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4 Mayor wants arts and culture committee to look at using main floor of old town hall.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EVENT: Barbecue roast beef dinner
WHEN: Saturday, July 13, 5-7:30 p.m.
WHERE: Stouffville Royal Canadian Legion



32 Gone fishing: You can try your luck without leaving York Region - or the ground.

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MARKHAM STOUFFVILLE SCRAMBLES TO COVER \$4 MILLION SHORTFALL

HOSPITALS COME UP SHORT

BY LISA QUEEN
 Staff Writer

Despite receiving \$20 million in additional provincial funding, York Region hospitals are scrambling to find ways to cover a \$15 million financial shortfall.

Markham Stouffville Hospital, Southlake Regional Health Centre and York Central Hospital are contemplating running deficits, bor-

rowing money from the bank, dipping into reserve accounts or pleading with the Tories to hand over more money so they can serve the needs of their growing communities.

As part of an additional \$645 million handed out last week by the Tories to Ontario hospitals — bringing their funding to a record \$9.4 billion — Markham Stouffville

received \$3.3 million, Southlake got almost \$6.6 million and York Central was granted more than \$10 million, which was one of the single largest contributions to a community hospital.

But Markham Stouffville was looking for another \$4 million, Southlake was hoping for \$3 million more and York Central was eyeing an additional \$8 million.

However, while hospital administrators are hoping the Ministry of Health will hand over more money to address their ballooning volumes due to York Region's high growth, they aren't blaming Queen's Park for their funding woes.

Instead, they argue the ongoing funding shortfalls hospitals face every year go to the heart of the

See RISING, page 10.

Bucking the trend on York Region's trains, buses

Improved service attracting more riders

BY JEFF MITCHELL
 Staff Writer

While ridership on public transit systems throughout the GTA declines, York Region's statistics buck that trend.

York Region Transit ridership was up 7 per cent during the first four months of 2002, a figure primarily attributed to improved service, said Irene McNeil, manager of service planning with the authority.

"We are bucking the trend," Ms McNeil said this week.

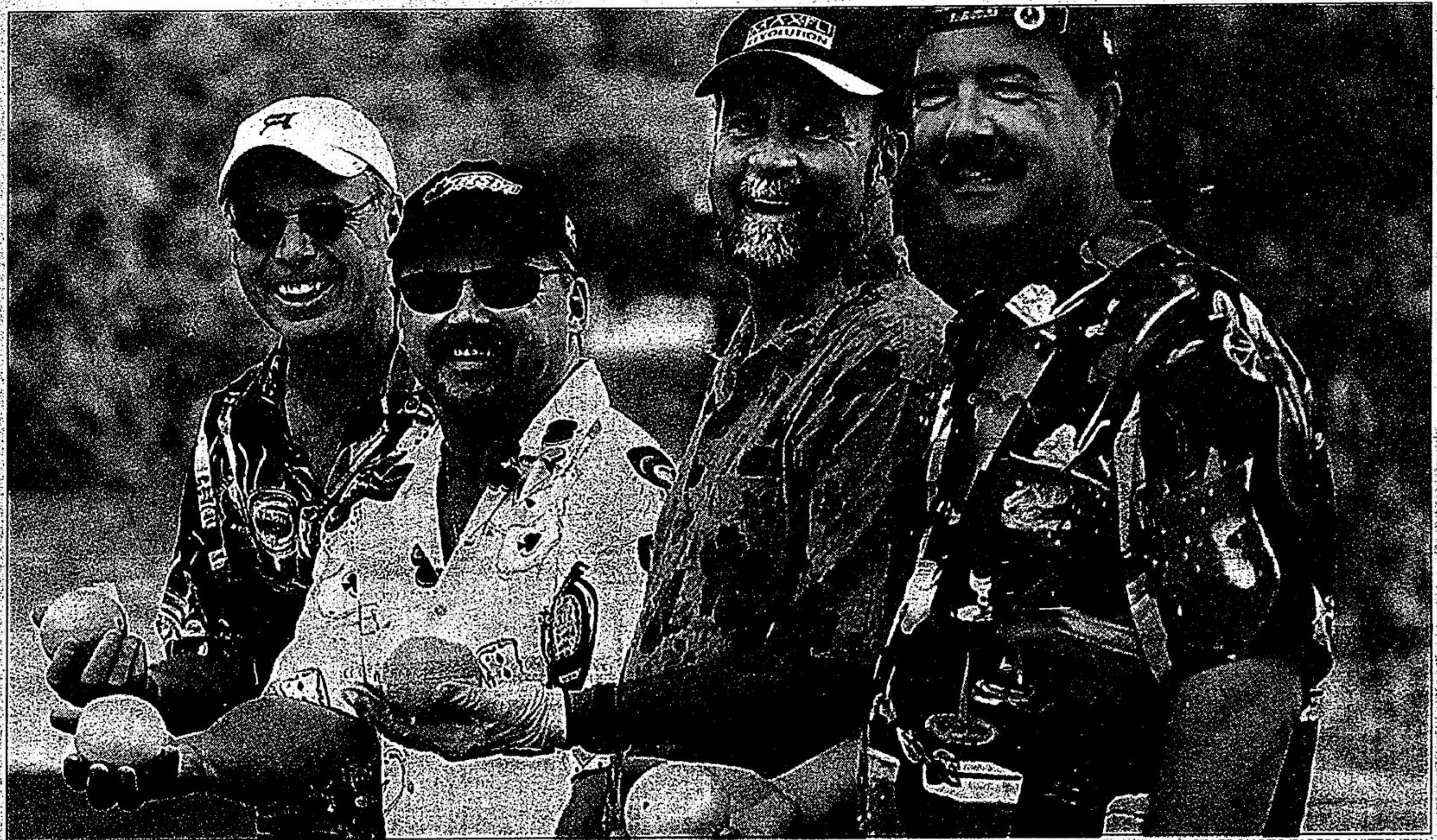
"I think probably the most important factor is we've put in so many improvements to service."

A report from the Toronto Transit Commission, issued this week, said ridership in most municipalities throughout the GTA has been either flat or in decline. The TTC anticipates eight million fewer riders this year than last, part of that decline is chalked up to the drop in tourism in the city in the wake of last September's terrorist attacks in the United States.

The terrorism chill notwithstanding, however, declines in ridership have left transit officials in GTA municipalities scratching their heads.

In York, meanwhile, there is a feeling of optimism. Ms McNeil said the public appears to be responding to system

See LOCAL, page 11.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

GOLFING IN TECHNICOLOUR

Gord Smith (from left), Brent Stachel, Gord Stowar, and Gary Coutts added some colour to the tee at the Sleepy Hollow Golf and Country Club during the eighth annual Whitchurch-Stouffville mayor's charity tourney on Tuesday. The tournament raised more than \$15,000 for youth activities in the community. See page 29 for more.

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