

Stouffville Sun

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EDITORIAL

Good growth

There is fear in Whitchurch-Stouffville. Many people are afraid of what will become of their small town after the Big Pipe sewage system is attached to Stouffville later this year.

With the pipe comes the opportunity for unlimited growth, something the sewage plant in Stouffville Memorial could not offer. Town officials say growth will be restricted, but the addition of thousands of new residents over the next 20 years is still unprecedented here.

What fears? Residents are afraid the sense of community that still exists will be lost. There are more tangible fears, too: Traffic will increase. The demand on services, including schools and recreation centres, will grow. If smaller lot sizes are permitted, the look of the town will be diminished.

And if new industry, planned for the southwest quadrant of Stouffville, doesn't arrive at the same time as the homes, more people will be forced to commute. That's not good for the environment, traffic flow, the local tax roll or the economy.

But there is also an upside to growth. New facilities will have to be built for new and old residents alike. There is talk of a theatre and a curling club. These projects should be hot topics during this year's municipal election campaign.

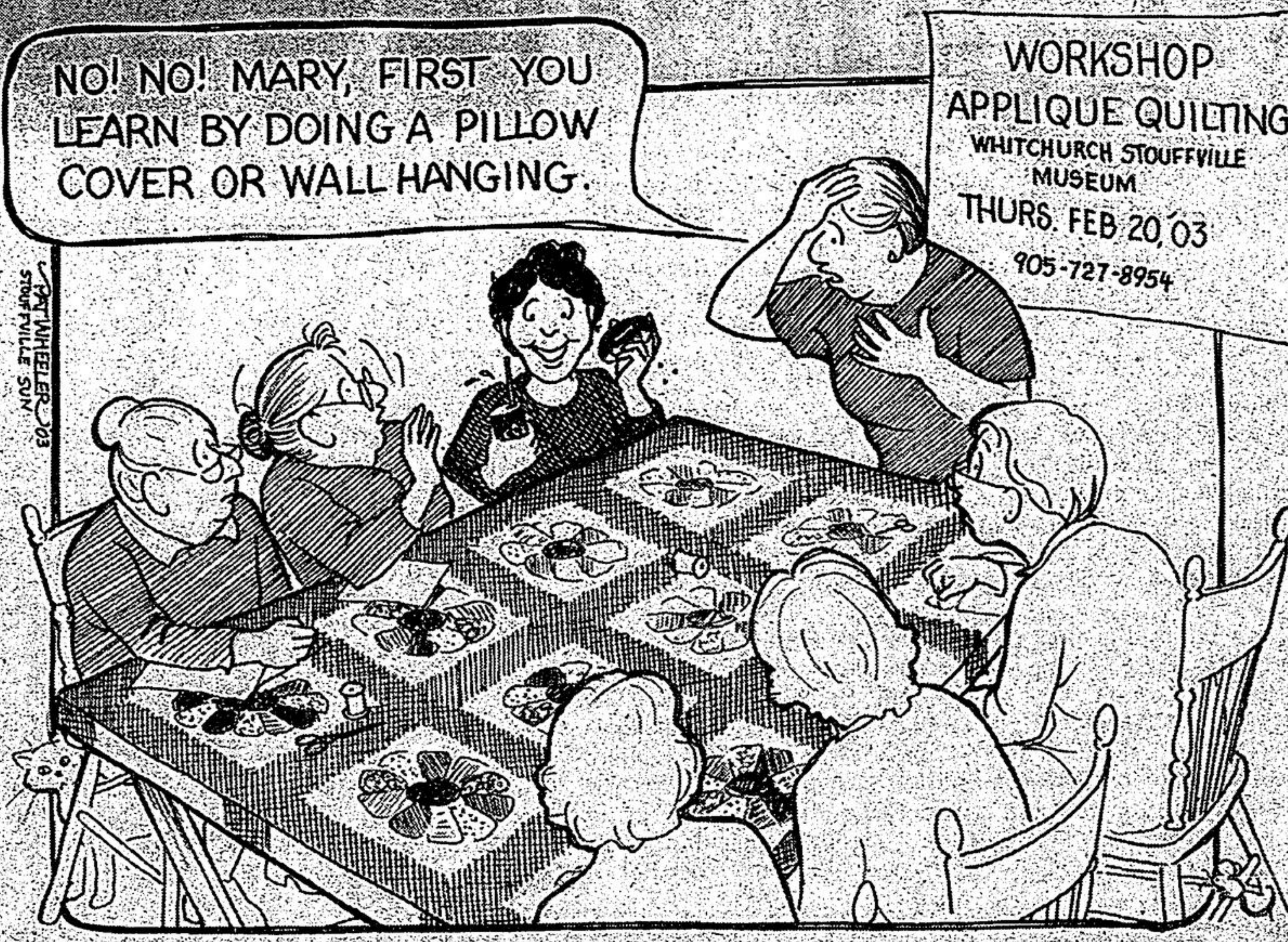
More stores will be built to service the new population. As well, existing stores will suddenly have a larger market to sell to.

