

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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Editorial

Beautiful SDSS a community gem

The new Stouffville District Secondary School is open for business. Business is the operative word.

The school, at Weldon Road and Hoover Park Drive behind Sobey's, is a beauty.

It's very large. About 900 students started classes Tuesday, but there's room for 1,500.

It's a far cry from the old school on Bramble Crescent.

The facilities are tremendous, including:

- A triple gym, with neighbouring weight room
- A bright and airy library with rows of computers.
- A massive hospitality instruction area, filling a need expressed by students wanting to pursue careers in the field.
- A cafeteria that will double as an auditorium
- A theatre arts room which doubles as a small performance area, with its own stage and dressing rooms.
- Eight hands-on science labs.

This isn't just a school for teenagers from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Our schools must be open for business on nights and weekends. Rentals must be reasonable.

We are paying \$23.5 million for the school. We should get full access, for community theatre, meetings, political rallies, sports, night and summer schools.

Heck, the building is so beautiful and architecturally pleasing, with its atrium entrance, extensive glass and wonderful light, it's more country club than public school in some areas.

That won't happen until all construction is complete, early in 2008.

It's a shame the new school isn't attached to a full-fledged theatre, the way high schools in Markham, Newmarket and Vaughan are.

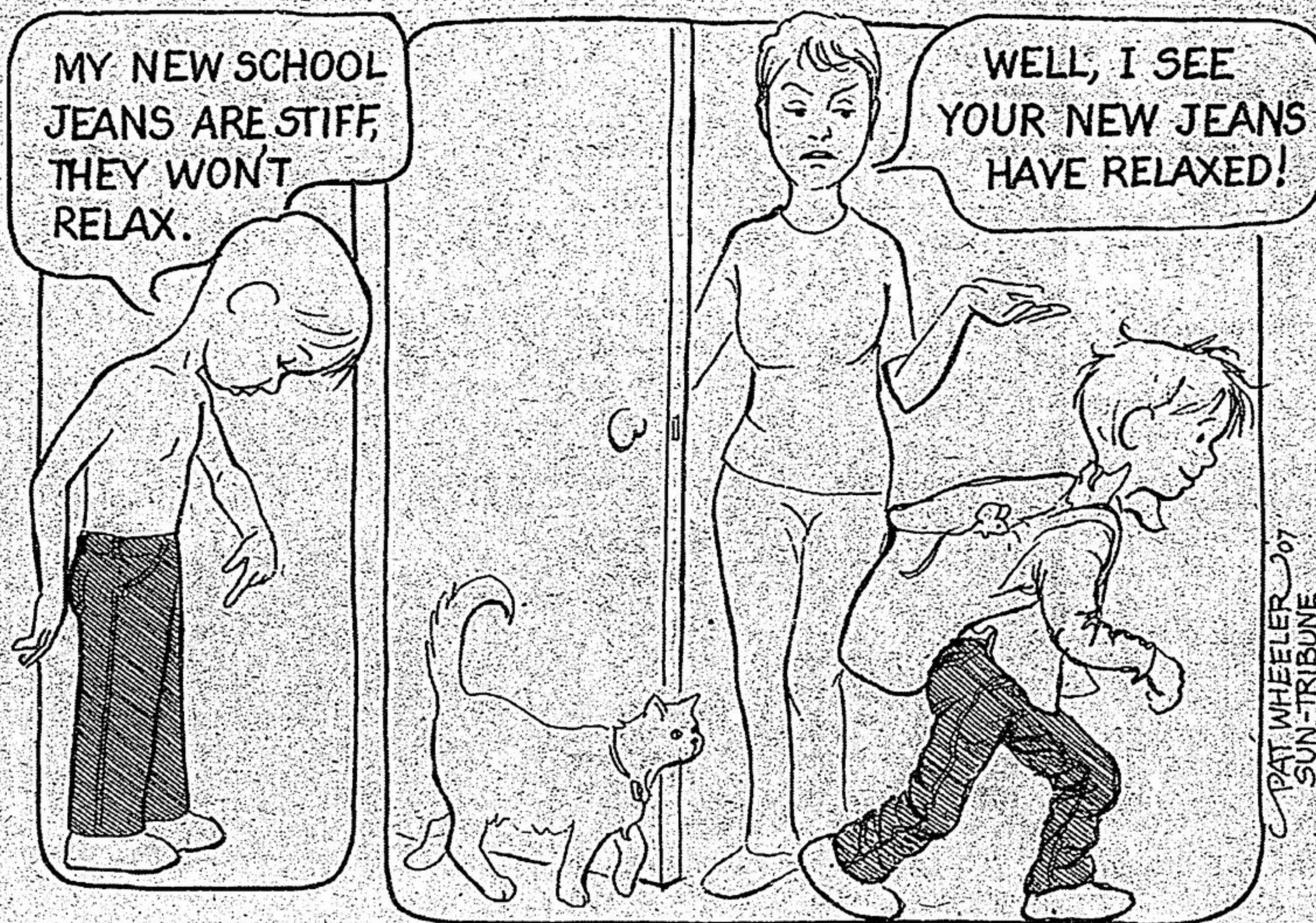
It's a natural marriage, especially in a town that has been crying for a theatre for decades.

