

Hungry rabbits munch on fruit trees

BY SANDRA BOLAN
sbolan@yrmg.com

It was a long, hard winter for everybody, including local rabbits, who decided eating fruit tree bark was better than the alternative — possible starvation.

More than a month ago, Steve Cicchillo discovered rabbits had eaten the bark off four of his six young fruit trees.

No guesswork was needed as to who the culprits were — they left paw prints and droppings in the snow.

"We love our fruit trees," said the Ironwood Crescent resident. "You get something from the tree. It's like gardening."

Rabbits are vegetarian and "if it's got a little bit of sustenance to it, they eat it," said Stouffville resident and gardening guru Mark Cullen.

However, fruit tree bark isn't their favourite meal. When they eat the bark it's because they have "become desperate", he said.

Rabbits prefer the bark of fruit trees that are five years old and younger, as it is green and more tender than that of older trees.

Along with being a particularly difficult winter for the non-hibernating rabbits, there has been a rise within the GTA of cottontails. Rabbits are also nearing the peak of their seven-year life cycle, which is contributing to fierce competition for food and their willingness to eat almost anything, according to Mr. Cullen.

Mr. Cicchillo lost bark two feet up the base of the trees. The chances of them surviving



Ironwood Crescent resident Steve Cicchillo discovered rabbits had eaten the bark off four of his six young fruit trees this spring.

aren't great.

"There is nothing he can do. He can pray," Mr. Cullen said.

Mr. Cicchillo won't know if the trees survived until the blooming season.

In order to prevent this from happening again, Mr. Cullen suggested Mr. Cicchillo put plastic tree collars around their bases in the fall.

Power groups network at 19 on Park

Energy co-op hopes arena solar plan OK

BY SANDRA BOLAN
sbolan@yrmg.com

The town's support may have earned the Whitchurch-Stouffville Community Energy Co-operative bonus points on its application, but that doesn't mean an Ontario Power Authority approval is guaranteed.

Projects totaling 85 mw are vying for approval from the OPA's Feed in Tariff (FIT) program, but only 25 mw are available, according to Harry French, president of the local co-operative.

A decision is expected later this month.

"It's a slight possibility (the application will be denied). It's very unlikely because we have everything lined up," Mr. French said during the Community Power Workshop's lunch break.

The workshop was held at the Lebovic Centre for Arts and Entertainment - Nineteen on the Park Wednesday and dealt with the management and governance of co-operatives, insurance requirements and how to pick the best engineer, procurement and construction company.

About 80 people attended the workshop.

The co-operative has approval from the town to construct a 250 kw solar project on the Stouffville Clippers Sports Complex's

roof.

In return, the town will receive \$14,000 a year in rent for 20 years.

A co-operative/municipality partnership is rare, according to Janice Ashworth, operations manager for the Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-operative.

She attended the workshop, in part, to find out how the two parties were able to come together.

Ms Ashworth said the ideal future will comprise of solar-powered municipal/community partnerships.

Denmark and Belgium, Ms Ashworth said, have gone so far as to legislate a certain percentage of the projects must be community-owned.

The local program is expected to earn dividends of \$57,400 annually for its community investors, according to information presented during the March 19 council meeting.

If all goes according to plan, the solar panels will be operational in May of 2014.

All electricity generated by the panels will go into a large pool of available electricity and dispersed by Hydro One.

For more information, go to www.energycooperative.ca and <http://fit.powerauthority.on.ca>

Walk will help moms, children

In the developing world, having a child is the riskiest thing a woman can do, according to Save the Mothers. Just about every 90 seconds, a woman somewhere in the world dies from pregnancy or childbirth complications.

Save the Mothers is hosting a 5K walk in Stouffville next Saturday, the day before Mother's Day, to raise awareness and support to improve maternal and child health in developing countries.

"It's a time people will have the sentiment of being a mom or thinking about their own mother," said Catherine Eeuwes, walk coordinator for Save the Children.

This is the first 5K walk the Canadian charity has held in Stouffville and Ms Eeuwes is hoping for about 100 participants.

Save the Mothers was founded by Dr. Jean Chamberlain Froese, a Canadian obstetrician/gynecologist. She is Ms Eeuwes' sister.

Dr. Chamberlain Froese was practising in Yemen and wanted to do something to help the women during pregnancy and childbirth. However, because of Yemen's Muslim culture, Dr. Chamberlain Froese decided to start the project in Africa, according to Ms Eeuwes.

"She could be home in Canada with a very posh job. So she's sacrificing a lot," she said.

The walk starts at 2 p.m. at Stouffville Pentecostal Church, 6853 Main St.

For more information and to register, go to www.savethemothers.org

Town hall orange for good reason

The waiting area of the town hall's main lobby will be awash in orange May 6 in hon-

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

our of Light it Orange for Melanoma Monday.

Estimates indicated there would be more cases of skin cancer diagnosed in 2012 than that of breast, lung and prostate cancer combined, according to the Canadian Dermatology Association.

The Light it Orange event will take place nationwide and was created to not only raise awareness of skin cancer, but to let those with it know people are fighting the battle with them, according to the Canadian Dermatology Association's media release.

