

Think before you drive, victim's daughter pleads

BY JOE FANTAUZZI
Staff Writer

Three years to the day after her father was killed by a drunk driver, Roxana Bancea stood before the media spotlight and said she hopes people get the message about not climbing into a car when impaired.

She admitted she was nervous to speak publicly when the idea was proposed.

After her father, Ion Mihaila, was killed — a short distance from where those on the front lines of the impaired driving battle discussed the annual RIDE message inside Cardinal Golf Club in King Township — she started paying closer attention to the news.

"I realized that we were not the

only ones who suffered," Ms Bancea said. "I hope the organizations and police and media will have the funds and the power to send the message."

In a voice that often cracked with grief, Ms Bancea said she was "still a kid" before her dad died.

"He was a very dedicated granddad for my sons," she said. "For me, there was a sense of him being proud of whatever I achieved. His personality was very outspoken. I think he would have loved to be here. He loved public gatherings, he had lots of friends and he was a very social person with a great sense of humour."

The RIDE program so familiar to motorists began 30 years ago in Etobicoke.

This year's crackdown in York Region, launched Tuesday, is dedicated to Mr. Mihaila.

York Regional Police Chief Armand La Barge said he suspects we're still living in a "one more for the road" society.

"In today's day and age, we'd like to see the numbers at least going down. The reality is here in York Region, they're going up," Chief La Barge said.

This is partially due to York's aggressive program, which uses year-round enforcement, a helicopter and resident tips to stop impaired driving, he said. But the numbers wouldn't be up if the impaired drivers weren't on the streets.

More than 2 million Canadians

drive impaired every year, Chief La Barge said.

"We know impaired driving is no accident. It's a selfish, senseless and a completely criminal act that kills on average four Canadians each and every day and seriously injures 200 more," he said.

Last year, the festive RIDE program resulted in 30 impaired driving-related charges and five impaired-by-drug charges.

So far this year, three people have been killed in crashes where alcohol was a contributing factor, according to police.

Impaired driving can potentially touch every person, MADD Canada's York Region chapter president Margaret Williams said.

"No one is immune," she said.

"This is your opportunity to take a stand and say enough."

Following the RIDE kickoff, traffic began backing up on Hwy. 9 as officers set up an impaired driving spot check. Shock, disbelief and denial often result from news a family member has died in a crash, traffic Sgt. Brad Bulmer said.

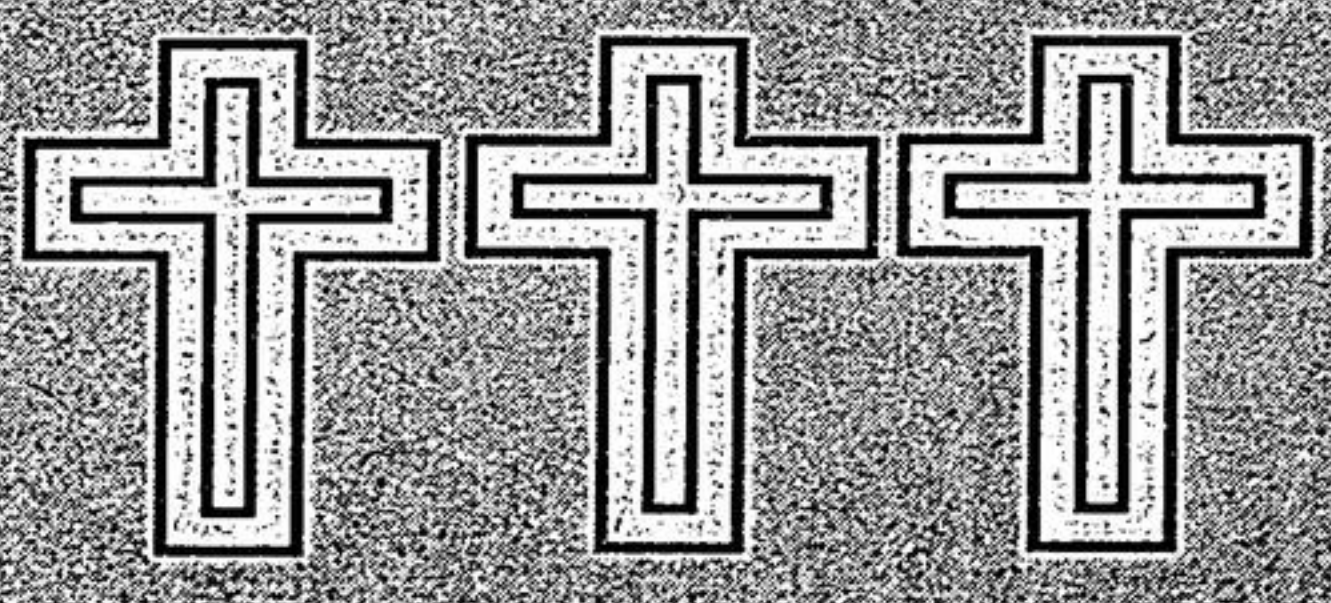
"That's one of the hardest parts of policing," Sgt. Bulmer said. "Being the bearer of that kind of news is hard to describe. You know that when those words come out of your mouth, it is going to change this person's life forever. Their life will never be the same."

