

Pembroke business to migrate to Stouffville

By DENISE McDONALD
A new bird has made its nest in Whitchurch-Stouffville.
On November 21 at 10 a.m., Pembroke residents Al and Helen Dickson will officially open the doors on this area's first Canadiana gallery, Snowbird of Stouffville, at 36 Main Street, former office location of lawyer Andre Kozak.
Both former school teachers of more than 10 years, the Dicksons originally opened the first Snowbird Gallery 17 years ago in Golden Light, Ontario.
"I decided to leave the teaching profession when I found the system changing too dramatically," said Mr. Dickson. "I was always trained to be a subject oriented person and I just didn't find the new ideas to be compatible with the things I liked to do."
While enroute to a meeting of the Renfrew County Travel Association, of which he was a director, Mr. Dickson said he and his wife spotted an old general store for sale 30 miles south of Pembroke. After inquiring around ab-

out it, the store was purchased and the two budding entrepreneurs suddenly found themselves in business.
However, the store wasn't officially named until they spent their first day renovating the old building which was buried under eight feet of snow.
"We were listening to the radio and Anne Murray's song, Snowbird came on. After that we kept kidding each other about being snowbirds buried in this building and the name just stuck," he said.
Now 17 years later, with much experience behind them, the Dicksons decided to look for a suitable location to house an offshoot of their original enterprise.
"We chose this area because we were looking for a smaller community on the outskirts of Toronto and one where we wouldn't have to locate in a mall," he said. "Stouffville definitely has that small town flavour."
Specializing in jewellery, books, clothing and many other articles, Mr. Dickson claimed

Snowbird will be in reality a department store selling anything made in Canada.
"The store here will be a reflection of what is in the other one plus other things specific to Stouffville," he said.
Included will be the largest selection of Canadiana books in Ontario, as well as an art and framing department and hand woven clothing.
Mr. Dickson also said he would be happy to sell merchandise for residents, however, he prefers to buy it outright rather than take it in on consignment.
"We prefer to deal with people who make their living by it," he said. "That's not to say I'm putting down the hobbyist, it's just professionals tend to be more reliable."
Although Mr. Dickson is presently commuting to Stouffville from Pembroke, a drive he said takes over three and a half hours, he will eventually be looking for a manager to take over responsibility of running the store in his absence.



A new bird will make its nest in Whitchurch-Stouffville when Pembroke resident Al Dickson (pictured) officially opens the doors Nov. 28 on his new Canadiana gallery, Snowbird of Stouffville.

—Denise McDonald

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