

A former college student described his "old home town" back in 1972

Back in 1972, while a student in Grade 9 at St. Andrew's College, Aurora, Rick Mann of Stouffville, now a medical doctor, wrote the following essay entitled "On Being From A Small Town". His instructor called it "one of the best" and gave him an "A". The Tribune felt you, the reader, might find Rick's description of "his old home town" interesting. However, one must keep in mind this is 1972—eleven years ago.

Stouffville, Ontario—population 4,000, no, wait, 4,001, Mrs Smith had a baby girl last week. Better mark it on the road sign; don't want people to think we aren't growing.

Stouffville, (as you have probably guessed by now), is a small town north-east of Toronto (that's a big

town), in case you ever want to find it. As for industry, farming and transportation, there's the Grey Coach Station at the barbershop and the "Stouffville Streak" that travels to the "big city" and back once a day.

There's a busy downtown, a part of which was destroyed by fire 1 1/2 years ago. There's no stock exchange, no theatre, no O'Keefe Centre, no harbor and no pollution except the pleasant aroma of cow manure floating in from neighboring farms.

Why do people choose to live here?

One answer is peace and quiet. There are no huge factories clanking and chugging through the night and no fears of being mugged or

shot while enjoying a walk through the park. These are problems characteristic of larger centres, not small towns like Stouffville.

Here, too, people involve themselves in activities—plays and shows, sports, doing something for the community. This generates "town spirit". I give you this as an example.

Recently, the local girls' ball team travelled to Scarborough for a game. There were more spectators in attendance from Stouffville than from Scarborough.

Here, no one is a stranger. Everybody knows everybody. In Toronto, you may know your neighbors on either side and maybe (if you're lucky) the people on your street. But that's about all.

There are drawbacks to this, however. In a small town, knowing everyone may also lead to knowing everyone else's business or, at least, thinking you do. News travels via the grapevine very quickly.

Folks tend to be more friendly in a small community. Seldom are you looked on with suspicion when you enter a store and people actually smile and say "hello" when you meet them on the street. Try this in the city and watch the reaction! They could even call the police.

Many may argue that smaller centres lack services. I don't agree. Our police department is as efficient as Metro's Finest and our fire department, although strictly volunteer, is an extremely capable brigade.

No, we don't have a hospital (although it's in the planning stage), but our medical facilities are adequate and our ambulance service is excellent. Why our doctors even work weekends and still make house calls.

We have recreational facilities equal to centres twice our size—an artificial ice arena, one major park, several smaller parks, a conservation area, a swimming pool and tennis courts.

So, the next time you hear the name of Stouffville, or pass through it by train, bus or car, don't call it "a little hick town" because, in the long run, it's a heck of a lot better than the big, smelly, crime-ridden place you're living in.

