

Town needs \$4 million pool; consultants find

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

Swimming was named the number one recreational preference in a random telephone poll last year of 375 Whitchurch-Stouffville households.

In light of this, the town should build a \$4.3 million aquatic centre next year to meet the needs of its residents, John Stevenson of Leisureplan International told an audience of about 35 people at Latcham Hall last Tuesday night. Although the pricetag has raised eyebrows in and out of council chambers, Stevenson said a \$4,373,000 pool would give the town a "low-end Chevrolet - pretty basic, average" aquatic centre.

(Council of the day in 1991 had turned down the notion of building the recommended indoor pool as an expansion to the recreation centre due to funding restraints; the issue has not been discussed by today's council, and a pool has not been included in the 1993 five-year forecast.)

Stevenson was hired in 1991 to find out which recreational and leisure services are in

most demand throughout the community, and to steer the town in the right direction in providing a range of services for the next five to 10 years.

In formulating the town's Leisure Services Masterplan Final Report, with emphasis heavy on recreation, Stevenson said the town needs to be more "pro-active" with volunteers to steer and enhance its

to get a youth centre off the ground.

The town currently operates and maintains one indoor ice surface; 12 community centres, halls and meeting rooms; eight sports/soccer fields; 10 tennis courts and 17 ball diamonds.

Stevenson said the town needs to adopt standards of parks and recreation in its

Official Plan - making leisure services a higher priority.

"Recreation has evolved historically without guidance and plans to set out a

mandate," Stevenson said. The town's recreation masterplan public process has not brought about much residential enthusiasm, however - enticing only 20 residents at three separate information sessions held last year.

But some angry Cherry Street residents said horse riders' needs and concerns were not mentioned in the consultant's report, sending a message that equestrian services are not a high town recreation priority.

Stevenson disagreed with the comments, however, claiming trail uses were discussed and included in the plan.

"There needs to be more of an emphasis on quality of life"

John Stevenson, Leisureplan International

recreational needs through to the next decade.

"There needs to be more of an emphasis on quality of life by planning and providing and facilitating," recreational programs, Stevenson said.

He added the town should set up "satellite" recreation departments in Vandorf and Ballantrae to offer more accessibility and convenience to rural residents.

Stevenson also said the town should "increase its awareness of teen needs," and set up an advisory committee.

The recreation department has already been working closely with volunteers in the formation of such a committee

People

This is no 'Uncle' Buck

KATE GILDERDALE
Correspondent

Stephen Buck has two full-time careers - firefighter and father - and he considers himself a fortunate man.

"I'm very thankful for the work I do, but my family comes first," stressed the Stouffville resident. Three weeks out of four, Buck's schedule enables him to be at home during the day with daughters Sarah, 10 and Kaitlyn, 7, while his wife, Marion, is at work.

"There are other firefighters doing this," Buck pointed out. "The children are both at school full time, so it's quieter these days. When they were smaller, the neighbors' kids would usually come here, because I've always believed that kids should be encouraged to play at home.

"During the day there would be five or six of them running around the place, and it didn't bother me a bit." At one time, when the family had the only swing set in the area, their backyard was the focal point for a large contingent of neighborhood youngsters.

"If they're around your house, you're more involved and you know what's going on with your kids," said Buck, who is a regular parent helper on school trips. "I sit at the back of the bus and get into trouble," he observed with a grin.

The family moved to Stouffville from Toronto in 1986 and although Buck has always felt very comfortable in his parenting role, he acknowledges that he is the exception rather than the rule.

"At the Toronto parent/tot group we used to go to, I was the token dad. Our situation is almost a traditional role reversal. My wife comes home from work and says, 'I'm tired, I don't want to deal with the kids right now.'"

And that's fine with Buck, who has no desire to turn back the clock to the days when, all too

often, a father was less a loving parent, more "an imposing figure who came home and gave discipline."

Nowadays, he said, most families have to have two incomes just to make ends meet, and life is often stressful and hectic as a result. "It's a race to get from here to there, get everything done and still take time to listen to each other."

Because he's home during the day, he looks after the housework and he and his wife share

meal preparation. His wife usually decides what the family will eat, "and I get started on it; she comes home and finishes it off."

While role reversals can

create problems, "to me it's a matter of priorities," said Buck. "What's important? Are you in this world to work? In my case, it's for my family."

