

A Canadian hockey town to be proud of

Where players dash with skates
 aflash the home team trails
 behind
 But they grab the puck and go
 bursting up and they're down across the line
 They storm the crease like bumble bees they
 travel like a burning flame
 We see them slide the puck inside -It's a 1-1
 hockey game!

*The Hockey Song,
 Stompin' Tom Connors*



**JIM
 MASON
 OFF
 THE
 TOP**

OK, so Detroit is really Hockey Town, and for good reason.

The Toronto area lives and dies only with its beloved Maple Leafs.

Detroit worships its Stanley Cup champion Red Wings, but it also supports major junior and college pucks like no other city in North America. At the same time, Toronto ignores university hockey and attendance at major junior games in Mississauga, Brampton and Toronto has been disappointing.

Stouffville isn't about to lay claim to the crown. There are hundreds of towns like it across Canada with indoor rinks, town teams and local hockey heroes.

Still, it's encouraging to see the game embraced again in this town the way it has this winter.

Saturday night, it was standing room only at the Stouffville Arena for the Stouffville Spirit playoff game against the Newmarket Hurricanes. The rink was abuzz, the lineup for hot chocolate at the snack bar endless and the cheering for both teams loud and proud.

Playing neighbouring Newmarket in a playoff series that went the seven-game max didn't hurt the coffers of either franchise.

Both have loyal fan bases that travel to visiting rinks to back their teams, especially when they're only 20 minutes away.

A large contingent of fans most spirited rang bells, honked horns and generally made themselves heard at Game 7 in Newmarket Sunday. Outside the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex, the wind howled strongly. Inside, the hometown Hurricanes were beaten back mostly by five unanswered Stouffville goals. Give Newmarket credit for fighting back and making a game out of it in the third, but the Spirit still won, 7-5.

The Spirit also drew well almost exclusively from the local area for its first-round sweep of the Couchiching (Orillia) Terriers. Not bad for an eight-year-old franchise without a championship to its credit.

But all is not as well in some other markets in the Provincial Junior A Hockey League. There were sections completely devoid of fans at games in Aurora and Markham last week. Both communities have quality teams this year that finished first and second, respectively, in their conferences.

So, what's the problem? Have these once autonomous communities merely become extensions of Toronto? Are the new Canadians that have moved to this

area from other sides of the planet not hockey fans?

Back to Stouffville.

It's not just junior hockey that ticks here. Check out youth hockey. Provincial championship banners won by boys and girls teams line both rinks in the Stouffville Arena. A weekend tournament drew teams from across Ontario.

The Stouffville Amateur Hockey League is marking its 25th anniversary this season. It has a lot to celebrate. Record numbers of men, and more recently women, have played in the association that is every bit a social entity as it is as sports association.

Then, there's the Buttermakers Pad, an outdoor ice rink located at Boyd's Source for Sports in west-end Stouffville. It's a throwback. Natural ice with boards and a new roof. No registration fees and no reservations. Just show up and join in, or wait for the group in front of you to finish its version of the Stanley Cup final.

Two weekends ago, teams of all ages paid to play on the rink in a fundraiser for accident victim Luke Anderson.

Hockey Night In Canada's Ron MacLean saw the Stouffville hockey scene first hand earlier this year when 1,300 jammed the town rink for Keith's Acton's The Game of our Lives.

So, Ron, if you're looking for locations for next year's *Hockey Day In Canada*, the day-long look at the game on CBC-TV, you know where we are.

Jim Mason is managing editor of the Stouffville Sun and a director of the Stouffville Spirit Junior A Hockey League team.

STOUFFVILLE SAYS

BY HANNELORE VOLPE

"Spring is just around the corner. What are your thoughts?"



CAROL WILSON

"I usually spend part of the winter where it is warm and sunny. I am looking forward to longer days, warmth and getting out in the garden."



JOANNE STEVENSON

"Spring is my favourite time of year. I like to see the tulips come up, the buds on the trees and that nice green grass. I can finally wear my shorts!"



