Free Front Lawn Library a Hit With Passersby

By Kinjal Dagli Shah

Walk by Karen Sawyer's house on a summer afternoon and you will likely find the family sitting on a bench outside their home, each engrossed in a different book. A couple months ago the Stouffville resident started what is called the Little Free Library, which basically functions out of a little box filled with books outside her house that anyone can borrow from or lend to.

It all started when Karen asked a colleague at work how she always had an interesting book to read. "I had noticed they weren't marked library books, and she told me they were from the Little Free Library outside her house," said Karen, adding, "A month later, we were visiting some friends in Waterloo and they had one at the end of their street. That was it! 8-year cracks

Not sure how well it would be received but intrigued all the same, Karen and her children picked out a beautiful turquoise box, added books they wanted to share, and announced the venture with the help of some sidewalk chalk. They waited for people to stop by and participate.

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She also found more information on the have been confusing. Three days after movement.

"The Little Free Library is a movement that was started in the United States by the son of a much-admired school teacher after her death. It was a way of recognizing his mother's love and passion for books. I consulted the website and realized that I could register. I signed up, and am now an official LFL chartered steward. I am quite proud of that. There is a vibrant on-line community," explained Karen.

The June showers dampened some of the books but not Karen's spirit. The bigger blow came when the Little Free Library disappeared, and so did the books. "While walking along Main Street one day, I saw a lovely glass lantern and thought it would make a lovely library. My 8-year-old son volunteered to fill all the cracks and holes with silly putty and we filled it with some of our favourite books. My children love their books, but they also loved the idea that other children in the neighbourhood would want to exchange books. We would have an ever fresh supply of bedtime stories. But I think the name 'Little Free Library' may

have been confusing. Three days after proudly including the children's lantern in our adult box, and filled with everything from Captain Underpants and Percy Jackson to Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator and Charlotte's Web, the whole lantern, books and all, was taken."

Generous as the community that we live in is, an army of neighbours, friends and other moms offered to donate and replace the books that were lost. "One mother in particular, Jennifer Babin-Miller, did a collection of books to fill the bin. I was overwhelmed by the generosity of this town," said Karen.

Back in business, the Little Free Library is now Stouffville's own and ready to open up new worlds to anyone interested in taking a peek.

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Karen and Derek Sawyer and their children Ben and Emily bury their noses in books from the Little Free Library in front of their home. Helena Tsapoitis-Barbesin photo.

Stouffville Honda Breaks Ground



Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Justin Altmann (second from left) digs in as Stouffville Honda held its official ground breaking July 28 at the Auto Mall at Hwy. 48 and Millard St. Councillors Ken Ferdinands (far left) and lain Lovatt (far right) look on as Honda Canada president Jerry Chenkin (third from left), Stouffville Honda dealer principal Kevin Pearson and Honda Financial Services president Tetsuo Oshima also wield shovels. The full service dealership, which is expected to be completed in early 2016, will be the fifth car dealer in the Mall that currently includes Toyota, Hyundai, Chrysler and Nissan outlets.

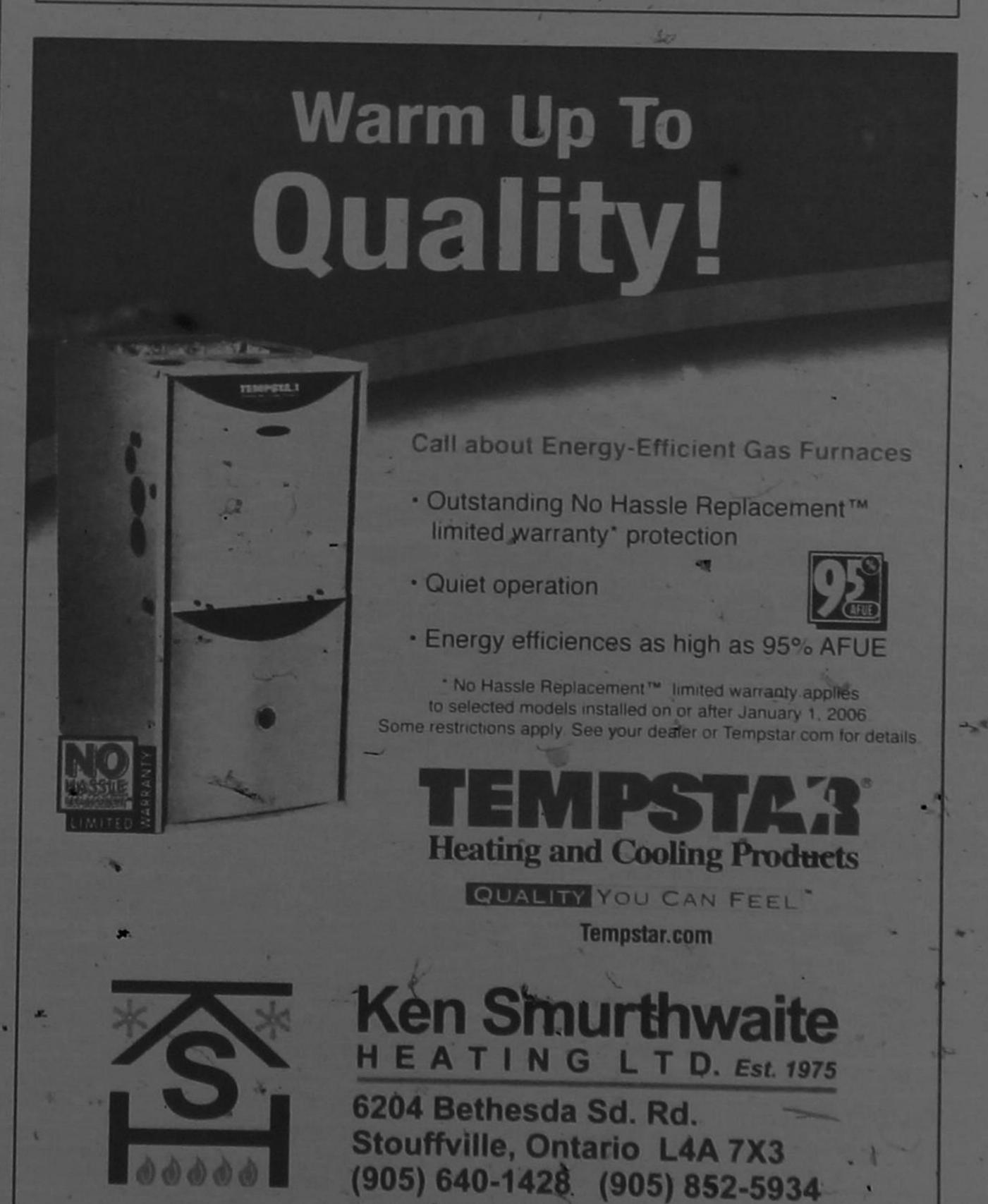


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