

Editor's Mail

Safeguards

Dear Sir:
While I seldom travel 18th Avenue (scene of the tragic train-car crash three weeks ago), I agree wholeheartedly with your view re safeguards at all level crossings.
Sure, the onus is on the motorist to Stop, Look and Listen, but few do. For failing to comply, the penalty shouldn't be death. This (on most occasions) is the end result.
There's no denying that the Town of Markham is a progressive municipality. Because this is so, it seems strange that Council's thinking with respect to signalized crossings harkens back to the horse and buggy days.

Sincerely,
Jim Beavis,
RR 1, Stouffville.

Kindness

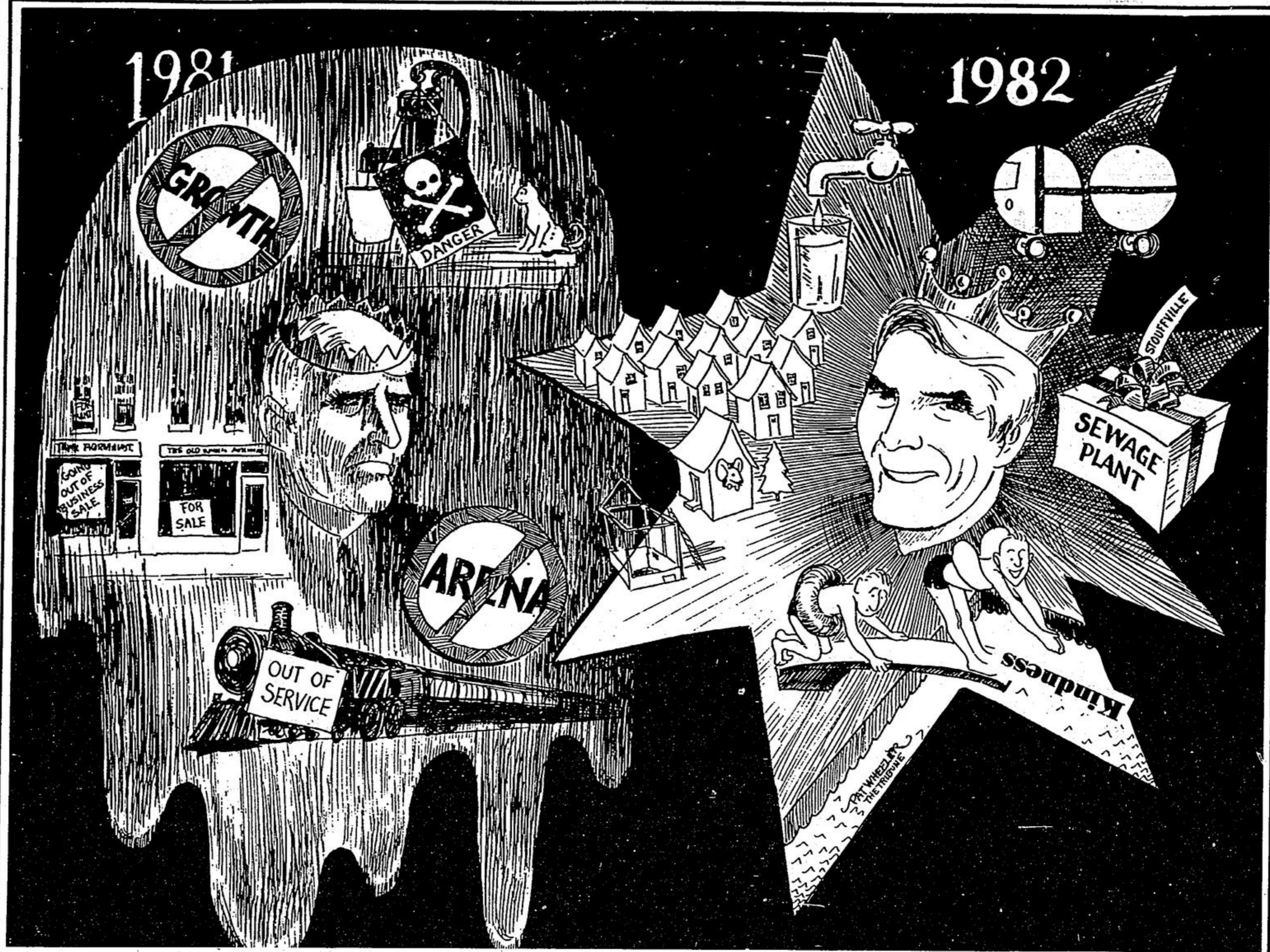
Dear Mr. Thomas:
I was touched by the Page 1 photo in the Dec. 23 Tribune showing Santa Claus (Councillor Bill Kamps) holding two children on his knee.
One can imagine the joy Mr. Kamps must have brought to dozens of kiddies during his visit to Scarborough Centenary Hospital. During such a busy period, it's wonderful that anyone would take the time to perform such a kindness.
I also saw the same gentleman on the Main Street of Stouffville the day before. In my opinion, he represented the real Spirit of Christmas, spreading happiness wherever he went.
On behalf of our family, thanks.

