

## AUSTRALIAN ODYSSEY

By Kate Gilderdale  
Stouffville Free Press

On July 25, after 17 years with the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Dorie Billich will set out on a new adventure with her husband, Ian.

Ian, a City of Toronto firefighter, is participating in a one-year job exchange with a fellow firefighter from Australia, and Dorie is excited about the opportunity to live and travel in a new and beautiful country. At the same time, she is sad to leave a long and rewarding career in her home town.

"I started at the museum as curator and worked there for 12 years. In 2007 I became manager of Culture and Museum Services," she said. Over the years, she has seen many changes, driven by a rapidly growing and increasingly diverse population.

"The opening celebrations at Nineteen on the Park was one of the highlights of my career," said Dorie, who is a regular patron at the downtown centre for arts and entertainment. "I think I have always tried to lead by example. If I want the community to support something, I need to be visible in supporting it myself."

Moving the museum's log cabin was also a memorable event, she recalled. "It was an exciting process and it really opened the museum up for moving into the 21st century with a new building and new programs."

The beautiful new facility, which opened earlier this year, incorporates the museum and a visitor and community centre which

can be used by a wide range of groups and individuals. "It's something that will serve the community for many years to come."

During the exchange program, Dorie and Ian will live in a suburb of Adelaide called Daw Park, which is in the Borossa Wine Valley. "We are about six or seven kilometres from the beach and six or seven to the downtown," she said. "While I'm there I hope I'll get more into cycling."

Their original choice was New Zealand, where, unlike Australia, "there are no poisonous animals," she said with a slight shudder, "but it would have been more of a challenge to arrange that." Meanwhile they have Googled their destination and are very much looking forward to living there.

"Australia is a stable, democratic, English-speaking country and I want to do some exploring, see the sites and learn about the culture." As for Ian, she's happy that his job won't involve driving the fire truck "on the wrong side of the road." She also mentioned a quote she heard about her new home that made her smile. "Australia has four meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner and beer."

Dorie will be very much missed by those in the community who know her. She is unflinchingly helpful, fun to work with and a credit to the town she has represented for the past 17 years. We wish her and Ian a wonderful year of discovery and look forward to hearing about her travels on her return.



Whitchurch-Stouffville manager of Culture and Museum Services Dorie Billich is accompanying her husband, Ian, on a one-year firefighter exchange program to Australia at the end of July.

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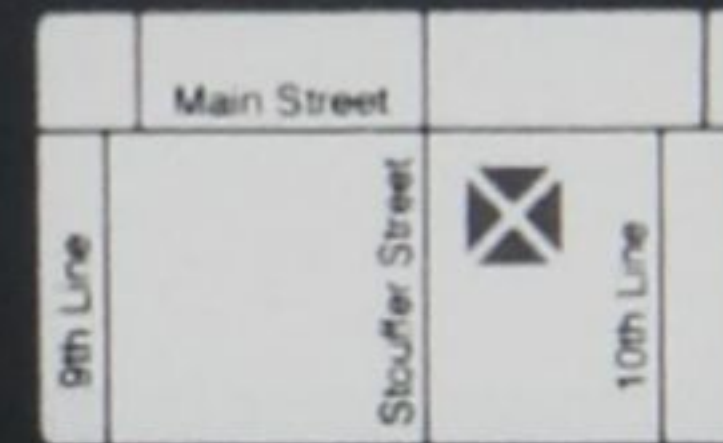
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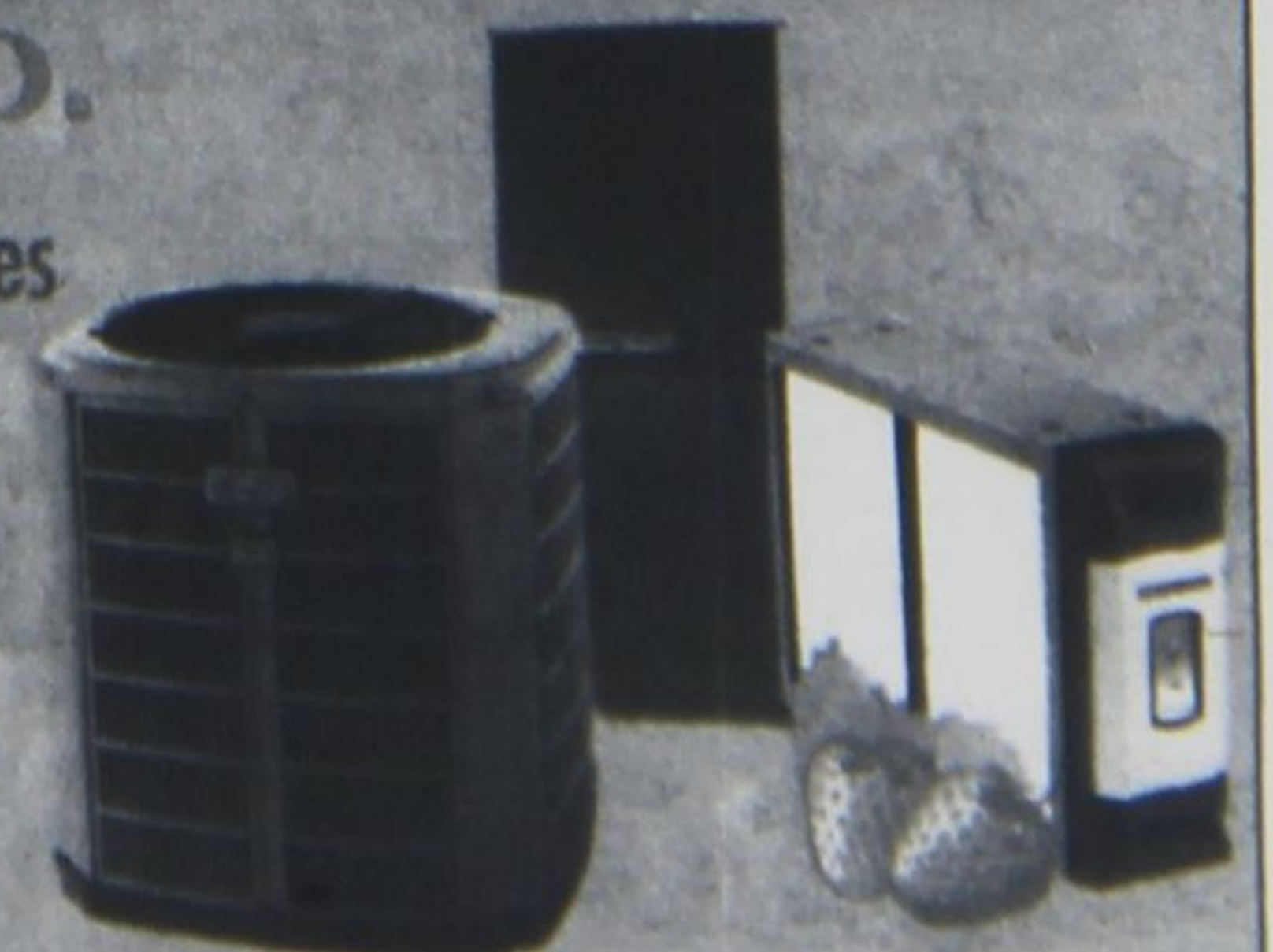
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