But, it's crying over spilled milk. Town council missed its golden chance earlier this decade.

Hats off to the town for building its next arena right next to the school. This will be the home rink for the Spartan boys and girls teams, both winners of Ontario championships last season.

The arena, hopefully with two ice pads, will open in 2009.

As much as we despise the negative side of expansion, new facilities are a perk.



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Truscott acquittal hits home with former cell mate

Unlike his Stouffville neighbours, Bobby couldn't watch the national news as some unattached viewer last week.

The lead story across the country was of the acquittal of Steven Truscott.

Bobby, who asked that we use an alias, was there near the beginning, in the next bed to Mr. Truscott in Kingston's Collins Bay Institution in 1965.

"I didn't really know him," he admits. "We just said hello."

Prison etiquette and all. Trust and lack of same. Lifers and those serving shorter terms didn't mingle, since their relationships are doomed to end.

Bobby was serving two years for breaking and entering and escaping custody.

Mr. Truscott, now a 62-year-old Guelph millwright was sentenced to hang for the murder. At age 14.

"That's what I can't imagine," said Bobby. "Being that young and going through that. He was just a boy."

They were both 18. "Kids," says Bobby, shaking his head.

The Ontario Court of Appeal acquitted Mr. Truscott of the 1959 murder of 12-year-old Lynne Harper in Clinton, Ont., and pronounced his conviction "a miscarriage of justice".

Innocent in so many ways. Bobby shakes his head, recalling stories of gang life in prison. Of prison rapes, beatings and robberies. Of brawls.

"And considering what Stephen was convicted of, he would have had it 10 times worse than me," he said.

Like Steven, Bobby had people on the outside caring for him and awaiting his release. Even on the inside. He recalls the sheriff, a guard and a warden who went out of their way to perform kind or protective deeds.

Pardoned 18 years ago, Bobby has led a productive life, full of family and career.

"My life is pretty darn good," he says. Still, he can't stop thinking of a cell mate from 42 years ago.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.

Letters to the Editor

Good Samaritan to the rescue

I would like to thank the woman who called 911 for me after an accident near the Stouffville Go train station.

On Aug. 28 at 7:48 a.m., I was walking across the railway tracks near the station. Suddenly, the warning alarm was on, a high and clear tinging sound. I sped up and tried to finish crossing the railway anyway.

When I got to the other side, the gate was lowered; it was close to my height and hit my head. I took off my cap and realized I was bleeding very heavily.

Luckily, a woman in a car saw the whole incident. She got out immediately and dialled 911 for me. She said she was a nurse and comforted me while we were waiting for the ambulance.

Within five minutes or so, the paramedics arrived and took me to the emergency department of Markham Stouffville Hospital.

I didn't get the woman's name, but want to express my sincere appreciation for her time and effort. My family and I are very appreciative.

K. CHAN
STOUFFVILLE

What's in it for lake residents?

Re: Fire hall, arena site on Weldon, Aug. 15. Here is the score for the Stouffville:

- \$3.2 million for two parcels of parkland on Bethesda Road with no study needed.
- \$1.2 million spent on the purchase of the old high school track, soccer pitch and tennis courts, with no study needed.
- \$1.5 million for the purchase of land for a new

twin arena complex and fire hall without a study undertaken.

- \$10 million planned to be spent on Memorial Park with a significant study done.

All great things for the community of Stouffville.

Compared to Musselman's Lake:

- \$20,000 being spent over two years for a study (two hours for residents' comments) to acquire the needs for parkland for the Musselman's Lake area with no promise to purchase or provide parkland for lake area residents.

What has to be done to show we need parkland in the lake area and have the money spent here to get what we should be provided with?

Still pressing my nose against the Stouffville window and watching all the great stuff you get down there...

MARK CARROLL
MUSSELMAN'S LAKE

Thieves on the prowl, vehicle owners

Just wanted to remind everyone in Stouffville with a lockable vehicle, especially in the east end, to do just that at night.

Through my own admitted stupidity, I failed to lock my vehicle the other night and awoke to find the driver's door ajar and my arm rest open.

My new cell phone and a small amount of money had been removed. My wife's car was also entered and a small amount of money removed.

Times are changing in our small town and it looks like it's time to start behaving like the big city folk.

DAVE BROOKS
STOUFFVILLE

LETTERS POLICY

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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