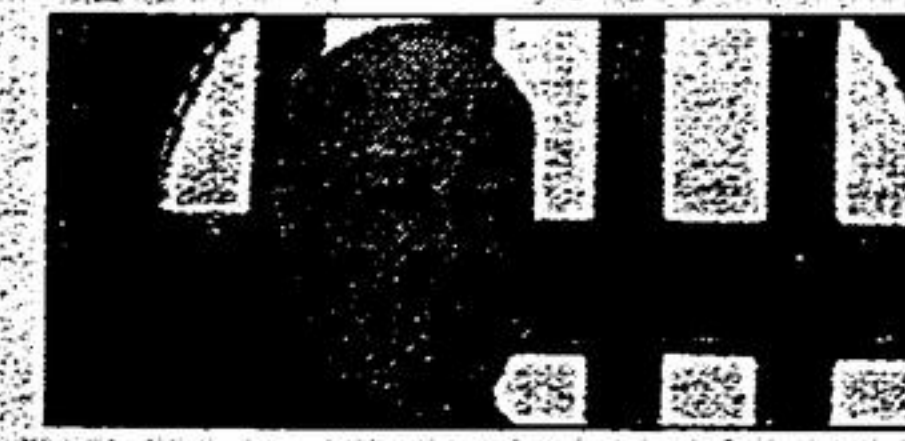


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31 Passengers could pay for Pickering Airport; open house coming to Stouffville.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EVENT: Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum barn dance
WHEN: Saturday, Oct. 5 (1-888-290-0337)
WHERE: Ballantrae Community Centre



26 Ancient church with new ideas: 12-acre Coptic village planned for Markham.

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SATURDAY, SEPT. 28, 2002

TO REACH US: (905) 640-2612

Rebecca out of hospital, on road to recovery

Residents rally around girl injured on farm

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
Staff Writer

She's smiling, singing, playing counting games on the computer and fighting with her little sister.

Four-year-old Rebecca Ramer is home after more than a month in hospital and things are slowly getting back to normal.

Almost. The pretty, brown-eyed tot lost five toes and half her foot in an accident Aug. 15 on her family's Reesor Road farm after her mom, Jane, backed up a riding lawnmower not realizing Rebecca was no longer at the back of the house, but behind her.

Rebecca has had three surgeries, skin grafts and weeks of pain medication including epidurals and morphine — but she's home now and her prognosis is good.

She has a pressure ulcer on her heel, due to lack of circulation, as her leg has been elevated for four weeks. But that should clear up while her leg is encased in a cast for 10 days. She'll then begin physiotherapy at the Bloorview MacMillan Centre in Toronto.

"We've had our trials. But the doctors say she'll eventually walk normally," said a relieved Mrs. Ramer, who didn't leave her daughter's side at The Hospital for Sick Children for two straight weeks and spent most of every

See MARKHAM, page 28.

'NOT UNEXPECTED,' YORK REGION MEDICAL OFFICER SAYS

THREE PEOPLE HAVE W. NILE

BY LISA QUEEN
Staff Writer

Three people have contracted the potentially fatal West Nile virus in York Region, preliminary tests show.

It's the first time people have become infected with the disease in the region, associate medical officer of health Dr. Hanif Kassam confirmed Friday afternoon.

"West Nile virus is here to stay. And we have to essentially accept the fact this is part of the activity from year to year," he said.

"I've indicated this is not unexpected. However, this is something of at least some concern to me. Although the risk is low, relatively low, for people in York Region, I think there should be renewed personal vigilance."

Dr. Kassam, who said it will take Health Canada's national microbiology lab in Winnipeg about two weeks to confirm the preliminary results, stressed all three patients are recovering at home and have not required hospitalization.

The patients are a 59-year-old Richmond Hill man, a 55-year-old Markham woman and a 31-year-old woman who was visiting

Thornhill.

The patients, who don't know each other and contracted the disease in different locations, have suffered from fevers, muscle weakness and headaches.

Dr. Kassam said the cases in York were expected, given incidents of people contracting the disease within the past few weeks in neigh-

See NINE, page 27.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

ONTARIO'S KING OF THE FURROW

Ken Ferguson of Frederick Street in Stouffville is this year's winner of the Ontario Plowing Match and will represent the province in the Canada-wide championships next year in Alberta. See story on page 16.

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