

COMING UP

New Year's options still available

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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Keep warm with hot chocolate while you take a horse-drawn wagon ride and watch ice sculpture demonstrations before the night sky becomes all-aglow with fireworks.

The final instalment of Mayor Wayne Emmerson's New Year's Eve festivities kicks off at 6:30 p.m. in Memorial Park. The fireworks light up the night sky at 9 p.m.

For adults, the evening does not have to end there.

The Stouffville Legion is one of a number of places hosting a party.

A hot and cold buffet will be served at 8 p.m. and dancing to the tunes of DJ Jim Erickson will get under way at 9 p.m.

There will be door and spot prizes as well as party favours.

Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. For more information, go to stouffvillelegion.ca or call 905-640-1714.

The Cornerhouse on Main is offering a special menu that includes lobster bisque, tenderloin carpaccio, seared mahi mahi and Guinness chocolate cake.

Tickets are \$65 each. To make a reservation, call 905-640-8494.

The Earl of Whitchurch Pub is offering a free ride home to patrons who live in Stouffville.

Tickets are \$75 each and include a buffet dinner, music by Chris Collins, dancing and cham-

pagne at midnight.

For reservations, call 905-642-3275 or e-mail earlwhitchurch@gmail.com

Start the new year off with a free skate at the Clippers Sports Complex, pad 1, from 1 to 3 p.m. New Year's Day.

"If (kids) got new skates for Christmas, they can come here to try them out," said Mayor Emmerson.

The Stouffville Legion is showing the Winter Classic from Michigan Stadium. The action gets under way at noon.

NEW YEAR'S TRADITIONS

In North America, our New Year's Eve traditions are pretty basic. Gather with friends, countdown the last 10 seconds of the year in unison, then kiss someone — whether or not you know them is optional — when the clock strikes midnight and the party continues.

Perhaps one year you may want to spice up your celebration by incorporating traditions from other countries.

Spaniards, for instance, congregate in the town's major centre to eat a grape a second as they countdown the last 12 seconds of the year.

The tradition signifies good luck for each month of the new year.

In Ecuador, residents scare off bad luck and burn away the negative stuff from the previous year by igniting a newspaper-stuffed scarecrow outside their home.

— source: policymic.com

York residents finding ways to conserve power

BY SEAN PEARCE
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Clark W. Griswold Jr., of National Lampoon's "Vacation" films fame as portrayed by Chevy Chase, might have thought twice about decorating his house with 25,000 imported Italian twinkle lights (that don't twinkle) if he were living in Ontario.

Electricity bills have risen sharply over the past decade and are set to increase another 42 per cent over the next five years.

Given that, York Region residents are already doing their best to cut their consumption and avoid using energy during on-peak periods.

It's unclear if Bob Sandiford has his house decked out similar to the Griswolds' abode, but either way, he was not planning to illuminate his Christmas lights that often. Electricity's simply too precious to squander, he said.

"I haven't even turned my Christmas lights on outside yet," he said just a few days before the big day.

Beyond that, Mr. Sandiford has also replaced his lightbulbs with more efficient models and has many appliances,

such as the coffee maker, on a timer to avoid having them run constantly.

He also keeps track of the time of day and ensures that the washing machine and dishwasher run only during off-peak times which is from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. on weekdays and all day on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.

For those keeping track, Hydro One issued a reminder that, while Dec. 25 and 26 are holidays for the purposes of electricity pricing, Dec. 24 was not. Using electricity during on-peak hours, from 7 to 11 a.m. or from 5 to 7 p.m., or during mid-peak time, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., on Christmas Eve or other weekdays meant higher rates and a bigger bill.

