

Discover The Moraine



Members of the Oak Ridges Trail Association enjoy a beautiful winter hike in Walker Woods. The organization is hosting a Discovery Night at Ballantrae Community Centre on Dec. 17 from 7 to 9 p.m. and everyone is welcome to attend. For more information visit www.oakridgestrail.org or call 1-877-319-0285.

New Beginnings



A Perfect Mix

By Kinjal Dagi Shah

Lately, there has been more than one new beginning for the Ruzicka family. There have been two – the birth of twins, Gabriel and Magdalena. Add three year-old Samuel, the twins' older brother, to the mix, and Carolyn and Michal Ruzicka are a busy couple.

Walk into their Stouffville home, and you hear a mix of Spanish, Czech and English amid the baby babble. The diversity seems indicative of the multicultural wave sweeping over Stouffville and across Canada.

Not too long ago, Carolyn, now 32, traversed the globe to teach English in the Czech Republic. “I’m Argentinian-Canadian, born and raised in Markham. I always wanted to go and experience a different culture,” she said.

Not only did she teach English, she ended up learning Czech and staying in the country for three years. “I was teaching business English in Michal’s company and that’s how we met.” The couple had their wedding there, and Carolyn’s family went over to bless them. But the family moved to Stouffville in 2007, when Carolyn was expecting Samuel. The move was a joint decision, and even though Michal’s family is in the Czech Republic, the couple decided it would be easier for them to settle in Canada.

“It was harder for me to assimilate in the Czech Republic even though I learnt the basics of the language. The logistics of daily life wouldn’t have come as easily to me because of the

limitations of culture and language,” explained Carolyn.

But Michal has only kind things to say. “For two and a half years, she would just smile and nod at the locals. Suddenly, one day, she started speaking entire sentences in Czech. She worked really hard to learn it,” he said, as Carolyn cut in with a note of gratitude in her voice. “I have him and his parents to thank for it,” she said, adding that she was also grateful for the Mexican soap operas dubbed in Czech that she watched in order to pick up the language.

Michal is keen that his children learn Czech, and little Samuel already speaks it, in addition to Spanish and English. “I tell him that his grandparents don’t speak anything other than Czech so if he wants to talk to them, he has to know the language,” he said, laughing. The grandparents aren’t too far

away either. “We’ve visited twice since we moved back, and they are coming over for Christmas to see the twins,” said Michal.

The family love Stouffville, and the small town of Uherské Hradiš, where their story began, got them used to farm and country living. Carolyn occasionally gets her dose of serendipity when she runs into some of her friends from high school who have also bought their first homes in Stouffville.

It’s a classic case of happy integration.

with each of them bringing the best of their cultures together. Michal doesn’t wish to give up his Czech citizenship, but the couple is happy that the children will be able to keep dual citizenship.

“It’s hard to say which is better, Czech Republic or Canada. But at the end of the day, we’ve got our own family here and it’s our first home together. That’s what matters,” he said, as his wife nodded in agreement.

As they say, *Isme šťastná Rodina*, which is Czech for “We’re a happy family.”

If you’re a Stouffville resident, and have a story to tell, Kinjal wants to hear from you. She can be reached at kinjal.dagi@gmail.com.



Carolyn and Michal Ruzicka with Samuel (centre), twins Gabriel and Magdalena, and Carolyn’s grandmother, Elida Calin.

Music Mania Casting Call
A Golden Opportunity

At Stouffville United Church on Jan. 6, 2010 at 7:30 p.m., Music Mania will hold casting calls for its 50th anniversary show, which takes place April 29, 30 and May 1.

“We want to see all current, former and new Music Mania cast and crew out for this meeting to see how you can be involved,” said long time participant Heather Reid. “There will be

no auditions and no pressure, just plain fun.”

If you like to sing, dance, act in skits or work back stage, Music Mania has a place for you. Current members will meet on a weekly basis to rehearse for the April show. Dancers will meet Monday nights, skit performers Tuesday nights and chorus members Wednesday nights. Former Music Maniacs are invited to participate in three ways.

By joining the chorus, skits, or dancers on a full involvement level, which

requires rehearsing on a regular weekly basis from January until show time in April by taking part in two musical numbers, which means committing to six 20-minute rehearsals (two in February, two in March, and two in April, plus a dress rehearsal), or by serving on the historical, props, stage crew, tech crew or publicity committees.

For more information call director Rick Lightfoot at 905-640-4575 or producer Fenella Smith 905-640-6410.

Vandorf Community Centre

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19 LEBOVIC CENTRE FOR ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT NINETEEN

THE GOOD LOVELIES – Wednesday, Dec. 23 / 8pm
The Good Lovelies are not your run-of-the-mill “all girl” band. Armed with a pile of instruments, and a lot of humour, this show features music from their brand new holiday recording *Under the Mistletoe*
TICKETS: \$35 regular / \$30 subscriber / \$18 student
Seasonal Concert Series Presenting Sponsor – The Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Charitable Foundation

BOOKENDS: Music of Simon & Garfunkel – Jan. 15 / 8pm
POP & JAZZ
Join two of Canada’s most talented musicians - **Kevin Fox & Patrick Allcock** - as they celebrate the songs and stories of the legendary **Simon & Garfunkel**. A stirring journey through all the classic hits.
TICKETS: \$35 regular / \$30 subscriber / \$18 student

FIZZICAL FIZZICKS – Sunday, Jan. 31 / 2pm
FAMILY CONCERT – perfect for kids ages 5 to 12
What do you get when you cross **circus skills, science concepts** and a couple of **wacky characters**? You get **Fizzical Fizzicks** – an interactive, action-packed show about the science of motion!
TICKETS: \$20 regular / \$17 subscriber / \$10 student

ANTOINE FEVAL – February 4 & 5 / 8pm
THEATRE *A hit at the Toronto & Montreal Fringe Festivals!*
A comic tour-de-force that introduces us to **Barnaby Gibbs** – a kind hearted but dim-witted Englishman who becomes the **Dr. Watson** like sidekick to detective **Antoine Feval**, not realizing his new partner has been robbing the city blind!
TICKETS: \$35 regular / \$30 subscriber / \$18 student

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