

Spirit hopes new GM brings winning touch

Mark Joslin has Jr. A coaching experience in Pickering, Aurora

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

Mark Joslin received a belated birthday present Thursday, after turning 44 two days earlier.

Giving the Richmond Hill resident that gift was the Stouffville Spirit, who named him as new general manager.

Joslin became the club's fourth GM in just more than a year.

He replaced Thomas Milne, who resigned in late March. Milne took over from Matt Gibson, who resigned in October. Gibson replaced Ken Burrows, who was fired 13 months ago.

In addition to handling the general manager's position, Joslin will serve as an associate coach and work with returning head coach Dave D'Ammizio.

"It feels great. It's a great opportunity," Joslin said. "I've watched Stouffville play over the last couple of years. There's a lot of upside to the team and it's a great community. I feel fortunate to be a part of the organization. I'll take the ball and run with it."

Joslin is no stranger to the league having been head coach of the Pickering Panthers of the South Conference in the 2007-08 campaign. The Panthers finished the season in last place with a 10-38-1 mark.

Joslin's familiarity with the Spirit and the organization stemmed from his time as an assistant coach with the rival Aurora Tigers for three seasons. Included in that stint was the 2006-07 year in which the Tigers won the Royal Bank Cup.

Over the past two seasons, he also served as a scout for the Barrie Colts of the Ontario Hockey League.

In taking over the club's hockey operations, Joslin will have little time to dwell on his new position.

Joslin said his first priority is to meet with D'Ammizio and assistant coach Pat Pare and organize the club's annual rookie camp May 3 and 4 at the Stouffville Arena.

He anticipates having 126 players plus goalies in place for the two-day camp to determine who they will invite

to the main camp in August.

After that, Joslin hinted he might make additions to his front office staff.

"We want the people to be excited about the Spirit and make it an elite organization," he said. "And from there, we will move on."

Spirit co-owners Zeev Werek and Dave Laren felt Joslin's personality and success in Aurora were the key factors behind the hiring.

"Everyone that I spoke to who worked with Mark or had played for him said he's a nice guy and a great student of the game," Werek said. "Mark has coached under Jerome (Dupont, Tigers head coach and ex-NHLer) and he's learned a lot from him. I feel Jerome is a premier coach in our league. Mark really likes the technical part of the game and teaches kids. He's a student of the game and that's what I like."

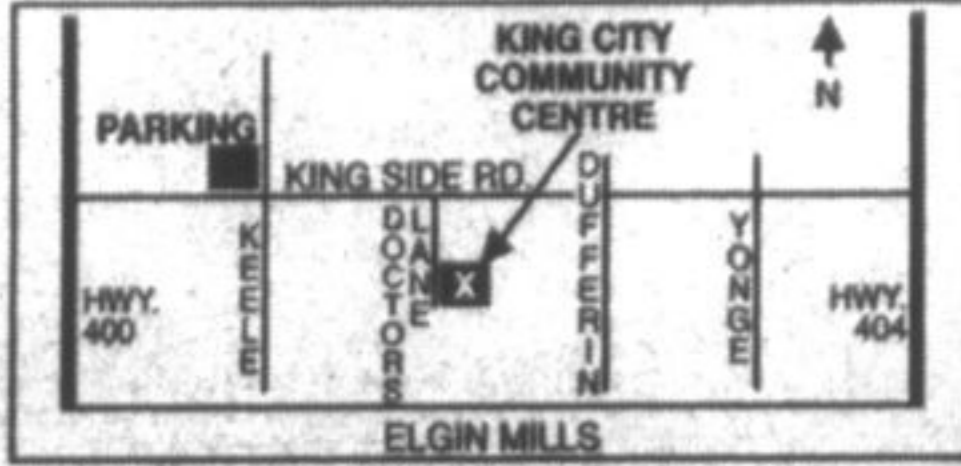
"Our success has come from stability. We need the same people and to build on it every year. Dave (Laren) and I didn't take it lightly," he said.

