

Town, family tradition on stage

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"It's something I'd seen my father do. I knew pantomime. I knew how it needed to be done," he said. "I didn't see any harm in giving it a try."

"It was my idea originally (to bring the pantomime to Stouffville) and yes, I wrote the script, but there are many other people involved," Mr. Parker said.

This year's show, The Pied Piper of Hamelin, is about a man who promises to rid the town of rats. However, the local burgomaster refuses to pay.

Sprinkled throughout the play will be references to current local events including town council's recent wage increase and allegations of discounted liquor being sold from a trailer in Musselman's Lake, according to Mr. Parker.

"We take great delight in dissin' Uxbridge - because we can," Mr. Parker said, noting it's become ironic because some of the people in the show now live in Uxbridge.

The pantomime has become a multi-generational show as cast members and behind-the-scenes workers include parents, spouses, children and even grandchil-

dren. The Parkers have three generations in the show. His eldest daughter is an actor, while his oldest granddaughter is a dancer and his youngest granddaughter a sign carrier.

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His father's presence is also felt. The senior Mr. Parker wrote the song performed during the cast's curtain call.

When Mr. Parker embarked on creating the pantomime in 1993, the first show was in 1994, he committed to 10 scripts. They are currently in their second incarnation.

Will there be any more original pantomimes?

"I don't think I've got it in me any longer," Mr. Parker said.

But he did note it is possible he may put together a best-of show one year.

In year 11, both Mr. Parker and Denise Pettitt retired from the show.

The person who took over decided to not return after

one year.

"Does it disappear or do we step back in and keep it going? It's too valuable to let it die," Mr. Parker said. So the duo returned.

Ms Pettitt is director this year, assisted by Vince Parry and Mr. Parker.

"We do it because we like to," Ms Pettitt said. "I think we get a lot more out of it than these kids sometimes."

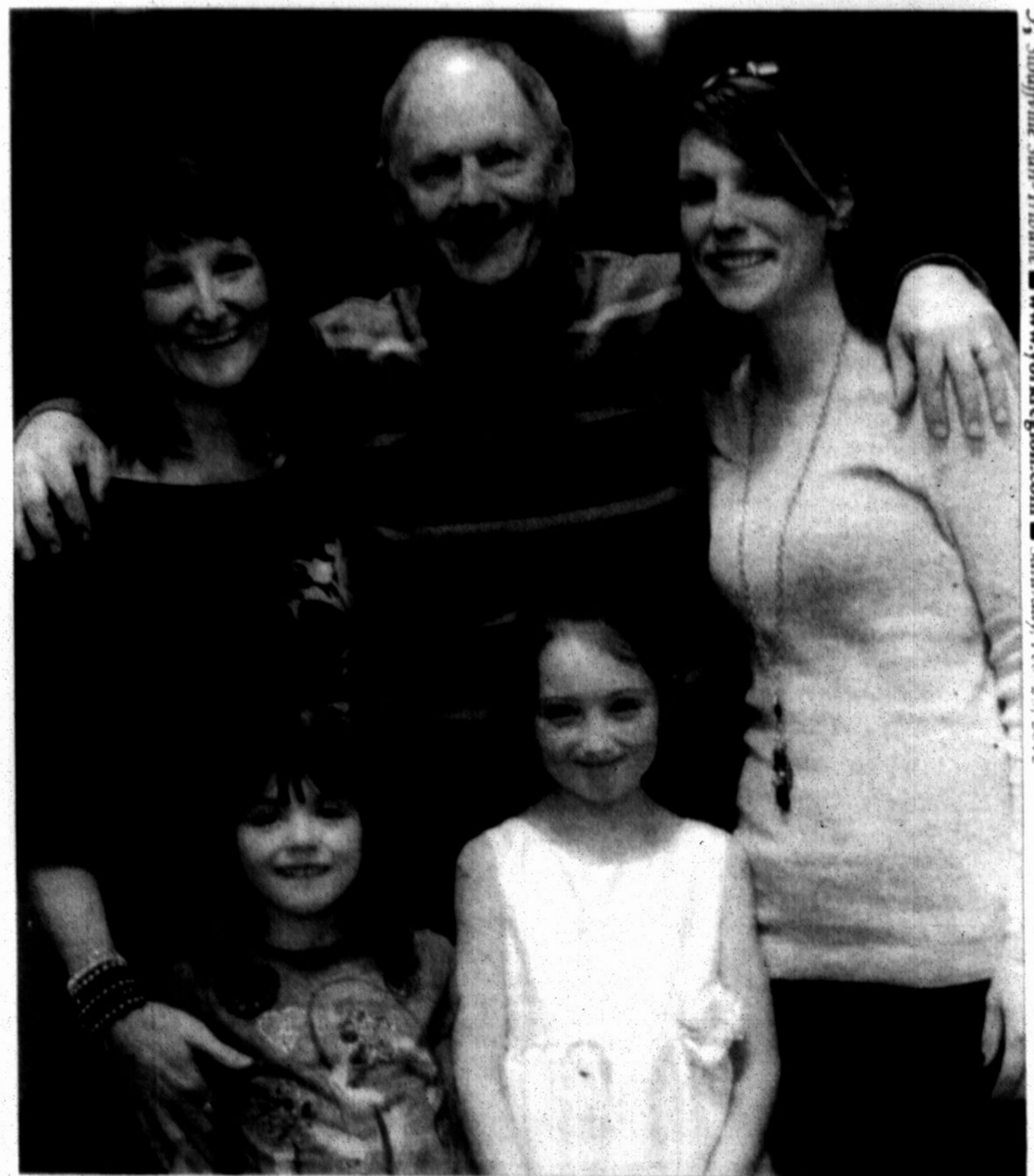
The church hall holds about 200 people. Ms Pettitt is hoping for near-capacity, if not sold-out crowds come showtime.

"These kids have worked very hard so we want them to look out and see a full audience," she said.

Money raised from the show will go towards church programs including its new one for young mothers, as well as community projects, according to Ms Pettitt.

Showtimes are March 2 - 7:30 p.m., March 3 - 2 and 7:30 p.m. and March 4 at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$14 for adults and \$10 for children and seniors. They are available at Stouffville Florists, 6343 Main St. and by calling the church at 905-640-1461. Christ Church Anglican is at 254 Sunset Blvd.



Charles Parker, pantomime writer and assistant director, poses with daughters Jennifer May (left) and Amanda Parker and granddaughters Julie May (left) and Abby May. The family is very involved in next weekend's show at Christ Church Anglican.



Cast members of Christ Church Anglican's annual pantomime, The Pied Piper of Hamelin, include Claire Summerhayes (from left), Eliza Wiseman, Eric Tomjenovic, Torey Hutchison, Emily Hutchison, Heather Hutchison and Kyra Goldsmith. The show will be performed four times next weekend, starting Friday night, at the church.