

OPINION



PUBLISHER *Ian Proudfoot*
GENERAL MANAGER *John Willems*

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune
6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON, L4A 1G7
www.yorkregion.com

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Editorial

905-640-2612
Fax: 905-640-8778
Class: 1-800-743-3353
DISTRIBUTION
905-294-8244

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Debra Kelly
dkelly@yrmg.com

DIRECTOR, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
Robert Lazaruko

DIRECTOR, REGIONAL PRODUCTS AND CLASSIFIED
Debra Weller

DIRECTOR, PRODUCTION
Jackie Smart

DIRECTOR, DISTRIBUTION
Tanya Pacheco

DIRECTOR, MARKETING AND SALES DEVELOPMENT
Gord Paolucci

Editor
Jim Mason
jmason@yrmg.com

Advertising Manager
Dave Williams
dwilliams@yrmg.com

Circulation Co-ordinator
Daphne Laurie
dlaurie@yrmg.com

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Time to take another look at downtown farmers market

ISSUE

Attendance appears to be dwindling at the once-thriving Stouffville Farmers Market

It was a perfect autumn day in downtown Stouffville. The afternoon sun shone and the leaves were turning.

It was harvest time, when farmers what reaping what they'd sown.

Even in rapidly urbanizing Stouffville, that is still news.

Residents frequent road-side stands in large numbers to purchase corn, berries, apples, potatoes and other produce.

Our provincial politicians were promoting it with their radio and TV ad campaign, "Good Things Grow in Ontario".

The Downtown Stouffville Farmers Market should be in full bloom at this time of year.

Sadly, that is not true.

On a recent, sunny Thursday afternoon, only four vendors had set up shop in the middle of Park Drive, south of Main Street.

That's a far cry from the bustling market when it first opened in 2008.

Times were good and so was traffic. Stouffville embraced the market and its dozen or so weekly vendors.

Even in a community that was already home to one of the largest weekend flea and produce markets in Ontario—the Stouffville Country Market.

When the market started,

part of its vision was to provide a "venue for farmers to sell their locally Ontario grown, with 100 miles or approximately 16-km radius produce, in season and for the community to buy fresh produce and interact with the people who grow the food they eat".

The rules changed in 2011 when vendors were allowed to sell anything from Ontario, including items purchased for re-sale.

That did not please some of its customers and vendors.

The committee that oversaw the operation was disbanded.

And it has apparently affected the popularity of the market.

Given the amount of resources the town is pouring into the operation every week, it's time for a proper review.

Residents have shown they will support a farmers market. Many have told us they want to buy locally grown produce—that's the whole point of a farmers market.

Many also told us they'd like to see the market relocate to cozier Civic Square.

How a public meeting to hear from vendors and customers, town council?

A farmers market is needed, only with different rules and, perhaps, a new location.

BOTTOM LINE: Residents want a market to shop at, just not under the current arrangement

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Time for big-box lumber store

I have been living in Stouffville for about three years.

I really like this town. It is very nice and peaceful. But there is one thing that stands out for me.

Being a construction/electrician worker, if I need supplies, I go to Rona, Lowes or Home Depot. But, there is no Rona, or Lowes, or Home Depot in Stouffville.

So what am I supposed to do when I need something?

Well, I need to go to a different town.

Yes, I know we have a Home Hardware store here, but it has too many flaws. It closes early, it doesn't open Sundays, it's too small and it doesn't have everything.

And yes, I am aware there is a nice Canadian Tire, but again, it does not have enough materials.

I think it is about time for Stouffville to get a Home Depot, Lowes or Rona.

ALEX TYRIN.
STOUFFVILLE

Soccer deserves more coverage in paper

I am an avid reader of The Sun-Tribune. I have lived in Stouffville since 2005.

Since that time, both my boys have played soccer, first at Novopharm, now Teva, then Bruce's Mill Conservation Area, then Bethesda Park and now Ballantrae Park.

I feel there should be more coverage of soccer players, coaches, teams, games, especially the development teams and the rep teams. The teams train two to three times a week. They enjoy themselves and create good friendships but they also work hard.

I notice numerous articles on hockey and rugby: players, games, stories, etc. but less on soccer.

My sons (ages 12 and 10) are somewhat skilled at soccer and both were chosen to play on a development team for their age group. This incurred extra costs, extra time and a lot of involvement and commitment.

The U12 boys became rep for the first time this year and they have done

exceptionally well under the excellent coaching of Frank Ntoukas and Steve Morrison.

They are playing against teams that are more skilled and experienced, yet finishing well in tournaments.

Yes, we travel quite a bit, to Collingwood, Bracebridge, Barrie and Lake Simcoe.

It would be fun to have families come out to cheer on the rep teams when they play home games. If people knew there was a game, local residents could visit the fields and clap and cheer and support the Stouffville Mustangs. And it's free.

My younger son is U10 under the fantastic coaching of Steve Harding and Anthony Piccione. They have finished first in not one but two tournaments, One in Lake Simcoe and one in Innisfil. The trophies were huge.

As a parent and spectator, I am very proud of all the athletes.

I think it would be nice and expected to have some recognition and coverage from our local paper, especially with the new indoor soccer facility in town. Soc-

cerCity, which shows the world that this small town has pride and commitment in soccer.

CHRISTINE COBEL
STOUFFVILLE

Young writer's stand making a difference

Re: We should all take stand against the 'R-word'. Saturday Forum column by Subhanghi Anandarajah, Sept. 5.

Miss Anandarajah is making a wonderful difference by standing up for what is important to all of us.

Yes, we do need to be more thoughtful in the words we use so that they are not hurtful to others.

Her message reminds me of an English proverb on a plaque hanging in our house: "Kind hearts are the gardens; kind thoughts are the roots; kind words are the flowers; kind deeds are the fruits."

Thank you, Miss Anandarajah, for sowing the seeds of respect and affection in our hearts.

SALVATORE (SAL) AMENTA
STOUFFVILLE

This is debatable

WEIGH IN ON THE DISCUSSION ... e-mail your comments to jmason@yrmg.com

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