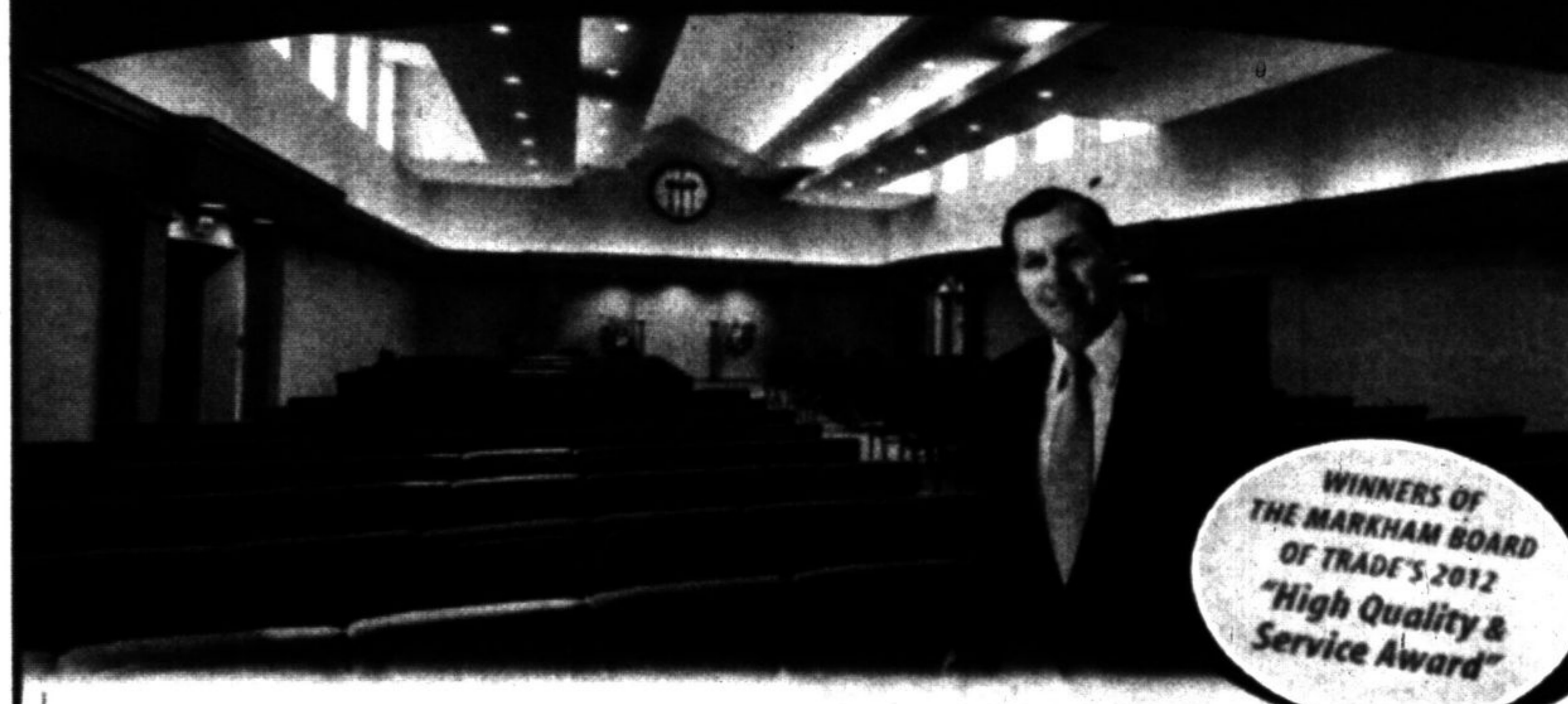
"We try to promote awareness to all great causes that come along," Mayor Wayne Emmerson told The Sun-Tribune of why the town hall will go orange for a day.

"The Canadian Dermatology Association is using the colour orange as the awareness colour for all skin cancers. The awareness colour for melanoma is black, but the CDA feels it's important Canadians recognize all skin cancers as a danger and take the necessary steps to protect themselves," wrote Jennifer Scott, director of communications for the association in an e-mail to The Sun-Tribune.

The survival rate for Canadians diagnosed with melanoma is about 90 per cent, according to the CDA.

Its main cause is too much UV radiation. Skin cancer can be prevented by limiting your exposure to the sun, staying in the shade, wearing a hat and using sunscreen.

A New Standard in Elegance



WINNERS OF
THE MARKHAM BOARD
OF TRADE'S 2012
"High Quality &
Service Award"

*Chapel
Ridge*

FUNERAL HOME
& CREMATION CENTRE

8911 Woodbine Ave., Markham
(4 blocks north of Hwy 7)
info@chapelridgefh.com
www.chapelridgefh.com

905-305-8508

ANNOUNCING...

**Chapel Ridge Funeral Home's
new chapel, now the largest in
York Region, and our beautiful
new sit-down reception facility.**

**A new standard in elegance.
An enduring standard of
professionalism and
personal service.**

A caring part of our community