

# Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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21 OrchardPark students have NASCAR in their classroom

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## the state of WASTE

Part 2 of a 4-part series

### Pioneering spirit has driven recycling

BY MIKE ADLER  
 Staff Writer

On a freezing December day almost 30 years ago, Stouffville's volunteer-run recycling depot opened in an old white frame garage just off Main Street.

Seven or eight volunteers stood ready to collect the newspapers, pop bottles, cans and plastics brought in by about 10 people, recalled John Garbutt, 74, the depot's founder.

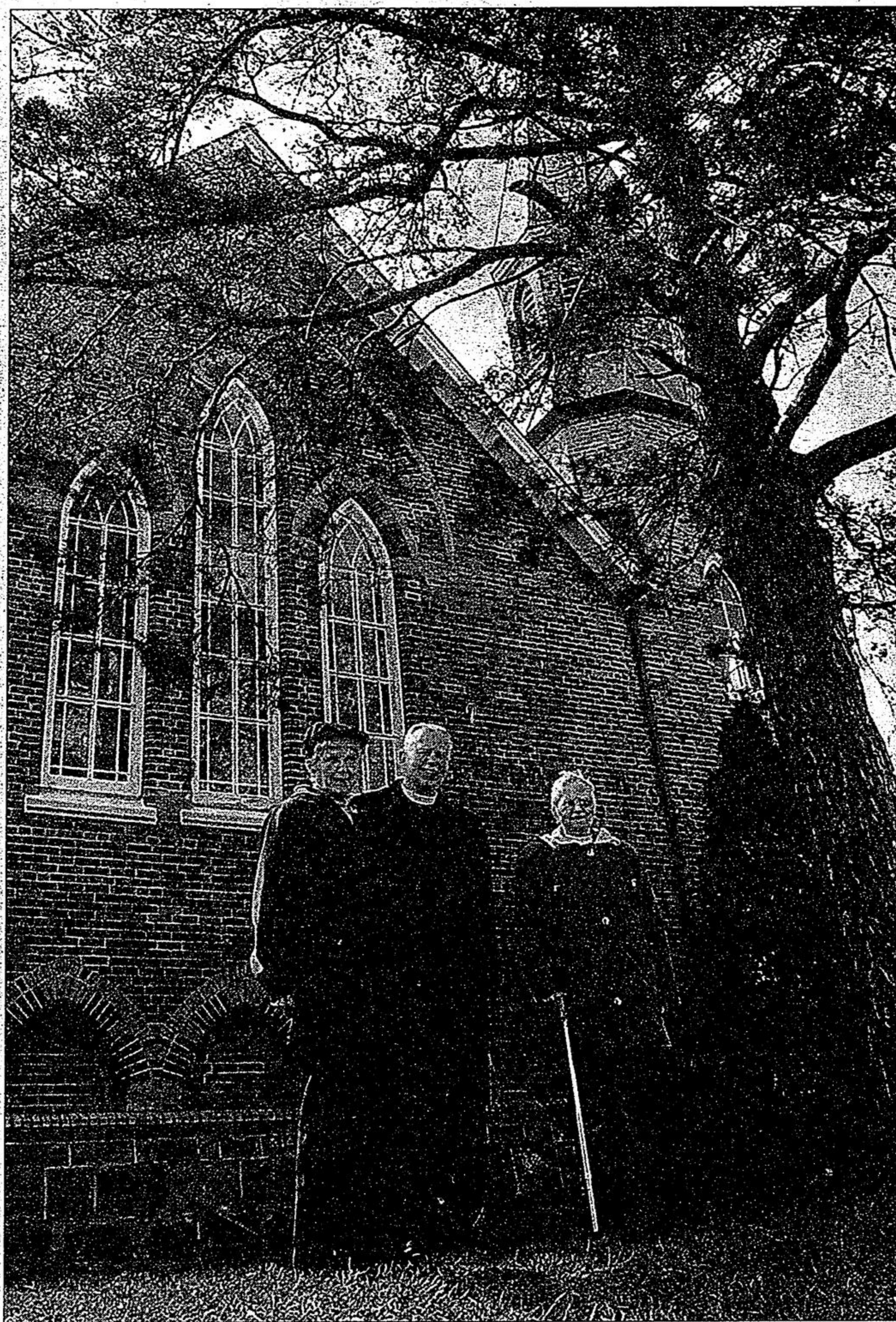
This was six years before the province first tried out its blue box system in Kitchener. There were few recycling depots in Ontario (Unionville had one of the first), but Mr. Garbutt was then a biology teacher who prided himself on being one of the town's first environmentalists.

In 1972, he wrote to the local newspaper, asking for volunteers. By 1975, the group had convinced town council to let it use the garage and held a dance, the Garbage Picker's Ball, to encourage volunteers.

"It was a big hit, actually," Mr. Garbutt said.

But when it comes to waste collection, new things can scare people. They can scare politi-

See GREEN, page 3.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Rev. Gordon Burgess with church members Isobel Nigh and Lillian Carr in front of Melville United Church on Kennedy Road in north Markham. The church is closing next month.

## Church closing after 160 years

Poor attendance dooms country church

BY HANNELORE VOLPE  
 Staff Writer

After 160 years, Melville United Church will close its doors for good June 12.

The difficult decision to leave a place that has been a part of their lives for decades was made reluctantly by a dwindling, aging congregation.

Only about 20 people come to Sunday worship services each week at the country church on Kennedy Road just south of the Whitchurch-Stouffville border. At least half of them are Stouffville residents.

"Because people are getting older and finding it more difficult to travel, there are fewer people each year," said Rev. Gordon Burgess, who has been the minister for 11 years. "There are no active members under 65."

Although members of the congregation sometimes worship with their children and grandchildren, no new families have joined the church in years.

When two other churches in the vicinity, Peaches United and Bethesda United, closed their doors in the 1960s, many of their members came to worship at Melville.

The fate of Melville United isn't known yet: it could be purchased by another United Church congregation, by another denomination or be decommissioned.

See YOU, page 11.

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