



14 Is that 'antique' in your cellar a piece of trash or a treasure? Ask the area experts.

INSIDE: Letters 6
Opinion 8
Events 10
Sports 19

3 Dealing with death as part of your job is never easy, York Region health-care workers admit

SERVING WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE SINCE 1888

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RESIDENTS TO GET SAY ON SMALLER COUNCIL

Public meetings over four-ward proposal

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

The move to shrink the size of Whitchurch-Stouffville council got to first base Tuesday.

Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson managed to convince the majority of local councillors that the town only needs four and not six councillors for a town with fewer than 25,000 people.

Premier Mike Harris has long pushed municipalities to downsize, Emmerson told council.

The mayor stressed that downsizing the size of municipal government will be a decision ultimately made by the public. If shrinking the size of the council is endorsed by the public, at a series of public meetings, the process will proceed to the next step and eventually be in place for the next municipal election in 2003.

There's nothing new about councils downsizing, Emmerson pointed out. Here in York Region, councils have reduced in King City, Georgina, Aurora, East Gwillimbury and Newmarket.

In Whitchurch-Stouffville, a councillor represents about 4,000 residents, while in Vaughan, a councillor oversees 25,000.

However, here in Whitchurch-Stouffville, the decision was not unanimous. The concept of amalgamation has "not worked"

See BOWES, page 12.

The blizzard battler



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Ian Boyd of Boyd's Source for Sports is well bundled up as he clears the parking lot in front of his Stouffville store on Tuesday. He'd likely rather be selling water skis and bicycles.

Students surprised with test results

School board chairs differ over province-wide literacy testing

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN, SHANNON WALTER AND MARCO DEROCCHIS
Staff Writers

Results of the province's first high school literacy test — which one-third of Ontario students failed — can be useful, but they don't really mean anything, suggested Bill Crothers, chair of York's public school board.

And some students who participated in the trial writing of the test in October were not only disappointed, but actually surprised by the results.

"It seemed to be a really easy test," said 16-year-old Patrick Johnson, a Grade 11 student at Markham District High School.

Not that easy. While results of York Region's public and Catholic boards won't be released until today — general results were leaked to media two days early — 29 per cent of the 150,000 Grade 10 students province-wide failed one or both of the reading and writing portions of the test. Ten per cent didn't write the test at all and they are included in the failure rate.

Other results included:

- 35 per cent of students who failed writing did not follow instructions correctly.
- 17 per cent of boys failed both reading and writing, compared to 10 per cent of girls, about the same gender difference reflected in the Grades 3 and 6 testing.
- 11 per cent passed reading but failed writing, most not completing at least one of the four questions.

See STUDENTS, page 18.

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