

INSIDE: Letters 6
Calendar 20
Sports 21
Classified 22

3 The saint behind the green suds: Celebrating St. Patrick's Day with a beer or a Bible.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EVENT: St. Patrick's Day tea and bazaar
WHEN: Today, 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
WHERE: Silver Jubilee Club, Main and Market streets



16 The Potted Gardener: You don't need a full-sized garden to get your fix.

SERVING WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE SINCE 1888

Stouffville Tribune

50 CENTS INCLUDING GST / 40 PAGES

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 2002

TO REACH US: (905) 294-2200

The war against hydro privatization

Bad for business, meeting will be told

BY MIKE ADLER
Staff Writer

Paul Kahnert has been a lineman for 23 years at Toronto Hydro, and a crew foreman for 10.

Recently, though, the Markham resident developed an unexpected taste for public speaking. A spokesperson for the Ontario Electricity Coalition, he has volunteered to visit 40 towns in the province — from Kenora to Cornwall to Windsor — as part of the coalition's effort to oppose the Tory government plan, starting May 1, to deregulate and privatize Ontario's power supply.

After Mr. Kahnert saw a letter in this newspaper by concerned resident Nelson King, he decided to make one of those 40 appearances in Markham — at 7:30 p.m. in the town's seniors centre at 22 Water Street on Thursday, March 21.

In an interview, Mr. Kahnert argued the government's hydro sell-off is going to hurt businesses in the town. Deregulation and privatization of electricity "has not worked anywhere," he said. "Why are we doing it here?"

But the Water Street gathering, organized by a local ratepayers group, is not the only one in the area next week concerned with electricity deregulation.

At 7 p.m. Wednesday,

No water wings required



Bong Juson throws nephew Justin Clark, 3, up in the air during the Tim Hortons free swim in the Lebovic Leisure Centre pool on Tuesday. The March school break ends Monday.

STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Housing boom hits home in York

New home sales skyrocket thanks to weather, interest rates

BY JEFF MITCHELL
Staff Writer

York Region is at the epicentre of a housing boom the likes of which haven't been seen since the heady days of the 1980s.

York was far ahead of other GTA regions in new home sales in January, when the industry turned in its best numbers in more than a decade, according to Joe Valela, vice-president of the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association.

"I would say York Region stands right now as number one in sales of all the regions (in the GTA)," said Mr. Valela, whose Valemont Homes builds in the GTA.

New home sales in the GTA hit 4,583 in January, the strongest showing since 1987. York led the way with 1,407 units sold, while neighbouring Peel Region saw 1,104 new homes purchased.

Unseasonably warm winter weather and interest rates at 1960s levels are generally seen as the catalysts for the surge in home sales. And York Region is the first choice of many buyers who factor quality of life into decisions about purchasing their new homes, Mr. Valela said.

"It's a place where people want to live," said the Markham resident. "They've been able to keep taxes in check and there's a good community base."

York's solid economy is also a strong selling point, Mr. Valela said. Region officials are quick to stress that York's economy has grown

See WILD, page 11.

See WIND, page 9.

E.M. Automotive
OIL CHANGE
\$19.95
9441 Hwy. #48
Unit 5
(Hwy. #48 & 16th Ave.)
2 km N. on #48
905-472-7272

SPRING IS COMING...
... AND WE ARE OVERSTOCKED!!!
Just Drive to

5396 HIGHWAY #7, MARKHAM
905-294-1210

90 Days NO PAYMENTS!!!
on 2002 Models
Markham Mazda

Sutton GROUP
Town and Country Realty Ltd.
640-0888