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Ryan Pfeiffer / Metroland

Fireworks light up the sky to wrap up Pickering's annual tree-lighting ceremony

PICKERING -- Performers from the Theatre Dance Academy watched the fireworks, which wrapped up the City's tree-lighting ceremony at Esplanade Park Dec. 4. This annual event brought thousands of families and friends from the community and

beyond out to enjoy the holiday lights and entertainment that included the dancers and the Pickering Community Concert Band. There were live reindeer and a special visit from the North Pole.

p.2 Holiday food and toy drives across Durham p.9 Focus on Family: New Year's Eve games for kids



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Scugog churches seeking more stops for house tour fundraiser

SCUGOG -- The Port Perry house tour is looking for homes to showcase in this fall's fundraiser.

The 2016 edition of the Port Perry Town and Country House Tour is on Saturday, Sept. 17, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and organizers are looking to add more stops to the tour.

It's hoped that homeowners of houses large and small, as well as new and old, will open their doors to the house tour. In particular, homes of varied and interesting architecture, interior design and decor are being sought for this year's tour.

Each home will be assigned a team that will be responsible for co-ordinating all aspects of the tour in that home.

The house tour is organized by the Port Perry and Prince Albert United churches' outreach committee and the effort has raised almost \$80,000 over the past seven years for local organizations.

To have your home considered for the house tour, contact Carolyn Humphrey at 905-985-9459.

For more information about the event, visit www.portperryhousetour.ca.



Ryan Pfeiffer / Metroland

Preparing Port Perry's ball diamonds for a new season

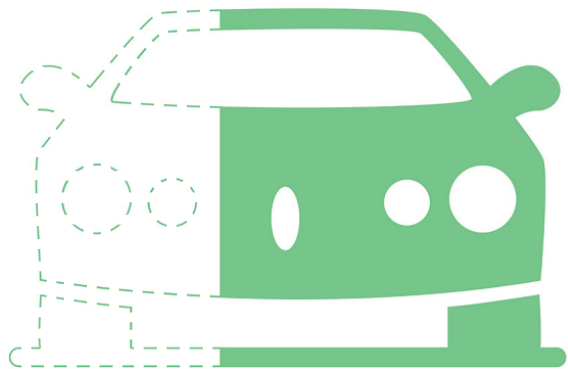
PORT PERRY -- Brian Mischlian, left, and Jesse Mischlian from Hillside Fencing installed a new fence on May 2 at the south softball diamond at Joe Fowler Park.

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*Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, The High Cost of Canada's Mutual Fund Based Retirement System, March, 2015



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Ryan Pfeiffer/ Metroland

PORT PERRY -- Port Perry MoJacks' Connor MacEachern was sent spinning by a hip check from Port Hope Panthers' Matthew Hunt during their Central Ontario Junior C Hockey League game at Scugog Memorial Arena on March 27. The Panthers beat the MoJacks 5-2 to take a 3-1 series lead and later eliminated Port Perry Tuesday night with a 4-1 win.

Port Perry eliminated by Port Hope Panthers

Panthers finish off MoJacks in five games

SCUGOG -- The Port Perry MoJacks remarkable playoff run came to an abrupt halt on Tuesday night following a 4-1 loss in Port Hope.

The MoJacks had cruised through the post-season in their own league, posting a 12-1 record en route to a Central Ontario Junior C title, but were quickly dispatched by the Port Hope Panthers in the Schmalz Cup semifinals in five games.

The Panthers finished off the MoJacks at home on March 29 and will now move

on to face the winner of the Kincardine Bulldogs and Alliston Hornets quarter-final series. Port Hope will be striving for its second straight appearance in the Schmalz Cup final after losing to Essex in seven games last year.

Ethan Ramsden had Port Perry's only goal in the final game, scoring 5:24 into the first period to give the MoJacks a 1-0 lead. Andrew Pickering and Bryce Paterson had the assists. Port Hope replied at 15:46 of the opening period to tie the game and took the lead for good at 2:39 of the middle frame. The Panthers added two more in the second period and scored their final marker at 2:08 of the third to cruise to a 4-1 win.

Port Hope had 35 shots on the Port Perry net, with the MoJacks sending 32 towards the Panthers netminder.

Port Perry steamrolled through the 2016 playoffs, sweeping aside the North Kawartha Knights and Uxbridge Bruins before defeating Clarington in five games.

In the championship series against Clarington, the MoJacks were the definite underdogs as the Eagles finished 23 points ahead of Port Perry in the standings and lost only four times in 42 regular season games.

The MoJacks last won a Central Ontario Junior C Hockey League Cougar Cup championship five years ago.



Curtis Hodgins
Guest columnist

Making an impression at minor hockey tryouts

With the arrival of April comes everyone's favourite time ... minor hockey tryouts.

