

THE RECORD



Non-stop Christmas

St. Jacobs retailer keeps the season alive all year round.

BUSINESS E1

A league of his own

McIlwraith has devoted a lifetime to local sports.

SPORTS C7



Sportsworld reinvented

Popular water park will be closed; year-round retail complex planned

By ROSE SIMONE
RECORD STAFF

KITCHENER

The water park at Sportsworld, which drew thousands of children each summer,

will close for good, but Sportsworld's new owners say they'll turn the property into a year-round recreational, retail, hotel and office complex.

GPM Managed Investments Inc., which manages pension

funds for institutional clients, closed a \$12.7-million deal this week to buy Sportsworld, which has been under court protection from creditors.

Sportsworld's previous owner, Terastar Realty Corp, faced debts of \$17 million.

GPM plans to get out of the seasonal outdoor aspects of the business, such as the water park.

But GPM plans to keep the twin-pad arena, golf dome and arcade. It also hopes to build hotel, office and more retail space on the 13.5-hectare site over the next two to three years.

"We like the Kitchener-Waterloo market and we want to increase our investment in the area, and this is a great property," GPM president Brent Chapman said.

The company and its divisions have invested in other properties in the region — including the Brick Brewing distribution building on Bingeman Centre Drive in Kitchener and a 70,000-square-foot office and retail building under construction at Northfield Drive and Bridge Street in Waterloo.

The biggest immediate change is that the outdoor wa-

ter park will not reopen.

"It will transition over time to retail uses... we will try to incorporate some recreational uses there as well, but we will try to work that through by looking at a range of tenants and options," said Mark Kindrachuk, who represents GPM and Intermarket Inc., the project developer.

SEE PARK: PAGE A2

A world of knowledge



Karthik Nambiar, 2, and sister Lakshminmaya, 4, are both whizzes at naming the world's capital cities. Trips with their parents back to their native India have helped fuel the pair's enthusiasm for geography.

This geography is child's play

Well-travelled youngsters easily rattle off capitals of the world

By DAVE PINK
RECORD STAFF

CAMBRIDGE

Lakshminmaya Nambiar may be only four years old, but she knows where she's going — and when she gets there, she'll know where she is.

Maya, as her parents call her, has developed an early mastery

of world geography. Name a nation, and the young Cambridge resident will exuberantly shout out its capital.

She knows the easy ones, like Ottawa, New Delhi and London.

She easily fields the slightly more difficult — Stockholm, Sweden; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Nairobi, Kenya; Budapest, Hun-

gary; and Santiago, Chile.

And she even makes some of the very obscure — Astana, Kazakhstan, and Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, for instance — seem like, well, child's play.

In all, says her mom, Yamini Konath, Maya has mastered 197 countries and capitals.

"She picks things up fast," says her dad, Susheendra Gangadharan.

And Maya's brother, at 2 1/2, gleefully competes with his older sister. Karthik Nambiar

knows 150 countries, says mom, as he jumps in along with his sister on Oslo, Norway; Managua, Nicaragua; Bangkok, Thailand; and Dublin, Ireland.

For their age, these kids are remarkably well travelled. Along with mom and dad, they travel frequently back to their parents' native southern India — a route that usually takes them through a European capital such as Paris or Amsterdam and to the Middle East before the final leg of the journey to India.

SEE SIBLINGS: PAGE A2

Gay rights back on the agenda

Harper reopens same-sex debate as nation gears up for Jan. 23 vote

OTTAWA

Paul Martin is using the unlikely twin hammers of patriotism and gay marriage to pound Stephen Harper, setting the tone for what promises to be a no-holds-barred, marathon election campaign.

The prime minister seized on the Conservative leader's failure to swing at a reporter's softball political question — "Do you love this country?" — yesterday.

Harper had answered with Spock-like enthusiasm that he thinks Canada is "great."

Martin, by contrast, was more than happy to knock the ball out of the park.

"This morning, I'm told that Stephen Harper had a little difficulty saying this, so let me say it: I love Canada!" the prime minister roared to wild applause at a Liberal rally in Ottawa.

Harper also gave Martin a gift by acknowledging that he would allow a free Commons vote on gay marriage — and ban further gay unions if Parliament decided to reinstate the traditional definition of marriage.

More than 3,000 gay couples have been married across Canada and Harper said those unions would be preserved even if the law changed.

Election 2006

Inside:

Candidates play it cool. A3

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Is economy really an issue? E6

But he didn't explain how he would ban same-sex unions, given that most provincial Appeal Courts have ruled the traditional definition of marriage is unconstitutional.

Most legal experts believe any government that wanted to reverse the trend would have to use the notwithstanding clause to override the Charter of Rights.

SEE ELECT: PAGE A3

Toyota executive dons political hat

By RON DERUYTER
RECORD STAFF

CAMBRIDGE

The numbers 800 million and 1,300 will figure prominently in Greig Mordue's campaign in the federal election.

The spokesperson for Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada in Cambridge has become the Liberal candidate in Oxford riding, where the automaker is building its second Ontario assembly plant.

Mordue isn't shy about highlighting the role he played in bringing the \$800-million factory and its 1,300 jobs to the community.

The plant, under construction in Woodstock, is scheduled to begin production of RAV4 and Scion vehicles in 2007.

"Frankly, I think I have done more in the community over the last 18 months than the sitting member," Mordue says, referring to Dave MacKenzie, the retired Woodstock police chief who won the riding for the Con-



Greig Mordue, chief spokesman for Toyota in Cambridge, is running for the Liberals in Oxford riding.

servatives in last year's federal election.

"I was part of something that ultimately will result in 1,300 direct, well-paid, secure jobs coming to the community. I am not convinced my opponent can make the same claim."

Mordue, Toyota's assistant general manager of corporate planning and chief spokesperson, says he played a key role in making the business case for locating the plant in Woodstock, and negotiating the acquisition of the land as well as the \$55-million contribution from the Liberal government in Ottawa and the \$70-million contribution from the Liberal government in Ontario.

SEE MORDUE: PAGE A3

Region's biggest cocaine bust

Three Cambridge men are in custody after \$5.6 million in cocaine was seized from a transport truck crossing into Canada from the United States.

SEE PAGE B1 FOR FULL STORY

Canadians snatched for spying: insurgents

TORONTO

American and British aggression in Iraq is to blame for the hostage-taking of four pacifists, including two Canadians, who were paraded on international television through al-Jazeera video footage, the Christian Peacemaker Teams said yesterday.

The four were snatched at gunpoint Saturday in a dangerous part of Baghdad by a group calling itself the Swords of Righteousness Brigade, which said the hostages were spies working undercover as Christian peace activists.

"We are angry because what has happened to our teammates is the result of the actions of the U.S. and U.K. governments



Canadian peace activists Harmeet Singh Sooden, 32, (left) and Jim Loney, 41, are being held hostage by Iraqi insurgents.

due to the illegal attack on Iraq and the continuing occupation and oppression of its people," Christian Peacemaker Teams said in a statement.

The organization identified the Canadians as Jim Loney, 41, a Toronto community worker, and Harmeet Singh Sooden, 32, formerly a McGill student in

Montreal who has most recently been studying literature in New Zealand.

The other hostages are Briton Norman Kember, 74, of London, and American Tom Fox, 54, of Clearbrook, Va.

"We were very saddened to see the images of our loved ones on al-Jazeera television," the group said. "Repeated showing of it will endanger the lives of our friends."

In Ottawa, Prime Minister Paul Martin said the government of Canada was "reaching out" to the families of the hostages.

"I can assure Canadians that there is no more urgent priority than the safe return of our citizens," Martin said.

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