

Environmentally Sound

by Jim Priebe



Suburbia Close To The Suburbs

So much for "Country Close to the City". Now we are talking growth. Big time. At a public meeting held by town council on June 18 (with another to be held June 25), Whitchurch-Stouffville residents were presented with details about the changes planned to take place over the next 15 years. Changes that include an increase in population of something like 20,000 new residents. Did you get that? 20,000 new residents.

There is no doubt that a huge set of developments like the ones presented will dramatically change Whitchurch-Stouffville. We will be a small town no more. I wonder if I stand alone or if others support my vision of a rural town. As I said when I spoke at the public meeting on June 18, I think Whitchurch-Stouffville should do what Uxbridge is doing: return to our rural roots. Development should be curtailed for 15 years.

Why 15 years? In part because I think that, at that time, we can assess the value of having a rural town. With York Region growing so rapidly there will be no shortage of new subdivisions for people to move to. What there won't be is a small town - unless we do something about it.

The other reason why I suggest 15 years is that I really believe that development standards are going to change. The lessons learned from Scarborough, Markham and Mississauga are that large scale developments cause traffic jams, are usually ugly, and do not protect the environment. Future developments hopefully will. As we see the effects of global warming and other forms of pollution

we will begin to realize that new ways of doing things are necessary.

My hope is that new subdivisions will respect the natural environment - trees will be left intact, and built around, even if it means less houses. Swamps won't be drained. Good farmland won't be built on. Bicycle paths and walking paths will be at least as plentiful as roads. Every house will be within walking distance of a park or parkette. We will recognize that we need a large, natural buffer between Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville. Not the 30 metre buffer currently planned, but something more substantial, like 500-1000 metres.

Unfortunately, I don't really think there is much to be done. Council and the town planning department have worked with the developers for some time on these plans. Too bad it wasn't an election issue. By the next election it will be too late.

With that said, if you share my vision of a rural town, speak up anyway. A very large number of focused, committed residents can do something. Let's try.

Graduation Hijinks



BRUCE STAPLEY / STOUFFVILLE THIS MONTH

Noah Gywnne and Nicole Brunett front the band at Mother Goose Academy's concert and graduation ceremony on June 17.

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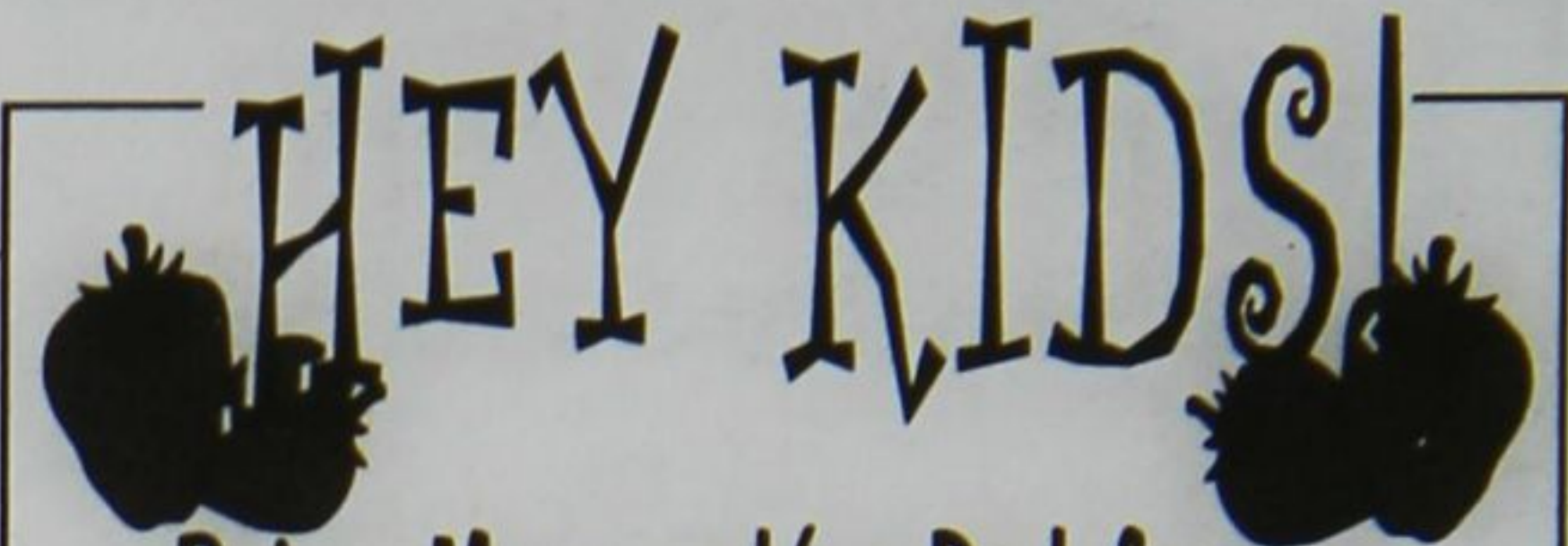
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Arts and crafts camp at library