Ontario Provincial Police have also launched a holiday season RIDE program, which will run until Jan. 2.

Stouffville Churches Welcome You

Parkview Village
12184 Ninth Line South, Sunday,
Sunday, December 2nd, 2007
Rev. Ken Smith
Oak Ridges Brethren in Christ Church
7:00 pm

HARVEST BIBLE CHAPEL
Sunday Service 10:00 am
at Middlefield Collegiate
525 Highglan Ave., Markham
Questions? Call us at (416) 725-6155
Visit us at www.harvestmarkham.ca
Email us at info@harvestmarkham.ca
Dave Teruel, Associate Pastor



PATHWAYS PRESENTS
CELEBRATING THE UNIVERSAL STORY
music & stories from many traditions
Markham Theatre
DEC. 23RD 2:00 PM
GET YOUR TICKETS NOW
www.markhamtheatre.ca
Sundays at 10:30 a.m.
Heritage Centre 17 Anna Russell Way,
Unionville
More info? www.pathwayschurch.ca
or 647-400-0673

STOUFFVILLE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
6853 Main Street
Sunday, December 2, 2007
10:00 a.m.
"The Better Way"
Pastor Earl McNutt
Tuesday — 7:00 pm
Illuminate — Grades 9-12
Wednesday — 7:00 pm
Kidz Club — Ages 5-Grade 5
Call church at 905-640-5696 for information
www.spckids.ca

STOUFFVILLE UNITED CHURCH
34 Church St. N. 905-640-1163
Minister of Worship: Rev Vicki Cousins
info@stouffvilleuc.ca
SUNDAY DECEMBER 2, 2007
1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
10:30AM WORSHIP SERVICE
Children's Worship & Baby Fold
& Youth Spirit
EVERYONE WELCOME
Website: www.stouffvilleuc.ca
Bach to Blues in Concert 7:30 pm

THE ANGLICAN PARISH of CHRIST CHURCH
254 Sunset Blvd., Stouffville
The Rev. Canon Robert Shields
The Rev. Jason Prisley, Associate
(905) 640-1461
Sunday, December 2nd
1st of Advent
Services at 8 am & 10 am
Nursery and Church School at 10:00 am
Saturday, December 1st
Breakfast with Santa
9:00 am to 11:00 am
Monday, December 3rd
Seniors Service & Christmas Luncheon
11:00 am
Come & See
www.stouffvilleanglican.ca
e-mail: admin@stouffvilleanglican.ca

BLOOMINGTON GOSPEL CHURCH
13660 Ninth Line N.
(905) 642-4414
Rev. Peter Pallant
Sunday, December 2, 2007
9:30 am ~
Sunday School
11:00 am ~
Morning Worship Service
6:30 pm ~
Evening Service
Everyone Welcome

Springvale Baptist Church
Stouffville Rd. at Kennedy Rd.
905-887-5651
www.springvale.org
Senior Pastor: Bob Flemming
Youth & Family: Jay Sandiford
Student Ministries: Alex Street
Children's Ministries: Sharon Russell
Counselling Services: Karla Kameron
December 2nd, 2007
9:45 am
Communion Celebration Service
Pastor Jay Sandiford
11:11 am
Sunday School for All Ages
6:00 pm
Fellowship Groups

Welcome to...
ST. JAMES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Rev. Kathryn Strachan, Minister
6432 Main St. Stouffville
Phone: 905-640-3151
email: st.james.stouffville@bellnet.ca
Sunday December 2
Hymn-sing
9:45 a.m.
1st Sunday in Advent
Holy Communion
10:00 a.m.
Sunday December 9
A Christmas Celebration
MegaCity Barbershop Chorus
Ballantrae Mixed Choir
Vocal and instrumental musicians
7:15 p.m.
'A Friendly Family Church'

Markham Missionary Church
Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada
5438 Major Mackenzie Drive East, Markham
905.294.5081
"A CENTURION'S CHOICE"
Written & Directed by Doris Pilkey
Friday December 7, 2007
~ 7:30 p.m.
Saturday December 8, 2007
~ 3:00 p.m.
(reservations only)
Sunday December 9, 2007
~ 6:30 p.m.

To advertise in the Church section please contact Tyler Duncan at 905-294-2200