

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE THIS MONTH

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Local News Views Happenings
Whitchurch Stouffville this month

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Opinion

Arts Land Backstage Role In Whitchurch-Stouffville

Scrooge came early to the arts community in Whitchurch-Stouffville when council voted against using the old town hall as a permanent cultural facility.

Instead, the ground floor of the building will become home to the Silver Jubilee Club, which is currently located at the southwest corner of Market and Main. The decision was made, with unfortunate haste at an afternoon council meeting Dec. 3, and with little regard for the years of hard work spent raising funds and awareness of the building's heritage on the part of the Clock Tower Theatre group and other concerned residents.

It also failed to acknowledge the groundswell of support for the arts in Whitchurch-Stouffville, the hundreds of people who showed up for the Clock Tower Artists' Studio Show and Sale last month, and a large and growing community of young performers who are obliged to use out-of-town venues to showcase their talent.

Council's rush to push the motion through indicates that the majority of our elected officials dismiss the important role a vibrant arts community could play in revitalizing our downtown core, not to mention improving the quality of life for residents of all ages. And although the mayor has acknowledged that the town needs a venue for arts and culture, the immediate prospects do not seem bright.

We have been told that a theatre and arts facility will be an element of a leisure services assessment, due out next June. We only hope that it will not follow the time-honoured path of royal commissions, with endless discussions and meetings resulting in yet more years of inaction.

Once again on New Year's Eve, Mayor Wayne Emmerson hosts his annual community party with the help of local volunteers. The tradition, which the mayor started as a personal initiative eight years ago, has become one of the most popular events on the local calendar, with approximately a thousand people showing up to participate in recent years.

We salute Mayor Emmerson for his effort in bringing the community together for a great family party, where newcomers can get to know their neighbours and the rest of us can renew old friendships. If ever there was a reason to resist becoming an extension of the urban sprawl to the south, and living up to our motto of Country Close to the City, this is it. Happy New Year, everyone.

Letters

Development threatens 'country close to the city'

To the Editor:

My family and I are concerned that all the numerous developments proposed for our town will make Stouffville anything but "country close to the city". At over 40,000 projected population, we will be a small city; we will lose that small town atmosphere, our friendly community.

So many residents came here to get away from

Scarborough, or even Markham, from the horrendous traffic, increasing crime, polluted air and cramped housing. We have lived here for 32 years and enjoyed the relative peace and tranquility, disturbed only by the garbage dump controversy and the spectre of a Pickering airport threatening to inundate our town with noise and air pollution.

We know there has to be growth, but why does it have to be so massive and so rapid, before anyone has had a chance to assess its impact on the town, on our water supply, our roads, our medical facilities, our policing service and other facilities?

We know the developers want to earn their millions and quickly go on to pave over the

See 'Development' page 6

Sounding Off

Are you familiar with the Concerned Citizens of Stouffville and do you think this group fills a need in town?



ANNA UTROSA

No, I am not familiar with the group but there is need for a group like this. We are concerned Stouffville is growing too fast and there is no transportation system that leads out of town. We have other concerns as well.



CATHRYN HEPNER

No, I haven't heard of the group but I think we need to think about the planning in Stouffville. There are traffic, housing and other issues. If we're not careful we'll lose our small town appeal and turn into Markham.



VALERIE ASHTON

Yes, I just read something in the local paper about the group. I thought they were concerned with the growth in Stouffville. I think growth is inevitable whether we want it or not.



FRANCES LAING

Yes, I am familiar with them and there is a need for this group. It would be nice if they could help preserve the small town atmosphere without compromising growth. Growth should be managed.



WAYNE HARRIS

No I am not familiar with this group but I'm concerned about all the moving around of stores and organizations leaving empty buildings. I would like to see more emphasis on encouraging new businesses to fill these voids. If there is a development plan I'd like to see it in the paper.