

## Scholarship winner more than musician

The rafters at Stouffville District Secondary School will resound to the pulsations of spirited voices and inspiring instruments tomorrow night when St. James Presbyterian Church hosts its 21st annual Student Music Scholarship Concert before an anticipated capacity audience.

An enchanting addition to the occasion will undoubtedly be a vocal selection by 16-year-old Rosa Alaimo, a Grade 11 student enrolled in the arts program at Unionville High School.

Rosa is the committee's choice for the 2013 Student Music Scholarship award.

It was after moving from Scarborough to Ballantrae that Rosa's parents, Joe and Theresa Alaimo, enrolled their daughter in a Montessori school at Unionville. Later, she was accepted into the gifted program at Rogers Public School in Newmarket where her brothers, Vincenzo, 13, and Dante, 10, currently attend.

In her first year at Rogers, the school's choir director recognized something exceptional about Rosa's voice. She auditioned for a solo part in a year-end concert and was successful.

Later, she was asked to sing at the conclusion of her class graduation ceremony.

"This was special," she said, "Mr. Griffin, our music teacher made it all happen."

The same evening, the acclaims continued when she received the Grade 8 music award.

Nor did the acclamations end when she entered Unionville High.

As a principal French horn player in the school's core band, she has twice won the music award, first in Grade 9 and again in Grade 10. She's currently a member of the school's wind ensemble.

In addition to the French horn, Rosa also plays piano and ukulele.



### Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

While drama is her chosen secondary school major, Rosa is best known locally for her superlative vocal talent. She sings with the Voices of Glory choir directed by Eugenie Landry at Stouffville's St. Mark's Catholic Church and her school's senior choir.

*All this and more without the aid of a voice instructor.*

She has participated in the Kiwanis Music Festival and recently placed second in a Teen Talent competition at Markham Fair.

All this and more without the aid of a voice instructor.

An innovative teen entrepreneur, Rosa, with the help of a provincial grant, has established her own company called Eco Grow where she collects used tire tubes and converts them into saleable gifts. These items have been on display and sale at Stouffville's Strawberry Festival and Ribfest, at the Ballantrae Fall Fair, Durham Craft Show and East Gwillimbury Farmers' Market.

Because of her ingenuity, she was the recipient of a coveted business award at a recent school assembly.

At Unionville High, she's a mem-

ber of the morning announcement team and a mixed curling club. She has achieved honour standing in grades 9 and 10.

"I love my school," she says. "The atmosphere is wonderful."

The arts program, she suggests, tends to create a warm relationship among all students.

Rosa and her mother are volunteers at Stouffville's Care and Share Thrift Shop as well as a similar endeavour at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church.

The entire Alaimo family assist during Thanksgiving and Christmas with an inner-city Out-Of-The-Cold program sponsored by St. Thomas Anglican Church.

Last summer, Rosa was an employee in the City of Markham tax department and also assisted with a reading program at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library.

On first learning she'd been selected for the 2013 music scholarship, Rosa admitted she was shocked.

"It's such an honour," she said.

Past recipients include Georgina Muir, Clara Jordan, Jocelyn McDowell, Cameron MacKenzie, Kathryn Irwin, Carley MacLean, Lillian Wild, Jennifer Thunem, Kirstie Hembruff, Aaron Clubine, A.J. deBoer, Madeleine Eddy, Colton Carrick and Matthew Eeuwes.

Participating schools include St. Mark, St. Brendan, Stouffville Christian, Glad Park, Wendat Village, Harry Bowes and Stouffville Secondary.

The master of ceremonies is Sun-Tribune editor Jim Mason.

Concert time is 7:30 p.m.

During the past 20 years, close to \$90,000 has been raised with all donations returned to participating schools to assist their music programs. Adult admission at the door is \$5.

*Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 60 years. He is a member of the scholarship concert committee.*

## No escaping Ford Nation's clutch on our world

You can't escape, even in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

"Some mayor you've got there, pal," said a tourist from California, sarcasm apparently dripping from his chin.

"Wayne Emmerson?" I replied. "You know him? Really?"

