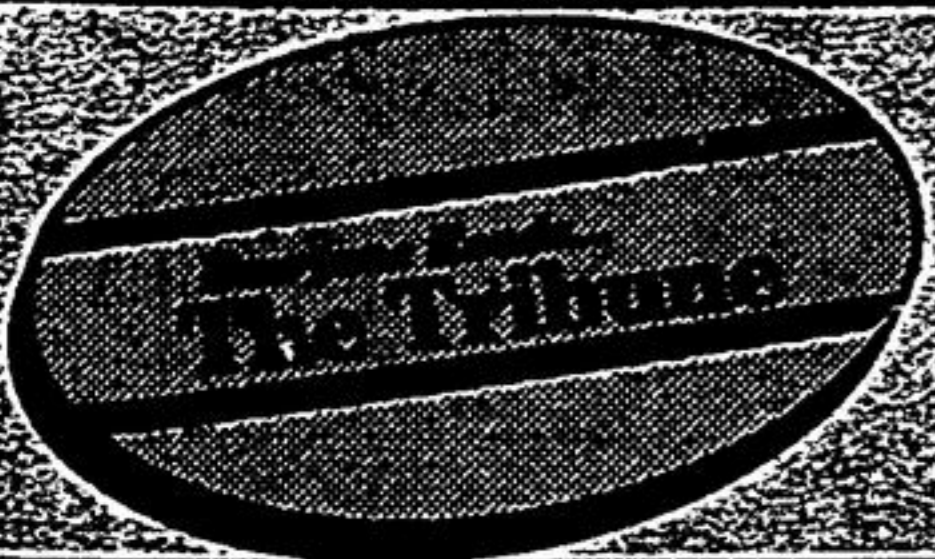


The Special Tribune Button Contest



The Tribune is pleased to announce its latest contest. Residents will be able to pick up our special Tribune buttons at local retailers and in the Trib office this week. If you are spied by one of our Tribune button spotters with your button on, you will win a prize.

Next week's prize will be dinner for two. Watch this space in the coming weeks for winners' names and new prizes. Stop by the office for your buttons or look for them in local stores. We'll be watching for you!

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Changing laws to make streets safer, Lewis says

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

Canadians deserve the right to walk the streets safely and raise their children in a violent-free society, Canada's solicitor general, Doug Lewis told the local business community last weekend.

More than 75 Whitchurch-Stouffville residents attended a breakfast meeting at Angie's Eatery organized by Markham Whitchurch-Stouffville MP Bill Attewell and the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce.

Guest speaker Lewis talked about changes to the current criminal law system changes that "Canadians said they wanted."

"We hear the people. You say you're fed up with unsafe streets; you want tougher sentences and freedom of violence. Law-abiding citizens must come first," Lewis said.

"Too much attention is paid to the criminals and not enough to the victims. We need to be caring and compassionate to victims," Lewis said to an applauding crowd.

The Toronto-born law school graduate and former Justice Minister and Attorney General of Canada told the audience the federal government is undertaking numerous reforms such as longer sentences for violent criminals.

"Victims, especially sexual abuse victims, feel left out of the system. They feel almost as if they are victimized again when they see their (attacker) in the supermarket line after being released on parole," Lewis lamented.

Other changes include:
□ Modernizing the 1958 Parole Act for the first time victims will be kept informed of

an accusers status, and can now attend parole hearings under the current law victims are entitled no information. Judges will be given greater say in the length of time violent offenders stay in prison before they become eligible for parole and courts will be made to provide reasons why an inmate is eligible for parole.

□ Changing the Young Offender's Act - formerly the Juvenile Delinquents Act of 1984. Young offenders currently face three years for murder. Under changes a youth would receive five years less a day. Waiting time for parole will be sooner and provisions for transferring youths to adult court will be made easier.

□ Tightening up gun control - the prevention of firearms conversion from semi to automatic weapons.

□ Changing extradition laws so that individuals who have committed crimes in other countries will be sent back to their own country faster.

□ Amending immigration legislation - the government will look at a new sentencing act to eliminate system abusers.

"The system is not perfect but we've listened, acted and are swinging the pendulum back," Lewis said.



Youth Centre

Question put to Stouffville teens

The need for a youth centre in Whitchurch-Stouffville will be put to a vote.

The town's parks and recreation department received permission from the York Region Board of Education to circulate a survey to all Grade 7 through 13 students in the area schools

to assess the desire for a permanent youth centre in town. The study emerged as the result of a Tribune-sponsored forum in December on a youth centre.

It will be put to the students this month, with results expected immediately after the survey

is collected, said Peter Arnott, recreation programmer at the town.

The first of the questionnaires should be circulated to at least one school before the March break, with the remainder of the area schools receiving them after the break, he added.

Fire guts million dollar estate home

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

A \$1 million rural estate home was completely destroyed by fire last week leaving a Whitchurch-Stouffville family of four homeless.

Whitchurch-Stouffville Volunteer Fire Department responded to a call Wednesday, March 5 at about 9:20 p.m. to Hill Country Dr., located on Kennedy Rd. just south of Aurora Sideroad.

Flames were already shooting through the roof - an indication the fire was probably "going for a while before it was detected", when the crew arrived, said fire chief Bill Brown.

The family managed to escape the blaze and ran to a neighbor's house across the road to report the fire, Brown said. The blaze took more than 114,000 litres of water, the assistance of Mt. Albert and Aurora water tankers

and more than 12 hours on the scene before the flames subsided, Brown added. Crews managed to salvage only a few pieces of furniture and other valuables from the inferno - making it one of Stouffville's worst fires in the past 12 months. The Fire Marshal's office is currently investigating the cause of the blaze, which may have started in a wood stove.

See page 3 for more on the fire.

Ian Boyd would like to thank
(see page 19)

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