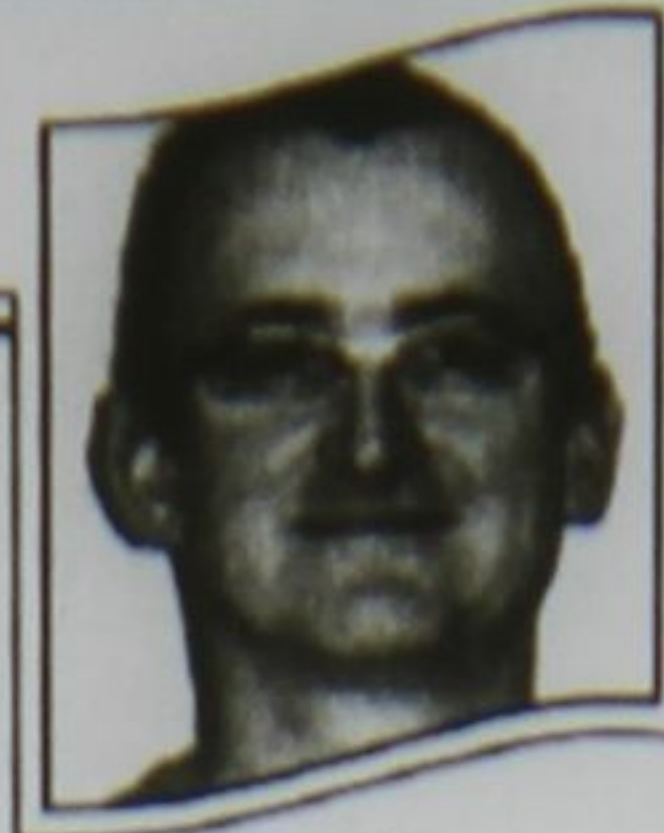


Talk Of The Town



# Scoring Goals For Town Unity

By Ben Embiricos

Jim Thomas in *The Sun-Tribune* recently made the point that racism may be at the core of some residents' objections to the rapid population growth taking place in Stouffville.

Perhaps for a small minority, this may be true. But for the vast majority of Stouffvillites I think the concern is simply that if the town gets too big it may become a suburb where people barely know their neighbours and have few things in common. I think most people want to welcome new residents and get to know them.

When my family came to live in Stouffville five years ago we were amazed at the friendly welcome we received. We moved into an older neighbourhood and so were surrounded by the "old Stouffville" every day.

The old Stouffville community spirit comes, I think, from a sense of civic pride, that is, a feeling that Stouffville is a great place to live and a desire to keep it that way. Part of that involves making new residents welcome so that they participate in the community rather than standing on the sidelines.

But if the larger subdivisions mean that the new and the old don't meet on the street so often, where will they meet? The two arenas will be meeting places for some, as will be the churches and many fine clubs and institutions. But it has to be recognized that these are not for everyone. As the community becomes more diverse and young families predominate, the challenge is to find facilities that will satisfy many needs and also bring people together.

Soccer has been popular in Stouffville for a long time. The excellent volunteer run Whitchurch-Stouffville Soccer Club was founded

in 1977 and has 1,250 members. Across Canada, participation levels in youth soccer now rival those of hockey.

In addition, soccer truly is the world sport, as a glance at the teams who have made it to this summer's World Cup Finals will show. I believe that the wide appeal of soccer in Canada and across the world provides an opportunity for the old and new Stouffville to meet.

Soon new town owned soccer fields will open at Bethesda Road to add to two fields at the Ninth Line arena. Even with this expansion, however, the club is still reliant on fields owned by Teva (formerly Novapharm) and at Bruce's Mill (owned by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority). This is because soccer continues to grow in Stouffville at a rapid rate and for many years investment by the town in soccer facilities was extremely limited.

Back in 2006, the club commissioned a feasibility report on the construction of an indoor soccer facility which would extend the season outside the short outdoor window (May to August). This was done at the suggestion of the town. The report showed that the facility was much needed. It is possible that an indoor soccer facility could also be used for other indoor sports such as carpet bowling, as is the case with the Richmond Green facility at Elgin Mills and Woodbine.

Wayne Emmerson, our current mayor, on announcing back in January 2010 that he was standing again in the October election, said that the construction of a curling rink would be one of his priorities for 2010-2014. This would probably cost more than an indoor soccer facility to build and I think it is fair to say that compared to soccer, it would only appeal to a pretty small group within

the community.

Since April 2010, however, the town has been working with the club to investigate further the possibility of building an indoor soccer facility.

Let's hope that the town wakes up and gets an indoor soccer facility built soon for the good of our kids and the future of this town. This would be a great place for the new and old Stouffville to get to know one another and would go a long way in helping that great Stouffville spirit live on.

## Relay For Life 2010

The Markham/Whitchurch-Stouffville Unit of the Canadian Cancer Society will host the 2010 Relay For Life June 18 to 19 at Markham Fairgrounds on McCowan Rd. at Elgin Mills.

Relay For Life is the Cancer Society's biggest fundraiser of the year. Held in numerous communities across Canada, the event brings thousands of people together to raise money for research, support programs and advocacy for cancer patients and their families. Teams participate in a fun, non-competitive environment, walking, running or strolling around a track for 12 hours throughout the night. It's a unique opportunity to celebrate survivors, remember loved ones and join the fight to find a cure.

Save your feet for the Relay and register online. You can participate in other ways as well, by volunteering as a helper, joining the survivors' victory lap or buying luminaries in memory of a beloved family member or friend.

For more information and to register, visit [www.relayforlife.ca](http://www.relayforlife.ca) or call the Cancer Society at 905-294-5925.



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