

Recipe for a Relocation



Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank co-ordinator Marion Wells (third from right) is all smiles as she and food bank board members and volunteers Doug and Diane McIntyre (left), Diane Casey, (third from left), Denise Casey (second from right) and Joan Doble acknowledge the receipt of a \$5,000 cheque tucked behind the label of a jar of spaghetti sauce from Mayor Justin Altmann. The money, which came from the Mayor's Community Fund, is to assist the food bank in its relocation from Churchill Baptist Church to Ringwood Drive. See 'Free Opinion' on page 6.

That Special Christmas Tree

By Maurice Smith

Many families have as part of their cherished Christmas traditions a trek to the forest or farm to cut that special tree, often chosen only after much deliberation and discussion.

It is generally agreed that the use of an evergreen tree as part of the Christian Christmas celebration started 400 years ago in Germany. Although the Canadian tradition seems to have started in Sorel, Quebec in 1781, the next reported use of a Christmas tree didn't occur until 1846 in Halifax when a local merchant cut down an evergreen and decorated it with glass ornaments to please his wife, who had grown up with the custom in her native Germany. Although the first Canadian Christmas tree farm was established in 1901, most families continued to obtain

trees from the local forest until the 1930s and 1940s.

In Whitchurch-Stouffville one of the earliest tree farms was owned by Doug Drysdale and family and located on the York-Durham Town Line. Doug started planting this farm in 1951. He grew up on the family's 50 acre farm in West Gwillimbury and was always interested in reforestation. After graduating from University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Science-Forestry degree, he worked in the Department of Natural Resources, walking through the hundreds of acres of York Region Forest while mapping land heights and was thus familiar with the property when it came up for sale.

This was a great location as it was close to Toronto, which he perceived as his primary customer base. However, one of his first customers was a vegetable

farmer from Holland Marsh who had been sending produce to the Kroger Foods chain in Cincinnati, Ohio. When the Kroger buyer asked the farmer if he could possibly send a few of "those Canadian Christmas trees" the vegetable farmer introduced himself to Doug. The Drysdales arranged for a truck load of about 800 trees that first year. The next year Kroger placed an order for 8,000 of the priceless product. The order was filled only after Doug convinced all other Whitchurch-Stouffville tree farmers to assist.

During the 1980s local farms were annually sending 10,000 trees to the New York City area alone.

Today thousands of families visit the many tree farms in the Whitchurch-Stouffville area with their supply of Fraser Fir, Spruce, Balsam and Scotch pine. The most popular, Fraser Fir,



a native of North Carolina, will have seen five years from seed to sapling before it is ready for field planting. Thereafter it will take an average of 12 years before it could be chosen as your family's favourite.

Although artificial products are now on the market, the fragrance of a real Canadian Christmas tree cannot be duplicated. As it has for centuries, the evergreen still symbolizes our belief in renewed life, the hope and faith that lives in all mankind, regardless of race or creed. The Whitchurch-Stouffville forests and farms in our area continue to generate many of those trees.

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Hockey Talk



Former Toronto Maple Leaf players Rob Pearson (far left), Bob McGill, Kris King and Mike Gartner discuss the finer points of hockey along with Jocelyne Larocque of the Canadian Women's Olympic Hockey Team during a Hot Stove session that was part of the 20th Annual Hockey Helps the Homeless Markham/Stouffville Tournament November 13 at the Stouffville Clippers Complex. This year's event was in support of 360 kids to help create long term housing for youth transitioning from homelessness in York Region. Twenty men's teams and six women's teams took part, with each squad including two pros. Also on hand were area residents Keith Acton and Brad May.



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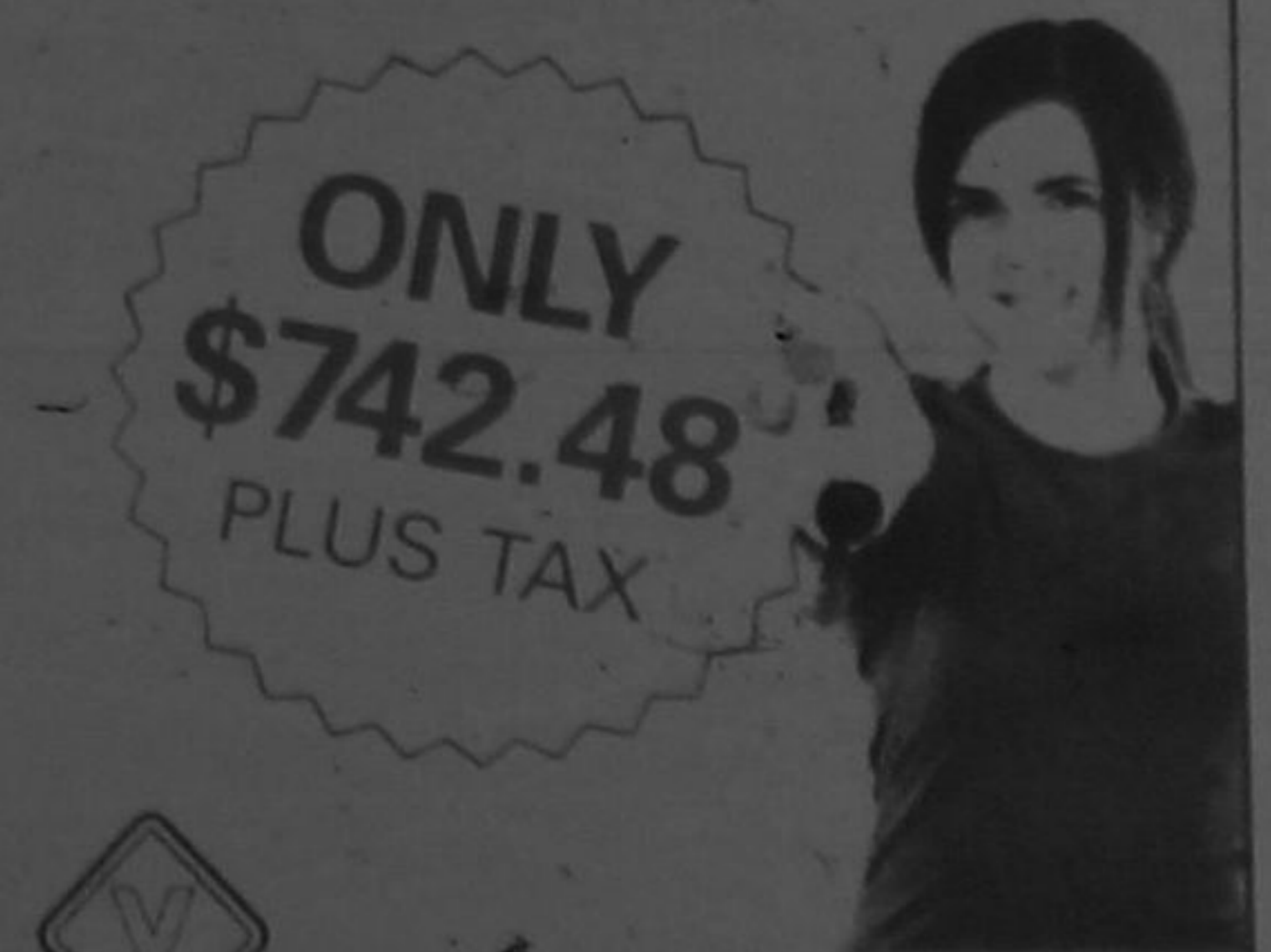
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