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Recycling for electronics opens in Markham

BY MIKE ADLER
Staff Writer

Fed into the giant machine, the PC on your desk or the largest photocopier in your office comes out in pieces the size of a guitar pick.

Covering 18,000 square feet in the Mississauga home of EPR Services Inc., the unique mechanical behemoth is said to waste nothing. Even the dust from electronic equipment it crushes and separates is collected and sold to a smelter.

Any sensitive data on your PC? No problem, Sid Morris, corporate services vice president for EPR, a subsidiary of the Markham-based Industrial Ecology Corp. said this week.

"Our system puts a finality to it." But most high-technology cast-offs in York Region — old PCs, telephones, VCRs, printers, pagers, Nintendo sets — end up at the dump.

Aside from the wastefulness of simply throwing these things away there are also concerns about what could escape from them into the environment.

Each computer or television display contains an average of four to eight pounds of lead, according to several California-based environmental groups. One, the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, estimated consumer electronics contribute 40 per cent of the lead in landfills.

This year, California decided the cathode-ray tubes in televisions and computer monitors are hazardous waste and should be kept out of municipal landfills. Computers can also contain small amounts of mercury, cadmium, PCBs and other potentially harmful substances.

In June, York Region agreed that there is a potential for lead to leach and contaminate groundwater if (electronic equipment is) not disposed of in an environmentally safe manner.

This week, the region started collecting electronic equipment from resi-



STAFF PHOTOS/JOERD WITTEVEN

Rolf Paul of Safety-Kleen deposits an old computer monitor in a bin for recycling at the Household Hazardous Waste Depot on Rodick Road in Markham.

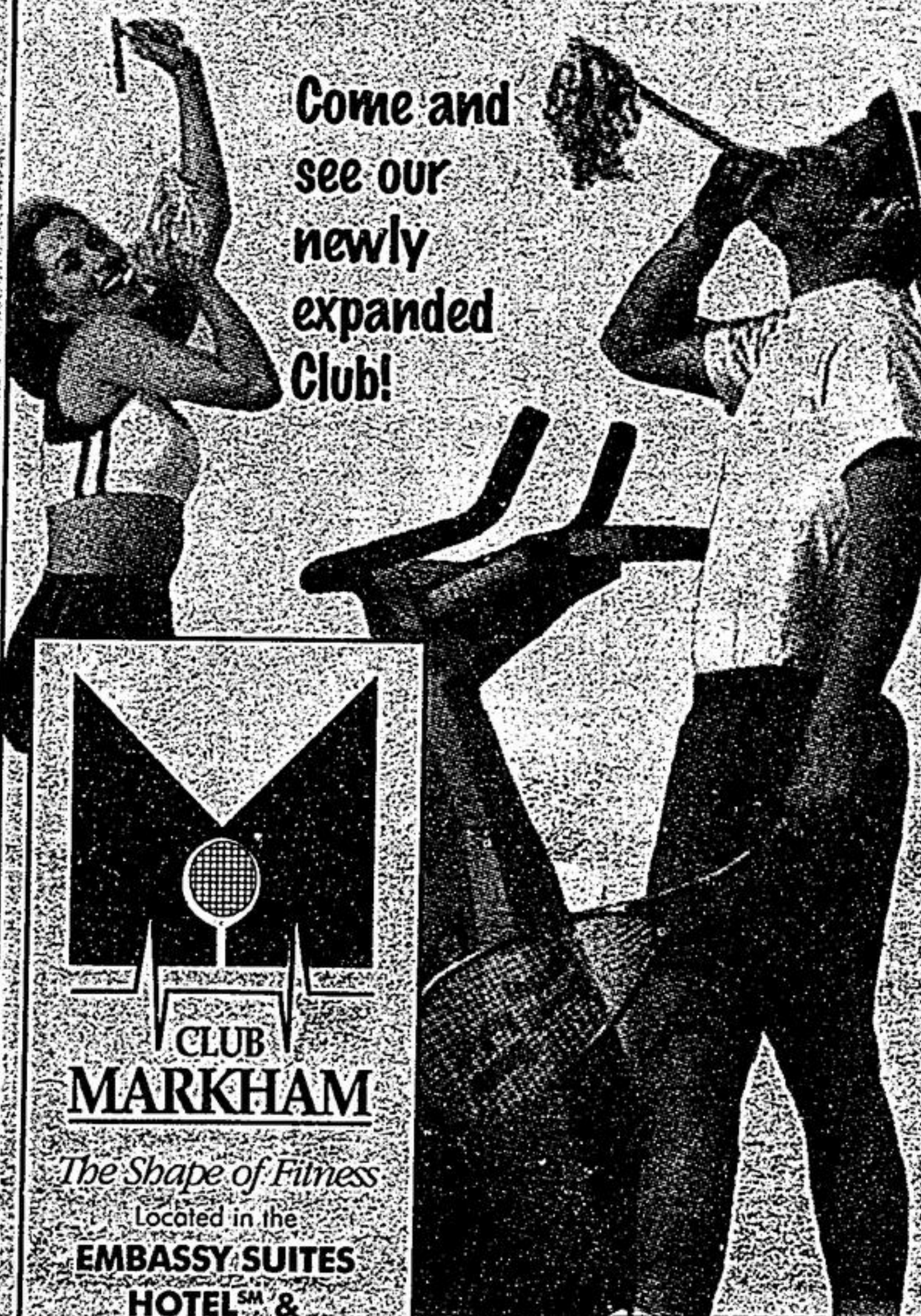
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