

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2006 ■ SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE ■ 40 PAGES/\$1 INCLUDING GST



2 Attending Music Mania 2006?
You can win dinner out at the show

Opinion..... 6
Calendar..... 16
Sports..... 18
Classified..... 20
Publication Mail Agreement #40007673

Successful season bodes well for Spirit

College, NHL scouts part of record crowds

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

Success breeds success. In the case of the Stouffville Spirit, the Provincial Jr. A Hockey League club's unexpected but pleasantly long sojourn in the postseason also translated into popularity off the ice.

Although the club's Cinderella season came to an end Sunday with a heartbreaking 3-2 double overtime loss to the St. Michael's Buzzers in the sixth game of the best-of-seven final series, it didn't take away from the enthusiasm exhibited by those who packed most home games at Stouffville Arena.

While making its debut in the league final, the Spirit sported the highest attendance in the 36-team league during the post-season.

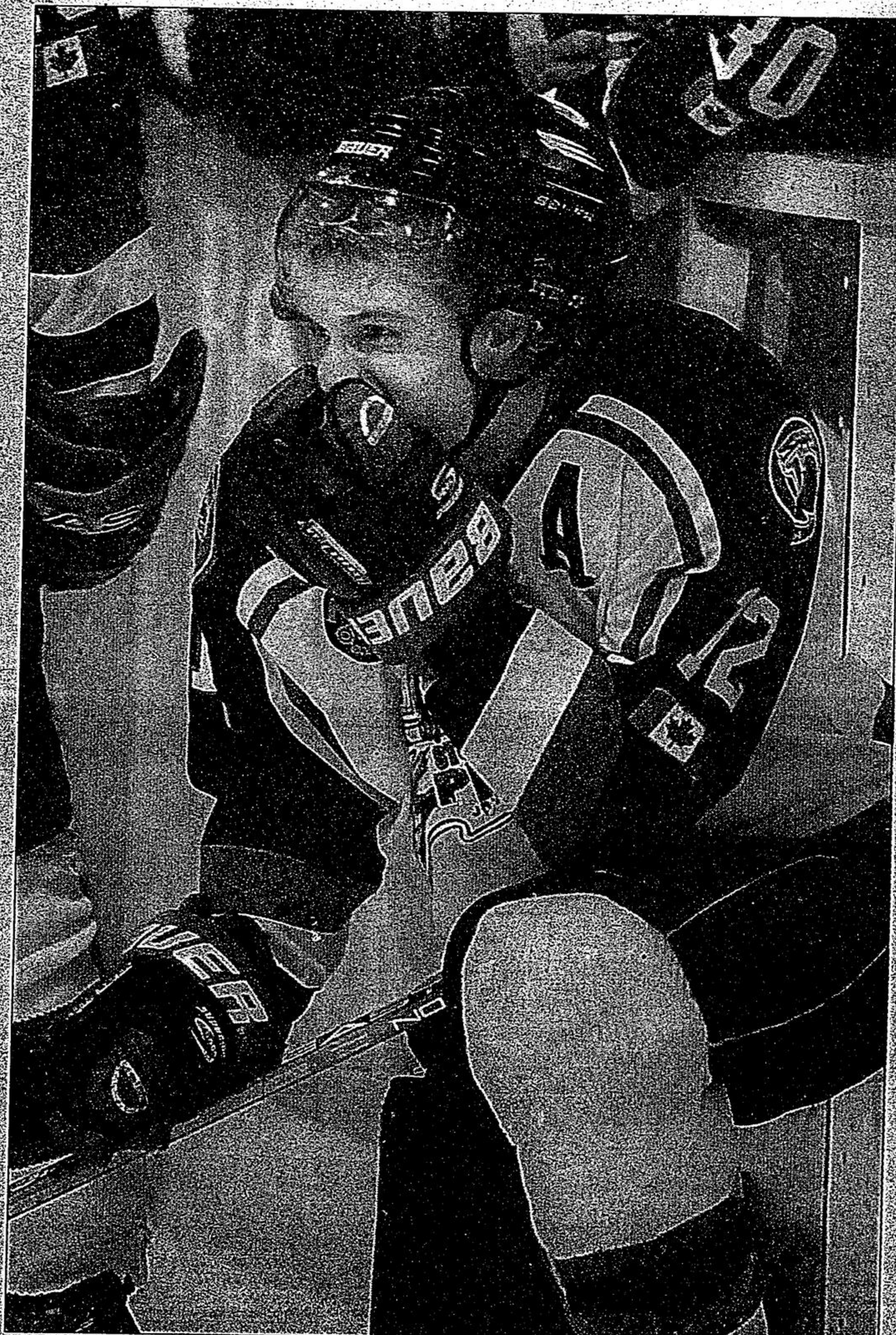
And it won plenty, taking four playoff series en route to capturing the North Conference and North/West championship trophies.

Over 16 home playoff tilts, 10,156 fans flocked to the Stouffville Arena. That translated into an average of 634 fans.

For the final three rounds, that average was closer to 1,000, including some standing-room-only games. The Toronto-based Buzzers, meanwhile, averaged 271 fans in the playoffs.

"Our fans were simply amaz-

See SPIRIT, page 19.



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Stouffville Spirit defenceman Simon Gysbers watches the St. Michael's Buzzers celebrate their Provincial Jr. A Hockey League championship following a 3-2 win in double overtime at the Stouffville Arena Sunday. The Spirit, which won two championships this spring, will honour its fans at a free skate event Sunday from 3 to 4 p.m. at the arena.

Town taxes rise by 4.48%

Spending grant money frustrates Hargrave

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

Whitchurch-Stouffville residents, you will be paying an additional 4.48 per cent on the municipal portion of your 2006 tax bill.

If you live in the "average" home valued at \$300,000, it means you'll be taking another \$38.68 out of your pocket.

The town's budget was finalized Tuesday afternoon, after being delayed since November, mainly through the efforts of councillors Rob Hargrave and Phil Bannon.

In November, the tax rate was set at 7.9 per cent, based on estimated figures. The councillors wanted to work with actual year-end figures, so budget talks were stalled.

The municipality's total 2006 budget came in at \$37.5 million. The operating budget makes up about \$20 million, with another \$17.5 being spent on capital projects.

Councillor Hargrave objected to \$118,000 being taken from a provincial grant to lower the tax increase by about 1 per cent to the 4.48 per cent figure.

He said it's frustrating "that we have a propensity to take future dollars and spend today, to lower the tax rate. It will have to be paid by taxpayers one way or another," Mr. Hargrave added.

He pointed to 1999 and 2000 when taxes were frozen, largely because the town wasn't contributing to OMERS (Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System) for

See TOWN, page 15.

24hr Drive thru
McDonald's

STOUFFVILLE
Family
Dentistry

(905) 642-7474

www.smileclinic.ca

6212 Main St.
East of the Train Station

Dr. Sheldon Lazier
Dr. Waseema Ali
Dr. Dina Ghobrial
Dr. Dan Kobric

Ed Edwards, Denturist

FOREVER[®]
THE WORLD'S MOST
BRILLIANT DIAMOND

Barthau
Jewellers

6312 Main St.
Stouffville
(905) 640-4646
www.handpickeddiamonds.com