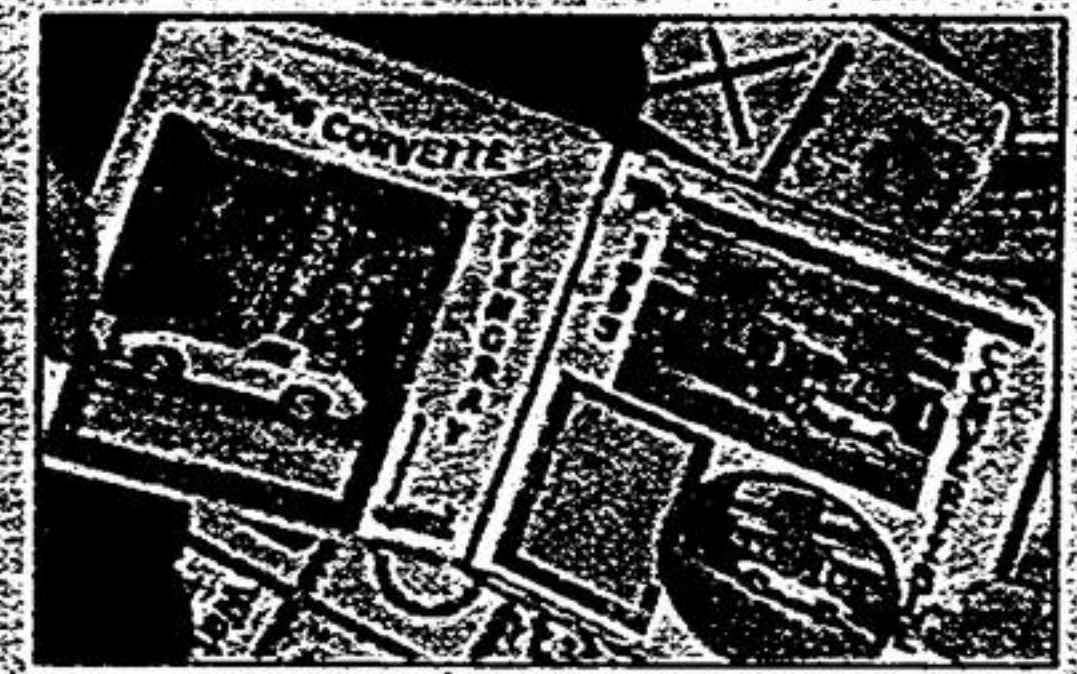


# Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SATURDAY, JAN. 10, 2004 ■ SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE ■ 36 PAGES/\$1 INCLUDING GST



**19** Scrapbooks help preserve precious family memories

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## Early release possible for Markham rapist

*Lawyer cites poor jail conditions*

BY JEFF MITCHELL  
Staff Writer

Three prisoners were routinely crammed into cells designed for two at the jail in which convicted rapist Michael Farouk spent almost two years of pretrial custody, a court has heard.

That time — commonly referred to as dead time — and the conditions at the Metro West detention centre are key points of debate as lawyers argue over how much time Mr. Farouk will spend in jail.

He was convicted in November of sexual assault, kidnapping and robbery.

A jury heard Mr. Farouk abducted a woman on a Toronto street, drove her to a school parking lot in Markham and sexually assaulted her.

He left her naked in the parking lot and drove off to his Markham home, court heard.

The Crown is seeking an eight-year prison sentence.

Defence lawyer Christopher Hicks has indicated he will seek enhanced credit for the time Mr. Farouk spent in the remand centre, during which inmates endured hardships caused by an eight-week public servants strike and the SARS scare.

Courts typically give a two-for-one credit for pretrial time

See PROSECUTOR, page 17.

## Fire hits Vandorf plant



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Fire crews inspect a smoking blaze Friday morning at several industrial units on Woodbine Avenue north of Bloomington Road. There were no injuries. See page 4 for details.

## Region's homeless ignored, critic says

*Politicians pay lip service, but cutbacks hurt program*

BY LISA QUEEN  
Staff Writer

Arieh Cohen wonders if someone will have to freeze to death before York Region starts taking homelessness seriously.

Mr. Cohen, co-chairperson of the Mosaic Interfaith's Out of the Cold program, says politicians are ignoring the growing number of homeless people.

"We've been telling them more than once, 'Do you want to wait till somebody dies and then you have to face it in the press before you deal with this?'" he said, adding funding problems have scaled back Out of the Cold, which houses people in places of worship.

"It is getting no better. It's getting worse. The numbers are increasing," he said, admitting he doesn't have a clear count of homeless people.

While Mr. Cohen says politicians pay lip service to the homeless issue, they would rather send the region's street people to Toronto than provide services here.

"What is really happening is they are sweeping them away to Toronto and then saying, 'They are Toronto people, we won't help them,'" he said.

"It's very unethical, if I can use a mild word."

The problem is they are trying to say everything is fine and dandy in York Region, which was their attitude five years ago.

But regional chairperson Bill Fisch said

See REGION, page 7.

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