

Whitchurch-Stouffville's Independent Community Owned Newspaper

# Stouffville Free Press



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**Mailing Address:** P.O., Box 125, Stouffville, Ontario L4A 7Z4  
**Phone:** 905-640-FREE (3733)  
**Editor:** Kate Gilderdale  
 withrinkles@hotmail.com  
**Advertising Sales:** Bruce Stapley  
 bstapley@sympatico.ca  
 Jann Smit  
 905-640-3733  
**Graphics Department:** Travis Merrick & Sheri Smith  
 travis.merrick@sympatico.ca

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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](mailto:stouffvillefreepress@rogers.com)

## Free Opinion - Kafka's Parking Lot

Is it us, or is the library/leisure centre parking lot a tad confusing to navigate these days?

Just as we were getting used to the lovely new roundabout, it was pulverized and replaced by a raised concrete and grass strip and a sign forbidding entry to the north parking lot from Burkholder. Drivers must now do a loop around the south lot in order to park at the north end, instead of entering directly via the traffic circle, increasing traffic volume at the south end of the lot in the process.

Pavement markings, meanwhile, remain as they were, with arrows at the north entrance indicating right of way for southbound traffic only. For clarification, a small notice announcing 'Right turn permitted' has been tacked onto the back of the no entry sign. However, negotiating the sharp turn to be faced with an arrow pointing

in the opposite direction can be rather unnerving, especially when a southbound car is approaching.

Perhaps it's just a subtle attempt to encourage walking – and we certainly could use more encouragement for the lowly pedestrian in our car-centric society – but walking is not for the faint of heart, especially in the summer. That's when cyclists whiz up behind you on narrow Main Street sidewalks on their bell- and horn-free conveyances. Their assumption that you will not deviate from the path without constantly turning around to check for human-powered missiles often results in near collisions, and makes you wonder how long it will be before pedestrians are required to wear helmets and full body armour.

On one recent occasion, a cyclist roared up the sidewalk at warp speed, horn blaring (at least he had one) and

looked furious when the pedestrians who were blocking 'his' path failed to leap out of the way instantly at his approach. "Didn't you hear me?" he snarled as he swept by. While we recognize that heavy traffic sometimes makes it necessary for cyclists to use the sidewalk, it's their responsibility to ride with care and consideration for others.

Meanwhile, pedestrians get the whole of downtown Main St. to themselves on July 3 when the road is closed for a giant marketplace featuring artists and artisans participating in Whitchurch-Stouffville's 26th annual Strawberry Festival. The only traffic, apart from a massive tide of pedestrians, will consist of a smattering of cyclists, an army of strollers, and those little golf carts that whiz around bearing festival helpers with impeccable road manners.

Happy Canada Day!

## Free Laughs - Road Trip

When preparing to travel, lay out all your clothes and all your money. Then take half the clothes and twice the money.  
Susan Heller

Thanks to the Interstate highway system, it is now possible to travel across the country from coast to coast without seeing anything.  
Charles Kuralt

And that's the wonderful thing about family travel; it provides you with experiences that will remain locked forever in the scar tissue of your mind.  
Dave Barry

A vacation is like love – anticipated with pleasure, experienced with discomfort, and remembered with nostalgia.  
Anon

Most travel is best of all in the anticipation or the remembering, the reality has more to do with losing your luggage.  
Regina Nadelson

The only way of catching a train I ever discovered is to miss the train before.  
G.K. Chesterton

I travel a lot; I hate having my life disrupted by routine.  
Caskie Stinnett

Just get on any major highway, and eventually it will dead-end in a Disney parking area large enough to have its own climate, populated by large nomadic families who have been trying to find their cars since the Carter administration.  
Dave Barry

Too much work, and no vacation. Deserves at least a small libation. So hail! My friends, and raise your glasses, Work's the curse of the drinking classes.  
Oscar Wilde

A vacation is one-third pleasure, fondly remembered, and two-thirds aggravation, entirely forgotten.  
Robert Brault

I did not fully understand the dread term "terminal illness" until I saw Heathrow for myself.  
Dennis Potter

Apart from cheese and tulips, the main product of Holland is advocaat, a drink made from lawyers.  
Alan Coren

Los Angeles is awful – like Liverpool with palm trees.  
John Lydon

(Deer) stalking is all about the great fallacy of Waterproof. Nothing made by man or God is waterproof. The very air howls and sobs with laughter at the idea that I might traverse this vale of tears, this ethereal car wash, and remain toasty and dry.  
A.A. Gill, Letter From Scotland

Clouds hang like soaked laundry, wiping out whole mountains. But then, with a burlesque flutter of fans, they part and reveal a naked country of such heartbreaking, lovelorn beauty; thatches of pale sunlight, like spotlights, race across its curves.  
A.A. Gill, Letter From Scotland

## Free Thoughts

It's Strawberry Festival Time!



## Readers Write - Town Growth

Ben Embircos's article on May 31, 2010 ("Scoring Goals for Town Unity") did more than simply advocate for an indoor soccer facility in Stouffville; it reminded readers (and aspiring politicians) that priorities for the next town council must be guided and informed by the new social realities of a town that has grown by 37% since in 2006. I would like to draw attention to a related, but easily overlooked, municipal issue: library spending.

The public library annual reports indicate that membership and circulation has increased with population growth. At the same time, the town's annual reports indicate that the library portion of its operating expenses dropped from 5.1% in 2004, to 3.0% in 2007. An Ontario-wide 2009 municipal study shows that our per capita library spending was 24.3% below the provincial average in 2008 (\$28 per capita, compared to a provincial average of \$37).

This is troubling when combined with a reading of Maclean's 2010 "Third Annual Smart Cities Rankings" (also online). Our town has a greater proportion of university grads than ever before, but the rankings show that our "exposure to reading" has declined annually between 2006

to 2010, and that we have fallen significantly below the national average.

The survey shows the same reality for Whitchurch-Stouffville with respect to our exposure to the performing arts, museums and galleries. Below average grades with respect to library funding and the arts generally is not good enough, especially when businesses are increasingly interested in locating in "smart cities."

The town is planning to attract another 9,000 residents (2,800-3,500 new residential units) between now and 2013. I think it is crucial to know which candidates have a sufficiently broad vision of growth to make library and the arts a budget priority in the coming years.

There are other issues that should be vigorously discussed prior to the municipal election in October. Creative proposals for the positive integration of new residents into the community, as Ben Embircos reminded us, is paramount. And close behind, I would argue, is the need for leadership that understands the importance of robust funding for library and the arts.

Arnold Neufeldt East, 672 Millard Street, Stouffville, ON