



**OOPS!**

Coach Cindy McNeil has her hands full keeping Dylan Cusack upright during a learn to skate program at Stouffville Arena Thursday.

STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

# Five killed on York roads

BY PATRICK MANGION  
Staff Writer

A series of fatal collisions serve as somber reminder to drivers who spurn calls from York Regional Police to take precautions while driving.

Five people have been killed on York Region's roads this year, compared to one in the same period last year.

With the help of the forces Air-2 helicopter, officers stepped up traffic enforcement efforts on roads, made more treacherous by blowing snow and frigid conditions.

More officers were patrolling Yonge Street during Friday evening's rush hour, Sgt. Brad Bulmer said.

Motorists can expect as many as 20 more officers patrolling the streets, Staff Sgt. Tom Carrique said.

Police will use unmarked cars to ensure drivers are adjusting to road conditions and keeping their vehicles in good working order.

"This is the first time we'll be using the helicopter to track aggressive driving. Usually (Air-2) can be used to catch speeders," Staff Sgt. Carrique said.

Even in ideal driving conditions, drivers should keep a two-second distance between themselves and the vehicle in front, he said. That should be increased to five seconds in poor driving conditions.

Sgt. Bulmer said a vehicle that was nearly split in half after crossing the centre line into oncoming traffic along Yonge Street Thursday morning had tires unfit for summer.

The driver, a 23-year-old Richmond Hill woman, was not wearing her seat-belt, he said. As a result, she was ejected from her Honda Civic into traffic, where she

was struck by a vehicle.

On Friday, the woman remained in critical condition at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto after being airlifted from the scene.

That collision was followed by a fatal head-on crash in Vaughan.

## WINTER DRIVING TIPS

- 1) Make sure car batteries are in top condition. Battery performance drops significantly as the temperature drops. For instance, at -18C, available power drops to 40 per cent.
- 2) Check the oil. As temperatures drop oil becomes thicker, creating friction, which can slow the starter.
- 3) Check engine anti-freeze. The fluid should be tested to make sure it cannot freeze in cold weather. Anti-freeze gradually loses protection from freezing, which can reduce the effectiveness of your heater.
- 4) See where you're going. Check your windshield washer fluid before you head out on the road and make sure it is rated for extreme cold. Also make sure windshield wipers are clear of ice before driving off.
- 5) Test your tire pressure. Under inflated tires are a significant safety hazard, especially in extremely cold weather. Tire pressure drops one pound per square inch for every 1 degree drop in temperature. Check tire pressure while the vehicle is cold.
- 6) Stay well back of vehicles. Stopping distances greatly increase in winter, more than doubling on snowy and icy roads. Roads that appear dry make have a coating of loose salt or sand that can affect handling.

# Don't give rapist credit for 'dead time': prosecution

BY JEFF MITCHELL  
Staff Writer

Despite Michael Farouk's claims of hardship and deprivation, the convicted rapist should not be given enhanced credit for the "dead time" he spent in jail awaiting trial, the Crown attorney has argued.

"Why should he be treated differently from all his cell mates?" prosecutor Rob Scott said during a sentencing hearing for the Markham man Friday.

Defence lawyer Christopher Hicks is seeking three-for-one

credit for the 30 months Mr. Farouk has spent in custody since his arrest in July of 2001. That time, much of it spent at the Metro West Detention Centre, was made harsher by crowding and restrictions brought about by an eight-week public service strike and SARS scares, Mr. Hicks argued.

Mr. Farouk was convicted of sexual assault, kidnapping and robbery in November after he abducted a woman in Toronto and drove her to Markham, where he raped her in a school parking lot. He was free on bail in connection

with another sexual assault charge when the incident occurred, court heard.

He is scheduled to stand trial in Peel Region for sexual assault and threatening death in March.

Mr. Farouk took the stand Friday to testify he was often kept in his cell during lockdowns and was unable to pursue correspondence courses while in jail.

"We got locked down (and) ... I could not speak to my family," Mr. Farouk said. "At least seven days every month we'd be locked down."

The strike in the spring of 2002 and the SARS scares last year also meant fewer visits and recreation opportunities, he said.

Mr. Hicks presented Superior Court Justice David Stinson with numerous examples in which judges have given enhanced credit to inmates who did "dead time" in remand centres such as Metro West and the Don jail.

The issue of credit for time in custody is crucial since it will have a direct impact on the time Mr. Farouk serves. The Crown is seeking an eight-year penitentiary term.

If Mr. Farouk is given the standard two-for-one credit, he'll have five years knocked off. Triple credit would see him serve virtually no additional time.

"(Mr. Farouk) has spent more than enough time in custody," Mr. Hicks told the judge.

The prosecutor argued while jail is not a pleasant place — and circumstances can make it tougher — there's no proof Mr. Farouk suffered more than anybody else in custody at Metro West.

Justice Stinson will hand down the sentence next Friday.

**Jason Ladd,**  
Managing Funeral Director

Jason is a lifelong Markham resident, active in St. Patrick's Church and as a volunteer director of York Region Victim Services program. If you know Jason, you know that the words *trust, compassion and professional* immediately come to mind.



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