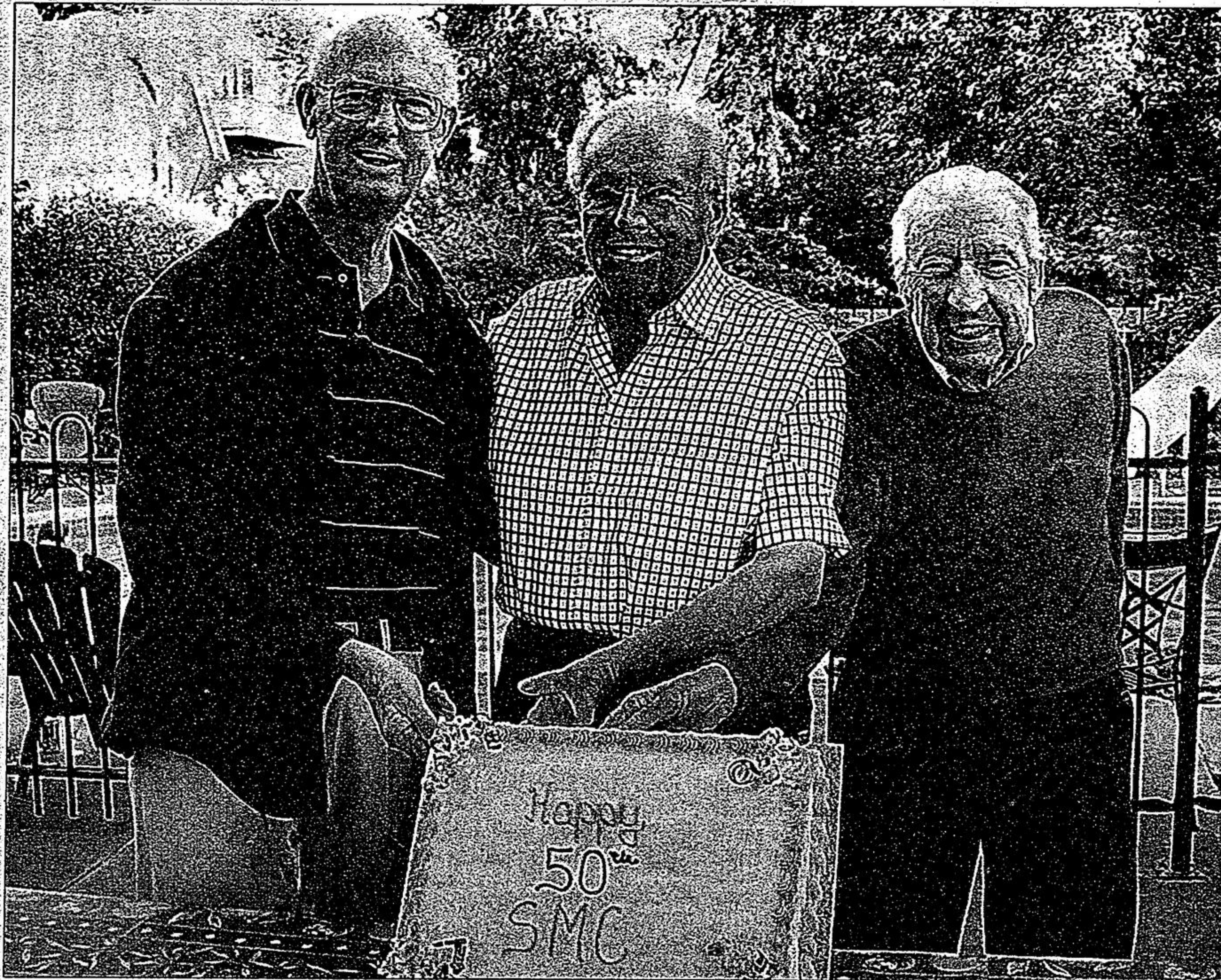


Doctors Don Petrie (left), Doug Brodie and John Button celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Stouffville Medical Centre this summer. Hours were long for the doctors in the early years of the clinic, with office hours in the mornings and several evenings a week, as well as house calls in the afternoons.



50 years after medical centre opened, doctor shortage remains in Stouffville

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

The Stouffville Medical Centre, built by Dr. John Button and Dr. Doug Brodie half a century ago, is still going strong.

