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Council

Stouffville's library in a bind

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library is severely

lacking in floor and book space and can't properly serve the nearly 11,000 cardholders who regularly use the facility,

local politicians were told this week.

Library board member Garth Burrow said the facility falls far short of floor space compared to other libraries across Ontario, and more importantly throughout York Region.

Burrow added that unlike a for-profit business, the library flourishes during recessionary times, adding further to its space dilemma.

"The worse the economy gets, the more the circulation goes up," Burrow said.

Whitchurch-Stouffville's library, serving a 17,403 population, has 478 square feet of floor space compared to Bradford West Gwillimbury which operates with 960 sq. ft. and a 16,585 population. And East Gwillimbury/Holland Landing generously displays 2,294 sq. ft. while serving only 17,346 people.

In fact, all but a few comparable facilities across the province have more than twice the amount of space Stouffville has, states the 1992 Ontario Public Library Statis-

tics. "Provincial statistics show we are extremely deficient (by 6,000 sq. ft.) - the second lowest of 32 same-size libraries," Burrow said.

Stouffville currently has more than 3,700 books in storage because there is no room to shelve them, Burrow said.

Burrow said planned growth in the community of Ballantrae could further add to its deficiency noting there are currently 1,334 cardholders from the area now.

During a presentation on the library's long-standing goal to build an addition, Burrow said the cost estimates of the 10,000 sq. ft. expansion rings in at \$2 million - down from its \$2.5 million figure a few years ago.

The board says it is currently investigating a number of funding options, including raising \$500,000 through its own efforts and asking for construction material and labor donations as part of a community project.

Burrow said for the library to start its funding or apply for any grants available through the province's tourism ministry, the board needs council's commitment and backing of the plan.

In addition, the town is being asked that a \$15,000 grant be added to its annual grant of \$55,000 to help raise the necessary money.

Burrow said library volunteers have proven to be proficient fundraisers - earning more than \$110,000 for the library - and adjoining Latham Gallery since 1988 - proving local money-raising efforts aren't being shouldered solely on council.

Officials will consider the matter during its April budget meeting.

Festival plans now underway

This summer will mark the 10th anniversary of the annual Strawberry Festival bash and organizers hope this year's celebration will jam the streets for the most exciting event ever.

Festival chairman Marcel Bossi told local politicians the group hopes to investigate corporate sponsorship this year - which will bring the event one step closer to its commitment to being 100 per cent "self-sufficient" by the year 2000.

"The light at the end of the tunnel is not a train," Bossi said.

This year's Strawberry Festival, the highlight of summer events in Stouffville, will be shorter than past years, with a planned three-day extravaganza packed with more of everything festival-goers have enjoyed throughout the years, Bossi said.

Bossi said the group is asking the town to donate a one-time grant of \$1,500 to pay for festival T-shirts.

Council will discuss the donation at its next budget meeting.



Dance to country sounds

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce is holding a country sweethearts dance tonight at the Rec Centre.

Tickets are \$12, and can be bought at the door. Music will be provided by a DJ.

Reaction mixed on smuggling fight

KATE GILDERDALE
Correspondent

While some people were outraged by the federal government's move to cut cigarette taxes this week, others were cheering the Liberals on.

Local bookstore owner John Lord is a smoker who wouldn't recommend the habit to anyone. Neverthe-

less, he thinks it's time beleaguered smokers got a break.

"Considering that you can buy Canadian cigarettes in the States for about a quarter of what you can buy them here for, I think it's great," he said.

It would be even better, added Lord ruefully, if Ontario premier Bob Rae had followed the federal government's initiative.

"I would never advocate smoking to anyone, and if they reduced the cost to 50 cents a pack, maybe more people would take it up, but I don't think this cut will encourage anyone to start smoking."

Apart from "the odd cigar or pipe," Jim Bolton is not a smoker. He doesn't think the tax cut will lead to a noticeable increase in smoking, and he applauds the

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