



Robbery victims praise York police for quick arrest

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Stouffville was held up.

Owner Saber Arman said a man wearing a smile entered the store. "He kept smiling, walked up to the counter and presented a small black hand gun. He demanded money. He told me to give him my wallet. I didn't have a wallet. I reached into my pocket and gave him a small roll of cash. I then opened the cash register and put money in his plastic bag. I did as I was told."

The spree ended with a

holdup at the Canadian Tire gas bar on McCowan Road in Markham. Afterwards, police spotted — then lost — a car on Hwy. 7 they believed was being driven by a suspect in the crimes. The car was located again by a police helicopter and the chase was on.

York Regional Police Const. Adam Stock said the suspect drove in a "dangerous manner striking vehicles in the process as he continued to flee police".

At the Crestwood Road in the Vaughan side of Thornhill, more attempts

were made to stop the vehicle, said Const. Stock.

"The car was driven onto the south-side boulevard in the path of pedestrians in an effort to escape, and was finally stopped when it came in contact with two police vehicles."

Adrian Russell Graham, 25, of Markham is charged with three counts of robbery, three counts of possessing a dangerous weapon, wearing a disguise while carrying out a crime, failure to remain at the scene of an accident, flight from police, dangerous operation of a motor vehicle and impaired operation of a vehicle.

He is in police custody and is scheduled to appear in a Newmarket court for a bail hearing on Jan. 25.

Mr. Arman was relieved to hear of an arrest. "I am at peace," he said. Mr. Arman has been robbed three times in the past 10 years, twice at



SABER ARMAN: Owner of Stouffville variety store has been robbed three times in 10 years.



FRED AHMEDI: Markham convenience store robbed for the first time. "This is sad," he said.

for their good work," he noted.

Daisy Mart owner Fred Ahmedi said during staff training he emphasizes the importance of co-operating with anyone holding a weapon. "I tell staff to give all the money, all the cigarettes, to not fight, to not argue, to not makes them angry, to always be polite, to be as nice as possible. After all, they have the weapon. They can and do use them."

"I tell my staff their lives are worth far more than anything in this store. I am pleased that Sayed did his best."

Mr. Ahmedi, a native of Afghanistan, has been a merchant for nine years. Wednesday marked his first robbery.

"This is sad. It's such a nice neighbourhood," he said. "It's quiet. Such nice people. But the police did an excellent job."

his Stouffville store and once in Toronto.

In Toronto, he was approached by five young males. Two guns were held to his temples and he was told to hand over every cent he could find. "After it was over, my boss was very angry

because I gave them so much money. I wasn't thinking of my boss at the time. I thought I was going to die."

On Thursday, Mr. Arman sent the York Regional Police an e-mail thanking them for making the arrest. "The police should be recognized

Box Grove land swap could help with water troubles

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
Staff Writer

The land swap deal in Markham's Box Grove hamlet and the resulting \$1.5 million hook-up to town water may be welcome news for some residents — at least those dealing with serious well contamination.

Residents recently conducted independent testing of 75 wells in Box Grove.

One was found to contain a small amount of e-coli bacteria, 34 contained coliform and of those, the vast majority had levels in the double digits — some as high as 100 or more.

Ward 5 Councillor Jack Heath said he doesn't believe there is a safe level of

coliform; the base line number should be zero.

"So that's an astronomical number," Mr. Heath said.

"That speaks a lot about private wells next to large municipalities — it's the same trouble all over the place."

He said the Legacy residential development at Hwys. 407 and 48, 407 itself and the continuing construction of the Ninth Line trunk sewer are all factors that could be affecting well water.

"Now we can consider the secondary plan (for the Box Grove area) sooner rather than later," Mr. Heath said.

"The plan, without the land transfer, would not be possible. Now we'll revive those documents and see where it stands."

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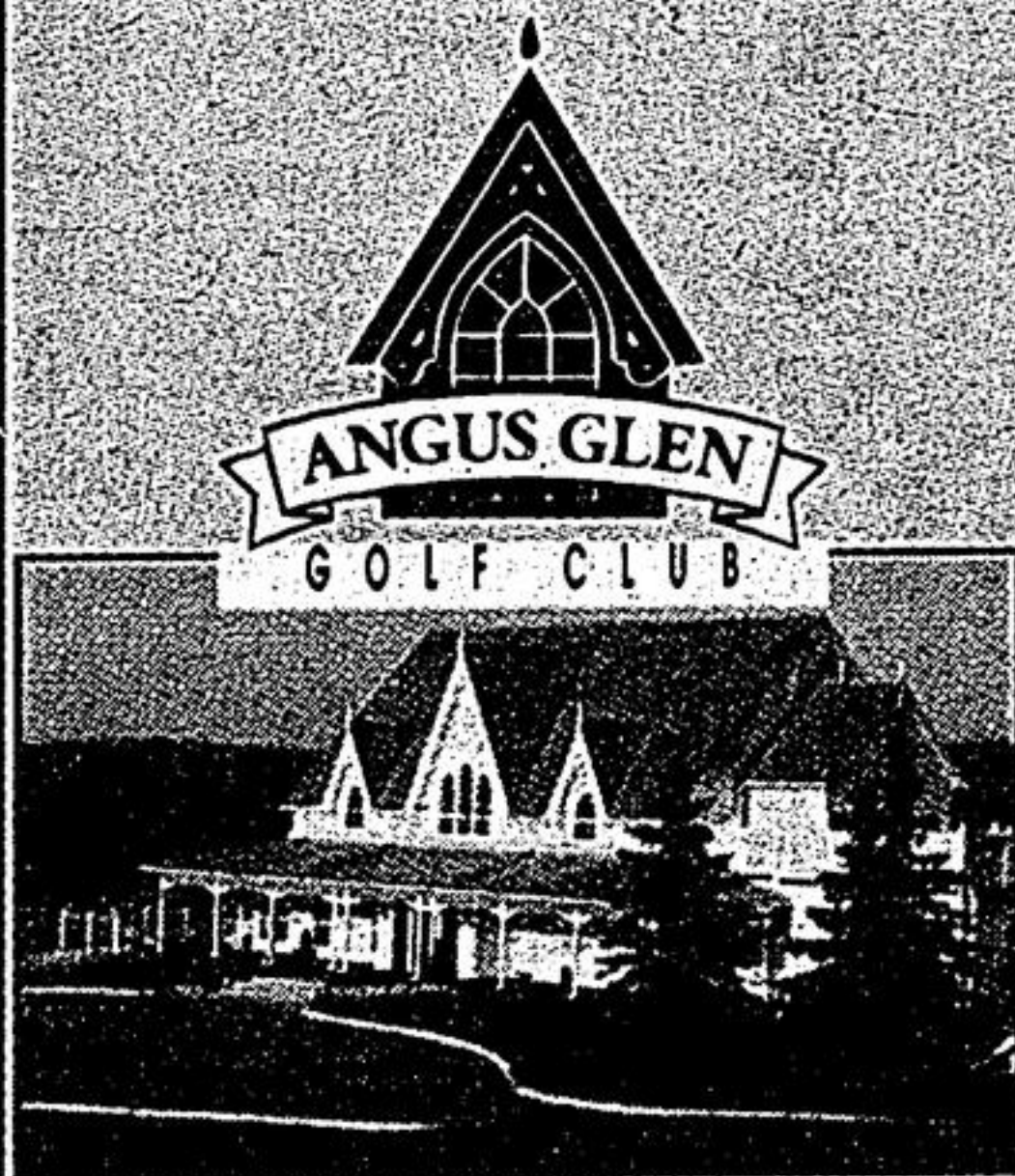
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