New schools, including a second Stouffville high school penciled in for the south side of the community, will add new facilities to the town inventory and alleviate any overcrowding at existing schools.

Traffic flow can be improved, thanks to growth. The weekday rush-hour traffic jamming Main Street — a minor irritation for those commuters who drive the crowded 400 series highways — can be alleviated. New east-west roads north and south of Main will take the load off of the main drag.

In the new subdivisions, we see smaller homes that will hopefully be more affordable, allowing more young people to live in this community. Rental accommodations aren't popular with builders, but they, too, would add nicely to the housing mix in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Not everything about growth is good. But it appears inevitable and we can gain some benefits, Whitchurch-Stouffville.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Don't sell out parks, town councillors

To the Editor:

While walking up Westlawn Crescent last Saturday afternoon, I was delighted to see so many families enjoying the use of Westlawn Park. There was a hockey game — with real nets — taking place on the new outdoor rink.

Finally the weather has co-operated and given us some outdoor ice. There was tobogganing and snow-sliding down Hunt's Hill. Younger kids were enjoying the swings and slides.

It was wonderful to see so many youngsters exercising in the fresh air at a time when there is such concern about the impact of sedentary lifestyles on the health of young people.

There was even a dog in a winter coat, frolicking in the snow. The park had become a virtual winter playground.

Westlawn Park is an integral part of the west end of town. Those of us who live near the park, and all residents who use and enjoy the park's facilities — whether it be the ball diamonds, the playground equipment or the outdoor ice — should tell Whitchurch-Stouffville Council how much this park is valued as part of our neighbourhood, part of our lifestyle and part of our sense of place.

At the same time we should also thank the town for the construction and maintenance of these facilities — tax dollars well spent!

With so many changes taking place in Stouffville, particularly in the west end, it's important for residents to tell our elected representatives that public parks, public land and greenspace should be preserved for the continued use and enjoyment of residents.

Now that land hungry developers have consumed all available farmland in the area, they could well turn their sights on our publicly-owned parks, conservation areas and green spaces.

All it would take is for council to designate such areas as "surplus" and they could be sold for other purposes. We can't let that happen.

I remember my Dad, 40 years ago, standing outside in sub-zero weather on winter nights, flooding the outdoor rink at Westlawn with a

garden hose so kids in the neighborhood would have somewhere to skate.

I'd like to think that on winter days 40 years from now, there will be skating, tobogganing and laughter in Westlawn park, because those who really owned these resources — the residents — cared enough to speak out and demand their preservation.

Jill McWhinnie
Stouffville

E-mail, fax, mail letters to Stouffville Sun editor

The Stouffville Sun welcomes letters to the editor from its readers.

Letters to the editor can be mailed to the Stouffville Sun, Box 154, Stouffville, L4A 7Z5, or faxed to (905) 640-8778.

Letters can also be e-mailed to editor@stouffvillesun.com. Or you can hand deliver your letter to the Stouffville Sun offices at 34 Civic Ave., third floor, in downtown Stouffville. Please include phone numbers where you may be reached, for verification purposes only.

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Your opinion is important to us — in both letters to the editor and discussion groups on our web site, stouffvillesun.com.

Join an online discussion on issues that affect your town. Come back often for others' feedback and more discussion on a variety of topics.

At stouffvillesun.com, click on the Stouffville link and read current and archived Stouffville news. Hit Opinion to read your favourite local columnists — Jim Mason and Jim Thomas. And please feel free to e-mail editor@stouffvillesun.com with your thoughts.

FLASHBACK



GIVE US AN 'S': The Stouffville District High School — SDSS' old name — cheerleading crew was pictured in the school's 1956-57 yearbook. From left, Karen Lewis, Carol Skinner, Mary Cole, Pat Buckland and Pat White.

PHOTO COURTESY STOUFFVILLE DISTRICT SECONDARY SCHOOL