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STAFF PHOTOS/SJOERD WITTEVEN

York Regional Police Sgt. Will Janes (right) receives congratulations for winning the excellence in policing award at the eighth annual Police Appreciation Night at Le Parc in Markham. Congratulating him are Chief Robert Middaugh, chief for a day Bruce Penner and police services board chairperson Margaret Black.

York police force celebrates the outstanding work of its officers

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
Staff Writer

Chief for a day and Special Olympian Bruce Penner had a 1,000-strong crowd alternately laughing and misty-eyed as he spoke Thursday at the York Regional Police eighth annual appreciation night.

"This will be a day I'll never forget. In Special Olympics, we love cops," Penner, 35, said.

Penner, who will compete in the powerlifting event as York Region hosts the 2000 Spring Games May 11 to 14, explained the contribution of police officers across North America to the Special Olympics has meant more than 11,000 athletes will compete this year, up from 3,800 two years ago.

"It's not so long ago it would have been inconceivable that I'd be standing here giving this speech. That's the magic of Special Olympics," Penner said.

More than \$100,000 was raised at the \$150-a-plate dinner attended by York Region mayors, councillors and business people, as well as master of ceremonies Ron Hewat from CFRB radio and Darrell Sanders, Chief of Police in Frankfort, Illinois.

Half of that money, \$50,000, will go to funding the operation of York's helicopter, the last of a \$100,000 commitment, while the Special Olympics will receive at least \$40,000.

While the Special Olympics theme wove itself through the evening's presentations, the annual community-based fundraiser also honours individual officers for excellence in policing.

"Our motto of Deeds Speak means actions speak louder than words," said Middaugh.

Const. Carolyn Matthews was recognized for bravery in the line of duty for saving the life of a woman whose house was on fire in April, 1999.

Three constables, Peter Cepelak, Christine Irvine-Leitch and Philip Mapley, were also honoured for bravery in the line of duty after diving into frigid waters in a Newmarket golf course pond after a van crashed through a concrete fence, sped down an embankment and ended up underwater.

Staff Sgt. Rodney Sine was recognized for outstanding service to the community.

Sgt. Will Janes, a 27-year veteran, was honoured for excellence in policing for his unflinching commitment to traffic safety — especially his involvement in expanding the RIDE program. Each year, the number of arrests goes down and, in 1999, 28 drivers were charged out of the 30,000 stopped.

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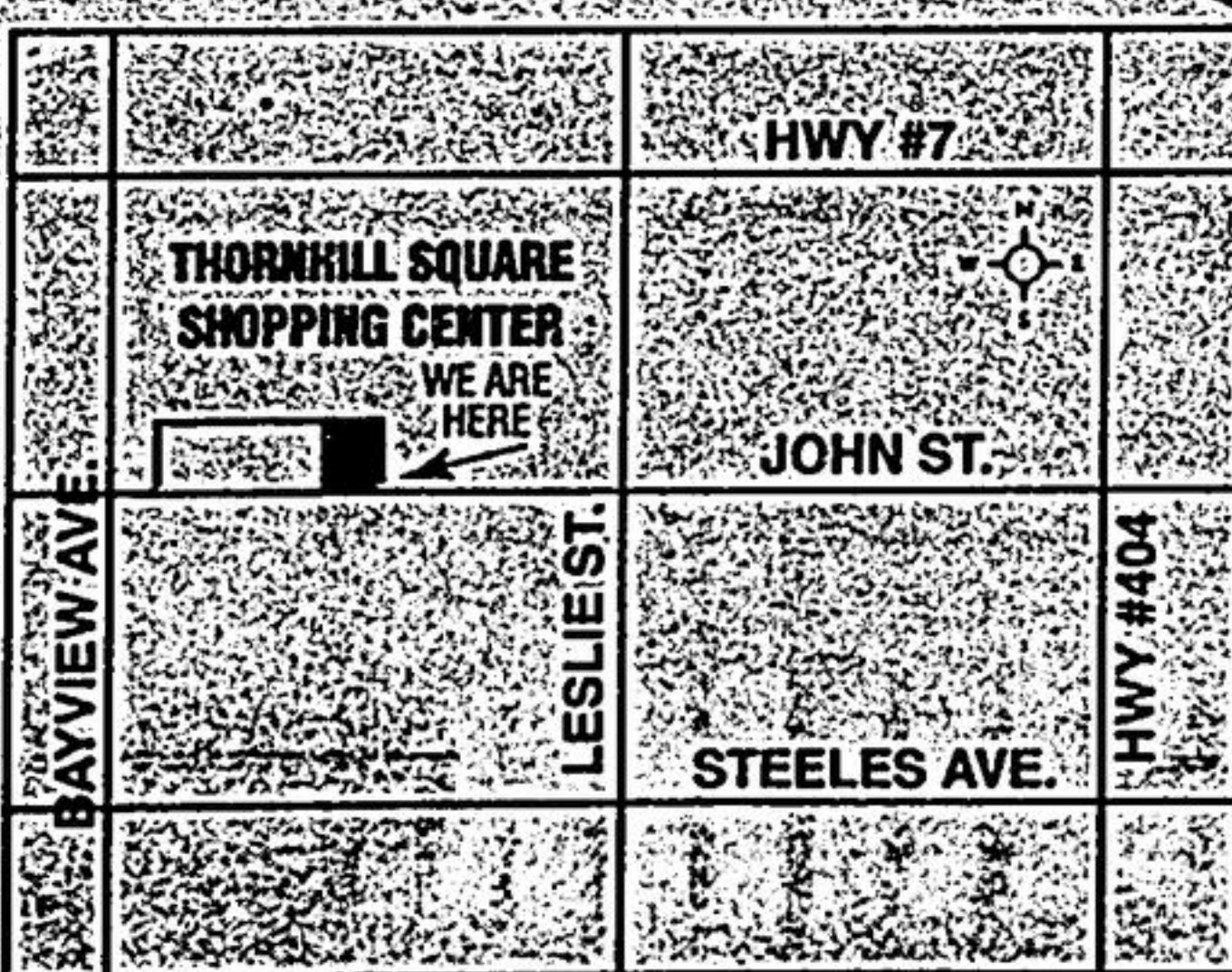
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When

April 29 - May 7



Markham Riding Association

Special General Meeting
Guest Speaker
RAHIM JAFFER M.P.

Monday, May 8th, 2000
7:00 p.m.

The Old Unionville Library
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Everyone is invited
For information call: 472-4670