



STAFF PHOTO/JIM MASON

Runners make their way along Main Street in downtown Stouffville during last Thursday's storm. Raincoats were more in order for this week's weather. Temperatures are to hover around 0 C during the next week with no snow in the forecast.

# Storm didn't measure up to blasts in past

BY LISA QUEEN  
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A week ago, Mother Nature sucker-punched southern Ontario with a blast of winter that delivered at least twice, and in some cases more than three times, the forecasted 10 centimetres of snow.

By mid-afternoon on Dec. 11, York Regional Police had recorded about 100 traffic collisions and that didn't count the dozens expected to show up later at the police collision-reporting centre in Richmond Hill.

Police closed King Road between Hwy. 27 and Weston Road and were asking drivers to avoid driving on Major Mackenzie Drive from Kipling Avenue to Pine Valley Drive due to poor road conditions.

School buses were cancelled and GO Transit was reporting delays on several routes.

**"We may not have a white Christmas."**

Dave Phillips  
Environment Canada senior climatologist

By the time the weather system finally moved out of the area, Schomberg had received 32 centimetres of snow. Twenty-two centimetres had fallen at Buttonville Airport in Markham. Aurora received 27 centimetres.

But how does last week's storm compare to years past?

You've got to feel for residents who were living in the Oak Ridges area 74 years ago, Environment Canada senior climatologist Dave Phillips said. On Nov. 30, 1940, 58.4 centimetres of snow fell on the northern Richmond Hill community. But it gets worse, because 15.2 centimetres had already fallen Nov. 26, 12.7 centimetres had arrived on Nov. 28 and 5.1 centimetres had come on Nov. 29.

That makes for 91.4 centimetres of snow in five days.

"Did they ever recover from it?" Phillips said with an incredulous laugh, adding the five-day period likely adds up to York Region's largest recent accumulation.

While school children may have welcomed a snow day last Thursday, Phillips pointed out there was a time a few decades ago when students and teachers would have cursed a blizzard because they would have had to go to class on a Saturday to make up the time.

Not surprisingly, nasty winter weather has been with us forever.

A century ago, residents would have welcomed snow because it made it easier to transport logs and equipment than on dirt roads, Phillips said.

"Snow was seen as good news 100 years ago," he said. "It's seen as a scourge today. Unless you're a skier or snowboarder, for the rest of us, it's a four-letter word."

On Dec. 10, 1992, 40.4 centimetres landed on Richmond Hill. Another 12 centimetres fell from the sky the next day, for a total of 52.4 centimetres in two days.

Things were almost as bad in Stouffville during the same two-day period. On Dec. 10, 1992, the town got 45.5 centimetres and another 13.1 centimetres fell the following day, for a total of 58.6 centimetres.

In 1999, there was a "real biggie" of a storm that walloped the region, Phillips said. A total of 60.4 centimetres fell in two days at Buttonville Airport.

"That's half a year's worth in two days," said Phillips, pointing out that was the same month Toronto called in the army to help it cope with massive amounts of snow.

Looking ahead, Phillips is wondering when kids who find sleds under the tree will have a chance to use them.

"We may not have a white Christmas," he said.

"I don't see any snow-makers (snow storms) coming from now to Christmas."

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