"No, that Ford guy," he said, poking at the Blue Jays logo on the golf shirt I forgot I was wearing.

Gotcha.

Everybody knows Rob Ford. And this was well before the Saturday Night Live impersonation, XXX-rated pillow talk about his wife and even the admission of crack cocaine smoking.

Americans filled almost every room on our cruise ship.

*'Some mayor you've got there, pal,' said a tourist from California, sarcasm apparently dripping from his chin.*

Even the limited TV choices in the staterooms included regular updates on the beleaguered Toronto mayor. (Fox News wrongly assumed Mr. Ford was a free-wheeling bachelor, obviously before he spoke unabashedly of his wife.)

It was just enough ammo to fuel Ford-filled dinner discussions every night on the ship. And to change my pre-meal



### Off The Top

with Jim Mason

introduction to: "Jim from Ontario - but not Toronto."

I also ditched the Jays' gear in favour of a Stouffville Spirit T-shirt.

Interestingly, Americans also know us for being very French, our health care, hockey, the CN Tower, Rush, the Rockies, Niagara Falls and, more recently, our Senate scandal.

In a highly unscientific survey, more than 90 per cent were unhappy with ObamaCare, their president's attempt to bring universal, affordable health care to America.

But with the seemingly endless Rob Ford saga playing out daily on U.S. TV morning shows, newscasts and late-night talk shows, they have an escape.

A punch line. "God's gift to comedy," as Jay Leno called the mayor of Toronto.

And maybe a reason for optimism.

At least Barack Obama is no Rob Ford.

*Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune. Follow him on Twitter @stouffeditor*

## Stronach, Proudfoot, author share secrets of success

BY CHRIS TRABER  
ctraber@yrmg.com

A triple play, hat trick or grand slam.

Call it what you may, but the trio of Leadership Through Innovation conference headliners hit it out of the park Friday morning at the Mansion in Aurora.

The standing-room-only summit hosted by the York Small Business Enterprise Centre featured invaluable insight from high-profile speakers and local CEOs.

Enterprise consultant Dan Ruby applauded his organizing committee and lauded the three lead-off speakers.

"They were the best we've ever had," he said of management consultant and author Jim Harris, Metroland Media and York Region Media Group vice-president and publisher Ian Proudfoot and Magna International Inc. founder Frank Stronach. "Today's conference was phenomenal, a great wrap-up of the 2013 conference series."

Mr. Harris, author of the bestselling *Blindsided!*, set the tone with a jocular presentation. Using a series of photos showing how English police used increasingly larger rigs to salvage an automobile from a canal only to have each hoist fall into the water, he illustrated how a lack of

foresight is a formula for disaster.

With real world examples, he demonstrated how innovation ensures corporate survival. When Blockbuster was approached by Netflix for a \$50-million investment and 50-per-cent equity position, Blockbuster declined. Today it's bankrupt and Netflix is thriving.

Mr. Proudfoot, publisher of The Sun-Tribune, told attendees he's often asked if newspapers will disappear with the advent of the Internet. While print may be under siege, prudent media purveyors need to recognize threats, retrench and diversify, he said.

"Newspapers are at the core of what we do," Mr. Proudfoot said, noting that York Region newspapers in the Metroland stable have been part of the community for more than 160 years. "But, truly, what we are is a content company."

Organizations must be fleet and embrace transformation, he said. Innovation can be overwhelming and confusing. Ultimately, it distinguishes a leader from a follower.

Mr. Stronach enthralled the audience with candid insights into his life and how an old world work ethic melded with new world innovation enabled him to become one of the

world's wealthiest men.

Life is a question of fate and circumstance, the 81-year-old, ranked by Forbes as the 25th richest Canadian, said. He credits being in the right place at the right time and a spot of luck for helping him create the world's most diversified auto parts supplier with more than 120,000 employees in 29 countries and sales of more than \$30 billion U.S.

His success is based on a formula of dogged determination and respect for employees, he said. "The key is to be fair and square with people and don't change the rules."

For the full story, visit [yorkregion.com](http://yorkregion.com)