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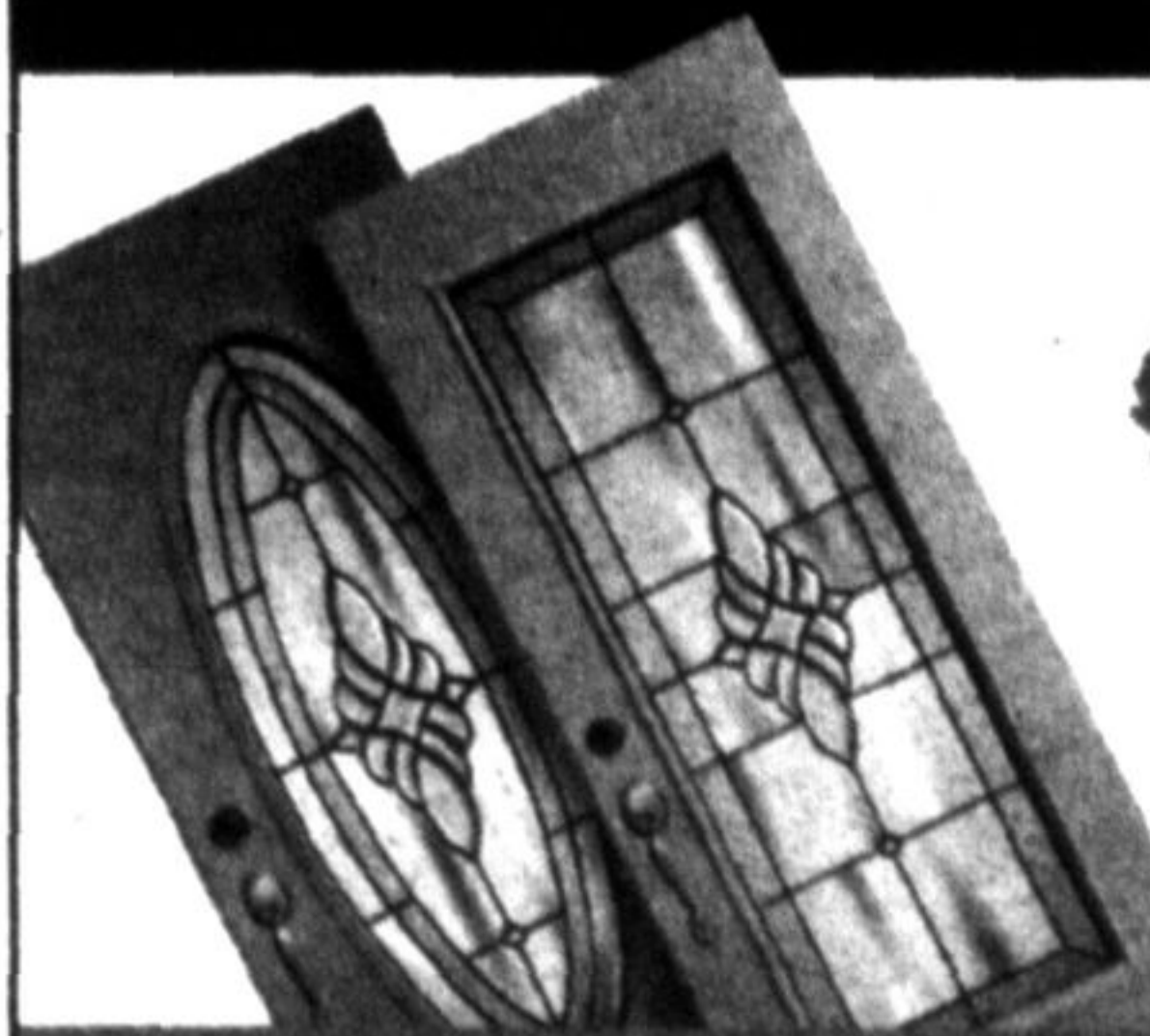
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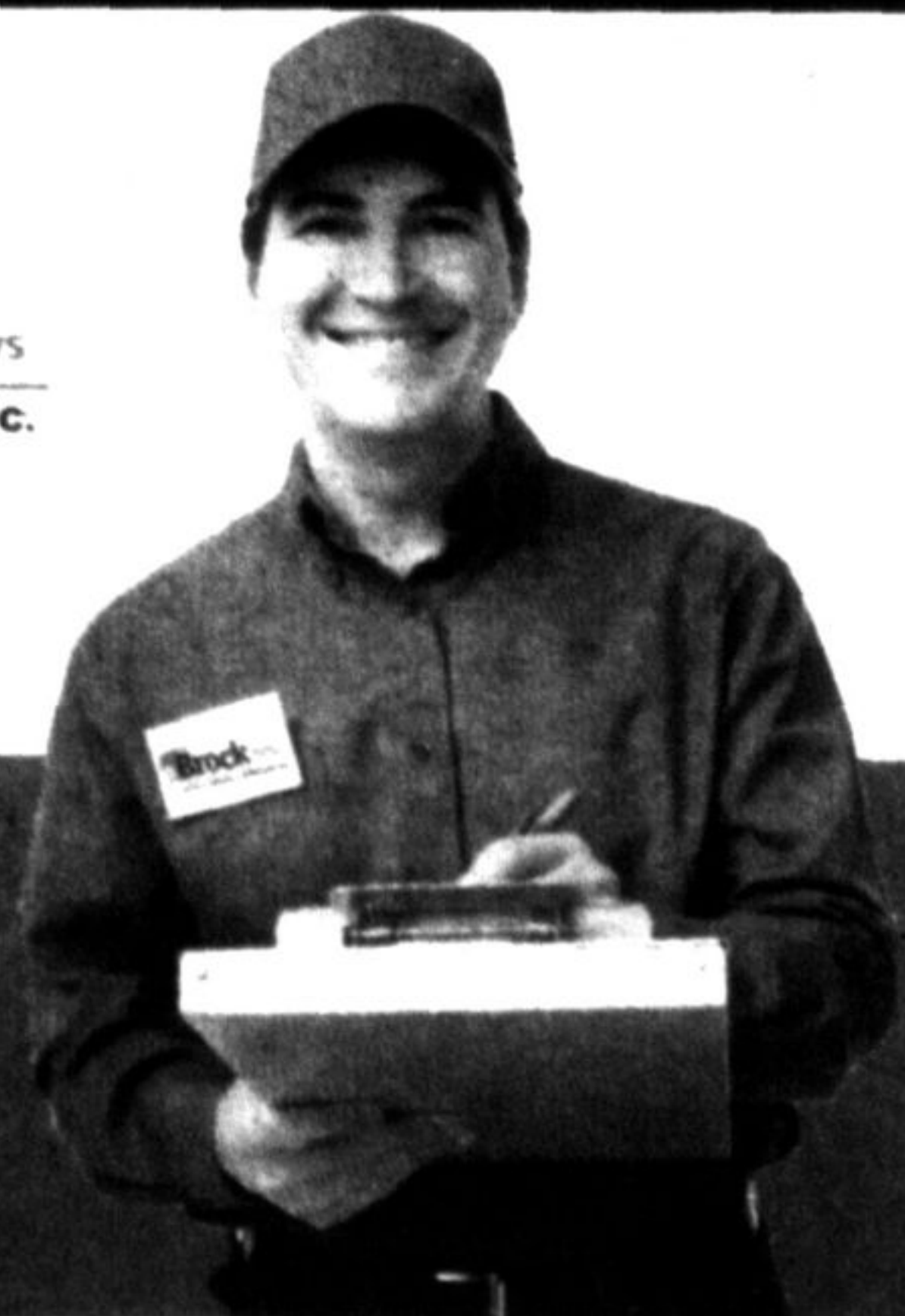
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COLUMN

