

21 Aggressive bees, wasps on the prowl this summer

Education 3
 Opinion 6
 Sports 20
 Classified 23

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MOTORISTS DEMAND ACTION

BY ROY GREEN
Staff Writer

Skyrocketing gas prices will likely cost the region's transit system an extra \$3 million in the next year, according to Don Gordon, general manager of York Region Transit.

As gas prices in the GTA were hovering around \$1.20 per litre Thursday, Mr. Gordon sat down to look at the fuel-escalation clause in the contracts YRT has with the contractors who operate the region's fleet of more than 200 buses.

"We're just in the process of revising our budget numbers for next year," Mr. Gordon said.

"In terms of fuel-escalation payments, it looks like it could be in excess of \$3 million."

Prices began to rise drastically Wednesday, a day after the United States Gulf Coast, which produces a quarter of all U.S. crude oil, was decimated by Hurricane Katrina, wrecking oil and gas platforms, pipelines, tanker ports and shutting down eight to 10 refineries.

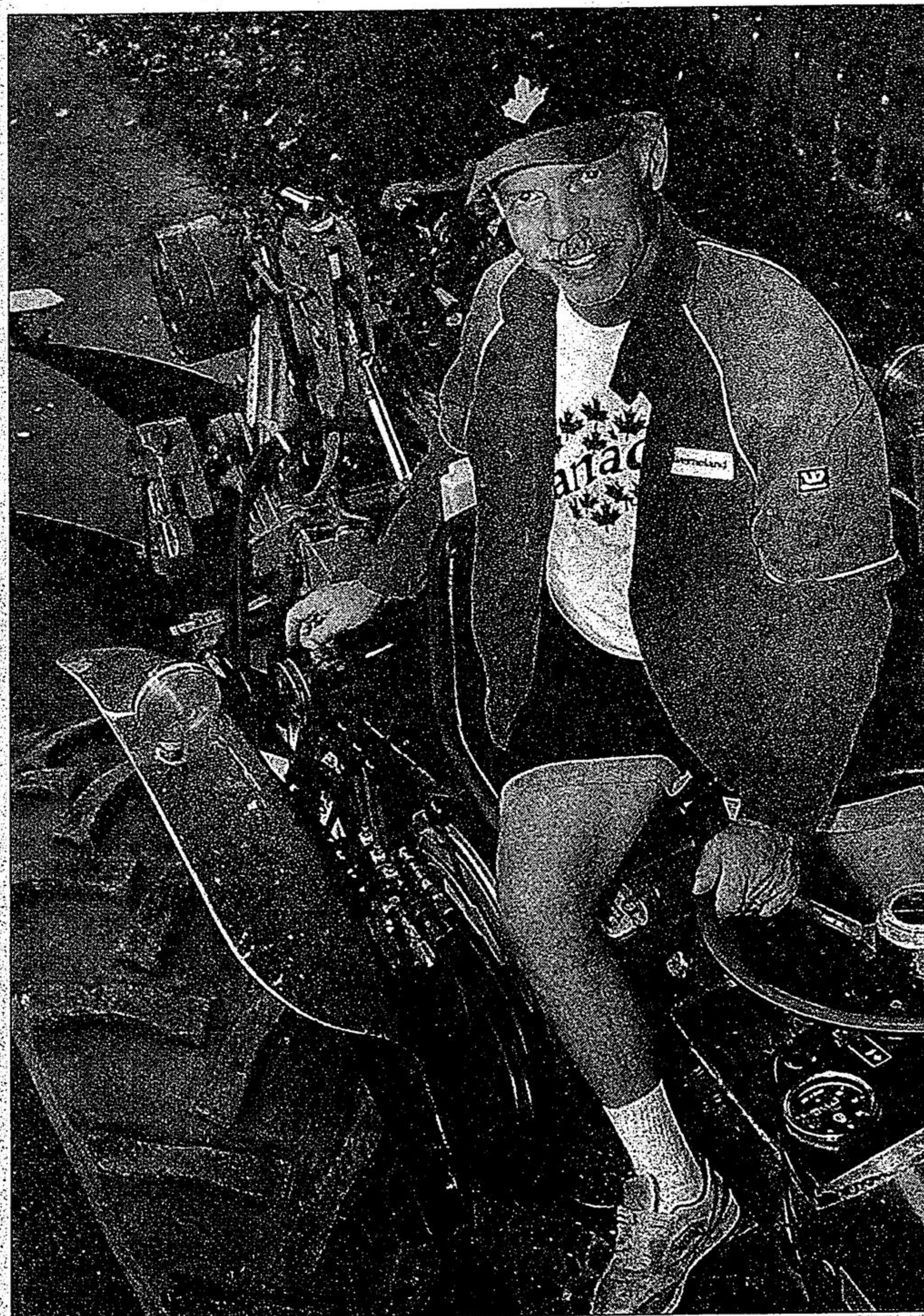
Analysts say prices will remain high for a while yet.

Telephone lines at the Central Ontario office of CAA in Thornhill were jammed by angry motorists Thursday, said Kris Barnier.

"I've spent three hours talking to members who are very upset," he said. "They're demanding action on gas taxes from the federal government. They take in about \$2 billion in tax, not counting the GST and they charge tax on top of the GST and PST. That's wrong. I don't know what it's going to take to convince Ottawa they've got to give us a break."

See CABBIES, page 12.

175th match plows into town today



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Ken Ferguson of Stouffville will compete in the 175th York Region Plowman Association plowing match today in north Markham. The Town of Markham employee is a former regional, provincial and national champion who has represented Canada at six international competitions. See story on page 7, for more information.

Dry well owners suing region

Problem unrelated to sewer, York officials insist

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

Details of a class action law suit linked to private wells going dry in Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville will be outlined at a public meeting in Lemonville Thursday.

Toronto environmental lawyer David Donnelly has been hired to take action against York Region after property owners blamed sewer construction for dry wells and unusually low water levels in ponds and streams as far north as Bethesda Road.

But York Region officials continue to insist construction of the 16th Avenue sewer trunk in Markham and the 9th Line sewer project in Whitchurch-Stouffville is not impacting private wells in this area.

"A consultant has advised us that the zone of influence does not extend to the Bethesda Road area," said project manager Nitti Subramanian, adding a hydrogeologist has suggested the problem may be linked to an increased number of naturally-occurring artesian wells in the area.

Artesian wells force water to the surface, which can impact private wells.

"There's an artesian condition in the area," Mr. Subramanian said. "A hydrogeologist has reported that there has been an increase number of ponds, resulting in an impact on existing wells."

See PEOPLE, page 10.

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