



STAFF PHOTO/SUSIE KOCKERSCHIEDT

Matthew Ormrod (from left), Victoria Hutchison, Bronte Anderson and Vince Parry prepare to present Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves next week.

## Encore! Alumni return for final pantomime

BY SANDRA BOLAN  
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After 20 years, Christ Church's annual pantomime is ending.

"It's run its course. It's time to come up with something else," said director Denise Pettitt.

"Twenty years is a long time to do anything. But I've enjoyed every single minute with these kids," she said.

Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves runs from March 1 to 3 at the Stouffville church.

Ms Pettitt, along with writer Charles Parker, founded the annual tradition, which started with their children being "voluntold" to participate, according to Ms Pettitt.

The pantomimes came out of a need to provide kids who didn't play hockey, ski or skate, something to do in the winter.

Shows were first staged in Latcham Hall before the church hall was built.

"It just grew from there. It was a huge hit everybody wanted to be a part of it," she said.

The one caveat was that in order to be in the show, you also had to attend the church.

Ms Pettitt left the director's chair a few years ago, but got reeled back in after missing only one season.

It was two years ago, Ms Pettitt and Mr. Parker decided the pantomime would end after 20 years.

*'Twenty years is a long time to do anything. But I've enjoyed every single minute with these kids.'*

In celebration of the show's closing, the more than 150 actors who have been in the productions have been asked back to perform.

A pantomime takes a traditional English fairy tale, in this case the dark adventure of a poor man who stumbles upon hidden riches and turns them upside down, with the inclu-

sion of local political satire.

"It's never hurtful, just poking fun at something," Ms Pettitt said, noting there are jokes for both kids and adults.

Over the years, the show travelled a bit. It was staged in Ancaster on the request of the musical director's parents, who wanted their congregation to experience a pantomime. They also performed at Parkview, prior to earmarking the Sunday matinee for seniors.

In an effort to ensure each of these last four shows is in front of a packed house, ticket prices are at their lowest in five years, according to Ms Pettitt.

Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$7 for children and \$30 for a family with two adults and two children. They can be purchased at Christ Church Anglican, 254 Sunset Blvd. or Stouffville Florists, 6343 Main St.

Show dates are March 1 (7:30 p.m.), March 2, (2 and 7:30 p.m.) and March 3 (2 p.m.)

For more information, call 905-640-1461.

## Whitchurch-Stouffville News Digest

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### Get help with your taxes

Need professional help preparing your taxes but can't afford it?

Since 1969, free CA tax clinics have been held across Ontario from mid-February until the end of March. Hundreds of volunteer chartered accountants and their associates help thousands of low-income people by preparing their income tax returns, free of charge.

Clinics will be held March 9 and 10, from noon to 4 p.m. both days, at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library.

To qualify, total household income must be below \$30,000 with dependents or below \$20,000 without dependents. Individuals with rental income and/or business income do not qualify. Returns for clients who have passed away are not done.

To book an appointment, call the library (905-642-READ).

### Jungle cats, mad scientists on March Break schedule

March Break at the public library is a Stouffville tradition dating back decades.

The Burkholder Street facility is again hosting a variety of entertainment from March 11 to 15.

The schedule features movies, a magician, jungle cats and mad scientists.

Musician Michael Vukovich will kick off the week with a pair of shows.

Admission is free, thanks to an annual donation from the Lions Club of Stouffville, but you must obtain an admission ticket.

Space is limited. Phone (905-642-READ) or drop into the library for more information.

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