

2003 Music Town award winner eyes the pulpit

Organist, pianist, choir leader, chorus leader, journalist, dramatist, vocalist, composer and teacher.

These, in brief, describe only a few of the skills possessed by Wanda Stride, Whitchurch-Stouffville's 2003 Music Town, Ontario, award recipient. The 36-year-old mother of two will be honoured at the 14th annual Sacred Music Festival, Friday, June 27, in Stouffville United Church.

The 8 p.m. concert is part of our town's Strawberry Festival weekend. Program participants include the 40-voice male chorus Men of Note, co-directed by Doug Walker and Jeff McAloon, with accompanist John Mole and soloist Susan Brown; the group Hickory Roots, with Wanda Stride, Sharon Baxter and Gary Burke; and the duo Kathi Phillips and Sharon Baxter with accompanists Tom Pullin and Gary Burke.

Net proceeds from the event will go to the Student Music Scholarship Concert Fund, an organization established to assist music programs in Whitchurch-Stouffville schools.



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

These extracurricular duties aside, it's been a love of music that's made Wanda so special within the congregation of Stouffville United Church, Music Mania, the Bach to Blues Company and more.

Such a talent, Ann Gage, director of Bach to Blues enthusiasts. She remembers how, when the company was first organized, they served as co-directors. "We were a team," she recalls.

Despite a multitude of involvements, piano remains her specialty. Many selections are her own compositions.

But nothing, Wanda recalls, can surpass the choir's Christmas concert, following the 9/11 terrorist attack on the twin towers in New York city.

While living in Cannington she began taking organ lessons in Orillia. At Cannington's Trinity United Church, she played the organ and led the choir, a role similar to what she's been doing at Stouffville United since 1995.

Wanda readily admits she's not a professional choir director. This area of endeavour, however, has opened a new world of satisfying achievements, including completion of the choir's first CD, as well as organizing and participating in a choral festival May 25. That festival raised more than \$1,800 for the Parkview Home Building Fund.

But nothing, Wanda recalls, can surpass the choir's Christmas concert, following the 9/11 terrorist attack on the twin towers in New York city.

"Everyone's heart was in it," she remembers, "a spirit prevailed like nothing I can describe."

But an even greater challenge awaits. Wanda plans to enter the ministry, a combined ministry of both sacred music and the spoken word. This fall, she begins studies for her masters of divinity degree.

"It's something that's been on my mind since high school," she says, "but I kept setting it aside."

Then, one Sunday, she attended service and heard Rev. Bob Nighthale deliver a message that touched her heart. She's never looked back.

But, for Wanda, an even higher priority exists. That is her family. "Our children are even more important. They've given me a whole new perspective as to my place in this world and eternity," she says.

As for receiving the Music Town, Ontario, award, Wanda has but one response. "Knowing those who've gone before, I feel so undeserving."

Those same people would disagree.

Jim Thomas, a Stouffville resident, who has written for local newspapers for more than 50 years, is an organizer of the sacred music concert.

National honour for Stouffville pharmacist/author

Farid Wassef of Houston's Pharmacy in Stouffville recently became a first-time recipient of a national Drugstore Outstanding Service Award.

He was honoured for his work in counselling patients at his pharmacy and his efforts to educate the community.

Mr. Wassef combines traditional medicine with alternative therapies in the family pharmacy. Mr. Wassef joined

the pharmacy in 1989.

Environmental and lifestyle factors can have an enormous impact on well-being and health, Mr. Wassef believes.

About 10 years ago, he began counselling patients with serious chronic conditions such as migraine, arthritis, Crohn's disease and allergies. He sees around 40 patients per week.

He recently co-wrote "Breaking the

Age Barrier," a book based on the principles of functional medicine.

ROXY
THEATRES OF UNBRIDGE
CALL 852-ROXY (7699)
FOR SHOWS & TIMES
www.roxytheatres.com

LOBSTERFEST

Fresh East Coast Lobster

From Tuesday, June 17 to Sunday June 22, The Corner House presents LobsterFest.

Fresh, East Coast Lobster prepared in four mouthwatering ways.

- ★ Steamed with Clarified Butter
- ★ Baked with Thermidor Sauce (Brandy & Mustard)
- ★ Broiled with our Special Spicy Herb Butter or
- ★ Bonne Femme (White Wine & Mushrooms)



6403 Main Street, Stouffville. For RESERVATIONS please call 905.640.8494. www.thecornerhouse.ca



\$599*
A MONTH AT
4.5%

LUXURY. PERFORMANCE. SAFETY. AND NOW YOU CAN THROW IN AFFORDABILITY TO THAT MIX.

A remarkably low lease rate is a most welcome addition to the ML350. Because even though it's equipped with a commanding V6 engine, a luxurious feature-rich cabin, and safety engineering as only Mercedes-Benz knows, the lease rate of \$599/mth at 4.5% simply turns it into the complete package. Mercedes-Benz. You're ready.



Mercedes-Benz

Mercedes-Benz Markham
8350 Kennedy Rd. (905) 305-1088

Mercedes-Benz Newmarket
230 Mulock Dr. (905) 853-6868

www.mbtoronto.ca

ML350 Elegance with privacy glass and optional Inspiration package shown. ML350 Elegance with privacy glass, MSRP \$57,270. *36-month walkaway lease at 4.5% with \$4,538 down or equivalent trade-in. \$1,000 km/yr. allowance. 20% per km excess. Taxes, license, freight, PDI and security deposit extra. Offer limited time offer.