

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Community non-profit groups in Whitchurch-Stouffville are welcome to place their coming events in this column at no charge. Please send your notice to Community Calendar at the Stouffville Sun-Tribune, Box 154, Stouffville, L4A 7Z5 (fax number 905-640-8778), or drop it off at the office, 34 Civic Ave., 3rd Floor. Deadline is Mondays at 6 p.m. Publication cannot be guaranteed but we will make every effort to ensure it is included. Please be brief.

VOLUNTEERS

Crohn's and Colitis: The Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada is looking for volunteers in Whitchurch-Stouffville and Markham to help with special event planning, work with the media or coordinate events. Call 416-920-5035, ext. 18, email at slabrosse@ccfc.ca or log on to www.ccfc.ca

NOTICES

Christmas Cheer winner: The winner of the Royal Canadian Legion's Christmas Cheer Basket draw Friday, Dec. 12 is Lori Hall of Sunderland, Ont. Proceeds go to the Legion's building fund.

SPECIAL EVENTS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1

New Year's levee: President John McCracken, members of the Royal Canadian Legion, Mayor Sue Sherban and Whitchurch-Stouffville councillors celebrate the traditional New Year's Day levee from 1 to 2:30 p.m. in the Legion Hall, 12278 Ninth Line, north of Main Street. A light luncheon will be served and all are welcome.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2

Kids' art: The Latham Gallery in Stouffville holds

two workshops: candle-making at 10 a.m. and knitting a scarf at 1 p.m. Each activity costs \$10 per person. Call the gallery at 905-640-8954 for further information.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3

Art workshops: The final set of winter break art workshops at the Latham Gallery in Stouffville are a 10 a.m. memory box workshop and a 1 p.m. photo-transfer workshop. Registration is required. Call 905-640-8954.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6

Adult skating: The Stouffville Adult Skating Club starts its new season at the Stouffville Arena. All adults are welcome to skate from 8:55 to 9:45 p.m. Admission is \$4 per person.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7

Music Mania: The first sign-up session of the year for Music Mania's annual variety show is 7:30 p.m. at Summitview Public School, 6551 Main St., Stouffville. Everyone welcome, but men's voices especially needed. For information, call 905-642-2096.

Musical discoveries: The Musical Discoveries children's program starts at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library and continues every Wednesday until March 10. Sessions are from 9:45 to 10:30 a.m. and are suited for three-to-five year olds. Cost is \$60 per child. Register in person at the library, 30 Burkholder St. in Stouffville.

Book discussion: The Book Discussion Group begins its 2004 season from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library. The group meets on alternate weeks to discuss a variety of topics. No charge. Just drop in. More information is available at the library, 30 Burkholder St. in Stouffville.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8

Early years: The Focus on Preschoolers II with the Ontario Early Years Centre program starts 1 to 2:30 p.m. and continues Jan. 15, 22 and 29. The session is for four- to six-year-olds and is free of charge. Register at the library, 30 Burkholder St. in Stouffville.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13

Christian coffee: The Stouffville Christian Women's Club hosts a Happy New Year Coffee Hour at 36 Eastern Gate in Stouffville from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Diane Stouffer speaks on choosing to be cheerful and the venerables, a family musical ensemble from Holland Landing, entertain. Cost is \$6 per person. Call in reservations and cancellations by Jan. 9 to 905-640-0791.

Preschool story hour: A preschool story hour for children three to five years old starts at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. Story hours continue until March 2. Cost is \$45 per child. Register in person at the library, 30 Burkholder St. in Stouffville.

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Region defends actions at plants

From page 1

"You're supposed to be going through the chain of command. But if you're going through the chain of command and it stops at your superior, then what?"

Despite Mr. Casey's claim a 15-day probe was undertaken by the region, Richmond Hill Mayor Bill Bell, chairperson of the region's transportation and works committee, said the committee was not made aware of Mr. Young's concerns.

In an interview at his home, Mr. Young outlined a number of troubling incidents he said he witnessed, including:

- Dumping of raw sewage at the treatment plant in Mount Albert.

