of Natural Resources spokesperson from the Aurora District office, pointed out that under newly imposed regulations, ice hut operators are not allowed to supply salted minnows to their clients.

However, the regulations allow people to bring their own salted minnows, providing they don't exceed the new limit of 120 minnows per angler.

More wild turkeys planted

The Rouge watershed received some new guests into its valleylands Saturday as the Ministry of Natural Resources released 10 wild turkeys.

The project to transfer wild turkeys to the Rouge involved capturing birds from wild populations in neighbouring King, Georgina and Brock townships and releasing them into the Rouge Park.

"The meadowlands, mature woodlands and rivers in the Rouge provide ideal habitat for wild turkeys," said Natural Resources Minister John Snobelen in a media release. "We're excited that the successful reintroduction programs elsewhere show that transferred turkeys will reproduce and establish self-sustaining populations when carefully managed."

The ministry has contributed \$3,900 in in-kind funds, matching the financial contribution of The Rouge Park Alliance in establishing a wild turkey population in the Rouge Valley.



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Members of the Unionville Synchro Skate Team practice for the nationals, coming up in three weeks.

Waxers to retire uniforms of 14 former goaltenders

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Sports Editor

For the Markham Waxers junior A hockey team, the year 2000 represents more than just the start of a new millennium.

Waxers' president Don Bremner declared 2000 as the Year of the Goaltender.

And to commemorate this theme, the Waxers will honour some of their top netminders from years gone by prior to the start of tomorrow's Provincial Junior A Hockey League contest against the Spirit of Stouffville at Centennial Arena.

The Waxers will retire the uniforms of 14 former netminders who donned the blue and white. Included in that group are former National Hockey League puck stoppers Mike Palmateer, Mike Liut, Rick Tabaracci, Brian Hayward, Bob Essensa, Steve Weeks and Greg Millen.

Rounding out the honourees are Ray Leblanc, Dean Anderson, Martin Maglay, Mark Michaud, Mike Lenarduzzi, Jim Baxter and

the late Steve Bloomer.

"The year 2000 has three zeros in it. So we've designated it as The Year of the Goaltender," Bremner stated in a press release.

The pregame festivities, which begin at 7:30 p.m., also allow the Waxers to maintain their tradition as being a former farm club of two of the greatest organizations in hockey: the Toronto Maple Leafs and Toronto Marlies.

The club, which has been a fixture in Markham for more than 70 years, is proud to point out that about 100 former Waxers' players worked their way up the ranks to the National Hockey League and now-defunct World Hockey Association.

Another 200 made their way to the Ontario Hockey League while more than 250 players received U.S. college scholarships or elected to continue their trade at Canadian universities or colleges.

"The Markham Waxers hockey program stands for tradition, heritage, community and education. We have a lot of deep tradition, but hockey is not just about winning hockey games, championships and trophies. It is about developing our youth and fulfilling their dreams as young Canadians."

"The dream of every young Canadian hockey player is to play for your home town, in front of your family and friends, or to possibly go on and succeed in the junior ranks, the OHL, college or university and maybe even going to the NHL or playing for Canada."

The 14 netminders will join Steve Thomas, Ron Wilson and Adam Oates in having their numbers retired by the team. Thomas wore 16, Wilson 20 and Oates 10.

The festivities will continue Saturday as the Waxers hold their Valentine and alumni dance at Fontana Gardens Banquet Halls (7400 Keele St.) starting at 7 p.m.

For further information and tickets, call Bremner at 1-800-894-4924.



Japanese women's hockey team eye Stouffville as training base

BY BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

The road to this spring's Women's World Hockey Championships could wind through Stouffville for the Japanese national team.

The Japanese squad is on the verge of accepting an offer from the Stouffville-Markham Girls Hockey Association to host a 10-day training camp at the rec centre, including an exhibition game with Team USA, to precede the national tournament in Mississauga in April.

Under the arrangement, the Japanese team would set up camp in Stouffville from March 24 to April 3, familiarizing themselves with the southern Ontario environment in preparation for the world event.

"It looks like this is going to happen," said SMGHA president Dianne White. "I'm trying to figure out all the details."

White was approached in November by the Canadian Hockey Association about preparing a bid to host a national team prior to the world showdown.

The proposal has been offered to the Japanese team.

"Now it's just a matter of whether they want to come," White said.

White thinks it's almost certain they'll accept.

The game between the Japanese and U.S. women's national teams has been scheduled for April 1.

White is hopeful arrangements can be made with ice users for the game versus the USA, as well as one or two exhibition contests.

White said it's unlikely the Canadian women's team can be

enticed to come to Stouffville to play the Japanese unit.

"I'd love to have them here but I doubt it could happen."

White said having the Japanese national team, which is ranked in the top four in the world, train in Stouffville would give the 300 players in the SMGHA a rare chance to observe talented women hockey players from close up.

"Basically, I'm doing this for the girls. I think it's a good opportunity for them to have a look at a higher level of hockey."

White said the fact Stouffville was considered as a site for such a camp is indicative of the respect the SMGHA has earned in its 27 years of existence.

She said the stage was initially set for when the SMGHA hosted one of seven Ontario Women's Hockey Association camps to select members of the Ontario midget under-17 girls team two seasons back.

"Once you start doing things like that for the OWSHA they remember. That's how you develop it."