

Staff, jurors, spectators sick at 'cleaned-up' York courthouse

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Staff Writer

The Newmarket courthouse may still be a sick building despite a year-long cleanup.

At least nine court staff, jurors and spectators in courtroom 403 attending the Maria Wong murder trial have complained of dizziness, nausea and ear and

sinus problems over the 2-1/2-month trial.

In fact, the female registrar fainted in court last Thursday and required an ambulance.

She felt dizzy, attempted to get up and collapsed into the arms of a court constable. Justice John McIsaac ordered an ambulance.

The registrar was taken to hospital as a precaution, delaying the trial about an hour, but was released the same day.

She appeared for work the following morning.

One juror delayed the trial a couple of weeks earlier, complaining to the judge about ear problems and resulting nausea.

Even a Toronto Star reporter alerted the judge that he was experiencing nausea while covering the court case.

In total, nine people have complained including a defence attorney (headaches), the Crown attorney and assistant Crown attorney (dizziness), two court reporters (heart palpitations and sinus trouble), a court

security officer and the judge himself has been battling a persistent sinus infection.

Justice McIsaac summoned the manager of court operations to the courtroom July 2 to ask her about air quality in the building.

Brenda Kritzer told him there had been extensive air testing, most recently in March and there is "nothing in the air that would cause the average person difficulty."

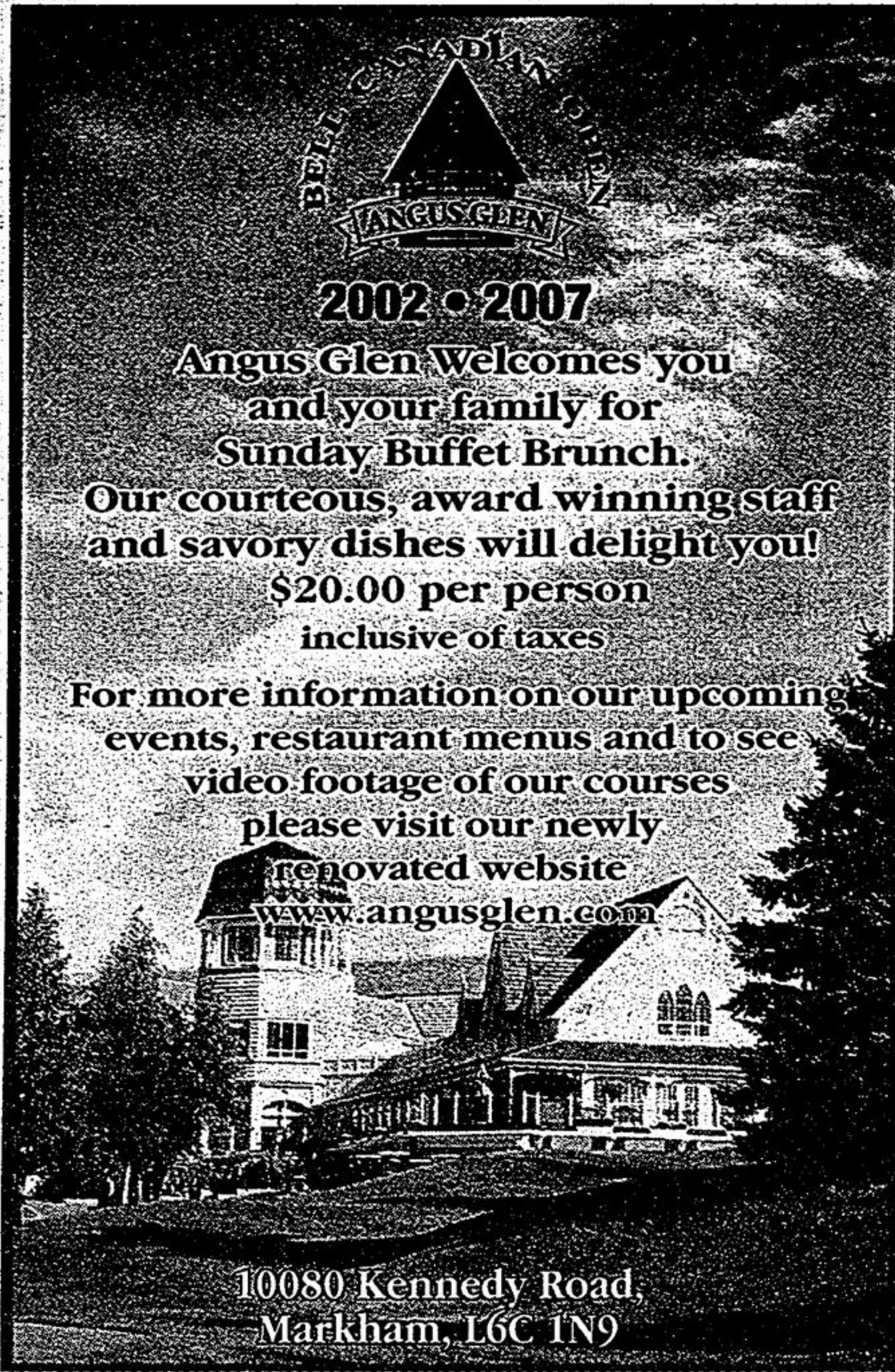
She said two courtrooms on the second floor had problems relating to air pressure but the issues had been resolved.