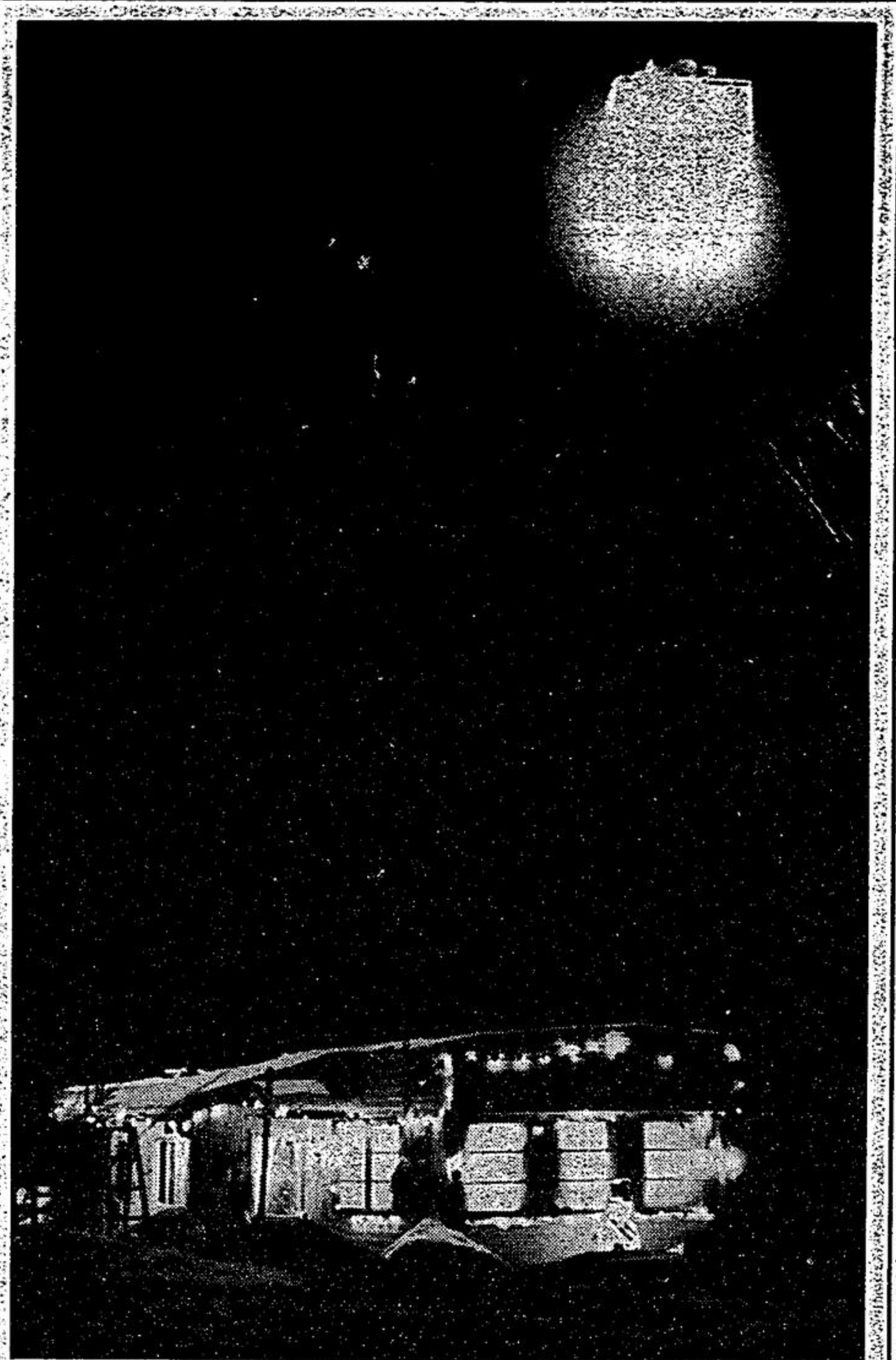
A full time career, on the other hand, gives him the advantage of being able to interact with other adults, something he thinks is a necessity for even the most devoted parent.

Buck has been a firefighter with the City of Toronto for 12 years, and a member of Whitchurch-Stouffville's volunteer force for the past three years. It's a tough but rewarding job, he says, and the public's high regard for firefighters is a definite plus.

Buck grew up in British Columbia and laments the loss of childhood freedom in a rapidly changing, and sometimes frightening world. "I remember being made to brush my hair and my teeth and then I would be gone for the entire day.

"Today, if my kids are going to go around the block to a friend's house, they call when they get there," he said. "Kids today are almost imprisoned, and I think that's sad."

"If they're around your house, you're more involved and you know what's going on with your kids." ~ Stephen Buck



Photo/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Starry night

A CBC-TV movie, *Small Gifts*, brought crews and trailers to the Whitchurch Conservation Area last weekend to shoot scenes.

Stouffville gets \$64K for blue box program

The town has received a \$64,600 grant from Queen's Park to help run its recycling program and purchase 500 new blue boxes, it was announced this week.

The grant, which falls under the Municipal Recycling Support Program (MRSP), was announced by Durham/York MPP Larry O'Connor on behalf of newly-appointed Environment and Energy Minister, Bud Wildman to promote municipal blue box programs across the province.

O'Connor said nearly 75 per cent of Ontario households now use the blue box system to "recover valuable materials that would otherwise end up in the waste stream."

"Through the efforts of communities like Whitchurch-Stouffville, more than 420,000 tonnes of waste is diverted from landfill sites each year. I am confident that, with this strong local support, the goal of the Ontario Waste Reduction Action Plan for the year 2,000 will be reached and that means a minimum of 50 per cent less waste going into our local landfill sites."

Whitchurch-Stouffville plans to use the funds for the purchase of 500 household bins, for the operating costs incurred by the program as well as for the promotion of the benefits and how-to's of the 3Rs program.

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