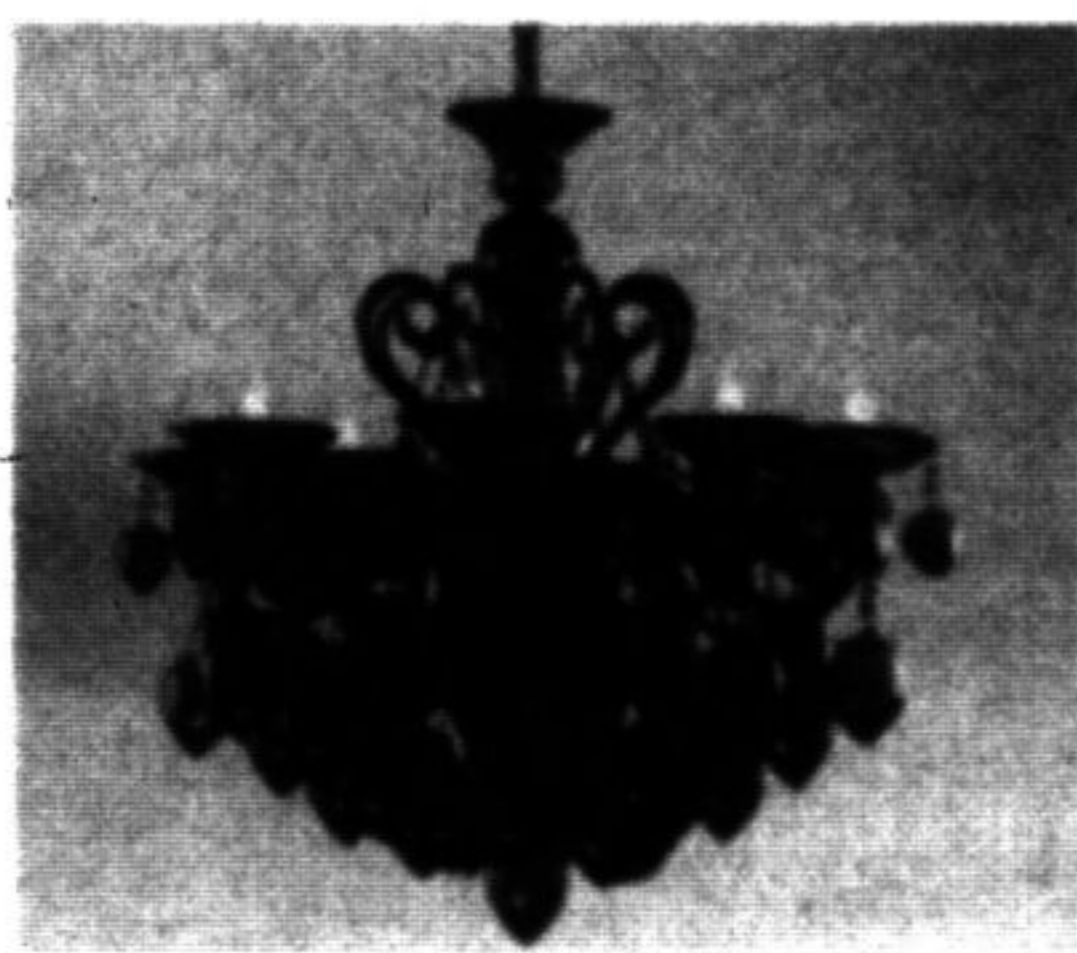
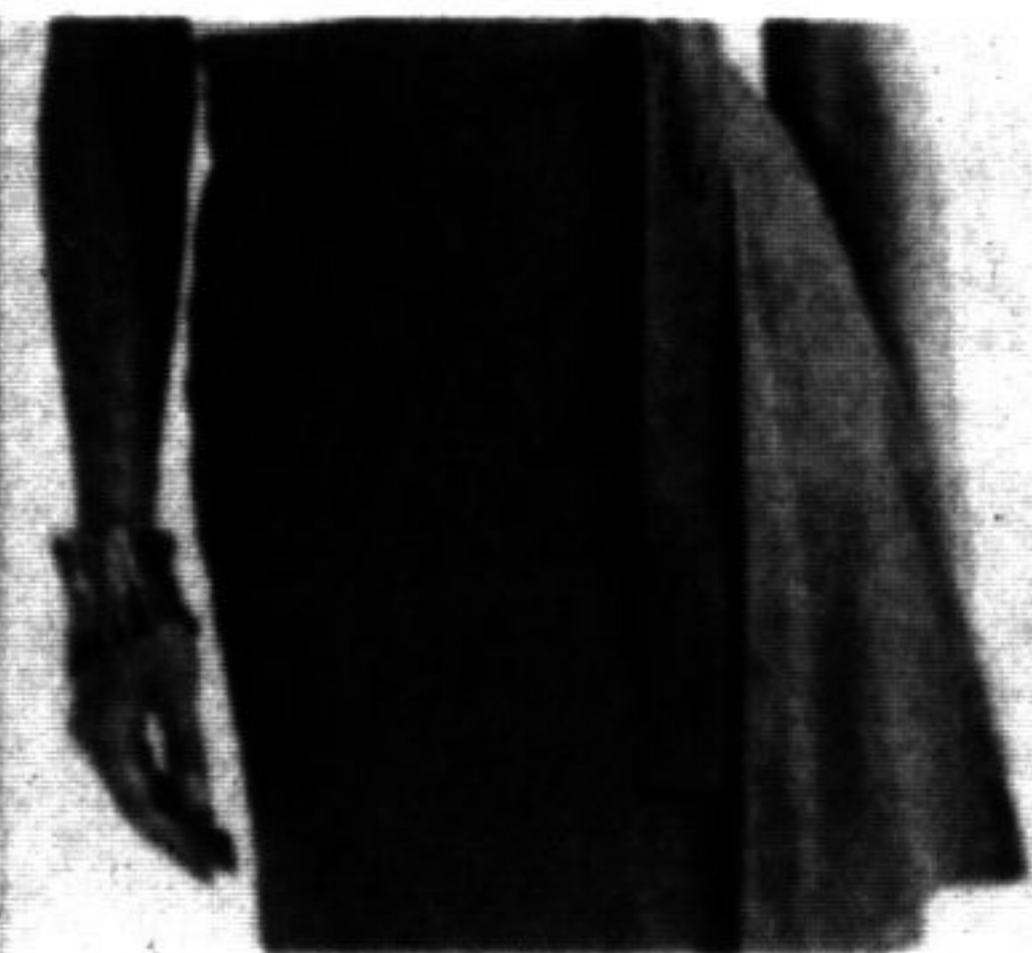
Others York Region Media Group spoke with said they, like Mr. Sandiford, would continue to replace their incandescent bulbs with more energy-efficient CFL and LED versions. Doing laundry and other energy-intensive activities after 7 p.m. on weekdays was also a common response.

Visibly surprised by the sharp, upward trend looming with respect to electricity pricing, Ashley Sousa said she intends to make sure that all of the lights are switched off when she's not home.

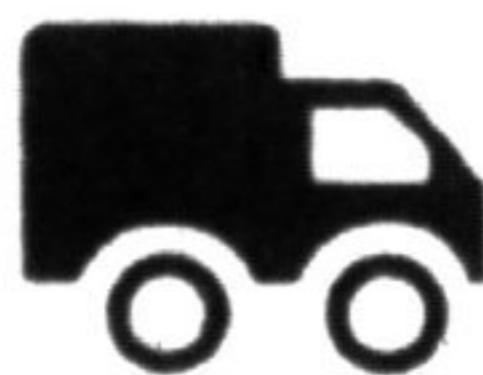
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