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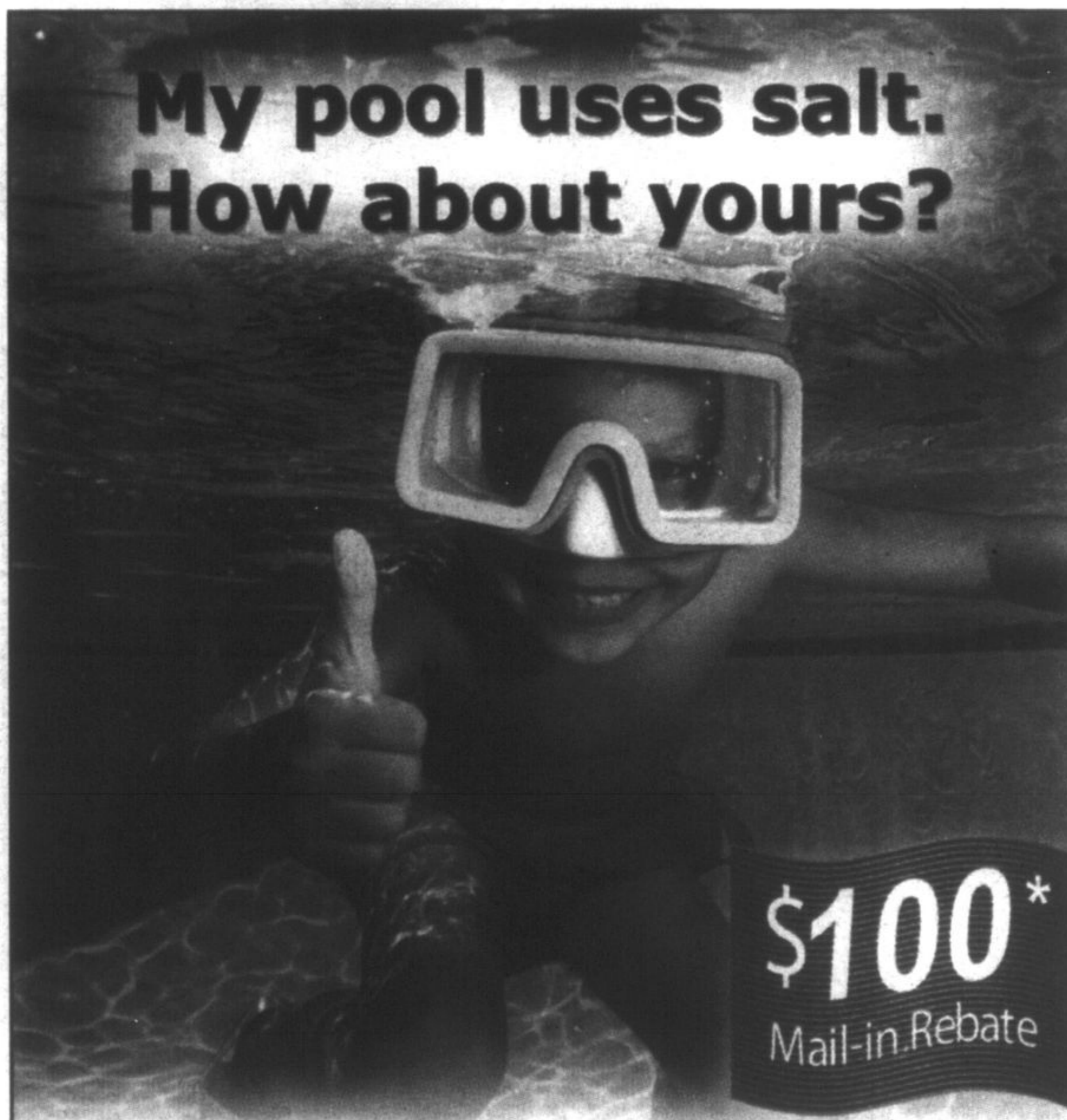
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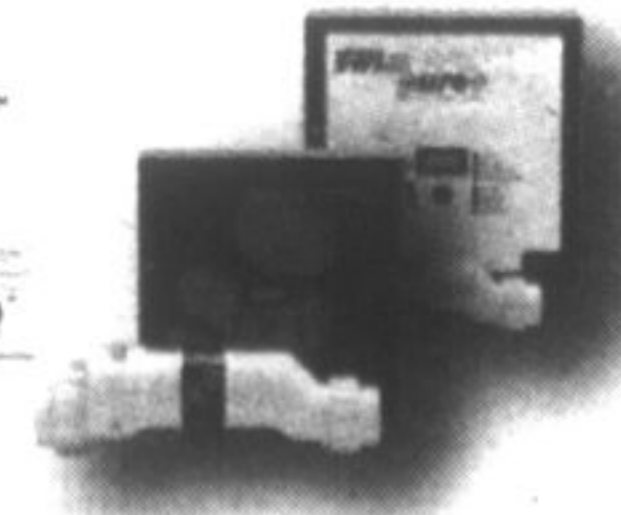
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