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## Coffee break leads to change in career

Trevor Balram is looking to make a career change out of a coffee break. Balram opened a Coffee Masters Donut and Deli franchise March 1 in Bal-

lantrae. The shop, which occupies half of the former Happy Daze Restaurant site, offers fresh coffee, donuts and muffins as well as a full deli selection including soups and assorted sandwiches.

Everything is made on location.

A mechanical engineer by trade, Balram was spending much of his time travelling around the country as an employee of a company involved in environmental clean up operations.

While the Guyanese-born Scarborough resident said he was thankful for the chance to see the varied beauty of the country he has called home for the past 16 years, he was ready to put his suitcase away for good.

"I got tired of being called on short notice to travel across Canada," said Balram. "I was working nine months of the year on the road. With a wife and a small child, I decided to go into business for myself."

Balram will be involved in his new venture on a full time basis and will hire employees as needed to

operate the business 24 hours a day.

He is counting on the experience picked up while operating a convenience store with his parents in Scarborough in the late 1980s to help him in the shop.

Balram said he chose Balantrae as the location for his enterprise because of its idyllic rural setting.

"It's always been a dream of mine to get out of the city

with its crime factor," said Balram, who said he would consider moving his family to the area if the business takes off.

Balram is hopeful he'll be well received by local residents and passersby.

"I'm looking forward to it. With what I've been told, traffic is busy here, especially in the summer months with people going to their cottages."



Coffee Masters Donut and Deli opened this month in Balantrae and offers a full deli section along with fresh coffee, donuts and muffins.

## SENIORS

### CHATS offers seniors home care assistance

By RENA GALANIS  
Advertising Features Coordinator

Community Home Assistance to Seniors (CHATS) offers homemaking, shopping and personal care services to help those over 65 remain in their own homes.

"The last thing many seniors want to do is give up their house, neighbors, and friends because they have to live in a retirement home," said CHATS Markham/Stouffville branch manager, Sharron Regan. "Most people want to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible. With the help we offer, they're able to do just that."

Homemaking assistance includes cleaning, bathing, preparing meals, and shopping. Also available is heavier home maintenance service for help with shovelling snow, lawn mowing, and "heavier" house cleaning, Regan says.

A Meals on Wheels (home delivery of hot meals) program is also part of what CHATS offers and the monthly Lunch Out, coordinated by Stouffville resident, Doris Harvey, provides transportation and companionship through organized group trips to area restaurants.

Furthermore, volunteers provide transportation to doctor's offices or hospitals, for seniors who have difficulty travelling independently or using public transit and taxis.

Also, respite care provides relatives relief from the stress which sometimes comes with being a constant caregiver.

Client profiles include those who have a deteriorating physical condition limiting their mobility, suffer from cognitive impairment, loneliness or fear, and those who are unable to perform personal planning and problem solving without assistance.

Celebrating its fifteenth anniversary this year, CHATS fulfills its mission with the help of numerous volunteers who range in age and background. It is the combined effort and dedication of the volunteers and homemakers who help to make a real difference in the quality of these people's lives," Regan says.

For more information about CHATS call 294-4240.

### Mobility Transit provides freedom of movement at reasonable prices

By RENA GALANIS  
Advertising Features Coordinator

Mobility Transit in Stouffville recently celebrated their first anniversary, offering transportation to seniors at reasonable prices.

"The number of area seniors we service has rapidly expanded to about 250 and the numbers are growing," says Mobility Transit president, Wilf Morley. "It's an excellent service because it offers them some independence and freedom of movement."

Former Stouffville councillor, Jim Sanders, pioneered the project which finally came into fruition last February after five years of planning and lobbying for subsidization from the provincial government.

The service is further funded through town fundraisers. Area service clubs have "been very generous in their support," Morley adds.

Mobility Transit has a contract with AAA Taxis who provide an accessible cab located in Stouffville, with the capability of accommodating two wheelchairs, Morley says.

A second, back-up cab is based in neighboring Markham. Cost for the service is \$1.50 for a one-way trip within the town, \$3 to Markham Stouffville Hospital, and a flat fee of \$6 for transportation to medical services outside the town.

A 24-hour reservation is recommended in order to guarantee cab availability at the required time. Seniors must qualify for the service and apply for eligibility. Applications are available at most medical offices and at the town's municipal offices at 19 Civic Dr.

Those who qualify for the service cannot walk 175 metres in less than seven minutes or need assistance to take steps, Morley says.

"There was obviously a need for this service in Stouffville," he adds. "The people we help have been very appreciative. It allows them to maintain their connections with the community."

For more information call 640-3551.

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### Forgotten crafts

Coopering once a thriving craft in Stouffville

By Sherri Feltham  
Correspondent

By the 1800s, Stouffville was a thriving farmer's village.

It had a variety of businesses ranging from blacksmithing to grist milling to carriage making and shoe manufacturing to name a few.

One business in Stouffville that is unfamiliar to many of us today was coopering. A cooper is someone who makes wooden barrels, kegs and other containers that store liquid or dry substances.

The craft of coopering is considered truly an art. It is extremely difficult to learn and requires experience and skill. The secret to a barrel's tightness is its shape. All staves, which are the wood planks running from top to bottom of the barrel, must be exactly the right shape so that when the hoops are put on, all the staves fit their neighbor exactly. One stave out of shape, by the slightest degree will cause the barrel to leak.

The physical process of dressing a stave to the correct shape is difficult because no prior measurements are made. A cooper selects exactly the right number of stave planks, considering variation in widths, and shapes them all to fit one another by eye only.

The next step is putting the staves together. The cooper gathers the staves one by one in what is called a raising hoop. Smaller wooden hoops called truss hoops are then placed on each end of the cask. Water is then applied to staves, then heated and cooled. This helps to mould the structure. Once the shape looks right, the ends of the stave are cut even and the truss hoops are removed and replaced by permanent hoops. Then the lids are made by putting together plans and cutting them into a circle. A stamp would then be put on the barrel guaranteeing its size.

There were two types of coopering, dry and wet. A dry cooper was one who made wooden barrels for dry products such as salt, sugar or maybe flour. A wet cooper was someone who made containers for liquids such as milk, water or vinegar.

When making dry or wet containers it was important to consider the type of wood being used. Oak is usually used for storing wine, because it adds flavor to the contents. However, with other liquids such as milk, oak would give it an odd taste. Other containers made by coopers were butter churns, baskets, domestic kegs and wash tubs.

Most coopers today are found in factories using machines for making large kegs for wineries. Most other barrels are now made out of metal or plastic.

Dan Zaroski, a resident of Maple, has made coopering his hobby. In England there is an organization of coopers called the Worshipful Companies of Coopers and Dan believes there is still a school in Scotland, where you can obtain your apprenticeship. Nothing like this exists in Canada, so how did Dan get his training? Originally from Thunder Bay, he got a summer job at Fort William and was assigned to the cooper shop. He was trained by someone who had been previously trained by a Hungarian cooper. For eight years he learned the trade through practice and reading. He was, then fortunate one day to receive a call from Illinois from a past visitor that said her father was a cooper and no longer needed his tools.

Coopers seem to be very much a dying breed. Even few museums have people trained in the field. For this reason Dan is trying to keep it alive by doing demonstrations and lectures whenever possible.

On March 16 at 1 to 3 p.m., Dan Zaroski will be giving a workshop at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum for children between eight and 14. The cost is \$7. If you are a cooper or know someone who is you can contact Dan through the museum.

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