

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SATURDAY, DEC. 10, 2011 ■ SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE ■ 16 PAGES/\$1 INCLUDING GST

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Seniors still reluctant to report elder abuse

Time to break silence, police say

BY CHRIS TRABER
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An 82-year-old Thornhill widow fell victim to a fast-talking con posing as a contractor and was bilked out of \$3,300.

The woman was approached by a man claiming to have surveyed her roof. It was about to leak badly, he told her. His crew could fix it fast and reasonably, no money up front.

"All they did was seal the chimney and eavestrough," she said. "He came in my house and demanded payment. He came on strong and then was hostile. He scared me. I paid."

A week later, the scammer was back, demanding taxes on the original bill. Again, the senior was intimidated.

"I kept quiet and didn't say anything until two police officers showed up," she said.

The case only came to light because the perpetrator was charged with 30 counts of fraud and police followed up with his victims.

The senior remained silent. She asked for anonymity, citing fear and shame. She is part of a growing and largely hidden elder abuse epidemic.

Up to 10 per cent of Canadian seniors experience some form of elder abuse, an Environics for Human Resources and Social Development Canada study stated.

More than 96 per cent of Canadians think most of the abuse experienced by

See **VICTIMS**, page 10.

Budget proposes 4.9% tax hike

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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Your property taxes could rise about \$50 next year.

The 2012 draft budget proposes a 4.9-per-cent increase, which includes a one-per-cent contribution to the town's capital reserves.

For a homeowner with an assessed

property valued at \$360,000, that comes to roughly \$50.

"We've got some work to do, some savings to find. ... We may not be able to do it all," said Mayor Wayne Emmerson during Tuesday morning's council meeting in which the 2012 draft budget was released.

The mayor isn't the only one who wants the increase to be less than 4.9 per cent.

"Two, 2.5 per cent is something I would look hard at," Councillor Richard Bartley said. The proposed 4.9-per-cent increase is too high in today's economic climate when surrounding communities are at zero or at cost of living, he added.

Councillor Clyde Smith wants an increase

See **LIBRARY**, page 7.



STAFF PHOTO/NICK IWANYSHYN

LET'S TALK ABOUT ART

Megan Nash (from left) and Eveyln Mihaly talk during IMAGES 2011/2012: @RT, a group exhibition by the graduating students of Stouffville District Secondary School at the Latchman Gallery Thursday.

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