Sincerely,
Agnes Campbell,
RR 1, Unionville.

Prayer

Dear Mr. Thomas:
Through The Tribune, I'm asking every family to unite their hearts in prayer for the complete recovery of our Margie and Courtney. We love them both.

A Stouffville mother



Town's star will rise in '82

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Roaming Around
The true spirit of Christmas

By Jim Thomas

It is better to give than to receive. How many of us believe this or put it into practice?
I can name you three-three people who, with the help of four others, made Christmas very merry for more than 400 senior citizens here in Stouffville.
It all came about last Thursday. A handwritten note plus several phone calls told of visits by Santa Claus and two elves to Parkview Home and Parkview Apartments, Green Gables Manor, Stouffville Nursing Home, Church Street Nursing Home, Testa Villa Apartments and the Sr. Citizens' Apartments on Elm Road. However, it wasn't until I actually saw the jolly old gent myself, that I decided to find out what was going on. And I'm glad I did, for it has to be the kindest story to come out of Stouffville this Christmas season.
While the persons involved will undoubtedly be embarrassed that their identities are being revealed, this column would not be complete if their names were not included.
Anyway, it will come as no surprise to many to learn that Bertha Slaughter (Watson Drive), actually got the whole thing going. She's been making pre-Christmas visits to Parkview Home and Apartments for the past six years. This time around, she was joined by Diane Peak (RR 3, Stouffville) and Kitty Evans (Blair Road). They, in turn, commanded the services of Ron Robb (Musselman's Lake); Tom Winter (RR 3, Stouffville) and Tom's two sons, Tom Jr., and John.
With three sacks to fill, donations soon poured in from all over—oranges, chocolates, candy-cane men, all simple things that can mean so much. This allowed the three Santa Clauses to include private homes on their calls, bring joy and happiness wherever they went.
Hesitant to accept any praise, Diane told instead of the personal satisfaction each had received in seeing smiles light up the people's faces.
"There has to be more to life than eating, sleeping and working," she said, "we thoroughly enjoyed it—it was fun."
"Time?" she questioned, "you just have to make time". She recalled how she and the others stayed up until after midnight, making stockings for distribution to residents at Parkview.
Diane admitted that some things around home were "let slide", calling her kitchen "a disaster area". Regardless, none in the family complained too much, realizing the importance of the project at hand.
She praised Bertha for initiating the scheme and "going it alone for so long".
"When she asked for a little help, we readily volunteered," she said.
Diane sees the program growing to such an extent, the whole community must get involved. She feels too that a 'master' senior citizens' list should be prepared so that no one in town is missed.
Good ideas—for the future. For the present, however, let's give credit where credit is due—to Bertha, to Diane, to Kitty, to Ron, to John, to Tom Sr. and Jr. A tip of the hat to you all for a job well done. This is surely the true spirit of Christmas, a gesture of goodwill that, except for a hand-written note and a couple of phone calls, might have gone unrecognized.

