

Weekender

Comment

Tragedy strikes us hard

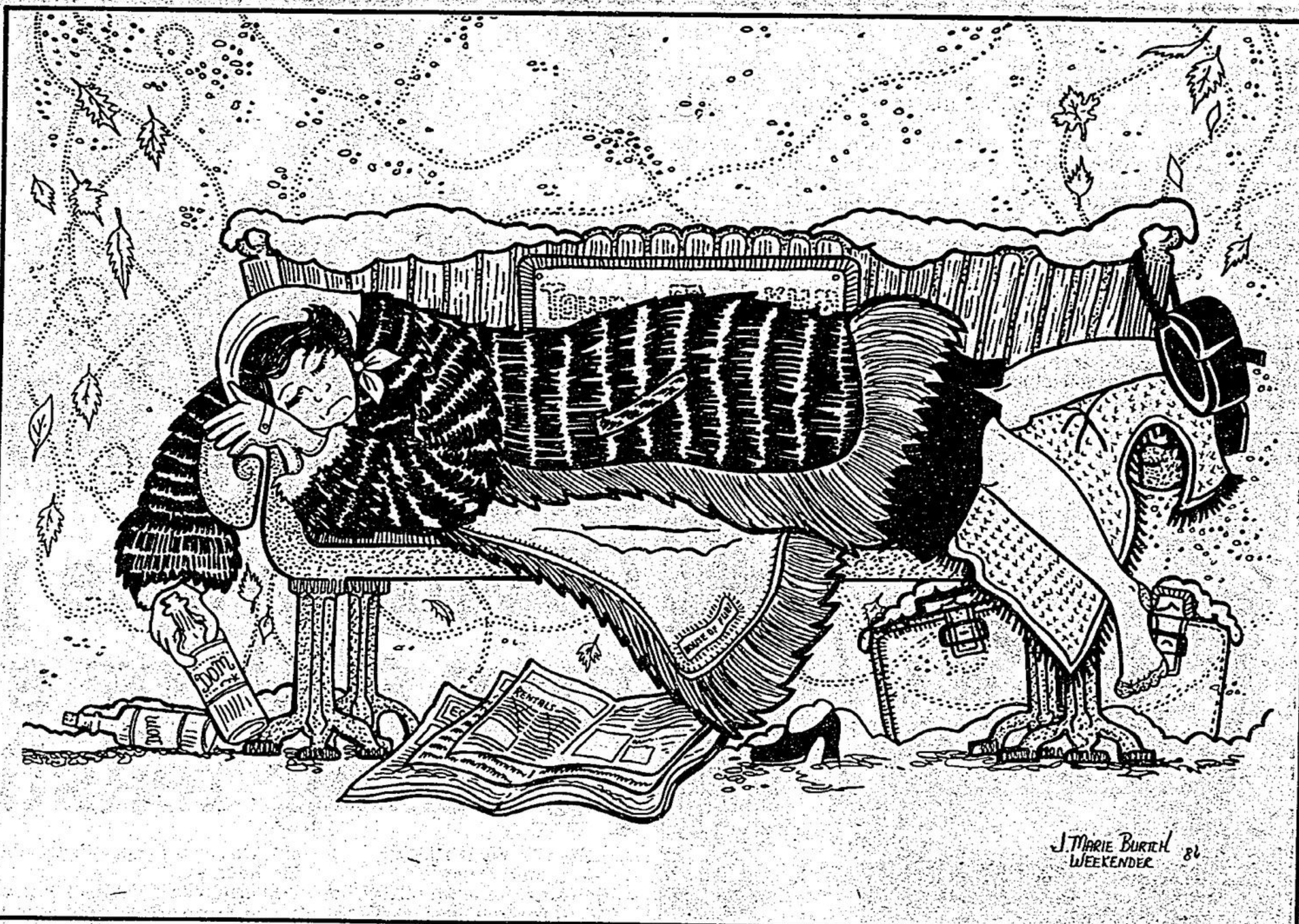
Life is so fragile. Early last Friday morning, 17-year-old Roni Kulathinal was delighted that he could use the family car to go to school. He and his brother Robert, 16, left home bound for St. Robert Catholic High School.

Along the way they picked up two friends who were waiting for the school bus. Young and alive, they were on top of the world. Then tragedy struck. At Leslie St. and 16th Ave. the Kulathina car was struck by a gravel truck.

Roni was killed. A passenger, David Graf, 16 also died in the crash. Robert and a third passenger Yvonne Tu were injured. Two families were ripped apart because of a short, terrifying collision.

It's hard to understand such tragedy. Why would two young men — with so many promising years ahead of them — be cut down in such a violent and final way? They were only driving to school — it was so routine.

It reminds us that life is short. It can end any time. Perhaps those of us who are left should renew our determination to make full use of every minute we have.



Stouffville finally coming of age

Move over Unionville. Make room Markham. There's a new kid on the block. Stouffville has arrived, and there will be no stopping her now.

For years, when conversation turned to country charm northeast of Toronto, it was inevitably Markham and Unionville that attracted all the talk. And rightfully so.

The pride of the town's people of Unionville, as evidenced by their joining together to preserve their Main Street and its historical appeal, became known throughout southern Ontario.