Sewage was trucked in from a nearby pumping station shut down for maintenance in August 2002 and dumped into an effluent pond to be released into the environment several weeks later, Mr. Young contends, there is no record of the material being treated before its release.

- The transfer of material from a Keswick station to Mount Albert and its subsequent burial on the property on Doane Road near Durham Road 30.

The material, which contained sand and other solids caught in the Keswick plant's filtration system, was buried in a shallow hole on the property over two days in November 2002, Mr. Young said.

SAMPLES FALSIFIED

- Falsification of effluent samples at a number of facilities.

During the release of treated effluent the process can take weeks — a number of samples are required by the Ministry of Environment, including a final sample when the effluent lagoon is nearly empty, Mr. Young said it's common practice to take a sample earlier in the process and label it with a later date, indicating it was the final sample taken. The earlier sample would provide a lower reading of phosphorous and other materials than one taken the day of release, when sludge at the bottom of the lagoon would be disturbed, he said.

Mr. Young did not disclose concerns

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about testing to the region. He said the practice is common in many jurisdictions, not just York Region.

- At the Kleinburg station, a pump that fed chemicals into the system failed and went unserviced for about four months.

Mr. Young said the problem was not addressed until the standby pump went down and phosphorous levels climbed above acceptable levels.

Dave Rupke, supervisor at the Mount Albert sewage treatment plant, confirmed material from the Keswick station was deposited at Mount Albert.

He said the material was left to dry and after it was dry enough to deposit in landfill it would be scooped up and disposed of.

"There is no other place to put that (material)," Mr. Rupke said. "That is a routine operation."

NO DAMAGE TO ENVIRONMENT

Test wells drilled during the investigation revealed no environmental damage as a result of the material being buried, Mr. Casey said.

"It's not raw sewage, it's not waste, it's sand," he said of material brought in from Keswick.

Mr. Rupke said he had no knowledge of sewage being trucked from a pumping station to the treatment plant. He said, however, that depositing material at the head of the plant for treatment would be more difficult than dumping it in the effluent lagoon.

"At any rate, sewage deposited in the lagoon isn't likely to have a deleterious effect on the environment," he said.

"It would obtain a natural treatment before it's discharged," Mr. Rupke said.

The region has issued a directive that, in future, any sewage pumped from stations will be sent to facilities that accept trucked waste, Mr. Casey said.

While allegations of falsified tests were not raised by Mr. Young, Mr. Casey said, all the concerns he did bring for-

ward were investigated thoroughly.

But Mr. Young, who has worked in the field since 1983, feels his attempts to shed light on problems with the sewage treatment system in York Region were thwarted along the chain of command.

Ms. Korolnek's initial response to his allegations during their meeting Aug. 1 led him to believe swift and decisive action was forthcoming, Mr. Young said.

"Debbie was not aware of any of this. She freaked when she heard it," Mr. Young said. "I honestly think that when I went to her, she wanted to do something about it."

"I believe she wanted to do the right thing."

REGIONAL STAFF TOLD

During a subsequent meeting at the regional administration centre in Newmarket Aug. 25, Mr. Young again related his concerns to regional staff and Doug Thomson, the Toronto lawyer representing the region over charges laid by the Ministry of Environment in connection with a massive sewage spill in Sutton in May 2001.

"They basically downplayed everything," Mr. Young said.

Mr. Rupke said he had been made aware Mr. Young had raised concerns about operations at the Mount Albert plant.

"They did talk to me. Debbie (Korolnek) specifically spoke to me," Mr. Rupke said.

"There was a number of allegations (Mr. Young) brought forward at the time he left the Region of York. He was obviously a disgruntled employee."

Mr. Young was a "fine" worker during his tenure with the region, with no problems on his record, Mr. Rupke said.

He confirmed Mr. Young left the region of his own accord.

Meanwhile, Mr. Young said he has also taken his concerns to the ministry, but has yet to receive a response.

A staff member confirmed Mr. Young has contacted the ministry and that information he forwarded is being taken into consideration.