Window on Wildlife
Birds need shelter at night

By Art Briggs-Jude

When the winter sun dips behind the lowest horizon, the resident bird life seek out their shelter for the long cold night. And as we watch the neighborhood house sparrows wedge themselves under the eaves or slip into an unused shed or barn loft, we often wonder where the other feathered creatures spend the dark hours. Where, for example, do the late feeding cardinals retire? Not far it seems, for they are back under the feeder by the first light of early morning. And what about the boisterous bluejays? Where do they go to sleep? Or those little puffs of energy the chickadees, or those carpenter cousins the Hairy and Downy woodpeckers? They all have a favorite nook or cranny to help stave off the cold. But the query is, where? Here are some of the answers to these questions, based on my own studies and observations over the years.
Let's look first at the colorful cardinals. At one time we had no less than 18 of these beautiful crested creatures coming to our feeder regularly. What a sight to see them grace the bare branches of the bushes like so many long-tailed scarlet bows. Of course, all were not the brilliant red males, however, the pinky golden-brown females were no less attractive. As stated, they were always the last to leave the feeder so I knew they were roosting not too far distant. But every evening as we watched them depart into the near darkness our curiosity increased. Finally, late one afternoon, I donned my winter gear, mukluks, parka, fleece-lined mitts and heavy quilted pants. Then I quietly slipped down the ravine behind the house and took up an inconspicuous position among the shrubbery. There, in the fading light, I watched in satisfaction as one cardinal after the other swooped over the crest of the hill and disappeared into the thickest centre of the multiflora hedgerow.
Some years ago, while on an owl outing, I chanced to be in a grove of medium-sized pine in mid-afternoon. Now, if you want to find roosting owls, a good bet is to check out the thickest evergreens, especially those in a sheltered location. So while peeping up among the branches, I was surprised to see several bluejays huddled against the main trunk. These crested clowns were already settled in for the night, yet a check of my watch revealed it was not yet 4 p.m.
Now let's take a look at the so called cavity nesters. Those birds, for example, that either chisel out a nest site or utilize an existing hole. Often they will find a crevice in a neighborhood stub or even a back yard birdhouse, to use as a night shelter. We frequently build wren nesting houses out of whole coconuts and by making a 1/4 inch hole through the heavy rope-like fibre, they serve wonderfully well as insulated winter homes for birds. I've seen as many as three downy woodpeckers retire for the night in one of these natural looking devices.
And while on the subject of family groups seeking winter shelter together, I once talked to a friend in Niagara who had a half dozen bluebirds going in one of her nest boxes every night during the cold weather months. So that's where some of our feathered friends spend the cold dark hours, but there are so many more that space will not permit. The discovery of these secrets is another reason that makes watching wildlife such a never-ending fascination. I'm thinking of the late afternoon I was heading home from a snowshoe ramble in the woods and had a ruffed grouse literally explode from beneath my webs. You guessed it. He had plunged into that snowbank a little earlier as a protection against the cold and darkness.

Editorials

A better year lies ahead

The year that was or the year that wasn't, make your choice.
Unfortunately, the negative aspects of 1981 held a wide edge over the positive as far as Whitchurch - Stouffville was concerned. In fact, except for an occasional bright spot, the first eleven months were write-offs for our Town.
Strange as it may seem, the misfortunes that plagued this municipality from January through November were, for the most part, not of our making. They were brought on by decisions "from on high", decisions over which the local politicians had no control.
First and foremost is the 'sanitary' landfill site, that controversial mountain of garbage that poses a threat to adjacent private wells in addition to the artesian water supply for the village of Stouffville. This, coupled with minus population growth, tended to create an unhealthy business climate, that's been felt primarily in the Town's main urban community.
The extension of Hwy. 404 through to Gormley has been a plus for our Town but again, this has been partially overshadowed by the federal government's decision to cancel the VIA-Rail commuter service next fall.
As fatalistic as our summation may seem, we predict a turn-around in '82. In fact, the upswing's already underway. For that reason, we've removed December from the gloom-and-doom period just past and added it to the year that lies ahead.
Why the optimism? For a start, work will soon begin on a new sewage disposal plant that will increase Stouffville's immediate population potential to 8,500 people, one thousand more than originally anticipated. Secondly, the long-delayed Dulverton Development of 500 homes, now looks like a

sure thing. Further, we predict the VIA-Rail system will become part of GO-Transit and continue to serve residents here. We also see a glimmer of hope with respect to positive government action on the landfill site.
Spearheading our certainty for "a brighter tomorrow", is our confidence in the leadership being provided by Mayor Eldred King. As he goes, so goes Whitchurch - Stouffville.
In recent weeks, he's shown a tenacity for dealing with problems that had barely surfaced before. And the results are very much in evidence.
By taking the offensive in Town-related issues, he's gained the confidence of even his strongest critics. So now we have a municipality that's working together instead of pulling apart. When such an attitude prevails, all things are possible.
So welcome 1982, a year of potential, of progress and promise. By adopting a positive attitude, we can make it happen.

In shock

Not since the accident to Stouffville's Wayne Feasby, has this community been so shaken. Word of the serious injury to Margie Griffiths and the hospitalization of Courtney Wallis, following a car crash, Sunday, has left young people here in a state of shock.
In response to many requests, The Tribune is calling on all residents to offer silent prayers for their recovery. As one teenager put it, "that's all we have left".

**To our readers
a happy and
prosperous
New Year**