

Fill empty stores before building more

Overworked and under-appreciated, the Whitchurch-Stouffville department of development services, headed by Tom Parry, comes in for too much criticism and too little praise. What these people have accomplished in the past three years boggles my mind. Our town is indeed the beneficiary of their expertise.

This being said, I have one nauseous question that deserves an answer: Why would professional planners approve the construction of yet another strip plaza, this one east of Ringwood Drive, when dozens of vacant stores already exist? I say, fill up the holes we already have before creating others.

SONG AND DANCE: Stouffville's Wayne Hill, executive director of the York-Durham Academy of the Performing Arts, has big plans for 2003-2004. First, he hopes to establish a show choir for children in Grades 1, 2 and 3. Instruction will be provided in singing, dancing and drama. Second, he intends to organize an academy concert band involving boys and girls in Grades 7 to 9.



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

And third, three theatre series are planned including Chorus Line, Jan. 16 to 18; Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, April 1 to 4; and Peter Pan, May 27 to 30. An information meeting to discuss each of these ventures will be held 6:30 p.m. Thurs. Sept. 8 at Orchard Park School.

FLORAL BEAUTY: A much-appreciated magazine enters our home six times a year. Farm & Ranch, published out of Greendale, Wis., includes a story with photos on The Prettiest Place in the Country. In this regard, under the heading The Prettiest Place in Town, Whitchurch-Stouffville could qualify many times over. A good place to start would be the residence of Gerardo and Antonatto Quadri, 662 Elm Road in Stouffville. The next time driving by, slow down and take a look. It's beautiful.

CURB VANDALISM: Vandalism continues to pose a problem not only in urban Stouffville, but rural Whitchurch. The solution, as recommended in this column one year ago, can be summed up in three words: establish a curfew. Trouble is, in an election year, vote-conscious politicians have too little concern for the community and too great a concern for themselves.

CHAMPS REUNITE: Forty-five years ago, the Stouffville Cardinals, coached by Murray Stewart and managed by Ike Hodgson, defeated Wheatley to win the Ontario Baseball Association junior championship. On Sept. 6, the team reunites, including Gord Eckardt, Bob Stover, Don Haynes, John Little, Lynn Taylor, Lawrence Wideman, Ted Suzuki, Glenn Jackson, Harry Barber, Eric Barber and Murray Holden. Only the attendance of Ross Madill is questionable. Mr. Hodgson died nine years ago. The get-together, the first since 1988, will be held at the Stewart home near Lincolnville.

LAURA'S LEAVING: Laura Jeffrey, an employee at the O'Neill Funeral Home, is leaving Stouffville and moving to Angus, north of Cookstown. She'll be missed, manager Robin Walsh says. Over the past four years, she's made many friends.

CHURCH SOD TURNING: Sunday, Sept. 14 is an important milestone for the congregation of Stouffville Missionary Church. At 6 p.m., the first sod will be turned, marking the start of construction on a new \$5 million house of worship. The five-acre site, donated by Norm Clements, is on Tenth Line, south of Stouffville Country Market.

EARLY ENDING: It's over. Just at a time when fan interest was at its height, the fastball season has ended. All too soon. The Stouffville Mennos, co-coached by cousins Howie and Art Burkholder, provided many evenings of excellent entertainment in Stouffville Memorial Park this summer, entertainment that should have extended well past Aug. 20.

Bruce Stapley and I had the privilege of filling the role of Tom Cheek and Jerry Howarth in the broadcast booth and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

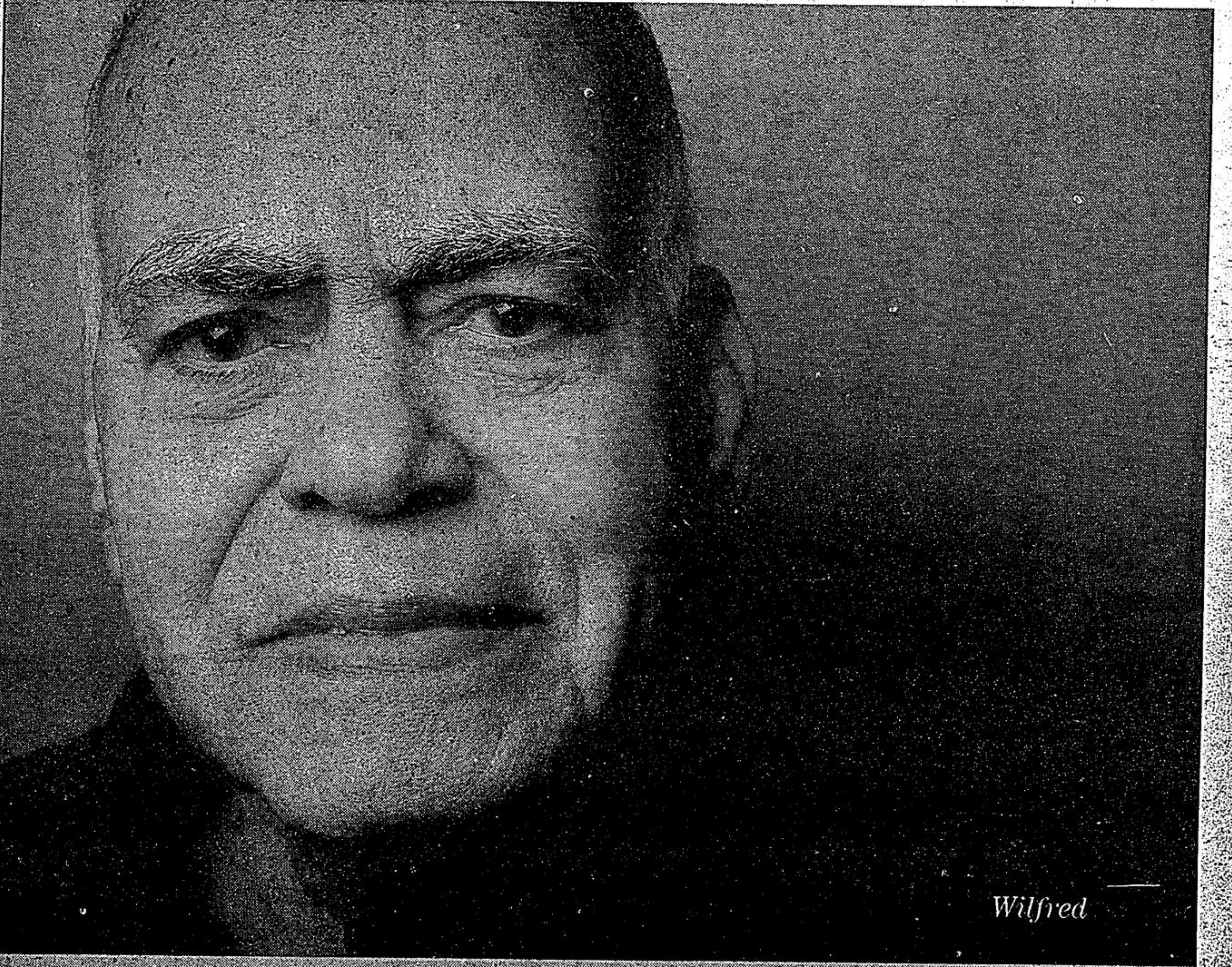
If nothing else, we were able to keep spectators updated on the scores even though, on occasions, we ran out of fingers and thumbs. The Mennos are indeed a class club, a credit to our town and the league.

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

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