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7 Joan Ransberry recalls Santa Claus parades past, with an eye on Stouffville's parade route.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EVENT: Stouffville BIA Festival of Lights
WHEN: Friday, Nov. 30, 6:30 p.m.
WHERE: Clock Tower square, downtown



12 Been there, done that: Reporter bears arms at Gormley shooting range.

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FORGIVING - BUT NOT FORGETTING HIS SON

Dad of shooting victim tells story to 1,250

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
Staff Writer

An unwavering belief in God's infinite grace allowed Rev. Dale Lang to forgive the 14-year-old boy who shot his son dead, he told a crowd of 1,250 at the Markham Prayer Breakfast yesterday.

Lang shocked his community and his country by publicly offering forgiveness to the troubled youth who took his son's life April 28, 1999, in a school shooting in Taber, Alta. Lang said if he hadn't his grief and anger would have overwhelmed him.

"I would have damaged myself and my family more. Instead I'm in a place of healing, a place of freedom. And that forgiveness impacted the whole town — people don't walk around angry at what happened," Lang said. "When we accept God's grace and forgive people who hurt us, it sets us free."

In an inspirational speech to members of more than 60 Markham, Whitchurch-Stouffville and Richmond Hill churches and 40 high school students, Lang described events leading up to the shooting — how it felt to be called to the hospital, to wait with wife Diane only to learn just minutes after arriving that Jason didn't make it.

"There's no way I will ever be

See GETTING, page 24.

An audience with the queen



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Stouffville women dressed in Victorian fashions at St. James Presbyterian Church on Monday celebrate the accomplishments of TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) ON 716 club. The walkers, having symbolically reached Victoria, B.C., in kilometres walked from Stouffville, transformed the church basement into the Empress Hotel and Queen Victoria (played here by Margaret Bibby) handed out diplomas.

York officers suing the SIU

Cops were cleared in 1998 Tony Romagnuolo shooting

Two York Regional police officers have filed a \$7-million lawsuit against Ontario's special investigations unit, claiming malicious prosecution.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of Constables Randy Martin and Mike Hoskin, both of whom were cleared last December of criminal charges resulting from the Dec. 28, 1998, shooting death of Tony Romagnuolo in Sunderland.

The lawsuit claims the SIU should never have charged them with any crimes because "it was patently obvious to any informed investigator, observer, SIU director, or professional that the fatal shooting was a clean shoot and that the plaintiffs had acted in an appropriate fashion, even a courageous one."

Martin was acquitted of second-degree murder — the first murder charge laid against a police officer in the 10-year history of the SIU — and Hoskin was acquitted of assault with a weapon and careless use of a firearm after a six-week trial. A third officer, Durham Region Const. Al Robins, who was acquitted of aggravated assault and discharging a firearm with intent to wound, is not part of the lawsuit.

Those named in the lawsuit include SIU director Peter Tinsley, James Harding, the agency's former executive officer and Steve Lechnowsky, one of its investigators. The province filed notice last week that it intends to defend the suit.

The SIU investigates cases of

See YORK, page 27.

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