

# Contest winner overcomes setbacks

By CHRIS SHANAHAN  
 Doug Davies' win in a recent Stouffville talent contest marked another chapter in his on-going struggle against some rather imposing odds.

He suffers from dyslexia (a reading and spelling disability), and is also nursing two fingers broken just more a month ago while working as an edging machine helper at Markham's Pitt Steel Limited.

But his dedication and passion for music paid off Feb. 15 as the singer earned top honors in the talent final at Greens Restaurant. And now Mr. Davies hopes his prize — a six-hour recording session scheduled for Claremont's Chalet Studios next month — will help launch his career as a full-time musician.

"I plan to go on and hopefully do a few recordings and maybe get a record out in the near future," explained the Baker Street resident, who's now searching for some local musicians to form a band.

The 28-year-old Davies has endured a lifestyle similar to that portrayed in the lyrics of some of his own tunes.

There have been some good times, but also a share of nights when the then-struggling singer ended up sleeping on the street for lack of a better place to stay. And not long after he arrived in Stouffville from his native Scarborough last spring, Mr. Davies

was the victim of an unprovoked attack by a gang of youths. He was playing his guitar in Stouffville Memorial Park when approached by four strangers who accused him of being an undercover narcotics officer, then proceeded to beat him up and smash his acoustic guitar to the tune of \$400.

Mr. Davies ended up with head, chest and rib injuries, but his pride and abundant spirit were unscathed.

He viewed that unfortunate incident the same way he approaches all adversity, as just another setback on a long road to fulfilling his dream of becoming a successful entertainer.

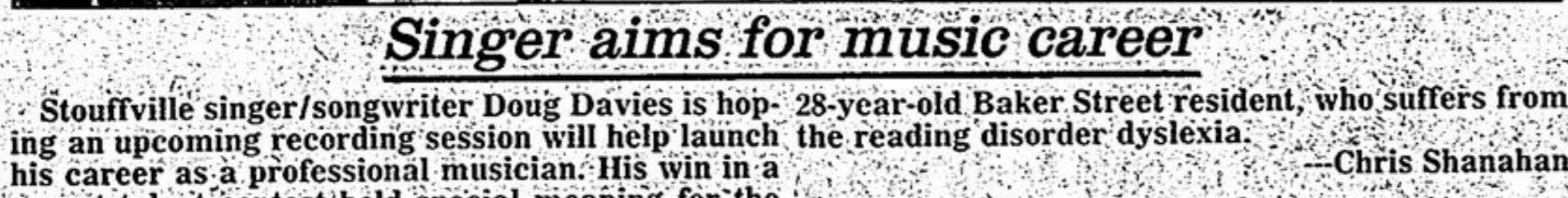
The lanky singer writes about half of his material and bases some of it on real-life experiences. His influences focus on "jazz, old rock from the '50s and a little country."

"It's really easy-listening music, not that jumping-up-and-down, pin-stuck-in-your-ear (stuff)," he chuckled.

While his writing and reading skills are limited by his dyslexia, Mr. Davies claimed this doesn't pose much of a problem with his music. He uses a tape machine to record new material as he plays and sometimes receives a helping hand from family members.

He's been strumming guitar since age 9 and regularly puts in four-hour practice sessions in the basement apartment of parents Jan and Barbara Davies' Stouffville home.

Mr. Davies previously won a Scarborough Cable TV talent show as part of a band, but had never before finished first in about 10 contest appearances as a soloist.



**Singer aims for music career**

Stouffville singer/songwriter Doug Davies is hoping an upcoming recording session will help launch his career as a professional musician. His win in a recent talent contest held special meaning for the 28-year-old Baker Street resident, who suffers from the reading disorder dyslexia. —Chris Shanahan

## Pub opens in May

STOUFFVILLE — Stouffville's new English-style pub is expected to serve its first thirsty customers on May 1.

Interior work is now underway at the Earl of Whitchurch, a combination pub and restaurant located at the corner of Main St. West and Freel Lane.

Owner Mike Larkin of Markham said the two-storey structure will be completed by spring if all goes according to plan.

"Soon as the weather warms up, we'll lay the bricks," explained Mr. Larkin, noting this kind of work can't be done during the cold of winter.

Much of the original brickwork from a former home on the site will be used on the new building, along with material from other old homes.


Mr. Larkin's Maylar Construction is handling the project with local trades used where possible.

The Earl of Whitchurch will feature an authentic English pub on the ground floor and a dining area upstairs.

"We'll run it for about a month to get all the kinks out before holding an official opening," he said of his much-anticipated business venture.

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