MURRAY WAGG

"I am looking forward to opening up the cottage. We hope we can get in through the snow. Now we want to see green grass and flowers."



MILLIE FORRESTER

"I am looking forward to going on nice long walks. This winter it was too icy and cold to get out too much. Everyone I know wants spring to come so we can get out more."



PATRICIA SCHICKEDANZ

"It has been hard on the farm animals. We have to bring the horses in more because of the bitter wind and snow drifts. It will be nice to get the horses back outside and it will be nice for the kids to get back outdoors."

Bowes sets the record straight and more

For several weeks, Whitchurch-Stouffville's Ward 5 Councillor Harry Bowes has been attempting "to set the record straight", with regard to a recent column of mine related to his alleged opposition to the opening of Beacon House on Church Street in Stouffville.

On Friday, he succeeded, but I came prepared. In addition to the above, I had issues to discuss with him. Queries and responses follow.

Question: Are you interested in the office of mayor?

Answer: Absolutely not. It's a full-time job. I'd have to quit too many other things.

Question: School trustee or town councillor — which is the most difficult?

Answer: A councillor's position is five times easier. There's less of a workload and fewer phone calls. The area of jurisdiction is much smaller.

Question: Should a mayoralty candidate have council experience?

Answer: By all means.

Question: How much is a councillor paid?

Answer: I think it's \$1,800 or \$1,900 a year but I'm not sure because I give most of it back.

Question: What part of council life do you most enjoy?

Answer: Getting things done. Baker Street will be paved this year, from Main Street to Manitoba Street with sidewalks constructed on one side following consultation with residents.

Question: The town's facing a sizeable budget increase. What are the main causes?

Answer: Road re-construction is a big expense. We've fallen far behind. Some of our roads are in bad shape. Garbage collection costs are way up.



**JIM THOMAS
 ROAMING AROUND**

Question: In your opinion, has Mayor Emmerson done a good, fair or poor job?

Answer: I think he's done a fair job. His attitude towards people is bad. In many instances he's too rough.

Question: Who is your choice as Mayor Emmerson's successor?

Answer: I have no statement. I must work with him or her, no matter who wins.

Question: Do you favour the system of user pay?

Answer: I favour the system of adult user pay. The arena's the one facility that makes money but ice time costs \$200 an hour.

Question: Is town residential development too much, too little or just right?

Answer: Residential development's being spread over 10 or 11 years. If we don't add any more we'll be alright.

Question: Financially, is the town too soft on developers?

Answer: We're not too soft. Development charges are high.

Question: In the beginning, why did you oppose the group home on Church Street?

Answer: It's not a group home and I didn't oppose it. I received 32 phone calls about it. I had to contact the people who contacted me. I only wanted more information but a member of town staff wouldn't allow me to attend the meeting when the project was being

discussed. On July 25, I received the information I wanted. There's no problem now. I sit on the advisory committee of the Whitby Mental Health Centre.

Question: Is a new Stouffville fire hall in the 2003 budget?

Answer: Funds will come from the sale of our hydro system. Two sites are being considered.

Question: Is a theatre for the performing arts dead?

Answer: It seems the new Arts and Cultural committee doesn't wish to be involved. I don't know why. There are two sites in mind — the Missionary Church and the skateboard park.

Question: What can be done to save Stouffville's downtown?

Answer: I saw the writing on the wall back in 1971. The downtown will remain small. The west end will be the centre of town.

Question: Is there a place for party politics in municipal council?

Answer: I'm absolutely opposed to party politics in council. Look what it's done to Toronto.

Question: Do you favour the move by The Silver Jubilee Club to the old town hall?

Answer: I'm neutral. What I wanted for the former library and the old town hall was rejected. I don't have an opinion.

Question: Is media coverage of council meetings fair?

Answer: Yes, I think it's fair. But all letters to the editor aren't fair. That's something over which I have no control.

Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 50 years.