



**Mike (Rehill) Richards** as goalie on Stouffville's Ontario-champion pee-wees in 1976 and as TSN Radio's morning man.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE PHOTO

# 'Still just the guy from Stouffville'

From page 1.

## FOLLOWING FATHER

including Bobby Orr and Paul Henderson, thanks to TSN's stable of experts, Mr. Richards' contacts from taking a similar show into top spot in Calgary and clients of his own agent, J.P. Barry.

He's moving his family into a new house in Courtice next week.

His story's been chronicled in the Toronto dailies. And a book - *Be Like Mike: A Rude Man's Guide To Life, Love and the 10-Team Parlay* - is coming.

Even the subject finds it hard to fathom.

"You sure you're not after the Mike Richards who played for the Flyers?" he said he told the literary agent. "I haven't written anything since Stouffville High."

Still, he insists he's "the same kid who helped erect the totem pole in front of Summitview" Public School. The teenager who appeared at Yuk Yuk's in Toronto.

"A man child," he says. "Nothing's changed. I just get paid to do the same stuff. I'm still just the guy from Stouffville, living on Manitoba Street..."

Not always.

The book will talk about "the heart-break," including working for only 18 months between 1998 and 2004. Then there was the well-publicized, and failed, negotiations to take over the morning show at The FAN 590 in Toronto last year.

He still owns two houses in Calgary, has changed addresses too many times, spent

What's the coolest thing Mike Richards has ever done?

Coach high school football in Calgary at the urging of then Calgary Stampeders, now Toronto Argonauts, coach Jim Barker.

"I loved it," he said of his time at St. Mary's High School. "I became my father."

Dad is Jim Rehill, a coaching and teaching legend at Stouffville District Secondary School from 1957-91.

All three of his sons have coached high school sports.

"We're very proud of Mike," said Mr. Rehill, who now lives in Uxbridge with his wife, Shirley.

"Not only does he have the mad characters, he's a phenomenal interviewer and he has a great grasp of sports."

months away from his family and knows the fickle nature of the business.

His resume includes stops at The FAN, CHUM, CISS and the short-lived Team 1050. And that's just on the Toronto radio dial. After radio college, he worked weekends overnight in Barrie and also did time in Hamilton before moving to Alberta and

building his show.

It's a product of hard work: no co-host, no calls from listeners and plenty of leg-work in the community.

"Just like in Calgary, I'll speak at everything that moves," he said.

That brings him back to Stouffville Thursday for a fundraiser for the Spirit Jr. A hockey club. (See story on page 12 for more.)

"The town looks so different every time I come back," said the former minor hockey goalie who played in the old rink in Memorial Park. "Hey, even the new arena on the Ninth isn't the new arena any more."

Many of his childhood chums - guys like Steve Rendall and Claude Maillet - remain his best friends today.

"Truly, he is pretty much the same," said Mr. Rendall, a Stouffville resident and Markham firefighter. "The only thing different is that he has a wife and son he has to be accountable to. And he's reached the level he wanted to get to back to in high school."

The pair became fast friends at Stouffville Secondary, appearing in the school's annual variety show as Saturday Night Live characters and making endless tapes of their material around the Rendall family's kitchen table or out in the community.

"We'd just go on about stuff," he said. "Some of it became classics and others not so much. But those were the early beginnings."

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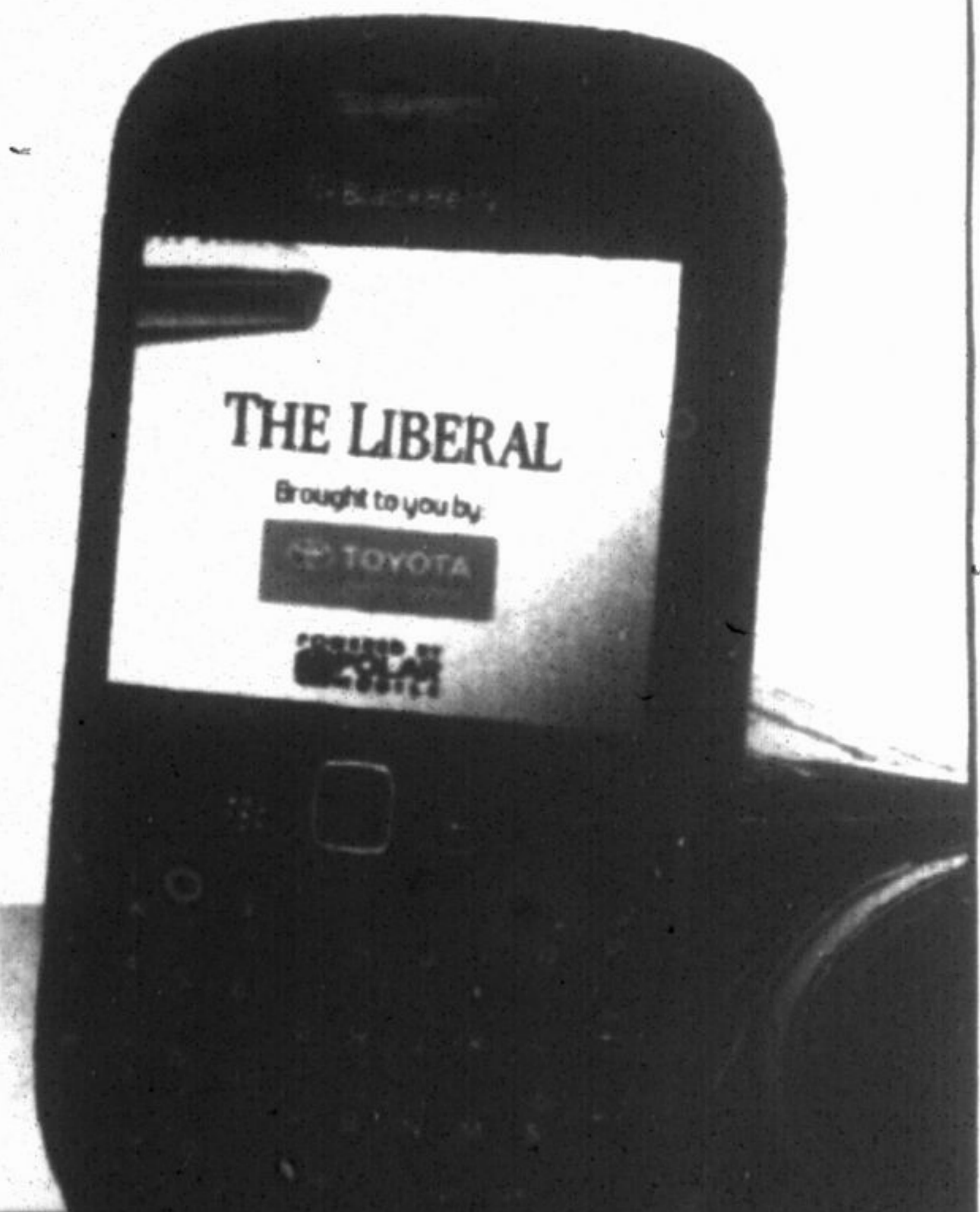
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