

COLUMN

Who could have imagined \$2M mansions?

Recently, I visited two of Whitchurch-Stouffville's most exclusive residential developments. Both are in Ballantrae, one on the west side of Hwy. 48 known as Forest Trail Estates and the other on the north side of Lakeshore Road called Copperstone.

Due to ongoing construction on Pine Vista Avenue, I sought parking privileges on one of several attractively designed driveways deep in the heart of Forest Trail.

But not for long.

For I quickly concluded my Chevy Cruze could quickly depreciate the value of adjoining properties on which were located cars of exquisite beauty.

The Forest Trail homes, huge by Rupert Avenue standards, are situated on one-acre lots and serviced by town water. Values range from \$1.63 to \$2.1 million. All have been sold.

The Copperstone development, currently being prepared by Todd Bros. Construction Limited of Stouffville, contains 18 half-acre lots, 11 of which have already



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

been purchased. House prices here range from \$1.19 to \$1.37 million.

Forest Trail homes range in size from 2,573 to 5,253 square feet with lots measuring 120 to 150 feet in width to 250 to 300 feet in depth. Some residences have three bedrooms, others have five. All have three-car garages.

Located near Hwy. 48 and close to Hwy. 404 as well as convenient morning and evening GO train service has made both Forest Trail and Copperstone attractive to daily commuters.

Proximity to the York Regional Forest and Musselman's Lake also appeal to nature lovers as well as the closeness to walking trails, a school, a community centre, churches, golf courses, restaurants and shopping.

Fifty years ago, no one could have imagined \$2 million homes on the outskirts of Ballantrae. Fifty years from now we can envisage similar homes extending south to Stouffville. Time will tell.

My old school

Whenever guys and gals now in their 60s, 70s and 80s get together, conversations inevitably turn to unforgettable years in the little red brick schoolhouse. Times, particularly in the 1930s were tough but so were the kids that lived through them.

There were no school buses. We walked. There were no smart boards. Only blackboards. There were no computers. Only books. There were no calculators. We added, subtracted, multiplied and divided. There were no washrooms. Only outhouses.

There were no field trips. Only arbor days. There were no gymnasiums. Only ball diamonds. There was no basketball. Only softball. There was no tap water. Only pump water. There were no detentions. Only the strap. There were no bands or choirs. Only Christmas concerts and a national anthem. There were no ball-point pens. Only pencils and ink wells.

There was no thermostatically controlled heating. Only unreliable wood stoves and furnaces. And, oh yes, there were always regular visits from the local minister accompanied by the visible presence of an accessible Bible.

These recollections flooded my mind last week when Margaret (Hoover) Emmerson of Stouffville delivered four photos of my old elementary alma mater, (S.S. 19, Markham), three miles south of town. Three are dated. One is 1932, another 1934 and another 1939. Thanks, Margaret, for the memories.

Big hole to fill downtown

Stouffville's downtown can't win for losing. Last week's news of the

planned move by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce from the corner of Main and Market streets hit most like a time bomb.

This occurred just when the area was showing signs of revival with attractive flowers and refreshing paint.

It was back in 1971 when a devastating fire destroyed this entire Stouffville business block. For several years the site remained vacant. Then the CIBC moved in, replacing a proverbial weed patch with a beautiful building.

But brick and mortar do not a business make. The management and staff have, over the last 35 years, gained reputations for friendliness and teamwork. In addition, parking never posed a problem.

While negative aspects of the proposed move are presently apparent, the bank's hoped-for successor, a sizeable downtown food store, would be welcomed.

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

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