

Many notorious incidents made headlines in 2013

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More information on York Region's top 5 crime stories can be found on our website, yorkregion.com, including photographs, follow-up stories and video.

1. Slingerland: Rarely have York Region residents seen such a spectacular fall from grace as the case of Dr. John Owen Slingerland.

A well-respected member of the community and, at one point, the region's chief medical officer, Dr. Slingerland was one of Mount Albert's most loved sons.

However, three years after allegations emerged that he was a pedophile and the crimes were committed against, among others, his best friend's sons, he has been convicted of the crimes and sentenced to two years in prison.

The Newmarket street that bears his name could soon have a new name. He is currently appealing the conviction.

2. Deaths of children in others care: York Region has witnessed two deaths at unlicensed daycares this year along with two drowning of children younger than 11.

None of the cases have been resolved.

In two of the incidents, Robert Robinson and Eva Ravikovitch, lawsuits are ongoing.

In two cases, including that of a four-year-old who drowned at the Pavilion Fitness Centre in Thornhill, a coroner's report is due imminently.

A coroner is also looking into the case of Ms Ravikovitch and a nine-month-old baby who died at an unregulated daycare in Markham.

The provincial government continues to discuss ways to improve legislation around licensing daycares.

3. Mercy Yulien: After being adopted out of Cuba and brought to Maple by Vaughan businessman Ronald Rosario DeFrancesco, Ms Yulien was subjected to years of sexual, mental and physical abuse

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by her adoptive father.

After she finally pressed charges, Mr. DeFrancesco fled to Italy and then to Argentina.

His son from another marriage informed York police of his whereabouts and he was eventually arrested and brought back to face Canadian justice, which amounted to two years probation.

After fighting to have a court-imposed publication ban removed, Mercy set up a charity to help fellow victims and told her story to York Region Media Group.

Since then, the new mother is training to become a lawyer and regularly speaks on behalf of United Way.

4. Mafia strife: Ever since reputed Montreal mob boss Vito Rizzutto was released from prison, the media has been abuzz about the possibility the mob war that has caused so many deaths in Montreal may come to Woodbridge.

Although Sam Calautti was killed in a mob-style hit outside a stag party in Woodbridge in July, the much-hyped war is not yet visible, at least in public.

Police have yet to solve Mr. Calautti's shooting and continue to seek witnesses.

Meanwhile, another Vaughan man with ties to the mafia, Carmelo Bruzesse, was arrested in August.

5. Fentanyl: When Oxycontin, an infamous opioid, was altered to make it harder for drug addicts to abuse, speculation was rife that heroin would replace the pharmaceutical among users.

Although that may be occurring, the overwhelming choice in York Region appears to have been Fentanyl.

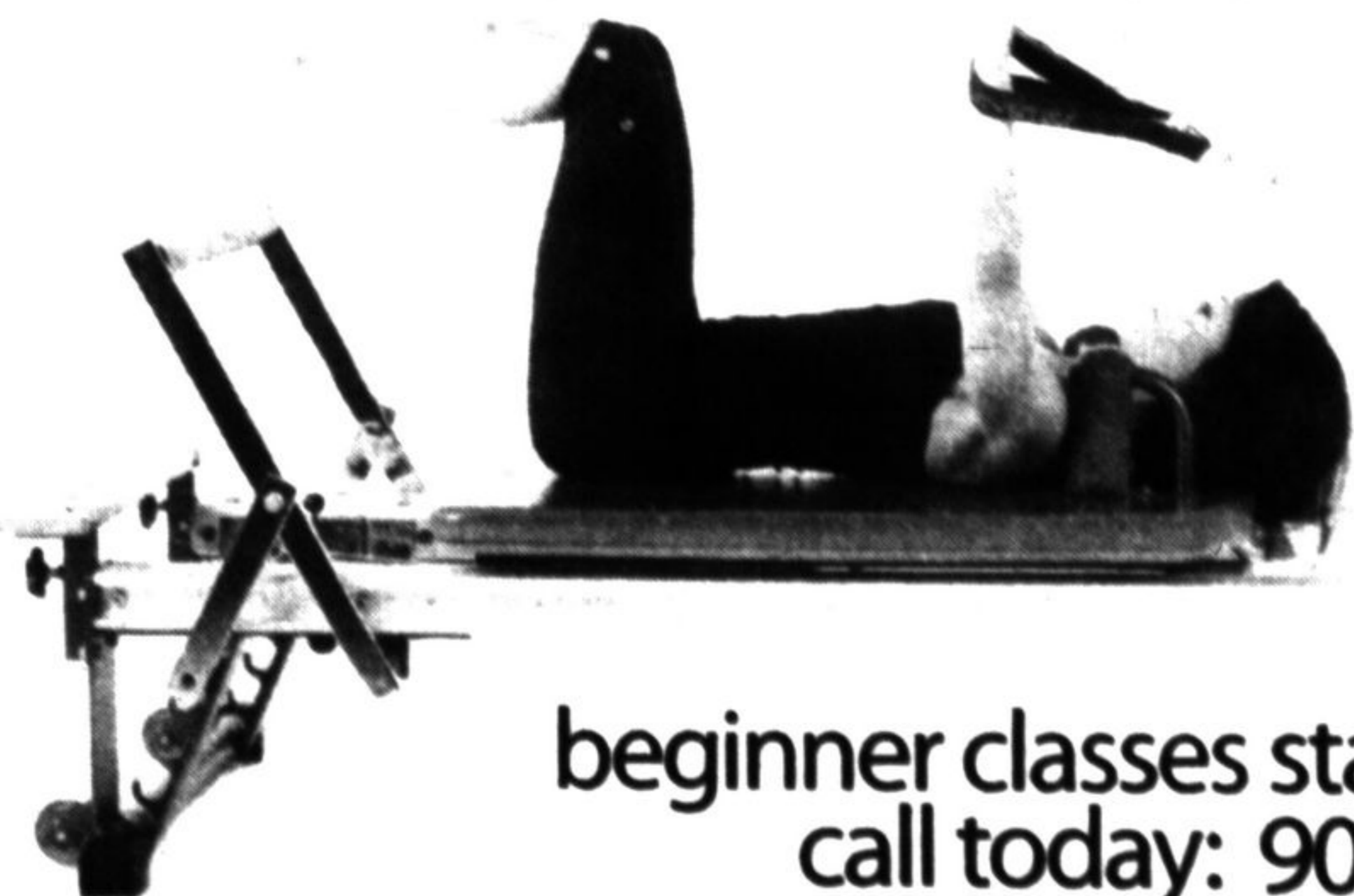
It has already claimed the lives of five people in the region.

Recently, the police announced a bust of 13 people and 140 charges, but the problem persists.



Dr. John Owen Slingerland leaves court with his lawyer, Faisal Joseph. Toronto defence lawyer Brian Greenspan has filed an appeal to Dr. Slingerland's conviction.

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