

Readers Write

Chamber welcomes the Stouffville Free Press

To the Editor:

Welcome to Whitchurch-Stouffville with your new venture. We applaud your courage in initiating a new newspaper in our community.

Along with the significant residential development that is scheduled over the next ten years, we also anticipate an increase in commercial and industrial growth. Therefore, we look forward to your insight into the factors affecting the business community, since this will be of primary interest to our members.

Best wishes with your new endeavour.

Helene M. Johnson

President & CEO

Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce

Celebrating Christmas Past



A collage of seasonal greeting cards, dating back to 1909, sent to community residents from friends and family in Canada and the United States.

Pictures courtesy of Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum.

Out in Write Field

Welcome to the Free World



By Bruce Stapley

"We may not be big but we're small." - Motto of The Vinyl Café, the fictitious used-record store in Stuart McLean's Sunday CBC radio show of the same name.

Eighteen years and a couple of million columns, human interest features, sports stories, obituaries, and a slew of newspaper ad sales later, I think we finally have our stories straight.

Maybe it's destiny, a classic case of the cosmic tumblers lining up just so. More likely, it's because we simply ran out of options. But for my long time fellow freelance local newspaper hack Kate Gilderdale and myself, throwing our collective hats in with the Stouffville Free Press just felt like the right thing to do.

After all, we had kids born the exact same day when we shared a good neighbour fence on Main St. back in 1978. Why not preside jointly over the birth of another "baby" some 27 years later?

Especially when said publication is to epitomize the all-local philosophy of community newspapers instilled in us both by that most venerable Stouffville newspaper legend Jim Thomas back in the late 1980's. It was Jim's unbridled enthusiasm for a good local story, and his unfailing support and encouragement, that enabled us to realize our dreams of using whatever creative talents we had on an everyday basis in the local paper.

When Whitchurch-Stouffville This Month was founded by a few like-minded acquaintances in 2001, we jumped on board; Kate as editor, I as ad sales rep and columnist. And when the need for a revival of an independent local newspaper concept became increasingly apparent in recent months, we dove right in, along with an enthusiastic and committed group of backers; business types, professionals and residents whose collective time spent living and working in Whitchurch-Stouffville adds up to just under a gazillion years!

Kate has been given "Free" reign (thus the name "Free Press") to do things her way as editor of this paper. I have free reign as well -- to get out there and spend every waking moment trying to persuade the town's local businesses to rally around us and take out ads in our paper. And I'm not above trying to convince my customers to adopt a somewhat zany, offbeat approach to advertising.

So if you find this publication slightly quirky, it's our fault -- Kate's and mine. We've always talked about the day when we'd be given the chance to print whatever we wanted in a Stouffville paper. That day has finally come.

And it should be pointed out that 'quirky' here means 'fun', and our readers are encouraged to join in by way of letters and submissions. After all, we're a small paper in a town that can still lay claim to small town status, relatively speaking. If Stuart McLean hadn't already coined the motto of the Vinyl Café, we would have had to.

Oh, and if by chance you don't like something, if you read a story that rankles a bit, call Kate. I'm just the ad sales guy.

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