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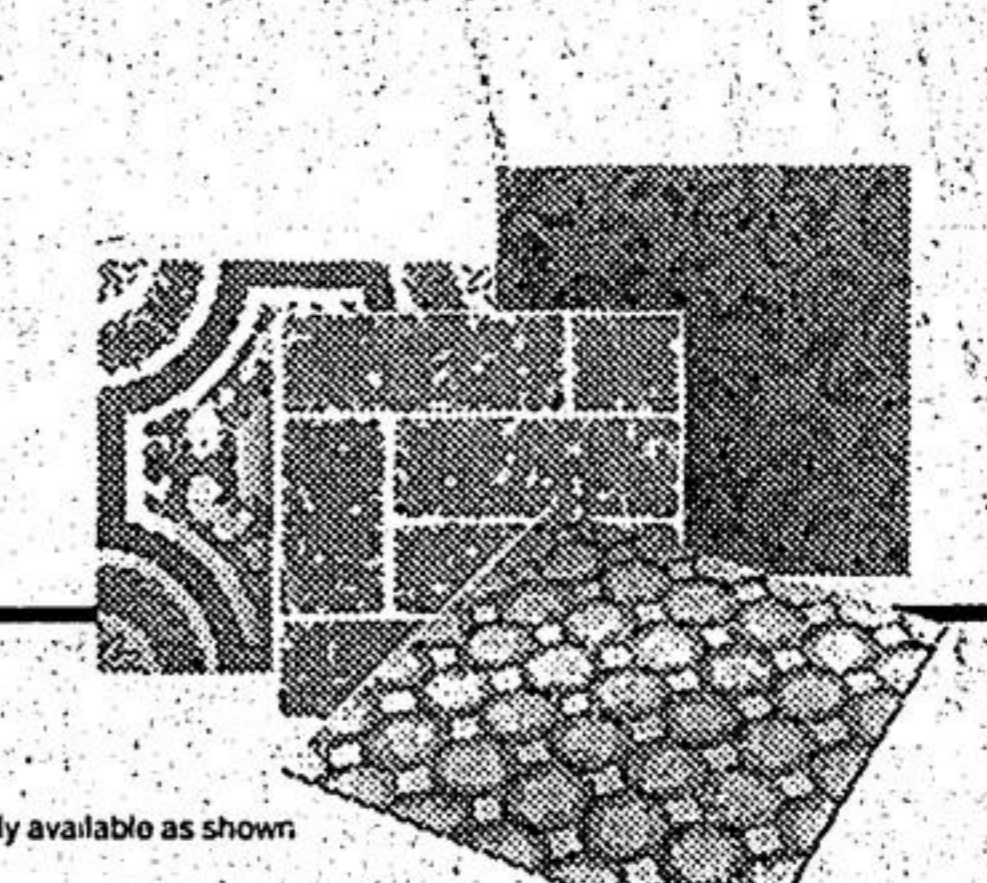
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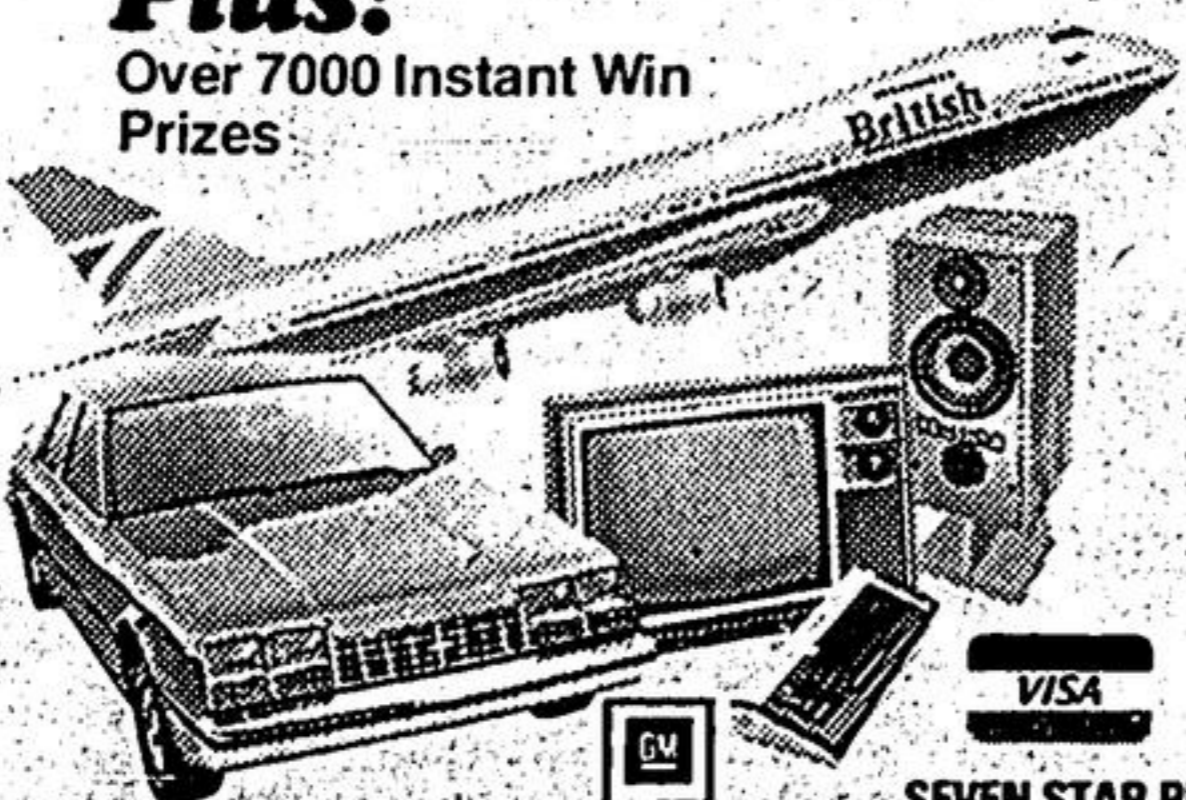
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