

People

Delivering babies rewarding part of obstetrician's job

By KATE GILDERDALE
Correspondent

Since it opened in 1990, the Birth Place at Markham Stouffville Hospital has welcomed many area residents into the world.

Obstetrician/gynecologist Neil Chang joined the staff

recently from Scarborough General.

"I was there for about six years. I was asked to come up and I thought it would be a good idea, because this hospital has excellent facilities and is very progressive."

The hospital's progressive approach is not only advanta-

geous to the people it serves, but it also allows staff to constantly update their knowledge of the newest techniques and treatments available," he pointed out.

Trained at the University of Toronto, Chang was drawn to obstetrics because it was a field in which many advances

were being made and he enjoyed dealing with healthy, well-informed patients.

One of the major issues affecting his specialty at present is hormone replacement therapy (HRT), which has engendered heated debate both inside and outside the medical community.

While there is strong evidence that HRT can be very effective in preventing such conditions as cardio-vascular disease and osteoporosis (loss of calcium in the bones), there are also understandable concerns about the possibility of an increased risk of breast cancer, said Chang.

"From a statistical point of view, there's much more benefit from decreasing the risk of heart attacks than from the increase in breast cancer. Still, you should tailor HRT to the individual," he said.

Those with high risk factors for heart attacks and osteoporosis would be prime candi-

dates for the therapy, Chang noted.

While he believes HRT can be extremely useful as a preventative treatment for many women, "if we looked at trying to stop women smoking that would have a much larger impact on heart attacks than HRT."

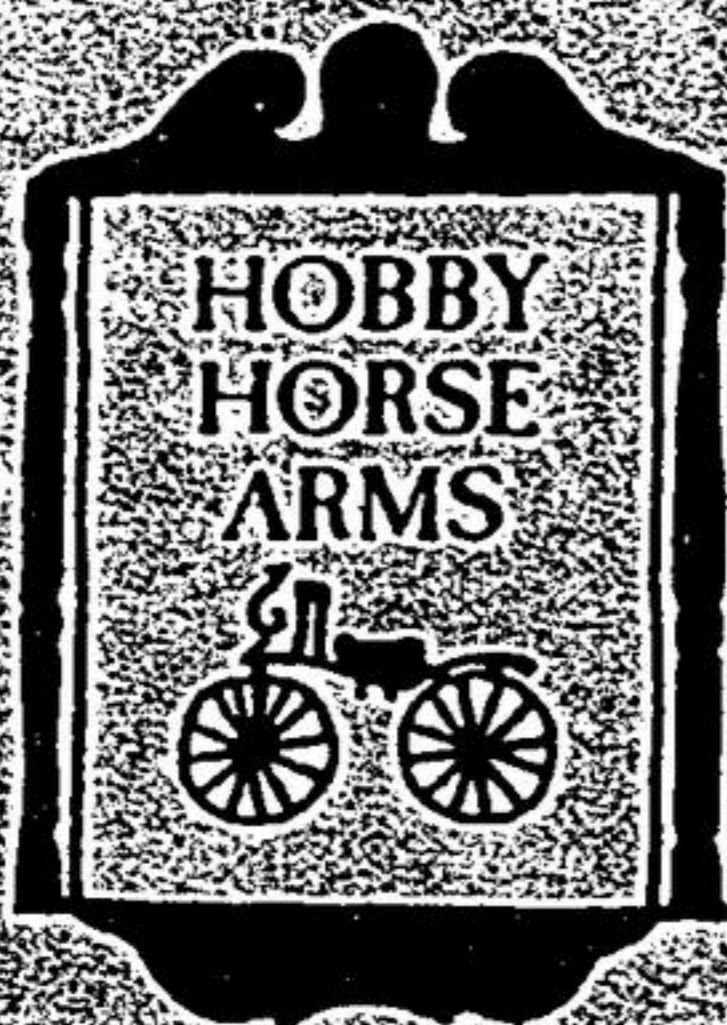
"Breast cancer has traditionally been a leading cause of death in women, but lung cancer will be much higher in the next few years," he predicted.

"You should individualize hormonal therapy and maybe not all women should be on it. You must look at the whole person."

One of the most rewarding aspects of his profession is delivering babies, said Chang, who is thoroughly enjoying his move to Markham Stouffville Hospital.

"It's so fulfilling to practise in a pleasant environment, coming to work is a pleasure."

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Health

Turtle House offers slow, steady road to self-improvement

By KATE GILDERDALE
Correspondent

If you're about to give up on those New Year's resolutions, take heart.

Turtle House in Stouffville is offering a 12-week weight loss program, an in-depth program to help smokers quit, adult ballet classes for beginners and deep muscle toning classes.

Owned and run by Sylvia von Hanna, Turtle House's tranquil environment is ideal for people who want to make a fresh start for 1995.

"A lot of people are looking for instant things to make them better, they're getting away from anything that's labor intensive," said von Hanna.

"The turtle has a slower way of getting through, but it's more thorough. I'm hoping that the kind of things that happen here will enhance and enrich life."

Adult ballet classes are conducted by Cathi Phillips, who also teaches dance at the recreation centre.

Sue Joyce is the instructor for the deep muscle toning classes, which offer a non-frenetic form of exercise for firming up the body gently but effectively.

Heather Hill Gibson and von Hanna are running the weight loss program, and sessions started last week.

The program will address problems associated with dieting and emphasize realistic ways to lose weight on a long-term basis through sensible eating habits and lifestyle changes.

"A lot of people are not doing what they want to be doing," said von Hanna.

"We want to help them re-discover who they are."

Anyone with the desire and the commitment to change can benefit from the program, she stressed. von Hanna is a qualified medical doctor and psychotherapist and Hill Gibson is an experienced therapist in spiritual and metaphysical counselling, who has studied at Lily Dale Spiritual Centre in New York.

The program to stop smoking is headed up by a counsellor who has worked for the Addiction Research Foundation for 10 years, designing a number of programs for the organization. Sessions are Mondays at 7:30 p.m. and run for 12 weeks.

Turtle House will offer a second session of both programs in the spring and a number of payment options are offered.

Ballet classes are held Tuesday evenings at 7:15 and deep muscle toning classes take place Tuesdays at 8:45 a.m. and Thursdays at 7 p.m.

For more information call 642-0970.