

Bandleader hits right notes

By KATE GILDERDALE
STOUFFVILLE — Both staff and students at Stouffville Dist. Secondary School will be sorry to say goodbye to band-leader Doug Walker. He's leaving in September to take up a new position as Head of Music at a new high school in Vaughan.

Mr. Walker, at SDSS for the past two years, is disappointed he

won't be able to continue his innovative program with the Sr. Band.

"This is my first year with them," he explains. "Peter (Samuelson) had them before. I taught the Grade 9s last year."

When Jim Rehill decided he could no longer continue the choir, Mr. Walker decided he'd like to try something totally dif-

ferent. He's currently working on a jazz group.

"We're getting into the jazz thing slowly," he says.

The band's been working on several arrangements from the 50s, as well as up-beat show music.

"It's the first time we've tried this here," he notes. The band hosted its winter con-

cert, Thursday, at Markham Theatre. Preparation for this was hard work, Mr. Walker admits.

Rehearsals have been held Tuesday evenings, at lunch times and after school.

As head of the Music Department, Peter has allowed me to express myself, says Mr. Walker. "He and Peter Bright, (principal), have been very supportive, although the approach is new to them also."

Mr. Walker refers to himself as "a band person" for whom music has been an important element all his life.

Prior to coming to Stouffville, Doug Walker was Head of Music at Markham High. He held this position ten years.

"I needed a change and they needed a change," he states. His duties at SDSS include teaching English as well as Music.

The 78-member Sr. Band comprises students from Grades 10 to 13. Although it's an extra-curricular activity, all students taking music as an optional subject, are expected to participate.

"Several who don't take music, still play in the band," he explains.

Making things come together takes time, says Mr. Walker. Every teacher approaches the subject differently.

"It takes this long for us to get used to each other," he says of his relationship with the students.

He considered the concert Thursday "exciting" and is looking forward to a band trip to the United States in the spring.

During the five-day tour in May, the band will participate in a festival in Maryland. They'll



Photo: JIM THOMAS
Stouffville District Secondary School Bandleader Doug Walker is looking forward to new musical challenges at a high school in Vaughan. Though he hasn't been at SDSS for long, he's established a good relationship with his music students and recently helped them with their winter concert. Before coming to SDSS, Mr. Walker headed up the music department at Markham District High School. He held that position for 10 years.

also visit Washington and Baltimore.

Twenty bands from across the U.S.A. and Canada will take part in the festival.

"It's not a competition," emphasizes Mr. Walker, "but an opportunity to pay and be adjudicated."

The students will make new friends and visit many points of interest. He describes the tour as "a musical, educational and social experience."

The cost is estimated at \$380 per student.

"The kids have started their fund-raising," he notes. They're

presently selling Heritage Foods and will be holding a Band-a-Thon in February with twelve hours of non-stop playing.