Whitchurch-Stouffville Library is holding a five-day Arts and Crafts Camp for kids aged 8 to 11, starting July 29. Half of each day will be devoted to arts and half to crafts. The arts portion will cover basic drawing skills and painting techniques, as well as mixed media art, and some outdoor projects. Crafts will include the use of wood, plaster, paint and fabric to create mobiles, masks and other three-dimensional pieces.

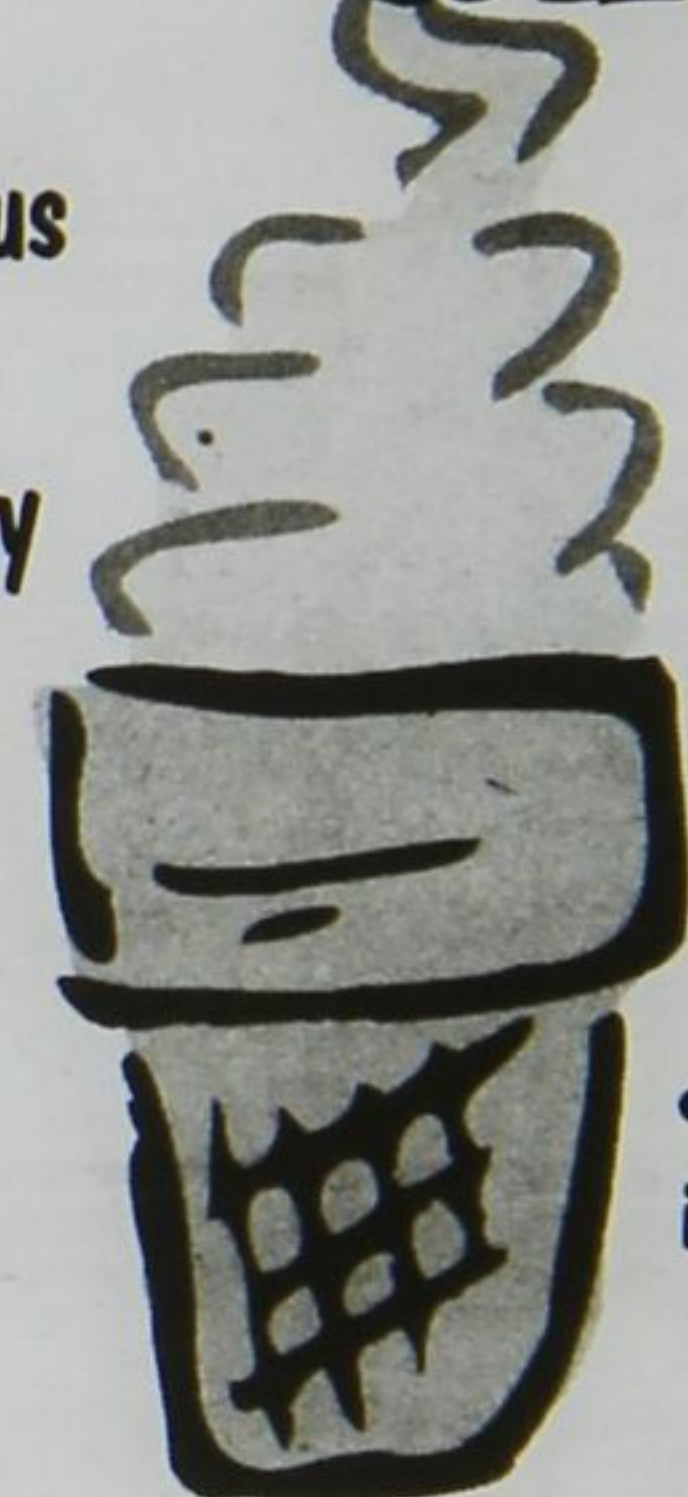
The cost is \$125, and includes all materials. For more information call 905-642-READ.



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