



## Out in Write Field

# A Downtown State of Mind

By Bruce Stapley  
Stouffville Free Press

### New to town?

So was I back in 1977, a young 20-something looking for a town of my own where I could hang my hat, as well as a shingle, raise a couple of kids and get involved. We headed straight to Main Street, both to live and to set up shop whacking together the pine furniture that was so popular back then. Main Street was the heart of Stouffville, the place where people came to do business, meet and greet each other, and generally be part of the scene.

Thirty-two years later Stouffville is still welcoming newcomers looking to embrace, and be embraced by it. As for me, I've become one of the town's old-timers who can tell the recent arrivals who Abraham Stouffer was, how the Mayor got his start, and how Savex, that pathetic excuse for a retail endeavour, has been a blight on the downtown core for decades.

Maybe it's the accelerated rate of growth over the past 10 years or so, with so many people taking up residence several miles from the downtown core, that has led to some of today's new residents shying away from the downtown area. Which is a pity really. Sure they come out for the Strawberry Festival, they line the streets with their kids to watch the Santa Claus Parade, and they come out by the hundreds for the annual B.I.A. Easter Egg Hunt downtown. And I'm seeing no end of new faces in No Frills as I shop five times a week to try to keep the fridge stocked for a couple of teenaged boys. But I sense there are some who are missing out on the satisfaction that comes with making Downtown Stouffville a significant part of their routine.

They are depriving themselves of some of the true joys of small town life here in Stouffville. If you've never sipped tea, had scones and cream and browsed the exquisite gift ware at Candlelight and Memories, sat on the backyard patio and eaten lunch and quaffed an ale at the Earl of Whitchurch, or slipped downstairs and tasted the Greek delicacies to be found in the Café Athena just beside our newly opened jewel, Nineteen on the Park, then you've yet to buy into what your hard-earned mortgage dollars are going towards.

And speaking of Nineteen on the Park, if you haven't been in to check it out, do yourself a favour and drop by on your afternoon off to see what your tax dollars have built. Make a point of attending a function – the *Free Press* and the library were to present a special film night May 27 featuring two highly acclaimed Canadian movies, *Eating Buccaneers* and *The Tenant*. The writers and directors of both films were to be special guests at the event, which carries a mere \$5 ticket price. Judging by the near capacity crowd that attended the *Free Press* presentation of *Outsourced*, a wonderfully entertaining film festival flick May 15, our movie nights are going to be a big hit.

The point I'm trying to make is that there has to be more to living in Stouffville than shopping at Wal-Mart and sitting in front of a computer in

one's off hours. If you need some direction as to where to go in the downtown area, what restaurants and coffee houses to check out, which shops just scream to be visited, or how to navigate Nineteen on the Park, then call me and I'll meet you down there. Seriously. The *Free Press* phone number is 905-640-3733, and it's answered seven days a week.

My life has never been as complete as when I moved to Stouffville and proceeded to become familiar with what it had to offer, either in 1977 or today. I've been able to be a part of something that is as vibrant and energizing as it is soul soothing and laid back. Try buying into it. I promise you'll be hooked.

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## JUNE 4 IS DIABETES MANAGEMENT DAY AT STOUFFVILLE I.D.A

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## WALK AND ROLL FOR APHASIA AWARENESS

Almost everyone is aware of the physical disabilities that may arise after a stroke, but few know about aphasia, a speech and language disorder which often results from stroke and brain injury.

Aphasia profoundly changes the most basic of human skills – the ability to communicate. Estimates show that in Ontario alone, 40,000 people are living with the condition, which occurs when the language centre of the brain is damaged as a result of stroke, head injury or brain disease. Aphasia does not impair intellectual ability, but has an impact on people's ability to speak and/or make sense of words they see or hear. The resulting communication problems often lead to depression, social isolation or markedly restricted community participation.

The York-Durham Aphasia Centre (YDAC) is a non-profit community agency which serves residents of Maple, Stouffville, Newmarket, Whitby, Peterborough, Richmond Hill and Markham. YDAC, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, currently has more than 200 individuals enrolled in its programs.

Trained volunteers and students, in partnership with a team of speech-language pathologists, communicative disorder

assistants and social workers, provide services designed to assist individuals with aphasia to more effectively adapt to the condition. Participants learn to develop new strategies for communicating in an aphasia-friendly environment where they can interact with and learn from others experiencing the same difficulties as themselves. The result is a new group of friends, a new set of communication strategies, and renewed self-esteem and confidence.

While core funding is provided by the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, extra money is needed to fully support the programs offered. Every June, during National Aphasia Awareness Month, YDAC's seven program sites host a fund-raising program, reaching out to their surrounding communities for financial support, while raising awareness and understanding about aphasia.

This year's local Walk and Roll-a-thon takes place at Parkview Village Auditorium June 4 from 9:30 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 2:30 p.m., and everyone in the community is welcome to participate. For more information visit [www.ydac.on.ca](http://www.ydac.on.ca) or call 905-642-2053.

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