

## Out in Write Field

# Spartans exhibit write stuff



By Bruce Stapley

They're back, and they're keen.

And while that tired, much maligned institution known as Stouffville District Secondary School creaks through one last year before giving way to a spanking brand new, hi-tech structure to the south west, there's a group of young would-be journalists who are determined to see the old learning factory go out on a high.

It all started a year and a half or so ago when Ian Boyd, Stouffville's high energy sporting goods retailer, addressed the school's parent council about what they saw as a festering public relations issue. According to some naysayers out there, the school was becoming a holding tank for teenaged malcontents and n'er-do-wells who were not only cerebrally challenged, but had a predisposition towards lawlessness and general civil disorder.

Not so, insisted Ian and the other parents. And to prove the point, he suggested the students be given a regular page in the local newspaper to accentuate all

the positive stuff going on at the school. He even offered to go out and line up sponsors for the page from among the Stouffville business fraternity.

And thus was born Spartans Speak, which made its debut in the first ever edition of the Stouffville Free Press last December. Under the guidance and gentle prodding of SDSS teachers Pat Dipede and Carola Schmidt, a band of budding newspaper types went to work compiling interviews, reports, dispatches and pictures relating to school activities, students, and staff.

There were glitches; missing pics, wonky email addresses, deadlines barely made and a proofing process that never did get perfected. But the finished product was polished and impressive, inspired even, with the Free Press's resourceful production chief Travis Merrick making it all come together in print.

Copies of the SDSS page were proudly displayed in a special showcase in the hall of the school. But best of all, a few of the contributors used their participation in the page as a means of helping obtain a favourable post secondary school placement.

This year, Carola and Pat have had to break in a whole new gaggle of j-school (that's journalism school for the uninitiated) wannabes, ten in all. But the kids soon proved they were up for it. And through it all, this dynamic duo of facilitators have held onto that most indispensable of journalistic aids; no, not a mickey of rye – a sense of humour! "When is the deadline for the upcoming paper?" Carola anxiously wrote in a recent email. "And I don't mean just the day, but the hour, the minute and the second!"

I'm sure the aspiring young journalists appreciate what is being done for them, both by these dedicated teachers and by sponsors Ian Boyd of Boyd's Source For Sports, Jolana Pettifer of Jolana's Exceptional Home Décor and McDonald's Restaurants' Howard Cooper.

And with any luck, when Free Press editor Kate Gilderdale decides to step down one day, one of these up and coming journalists will be there to take her place!

## Tuning into Whitchurch-Stouffville

A conversation with his wife, support from a former CBC employee and help from a network of community radio station believers all lit a fire inside local resident Jim Priebe to launch a community radio station.

Once Jim latched onto the idea, he set aside some time every day to do research into the realities of how to make it happen. He discovered that the Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC) has a special class of licensing for community radio stations. He found a whole network of community radio station enthusiasts with a wealth of information to share. He connected with Jay Mowat, who was working to establish a community radio station in Erin, Ontario, and is about six months ahead of Jim in the process. At the same time he bounced ideas off ex-CBCer Ivan Harris.

Jim launched his quest for local community radio, WhiStle Radio, in May at town council. He did a presentation on his idea and asked for their endorsement. His strategy for his CRTC application was to gather as many community endorsements as possible. He also made presentations to service clubs, sports clubs and other local groups.

In his quest for community support, Jim also started doing web casts of Stouffville Spirit games. The glitches that always come with anything new were worked out and he will be doing Spirit game web casts again this year.

Other steps included filing all the necessary paperwork to incorporate as a not-for-profit corporation and raising money to hire an engineer to find a working frequency. Applications for a community radio station must have a working frequency along with proof that the frequency does not interfere with anything else. Many told Jim that there was no way he would be able to find a working frequency in the GTA.

Using money raised at WhiStle radio's first fundraiser, an engineer was hired and a frequency was found. WhiStle Radio's home is at 102.7 FM.

Armed with community endorsements, not-for-profit incorporation, a working frequency, a budget and a detailed project plan, Jim submitted his CRTC application in March of this year. The hearing was held on Sept. 11.

With CRTC approval, Jim is now ready to move on to the next stage of community radio development. He is putting together local programming, speaking with potential advertisers and raising money to purchase equipment. Response from the community is positive and enthusiastic. There is interest from youth in producing a teen show, and interest from various musical enthusiasts to put on shows focusing on everything from jazz to gospel to big bands. Other possibilities include broadcasting local council meetings.

To forge forward, WhiStle Radio is hosting its second fundraiser, A Swing Dance, on Nov. 4 at 8 p.m. The dance is being held at Cedar Beach Pavilion at Musselman's Lake.

To find out more information about WhiStle Radio or the upcoming Swing Dance, go to [www.whistleradio.com](http://www.whistleradio.com). Tickets can also be ordered by calling 905-640-6429 or from local merchants Barthau Jewellers, the Backyard Naturalist, We Rock, Shoeless Joe's, IDA Pharmacy and Sandy McKenzie State Farm. Tickets are \$40 each or \$75 a couple.



This article was written on behalf of Culture, Arts and Heritage of Whitchurch-Stouffville (CAHWS).

For more information, please log onto our website at [www.cahws.ca](http://www.cahws.ca) or call Pam Mandich at 905-642-4898.

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- Support our heritage, arts and culture and downtown revitalization
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- Work to minimize taxes by attracting business and clean industry



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