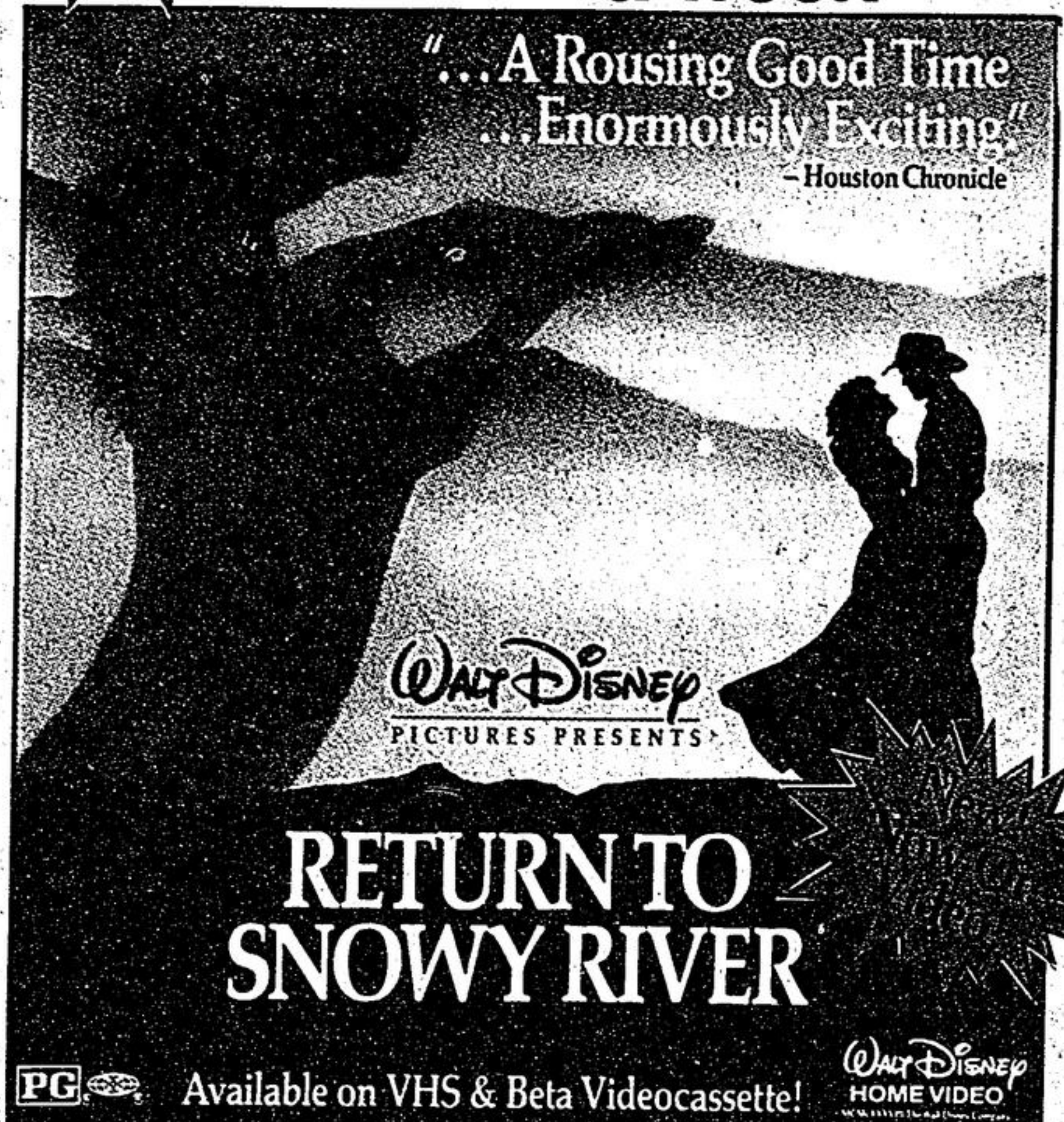
Although Doug Walker regrets his rather short tenure at SDSS, he's excited about the challenge awaiting him at a school that will open its doors for a first time in September.

"It's a chance to start from the ground up; to build a program and see what happens," he says.

Meanwhile, he intends to make the most of his remaining months at Stouffville, working with his students to produce new and exciting musical experiences — for them and for their audiences.

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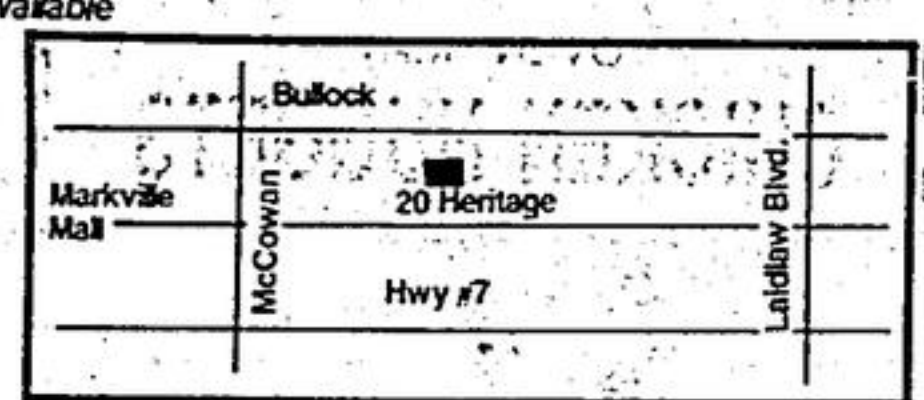
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