Markham, so capably managed and developed as it underwent its prolonged period of growth, now represents the ideal alternative for people wanting to escape the big city rat race without giving up the urban amenities.

But, while both towns were busy establishing their lofty reputations, York Regional Police officers were scoffing at assignments that found them banished to

"Hooterville", the moniker given Stouffville by the cruiser corps.

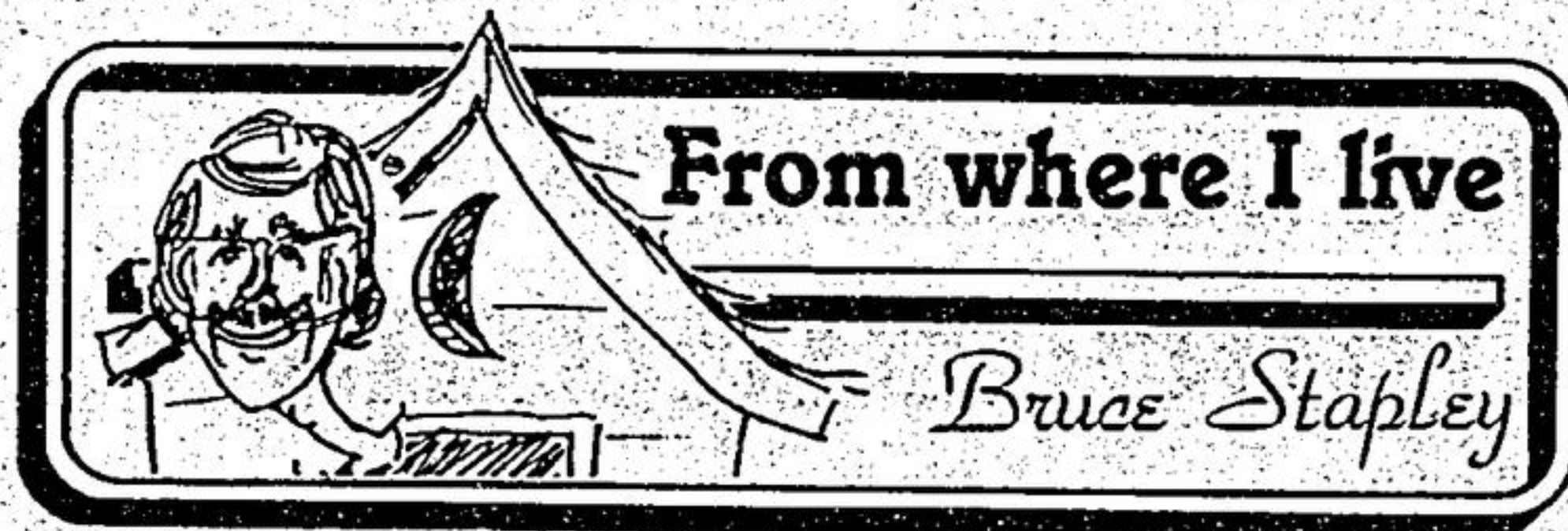
And you really couldn't argue with the label. After all, Stouffville had become known for two things, the Sales Barn, and the Sales Barn traffic tie ups.

It seemed as if the efforts of all those people who were doing their best to edify their beloved little town were going for naught.

Stouffville was, well, a little lacking when it came to that intangible quality called charisma. Sort of like well done roast beef and potatoes being compared to pheasant under glass and pate de foie Strasburg.

But all of a sudden "doing" Stouffville no longer gives bus tour operators visions of empty coaches. Visitors and residents alike are now being dazzled by an ever-increasing lineup of visual delights, cultural extravaganzas, and overall prosperity.

The downtown core, the heart of any small town, has been given a long awaited facelift with the re-



building of the Sanders Block. Trendy new shops and superb restaurants are popping up everywhere.

Yes, it's no longer necessary for Stouffvillites to drive for miles in order to enjoy the culinary delights and ambience offered by other towns' eating establishments. As a matter of fact, if this trend continues, restaurant critic Joanne Keates will have to start moonlighting for the Stouffville Tribune!

Much credit has to be given local businessmen and developers whose faith in their town never

flagged, even during the years of the water scare.

And don't kid yourself that they were the only ones to gain by the increase in the town's fortunes. Everyone who owns property in Stouffville is more than aware of what has happened to their equity in the past few years.

For the longest time, the complete absence of any kind of new housing in Stouffville had the town sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss.

Residents wanting to upgrade their housing situation were

forced to go elsewhere to find the type of dwelling they were looking for. With the coming on line of at least a half-dozen different housing developments, all that has changed. Happily, some of the exiles have now returned.

Granted, all is not roses in this new paradise to the northeast. The tax base is still way out of whack, 85 per cent/15 per cent in favor of residential. That should be somewhere around 60 per cent/40 per cent.

A shortage of school facilities has forced many kids to be bussed to schools because the school in their own neighborhood is full. Mayor Fran Sainsbury, an ex-teacher herself, is particularly chagrined about this issue.

And the traffic problem on main St. has become somewhat severe.

But, hey, Rome wasn't built in a day, and the mayor has always responded to a challenge.

So go for it Fran! Stouffville's time has come. At last.

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