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7 Stouffville District Secondary School student hit by Jeep and seriously injured Friday.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EVENT: Adult Valentine's skating party
WHEN: Tuesday, Feb. 12, 8:55 to 9:45 p.m.
WHERE: Stouffville Arena, Ninth Line



22 Work hard for the money? What motivates you to go to work every day.

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WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE COUNCIL HAS PROBLEMS WITH VALUES PROGRAM

A CHARACTER COMMUNITY?

BY CAROL COOPER
Special

At least one Whitchurch-Stouffville town councillor is ambivalent about council's decision this week to designate the town as a Character Community.

Following a delegation led by Markham Mayor Don Cousens, chair of York Region's Character Council, Whitchurch-Stouffville

town council passed a resolution to support the regional initiative on Tuesday. The Character Community program, originating in the U.S., recognizes and fosters the growth of good values and character.

Ward 5 Councillor Harry Bowes abstained from the vote. "I think it's a good thing, but I don't want to be involved, because I've seen so

much in the background since the Quest for Character conference in 2001," he said later.

He noted the initiative was nothing new. "The municipal and provincial politicians have picked up on what education has been doing for years and years. It's the in thing to do."

And during the '70s, the school board attempted a morals and val-

ues education program, he said: It was dropped because of opposition from religious groups questioning whose values and morals would be taught.

Ward 6 Councillor Sue Sherban endorsed the project, but said that it should receive the financial and promotional support it needs to become successful. "We need to

See **MAYOR**, page 10.

We've made enough to pay for this year's food

'Cheapest eats' in the world hurts our farms

BY CAROL COOPER
Special

John Doner's family has owned the same Gormley farm for 200 years. He wants to keep it that way.

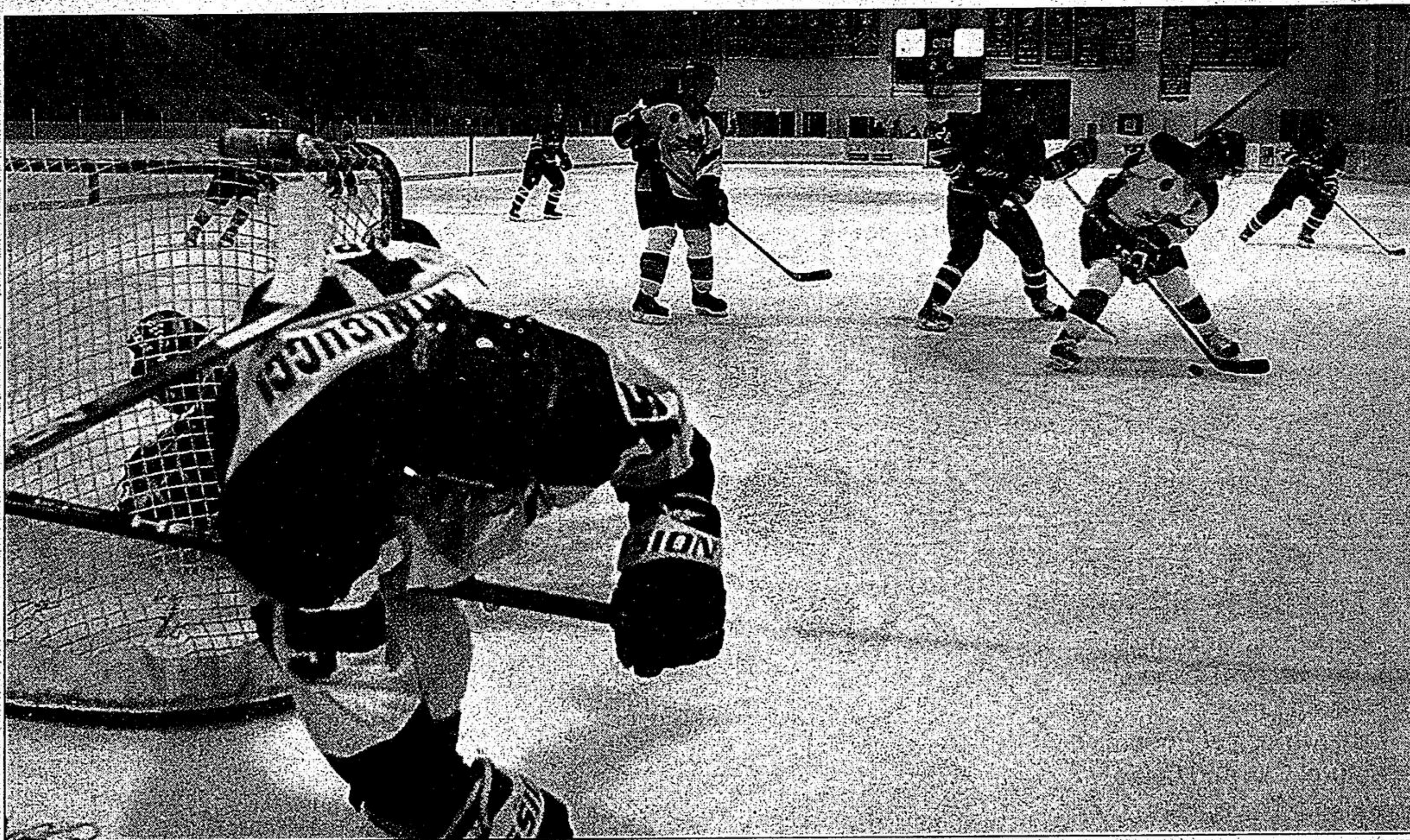
While Mr. Doner struggles with the uncertainties of markets and weather, Canadians enjoy the cheapest food in the world.

Thursday marked Food Freedom Day, the day of the year by which Canadians had earned the 10 per cent of their disposable income they spend annually on food. Organized by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), the day raised awareness about Canadian food prices and farming.

Two years of poor crops in York Region and competition from subsidized farmers in the U.S. and European countries, have made life difficult for area producers, said Whitchurch-Stouffville's Dr. Terry O'Connor, first vice-president of the York Region Federation of Agriculture.

Last summer's drought affected the soybean crop the worst, said Mr. Doner. Production dropped by between 50 and 70 per cent with a resultant drop in income, he said. Compounding the difficulties, the price he received for the soybeans he grew went down 70 cents

See **WEAKER**, page 8.



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

STOUFFVILLE SPIRIT ON THE FLY

Stouffville Spirit captain Anthony Minicucci flies past his own net during his team's playoff opener with the Collingwood Blues Thursday at the Stouffville Arena. The Spirit won 7-2. The two teams, who played last night in Collingwood, meet again on Thursday in Stouffville. Spirit players Jeff Mok (left) and J.D. Smithson protect the front of the net. See sports on page 25.

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