Justice McIsaac asked her if any other staff were complaining; she said no.

Ms Kritzer is currently on vacation and could not be reached for comment.

The courthouse was first closed in June 2000 to clean-up toxic mould.

However, the extent of the problem kept the building closed for about a year, with trailers and off-site building being used as temporary court facilities.



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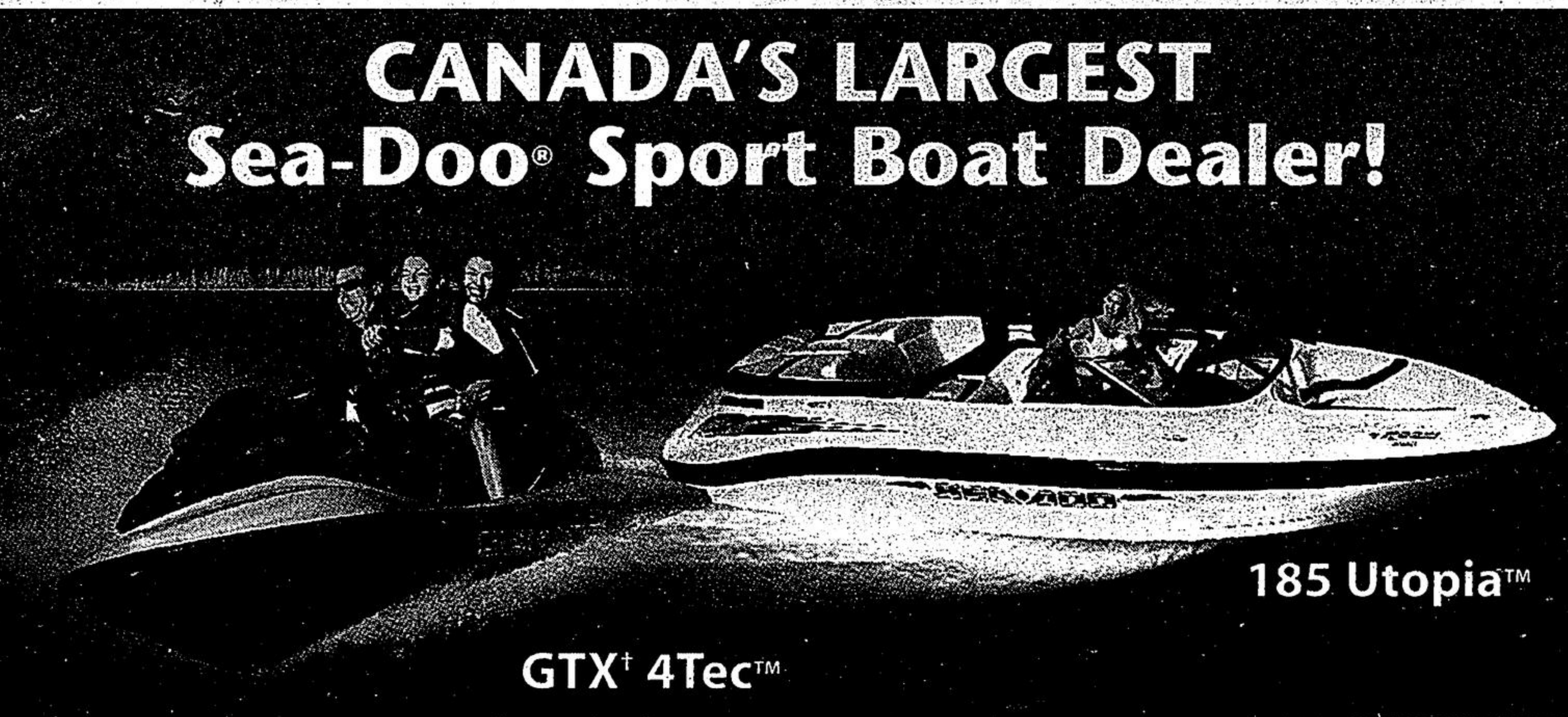


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