

Whitchurch-Stouffville's Independent Community Owned Newspaper

Stouffville Free Press

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UP AND COMING

The Stouffville Free Press welcomes community event listings from non-profit groups and organizations. Please send a brief synopsis of upcoming events by email to stouffvillefreepress@rogers.com

Free Opinion - Tap Dance

While city dwellers complain about the dire state of Toronto's public transit system, Whitchurch-Stouffville has been well served by GO Transit.

Instead of waiting for gridlock to grind traffic to a halt on the 404 and Don Valley Parkway, Metrolinx – an Ontario Government agency created in 2006 to coordinate and integrate public transit serving the GTA – anticipated the needs of the future: A future that has already arrived in this community as a result of the explosion of growth since the installation of the Big Pipe.

In the last few years, GO train and bus services have expanded rapidly, providing a viable alternative to the car for many commuters, and offering a stress-free option for those visiting the city in off peak hours for arts, culture, baseball, basketball and – somewhat

belatedly this season – hockey. The result is not perfect – the ability to run more trains is hampered by the fact that there is only one track north of Markham – but we have come a long way in a very short time.

The Presto card, which has replaced monthly passes and multiple ride tickets on GO and YRT/Viva, along with a small number of TTC stations, is a step in the right direction for providing a seamless payment system for transit across the GTA. Like any new system, it has some frustrations – aside from the massive cost overruns to the province, and thus the taxpayer.

Although our GO station is now open longer, there is no ticket machine available during off-peak hours, which means riders without a card have to pay the driver in cash when they

board the bus. This creates a headache for riders, as more people replace cash in their wallets with debit and credit cards, and holds up the bus as drivers make change for passengers without tickets.

Presto offers a default system for people travelling between the same two destinations on a regular basis, which means train riders only have to tap on at the outset of their journey. Local riders should be aware, however, that when GO replaces a through bus service from Union to Stouffville with a train and bus via Unionville, the card 'reads' it as two separate trips. To remedy this, the rider has to press the override button on the Presto reader before tapping on and off both the train and the bus.

Free Laughs - Love and Marriage

Put your hand on a hot stove for a minute, and it seems like an hour. Sit with a pretty girl for an hour, and it seems like a minute. That's relativity.
Albert Einstein

No man is truly married until he understands every word his wife is NOT saying.
Anon

You can't buy love on eBay.
Anon

Marriage is a romance in which the heroine dies in the first chapter.
Cecilia Egan

I'm always looking for meaningful one night stands.
Dudley Moore

Men are from Earth. Women are from Earth. Deal with it.
George Carlin

I was married by a judge. I should have asked for a jury.
Groucho Marx

Nobody will ever win the battle of the sexes. There's too much fraternizing with the enemy.
Henry Kissinger

No matter how love-sick a woman is, she shouldn't take the first pill that comes along.
Joyce Brothers

If you want to sacrifice the admiration of many men for the criticism of one, go ahead, get married.
Katharine Hepburn

A proof that experience is of no use is that the end of one love does not prevent us from beginning another.
Paul Bourget

It is not uncommon for slight acquaintances to get married, but a couple really have to know each other to get divorced.
Anon

Love is temporary insanity curable by marriage.
Ambrose Bierce

I love being married. It's so great to find one special person you want to annoy for the rest of your life.
Rita Rudner

A man is incomplete until he is married. After that, he is finished.
Zsa Zsa Gabor

My wife and I were happy for 20 years – then we met.
Rodney Dangerfield

A good wife always forgives her husband when she's wrong.
Milton Berle

By the time you swear you're his, Shivering and sighing, And he vows his passion is infinite, undying – Lady, make note of this: One of you is lying.
Dorothy Parker

The trouble with some women is that they get all excited about nothing, and then marry him.
Cher

Free Thoughts

Jeff and Stacy's eager participation in 'The Disco Ball' to support Evergreen Hospice has allowed little Jeffy to see his grandparents in a whole new revolving light.



Readers Write - Library Services Critical

Library services are critical for a vibrant community. Literacy opens up new worlds for children. Librarians spark the imagination of young minds, and give students of all ages the tools and skills needed to explore, research and create. In Whitchurch-Stouffville, the library is also the town's "commons," where new residents (some of whom are also new to Canada) find information and new connections in the larger community.

The library's many functions are important to recognize and protect. In January, consultants presented council with a Corporate Efficiency Review. The recommendations are terrible for our library.

There are provincial guidelines for the size of libraries. Council first planned for library expansion to take place in 2009. This was postponed many times. Now we learn that money is still tight, and expansion will likely not happen until 2017.

There are provincial guidelines for staffing. Despite a boom in our population, the first new full-time position in a decade was added in 2011. Today we should have 21 full-time staff, but there is money for only 11. If council acts on the recently received recommendations, 2014 and 2015 will be the worst years our library has ever

seen with respect to staffing per residents served.

How do we compare with other communities our size in Ontario? With respect to per capita funding, we have been in last position and dropping for a number of years. We are now 44 per cent below that peer group average. And with respect to staffing, we are solidly in last place.

This is not surprising: our per capita library funding has fallen 12 per cent since 2006. In the meantime funding for parks, recreation and recreation facilities has increased by 38 per cent – far above the provincial average.

If council acts on the latest recommendations, the worst years for our library are still to come – even beyond the mandate of this council. While the mayor and council have done so many fine things for our community, the library has been a huge blind spot for many years. "There is a feeling that Town Council may not be fully appreciating the services provided by the library." This is the very last line in January's 76-page Corporate Efficiency Review report.

This lack of appreciation as demonstrated in annual budgets since 2007 is affecting all of us. More residents need to tell council immediately that an "average" library is the least we expect from our municipal tax dollars.

Arnold Neufeldt-Fast, Stouffville