

## COLUMNS

### More things change, more some remain same

**T**he young man was telling Whitchurch-Stouffville council his grand vision of development for the southeast corner of Stouffville Road and Hwy. 48.

(Oddly, another fellow appeared at the next council meeting to say he was the registered owner of the property in the hamlet of Ringwood and he had no clue who the dude with the deputation was he'd read about in the local paper.)

It was 1983.

And the corner, briefly home to a community flower bed, looks pretty much the same 33 years later.

Same goes for the block of Main Street east of the intersection, except most of the houses are now boarded up like they were in a boom town that went bust.

Many of us may be numb to it, we pass by so often. It's like the peeling paint on the front of our own homes.

But it's an anti-welcome mat at the entrance to the community, other folks have told us in letters to the editor and on our Facebook page.

There is hope. The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is "in the middle" of a study leading to a development plan for these Main Street lands, from Hwy. 48 to Ninth Line, spokesperson Glenn Jackson said.

The widening of Main Street, complete with a partial boulevard, was a good start by a previous council.

The entrance to Stouffville is not flying solo in the list of stories that just won't go away.

Speaking of councils past, their redevelopment of Memorial Park can still fire up a crowd, be it virtual or real-life.

The bandshell in the event area of downtown park, where the outdoor pool once splashed, is a solid addition. Here's hoping it continues to breathe life into a gem of a property that has become more passive than active in recent years.



### Off The Top

with *Jim Mason*

And Mayor Justin Altmann has pledged to return the toboggan hill, one of the big losses in the park redevelopment.

But don't hold your breath waiting for the ball diamonds that relocated to Bethesda Road to reappear. The winding freeway that replaced them, dissecting the park with concrete and asphalt, isn't going anywhere. Unfortunately.

Gormley was supposed to be the answer to the town's lack of industry, jobs and business taxes. That was a few mayors ago.

A Toys "R" Us complex near Stouffville Road and Hwy. 404 was floated to reporters as a possibility. That toy story was never written. And although some business and industry has located along the 404 corridor in this town, there's room for plenty more.

Stouffville was simply known as the home to "THE flea market" a couple of decades back. Traffic backed up from the 10th Line facility, now known as the Stouffville Country Market, all the way through downtown on Saturdays and Sundays.

The market is now smaller and only still open, thanks to a series of two-year reprieves from its land owner.

Enjoy it while it's still here.

*Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune. Follow him on Twitter @stouffeditor*

## Mother Nature 1, Thomas 0

**I**n a split-second the lights went out. Previous to entering insensibility, I'd been in the process of delivering editions of the March 24 Sun-Tribune along my Elm Road route.

The next minute I was spread-eagled like a contorted octopus, the sharp corner of a cement step jabbed in my back.

Such was the scene neighbours Al and Edna Piette discovered while cautiously treading in penguin-like fashion towards their car. It was my good fortune they glanced to their right and discovered this helpless soul unwilling to budge for fear of worsening suspected damage.

Those remembering this particular morning, will recall the vilest of walking conditions experienced throughout the entire winter. A mixture of wet snow and freezing rain had transformed Whitchurch-Stouffville terrain into an extended skating rink. There was ice everywhere.

Realizing this, I still imprudently soldiered on, hoping to complete my rounds before noon. Unfortunately, the odds were against this optimistic objective. I flaked out with 40 paper drop-offs to go.

My rescuers were wonderful, ignoring their own safety to assist a senior unable to move a muscle. Not only that, the husband offered to drive me home while his helpmate contacted my wife. I'm extremely grateful.

At so shocking a moment, an entire life is supposed to flash before one's eyes. But not mine. What I concluded was: "There goes my school crossing guard job." I felt certain I'd broken my back. Oh the relief when, with the aid of two supporting arms, I was able to stand erect.

As stubborn as close associates know me to be, I



### Roaming Around

with *Jim Thomas*

refused an ambulance trip to hospital or even a family physician check.

"All they'll do is prescribe two Tylenols, a glass of water and rest," I said.

The personal diagnosis was two fractured ribs.

Those who've suffered through this type of injury know the accompanying discomfort. For me, climbing a single flight of stairs to my computer room was pure agony.

So was entering and exiting the car, not to speak of crawling in and out of bed. Each and every undertaking felt like a time to take me under. Periodic moans and groans didn't enhance the atmosphere either.

Fortunately, my hapless date with near-fate occurred prior to the Easter weekend. And while I missed two significant worship services, Good Friday and Easter Sunday, I'd whipped myself into sufficient shape by the following Tuesday to maintain my crossing guard responsibilities.

So all's well that ends well. I'm back to normalcy with ice grips attached to my footwear just in case Mother Nature again gives me the boot.

### Help is on the way

Breathe a sigh of relief, parents and children. The Millard St./Glad Park Ave.

intersection will soon become a four-way stop.

This is the word from Ward 4 councillor Rick Upton. "Your (crossing guard) persistence has paid off," he said.

The decision follows nine years of requests and debates.

At present, north/south Glad Park Ave. traffic must stop, but east/west Millard St. passage remains unobstructed. The latter will change once proper signage is installed. Close to 300 students from St. Mark and Glad Park schools utilize this intersection every school day.

### Tickets still available

Performers, including two-time Juno nominee Jason Wilson & The Perennials, will be featured during a concert Saturday at the Lebovic Centre for Arts & Entertainment - 19 on the Park.

Participants will also include Stouffville folk musician Greg Mashinter, The Tudor Consort Chorale and legendary musician George Dimitri Sawa.

Concert time is 7 p.m. Admission is \$35. Net proceeds will go to the Stouffville Cares' Syrian refugee sponsorship fund.

### Big bike brigade

Stouffville's Big Bike brigade is again being marshaled by the Lions Club. Participants will pedal off from Boston Pizza in the Walmart Plaza May 18 at 3:30 p.m.

Seat reservations are priced at \$50 with no limit on what can be pledged. Proceeds will go to the Heart & Stroke Foundation. Through the years more than \$17,000 has been raised.

Pledge forms are available by calling Joe Cote, 905-640-2294.

*Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 65 years.*