For the first 48 years, the medical centre was at 6131 Main St. About two years ago the centre moved to the middle of town at 34 Civic Ave. behind the old municipal building. The former medical centre is now a law office.

Dr. Don Petrie, who joined the centre in 1959, has seen a lot of changes during the years. After 48 years, he is still with the centre, although on a part-time basis.

One thing that hasn't changed is the doctor shortage Stouffville faced 50 years ago.

The situation is about the same now with very few new patients being taken on by the doctors in the Stouffville Medical Centre.

"There are absolutely not enough doctors in Stouffville," Dr. Petrie said.

Many people keep their physicians from their home community

after moving to Stouffville.

Dr. Petrie has also found those who have moved from Stouffville still return to their doctor at the centre, some from as far away as Peterborough.

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However, the number of house calls has dropped dramatically over the decades.

That's largely due to the fact almost everyone now has a car, Dr. Petrie said.

Also, modern doctors' offices are much better equipped to treat patients "instead of taking things with you", he said.

Some of his patients have come

to him for more than 40 years.

"You see some people's grandchildren", he said.

"That is one of the perks of a family practice, watching them grow."

The staff at the Stouffville Medical Centre includes Dr. Andrew Patterson, Dr. Gwen Sampson, Dr. Janice Li, Dr. Jane Philpott and Dr. Sarah Barclay.

Dr. Button, who began practising medicine in 1946, recalls the office he had over his father's hardware store in the centre of town. During the early years, people were returning from the war and settling down to start families.

"I had a busy obstetrical practice for many years," he said. "All the doctors in town were busy with obstetrics."

When he and Dr. Brodie first hung out their shingle, it read, "Dr. Brodie and Dr. Button, Physicians and Surgeons."

Hours were long with office hours in the mornings and several evenings a week, as well as house

calls in the afternoons.

With both physicians on duty three nights each, the only night of the week that wasn't covered was Sunday.

One of the evenings he practised was Saturday, which was the peak shopping time in Stouffville, Dr. Button recalled.

Rural families would come into town to visit clothing stores, furniture shops and grocery stores and socialize.

Many of his patients were from the rural areas of what is now Whitchurch-Stouffville and beyond. He visited patients in Gormley, Ballantrae, Goodwood and Markham.

In the early days, doctors also attended car accidents, a practice which was eventually replaced by emergency services staff.

It was easier and faster for patients to see specialists than it is now, Dr. Button said.

Dr. Button was also Parkview Home's first medical director, holding the post from its opening in 1965 until 1988.

Briefly

Forests get fire protection

Whitchurch-Stouffville fire and emergency services and York Region are working together to make sure fires starting in forests can be put out faster and more effectively.

Since 2002, York Region has provided equipment, such as portable pumps, lightweight forestry hose and hand tools, to the local department as well as forest fire training for firefighters.

Equipment to fight fires has been enhanced this year with additional forestry hose, water backpacks and tools provided by the region.

In addition, Whitchurch-Stouffville's fire department has outfitted a pick-up truck to transport the equipment, as well as water and firefighters to remote areas within forests.

There are more than 2,000 acres of forest across the region, including public lands north of Ballantrae. The forest trails are popular with hikers and horseback riders.

For more information on the forest, go to york.ca/Services/Forestry

Spirit at home tonight in pre-season action

The Stouffville Spirit won its first two pre-season games last weekend.

The Provincial Jr. A Hockey League team hosts the Lindsay Muskies tonight at 7:30 p.m. at the Stouffville Arena and continues its pre-season schedule tomorrow night in Markham.

The Spirit opens the regular season at home Sept. 13 against the Collingwood Blues. Ken Burrows, fired as general manager of the Spirit last spring, is now GM in Collingwood.

See story on page 23.

For more information on the Spirit, go to stouffvillespirit.com

Bowlers bank on win

The Scotiabank Trophy was brought home by bowlers from the Stouffville Lawn Bowling Club this month.

The rink of skip Marg Curtis, vice Bob Stover and lead Nancy Stover came out on top in the mixed trebles tournament at the Newmarket Lawn Bowling Club.

The team played against teams from Newmarket, Willowdale and Richmond Hill.

At the Uxbridge Ladies Luncheon Tournament, skip Audrey Gibson, vice Gert Brugger and lead Nelda Morley bested teams from Uxbridge and Agincourt.



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