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Energy miser, producer rewarded

Home solar plant earns Ontario honour

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
 Staff Writer

Whitchurch-Stouffville's Sal Amenta is an energy miser of the best kind.

He enjoys watching his hydro run in reverse.

As the first homeowner to sign on with an Ontario program that encourages people to generate their own energy by using solar, wind, bio-energy or water power, he is poised to sell his electricity back to the grid.

Mr. Amenta is awaiting the installation of a second hydro meter under the Renewable Energy Standard Offer Program (RESOP) from the Ontario Power Authority, which was launched Nov. 22.

With the second meter in place, he'll receive 42 cents per kilowatt hour for the energy the six roof-top solar panels on his house generate. Residents usually pay around 11 cents per kilowatt hour for hydro.

He is the smallest micro-generator of renewable energy of the 22 projects under the program so far. They were honoured by Energy Minister Dwight Duncan earlier this month.

The standard offer program pays 11 cents per kilowatt-hour for power that comes from wind, water or biomass and 42 cents per kilowatt-hour for solar electricity. The projects have to be 10

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Yoke's on you



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Alice An tries the yoke as guide Ken Tranter and visitor Hadiatou Barry look on at Bruce's Mill Conservation Area Friday. The annual maple syrup festival is on at the park through April 9. There are daily events throughout March Break. For more information, see page 7.

C. difficile in all hospitals: expert

Potentially deadly bacteria still not 'reportable' illness

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
 Staff Writer

York Region health officials are on the lookout for the potentially fatal *Clostridium difficile* bacteria.

While the bacteria has not proven fatal in the region lately, that could change at any time, an expert says.

"C. difficile is in every hospital all of the time and it's everywhere," Richmond Hill's Dr. Danny Chen said.

A specialist in infectious diseases who practises at York Central Hospital, Dr. Chen suggests C. difficile should never be underestimated.

"All cases are potentially dangerous," Dr. Chen said. "Some strains can produce more toxins and be harder to treat."

In the past two weeks, the potentially fatal stomach bug has hit Barrie with 39 cases being reported and claimed four lives in Mississauga.

Alarm bells rang especially loud across Ontario when it was reported recently the bacteria has killed 2,000 in Quebec during the past three years.

When it comes to C. difficile, local laboratory testing does not differentiate strains.

"I can't say that the Quebec strain is not here," Dr. Chen said. "There's no specific test to say it's the Quebec strain."

The calculated rate for C. difficile in Canada is five to 10 for every 1,000 patients. "We are within that range at York Central," Dr.

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