

# School yard shooting still hits home

**I**t was a day Danette Beare will always remember.

It was a day her parents, Ivan and Joan Grove, will never forget.

Nor will the staff and students at Dickson's Hill Public School, on Hwy. 48 south of Stouffville.

The date was June 15, 1972 — 41 years ago this month. Danette, then nine and in Grade 3, was one of 300 children watching a softball game in the school's east playground.

Suddenly, she felt a sharp pain in her back "like I'd been struck by a baseball bat".

Principal Allan Martindale helped her into the school knowing something was seriously wrong but unsure what. Telephone calls were placed to Danette's mother at home and to her father, a dispatcher with McCowan Mobile Mix.

Mrs. Grove, accompanied by daughter Debbie, 12, drove directly to the school and then rushed Danette by car to the Stouffville office of Dr. Blair Mitchell.

"Dr. Mitchell immediately told me Danette had been shot," Joan said. All three then travelled by ambulance to Scarborough Centenary Hospital where Danette's father was waiting.

It was later learned the injured girl had been hit by a .22 caliber bullet, fired by one of two teenage boys hunting groundhogs with a rifle on a neighbouring property next to what's now MindTech Montessori Schools.

The bullet missed Danette's spinal column by a fraction of an inch but severed her liver.

"Ninety-nine percent of injuries that severe are fatal," her mother said. She remembers Dr. Mitchell describing her daughter's recovery as "a miracle".

"I'm lucky to be walking,"



## Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

Danette said in a telephone conversation from the family's Gowanstown farm near Listowel. "I'm lucky to be alive."

She still retains a large get-well card signed by Dickson's Hill staff and students.

Danette spent 12 days in hospital.

"The Centenary staff was wonderful," Mrs. Grove said. "They regularly kept in touch by phone." Surgeons predicted that, if she survived the first 72 hours, chances of a full recovery were good. Her mother remained at her daughter's bedside until the critical period passed.

*'I'm lucky to be walking.*

*'I'm lucky to be alive.'*

Following her release, Danette returned home, but not to school, a decision that troubled her greatly, her father said.

"She was afraid she wouldn't pass," Ivan remembers.

But she did. Principal Martindale made sure of that. Come September, she was back with her friends in Grade 4.

In the meantime, her recupera-

tion continued, so rapidly, the entire family enjoyed a memorable boat trip that summer from Pefferlaw on Lake Simcoe, along the Severn River to Pointe au Baril on Georgian Bay.

"She was fine," her mother recalls.

And she's been fine ever since, graduating from Grade 13 at Stouffville District Secondary School with an Ontario scholarship.

On Sept. 25, 1982, Danette and Ray Beare were married in a lovely ceremony at Wideman Menno-nite Church. For a short time, they resided at the Beare family farm south of Hwy. 7 then, 24 years ago, purchased a 200-acre property in Gowanstown.

"She leads a full life," her mother says proudly of Danette. She's the deputy clerk of North Perth County, is recognized as a certified municipal officer and holds an executive diploma in municipal government.

But it's not all work and no play for this 50-year-old mother of three and grandmother of two.

She loves to sew and knit, plays the organ and piano, golfs and downhill skis.

And her skills don't end there. She sometimes serves as a soloist at Zion United Church near Gowanstown and won the hearts of friends and relatives when she sang at the wedding of their eldest son and daughter-in-law, Graham and Corrine.

Ray and Danette have two younger sons, Derek (Kristine) and Wade. They also have two grandchildren, Jarret and Brooklyn.

And to think, 41 years ago, a life was spared by "a miracle".

*Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 60 years.*

# Want a Rob Fordesque mayor? Sit back and enjoy the show

**W**hat if Rob Ford was mayor of Whitchurch-Stouffville?

What would you do?

Attend more council meetings?

Picket the town offices on Sandiford Drive?

I know it's a wacked-out query, the kind posed after an overload of morning caffeine at the doughnut shop.

It's like wondering where the Maple Leafs would be if not for their Chernobyl-esque meltdown in Boston last month.

It's hard to fathom, but there are still Ford supporters out there, even here in the hinterland where we neither select the mayor of Toronto every four years nor pay his freight.

We just sit back and enjoy the show, 12 kilometres north of the Big Smoke's border. Heck, I was a 15-hour drive from Toronto last week and Ford Nation was still big news.

Mr. Ford should really have his own TV show. You can't make up stuff this good, as reality show writers have come to discover too quickly.

Heck, Mr. Ford makes Mel Lastman's time in office forgettable when we all thought it was too bizarre.

Still, the stories of Rob Ford — some don't even involve the law enforcement community — should serve as a collective cautionary tale for us all.

Wayne Emmerson, the longtime mayor of Whitchurch-Stouffville, announced well before the last election this would be his



## Off The Top

with Jim Mason

last term in office here. (He will seek the chairmanship of York Region, a post only voted on, for now, by members of regional council.)

That leaves the door to the mayor's office at 111 Sandiford wide open for next year's election.

(For now, it's a line-up of one, Peter Carle, a retired lawyer and relative newcomer to our town who has some interesting takes on life in rural Whitchurch-Stouffville — not that he's Rob Ford material. You can read our full story on Mr. Carle from last month at [yorkregion.com](http://yorkregion.com).)

Most people are happy to let their neighbours select their politicians — then spend the next several years complaining about them.

You want a Rob Ford for mayor? It could happen.

Just sit back and see who the rest of us elect Oct. 27, 2014.

*Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune*

# Celebrate Rouge Days with cook-off, park visits

BY SANDRA BOLAN  
[sbolan@yrmg.com](mailto:sbolan@yrmg.com)

In celebration of the Rouge River watershed and park, the fourth edition of Rouge Days takes place June 6 to 9.

Learn about Willowgrove's various habitats on its 100-acre park property at 11737 McCowan Rd. tomorrow between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Naturalists are asked to bring their lunch, which will be eaten around the campfire. S'mores will be provided.

Pre-registration is required and can be done by contacting Laura at [laura@willowgrove.ca](mailto:laura@willowgrove.ca) or 905-640-2127.

If that isn't enough outdoor activity for you, a historic tour around Bruce's Mill Conservation Area, 3291 Stouffville Rd., takes place at 7 p.m. It will be led by local historian Fred Robbins and goes rain or shine. Look for orange balloons in the parking lot for the meeting location.

The walk is free, but pre-registra-

tion is required as space is limited. Contact Anna Rose at [anna.rose@townofws.ca](mailto:anna.rose@townofws.ca) or 905-640-0749.

## TASTY DAY AT MARKET

The second annual Chef Cook-off takes place at the Stouffville Farmers' Market June 20.

Local chefs are asked to once again use ingredients from the market vendors to create dishes. However, because it is still rather early in the season for fruits and vegetables, they are being allowed to augment

with other products, according to Maria Schembri, spokesperson for the town.

Samples from the chefs will be available for tasting between 3 and 4 p.m., which is immediately followed by announcing the community choice winner, as voted by the tasters.

The Rouge River watershed is 336 square kilometers in size and includes York and Durham regions, as well as the municipalities of Toronto, Pickering, Markham,

Richmond Hill and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Land use is approximately 40 per cent agricultural, 35 per cent urban, 24 per cent natural and 1 per cent open water, according to the Rouge Days' website.

Rouge Park is North America's largest urban park and protects 41 square kilometers of watershed, which includes rivers, creeks, forests, meadows and agricultural lands, according to the Rouge Days' website.