'Tis season for flu prevention

Flu season is upon us. Fortunately, we have preventative measures such as hand washing, sneezing or coughing into your sleeve, and getting the flu shot to help protect us against getting sick.

Ontario flu season typically begins in mid-October and lasts until April. The flu is an acute respiratory illness that can lead to pneumonia. If you or a family member have other health issues, it can pose a serious threat. Those at higher risk of influenza-related complications include the elderly, young children, pregnant women and people with pre-existing health conditions. The virus spreads mainly from person to person through coughing, sneezing or by touching a surface contaminated with the virus. If you have the flu, you may be contagious to others before your symptoms appear.

Our government is committed to protecting the health of Ontarians by offering the influenza vaccine free of charge to anyone over the age of six months who lives, works, or goes to school in our province.

I encourage everyone who can to get immunized. The free flu vaccine is available at doctors' offices and at community and workplace flu immunization clinics. It is also available for those five years of age and older through trained pharmacists at almost 2,400 pharmacies across Ontario. All you need is your health card.

As the former Medical Officer of Health for York Region for many years, I am con-



Dr. Helena Jaczek

MPP Oak Ridges - Markham

vinced that getting a flu shot is the most effective way to prevent the flu. To find out more information on how the flu shot works, and where in York Region you can go to get immunized, visit www.health.gov.on.ca

On another note, I would also like to wish a happy Diwali to everyone who celebrates the ancient Hindu festival of lights. Since first being elected, I have had the privilege to share in Diwali celebrations hosted by community organizations such as the Sanatan Mandir Cultural Centre. This year, they hosted a week-long Diwali celebration that culminated in a wonderful evening gala.

Congratulations Sanatan Mandir Cultural Centre on another terrific Diwali celebration!

For information about government initiatives and services please contact my constituency office at 905-294-4931 or visit www.helenajaczek.onmpp.ca



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

HOLIDAY HOMES

Angela De Angelis, Patty Yake, Jennifer Fowler and Elen Awad are preparing Stouffville's fifth Home for Christmas House Tour Nov. 7 and 8. Tickets are \$25. For more information and tickets, go to stouffvillechristmashometour.ca Tickets can also be purchased at Stouffville's Canadian Tire, Candlelight and Memories, Red Bulb Espresso Bar and Stouffville Toyota. This year's goal is \$30,000 and it will be split 50/50 between the Jennifer Ashleigh Foundation and The Able Network, which assists adults with intellectual disabilities.