

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SATURDAY, OCT. 8, 2005 ■ SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE ■ 36 PAGES/\$1 INCLUDING GST



18 Say hello to herb and spice up your medicine cabinet

Opinion 6
 Business 9
 Sports 11
 Classified 20

SUV sales sag as gas prices surge

Smaller SUVs more popular in Canada

BY PATRICK MANGION
 Staff Writer

Even if waning sales of SUVs and exorbitant gas prices stunt production of the hulking gas guzzlers, only a sliver of Canadians would even notice, according to a local automotive expert.

Americans' love affair with large SUVs never transferred to Canadians, who embraced more compact SUVs, Richmond Hill-based automotive consultant Dennis DesRosiers said.

While Canadians have purchased 18,000 of the larger SUVs this year, that number reached 1.1 million in the United States.

Despite York Region's affluence, sport-utility vehicles represent a tiny portion of what residents are buying.

While figures from September showed a move away from SUVs, there is more to the slide in popularity than just rising gas prices, Mr. DesRosiers said.

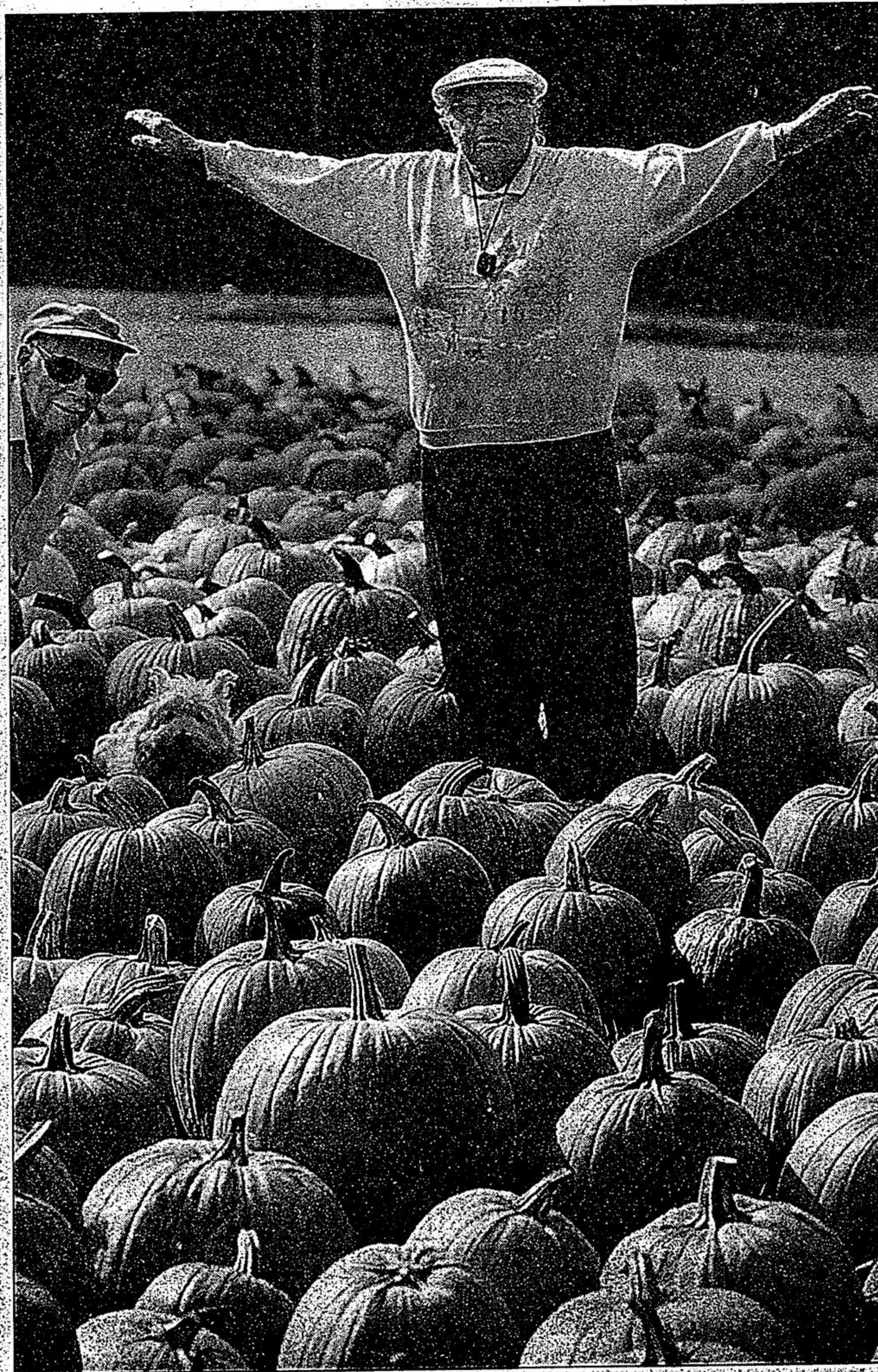
For instance, several domestic automakers offered their highest consumer incentives over the summer months. Therefore, many buyers who were in the market for a new vehicle likely purchased one by the time last month's figures were compiled.

"There's no doubt (SUVs) will be less popular on a go-forward basis," Mr. DesRosiers said.

But sweeping changes to North America's automotive landscape will have to come from the U.S. market, he added.

See CHANGES, page 10.

Scarecrow at work



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Victoria Hoult makes like a scarecrow as she stands with her husband Ivan and their dog Skippy in a sea of pumpkins at their farm on Hwy. 48 north of Ballantrae.

Health unit to monitor schools

Act as warning system for large-scale outbreaks

BY CAROLINE GRECH
 Staff Writer

Several York Region schools will act as a warning system for large-scale outbreaks this year.

The public health unit will track sickness patterns at four elementary schools and four high schools.

"The school is part of the community that gets together five days a week. It is more of a gauge to see how the broader community is doing," Ross Virgo, spokesperson for York Region District School Board, said.

Starting next week, the eight schools will provide a daily report on absenteeism, detailing how many students are absent due to respiratory illness (cough, cold, breathing) or with gastro-intestinal symptoms (vomiting/diarrhea).

"If a school has 20 per cent of the school population sick and a segment of that population is ill with gastro-intestinal symptoms, it is a sign that there may be a flu strain in the community," Mr. Virgo said.

The project is meant to assess the overall health of the community and help the health unit plan for the deployment of medical resources if necessary.

While the new tracking system can be used to detect a pattern for the widely predicted flu pandemic, Mr. Virgo said that is not the sole reason the new system is being put into place.

It is a measure the board wants to keep in place over time, Mr. Virgo said.

The system will be assessed after this year and more schools could be added if necessary.

Seaway Pools & Hot Tubs
 27 HERITAGE RD., MARKHAM
 294-8030
 BOOCHAMBER 1981 1982

2005 CLEAROUT
 MAKE YOUR MOVE
 We are way overstocked & now is the time to make a deal!
 We need to make room for our 2006 models!!
MARKHAM Mazda 5396 HIGHWAY #7 MARKHAM 905-294-1210
 www.markhammazda.ca

Sutton GROUP
 Town and Country Realty Ltd.
 640-0888