Selecting a team is a tough job for any coach and one not made any easier with the volume of bodies on the ice and the short timeframe in which to evaluate. All the more reason these aspiring young skaters need to take every opportunity to make a positive impression by following these simple guidelines to ensure they stand out for all the right reasons.

Don't try to reinvent yourself at tryout time. If you are a stay-at-home defenceman who excels at looking after your own end, then don't all of a sudden try to become an offensive defenceman overnight. A good coach will recognize the different talents players bring to the table.

Every coach wants players on their team who are willing to work hard at all times. Attend each tryout with the intention that you will work as hard as you possibly can, and right to the end of each session.

The easiest way to get noticed for the wrong reasons is to be lazy on the ice and not give a full effort.

Pay attention at all times during tryouts and listen to what your coaches are saying. Make sure you are up front when the coaches are speaking so you can hear the instructions. Be one of the first skaters to start each drill and don't hide at the back of the line. Coaches are always on the lookout for those players who are fooling around and not taking things seriously.

This is often overlooked but I believe it is important. Look like a player. Make sure your socks match and your equipment isn't in poor condition. Above all, don't forget you are not only being evaluated on the ice but also in how you carry yourself off the ice. Come to the rink dressed respectfully. How a player looks and carries her/himself can definitely impact a coach's impression. You only have one shot at a first impression. Make sure it's the one you want.

Curtis Hodgins is the head coach of the UOIT men's hockey team. Contact him at Curtis.Hodgins@uoit.ca

● Photograph by Ryan Pfeiffer

the **BIG PICTURE**



Whitby fire and emergency responded to a massive house fire at 41 Sandhill Court near Ashburn Road and Columbus Road West. All five of the department's vehicles were required at the scene.

Full honours for Toronto police horse Viscount at Thistledown Pet Memorial in Uxbridge

Jeff Mitchell
jmittell@durhamregion.com

UXBRIDGE -- On a crystal clear January afternoon, members of the Toronto police service gathered in rural Uxbridge to pay respects to a fallen colleague.

Viscount, an 18-year-old Percheron, was laid to rest Wednesday, Jan. 6 at the Thistledown Pet Memorial centre with honours, including a procession led by a piper and words of praise from Toronto police Chief Mark Saunders.

Officers stood at attention and saluted as members of the mounted unit carried a box containing Viscount's remains, which was placed on a shrine composed of a saddle, a riding crop and a blanket, upon which lay an apple and a bundle of carrots. A portrait of the black horse stood nearby.

Constable David Moore, who rode Viscount until the horse died suddenly of colic on Christmas Day, spoke emotionally of the bond he formed with his mount, with whom he'd ridden for the past year and a half.

"He was my partner," the officer said. "We helped each other. We spent every day together."

"I'm going to miss that," Const. Moore said.

Viscount is the third Toronto police horse interred at Thistledown, established in 1998 on 50 acres of forested property on Concession 7 by Nancy and Colin Graham. The remains of Brigadier, killed after being hit by a vehicle in 2006, and Royal Sun, injured on duty in 2012, lie in a section of the centre reserved for service animals.

"It's such an honour to have them here," Ms. Graham said.

Members of the public stop by on occasion to pay tribute to the police horses, Ms. Graham said.

"They come by and they bring apples, they bring carrots -- and they always, always reach out and touch the plaques," she said.

Wednesday's service was a dignified affair,



Ryan Pfeiffer / Metroland photos

UXBRIDGE -- Toronto Police Constable Dave Moore, above, the most recent rider of Viscount, during a memorial service at Thistledown Pet Memorial for the Toronto police horse that died as a result of colic over the Christmas holidays. Below left, Const. Moore, left, and training Sergeant Kristopher McCarthy, right, carried the remains of Viscount. Below right, Sgt. McCarthy and Const. Moore stood at attention during a memorial service. The Toronto force has buried two other horses in Thistledown in the past.



indicative of the regard in which the horses and officers of the mounted unit are held. Chief Saunders called the mounted unit "an integral part of policing". He referred to Viscount as "a loyal, dedicated officer of the law who was majestic and beautiful."

"It's not just the enforcement piece," the Chief said of the role the horses play in policing. "They also offer ambassadorship. We get so much positive feedback from their presence."

As the chief spoke, two members of the



unit were positioned nearby, astride towering black Percherons. The horses stood calmly, puffs of their breath rising in the clear air, hooves crunching occasionally in the crisp snow as they shifted their massive bodies.

As the service ended, Const. Moore and Training Sergeant Chris McCarthy gently lifted the box containing Viscount's ashes

and carried it into the building where the remains were interred next to Brigadier and Royal Sun.

When the officers emerged, the pipes wheezed to life and the mounted officers guided their horses down the drive.

The officers fell in behind, marching in formation as the pipes echoed through the pines.