

Newsmakers dealt with many environmental issues in 2000

From page A1

don, who chairs the region's solid waste committee.

King Township Mayor Margaret Black was re-elected by the slimmest of margins in last month's municipal election at least in part because of her support of the plan to have King hooked up to the York-Durham Sewage Scheme — the Big Pipe — replacing King's ancient septic systems.

Though the OMB ruled in favour of the plan following an eight-week hearing in March, a number of area citizens appealed the decision and, in August, the Ontario Divisional Court agreed with them, halting any further development. And earlier this month, newcomers on King's council staged a coup, voting to re-visit the whole issue. In King, the Big Pipe is dead.

At least for now.

The tainted-water tragedy in Walkerton spread its tentacles across Ontario this year and York Region was no exception. Rural residents in dozens of areas were advised to boil the water from their wells because of coliform and E. coli readings.

Queen's Park launched a massive inspection program, uncovering deficiencies at a number of municipal water treatment plants. Although York Region water plants passed the test, the region was chastised at one point for failing to supply minimum sampling requirements at three of its plants.

Olympians make their mark on sports scene

A number of York Region residents were national and international newsmakers this year on several fronts, including the Olympics and politics.

The bronze medals won at the Olympic Games in Australia by Markham resident Mathieu Turgeon and his girlfriend Karen Cockburn, were two rare bright spots in an otherwise bleak Olympic scene for Canada. Both train at the Skyriders Trampoline Club in Richmond Hill.

Schomberg equestrian Eric Lamaze also made Olympic headlines — of a different sort. Considered one of Canada's top hopes for a medal at the Olympics, Lamaze was hit with a lifetime ban from all sanctioned

equestrian competitions for testing positive for cocaine metabolites.

He was reinstated when an adjudicator accepted the rider's explanation that he took cocaine when he was told he was banned for life after testing positive for ephedrine, a banned substance he mistakenly took through a dietary supplement.

Although given the green light to continue with his riding career, Lamaze was told by the Canadian Olympic Association he would not be allowed to rejoin the team for the Olympics.

A leadership hopeful with principles

On the political scene, Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees gained national attention last spring when he tossed his hat into the Canadian Alliance leadership battle, only to withdraw a few weeks later, claiming he couldn't live with a backroom deal.

Klees said an individual donor had offered him a considerable amount of money to aid his \$3-million leadership campaign, but the pledge came with a condition — that if Klees failed

to win on the first ballot at the June leadership convention, he would support one of the other leadership candidates. Klees refused.

"Do I feel like a fighter who has been asked to take a fall? In a way, yes," he said.

And a candidate with a passionate cause

Newmarket resident Joe Wamback took his relentless battle to overturn the Young Offenders' Act to the national scene on CBC Radio's Cross-Country Checkup program. And he took the battle to the political arena when he accepted an invitation from PC leader Joe Clark to be the Tory candidate in what proved to be an unsuccessful bid in York North in the November election.

Wamback also launched a multi-million-dollar lawsuit against the teenagers who were convicted this fall of the brutal beating of his son in 1999.

Turning to the bizarre, Markham MP Jim Jones was thrown out of the Tory caucus after stating he would seek both the Tory and the



(Above) Margaret Black was challenged for her King mayoralty post by environmentalist Jane Underhill. Black won. (Below) Former Markham MP Jim Jones, a Tory, then a Canadian Alliance candidate, was ousted by Liberal parachute candidate John



(Above) Schomberg equestrian Eric Lamaze was banned from Olympic competition because of drug use. (Below) MPP Frank Klees stepped out of the Canadian Alliance leadership race on a matter of principle.



See NEWSMAKERS, page A9.

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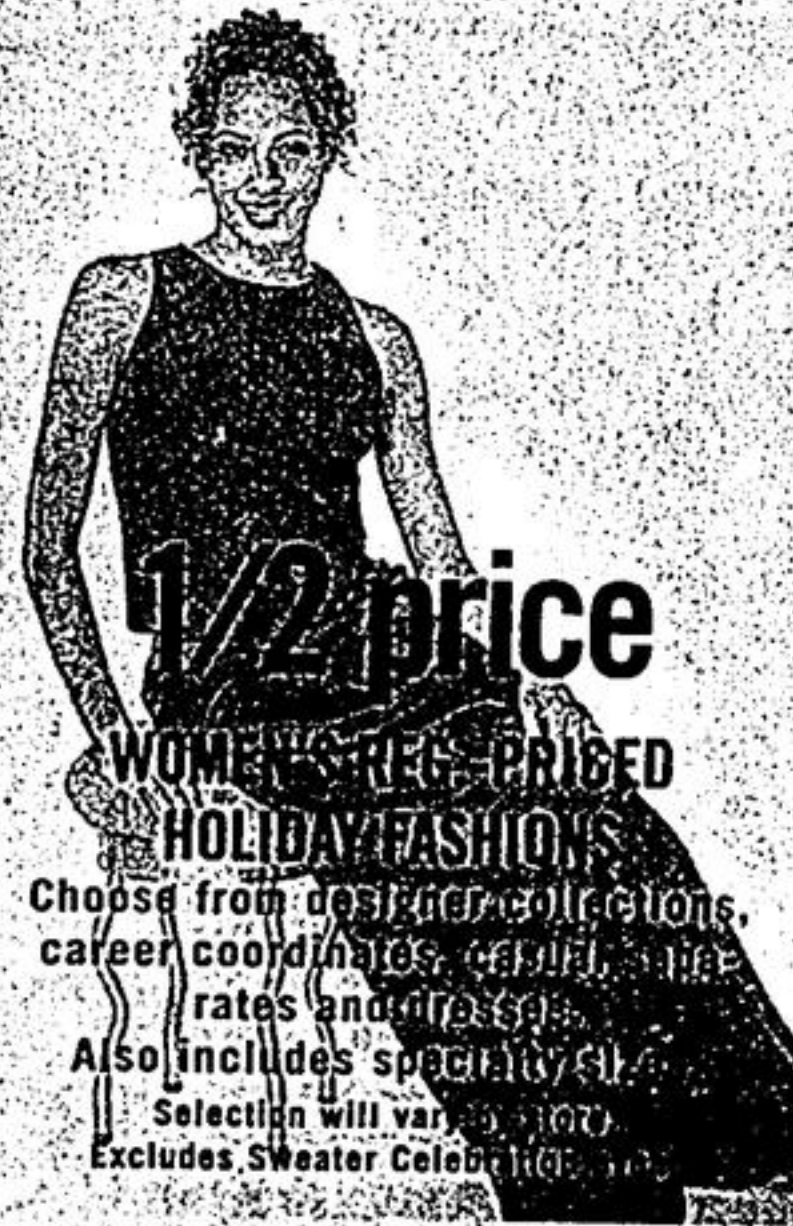
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