

**WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE THIS MONTH**

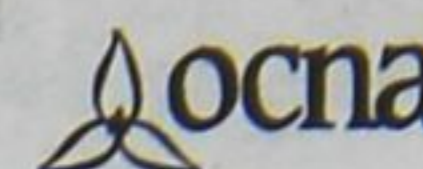
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**whitchurch Stouffville this Month**

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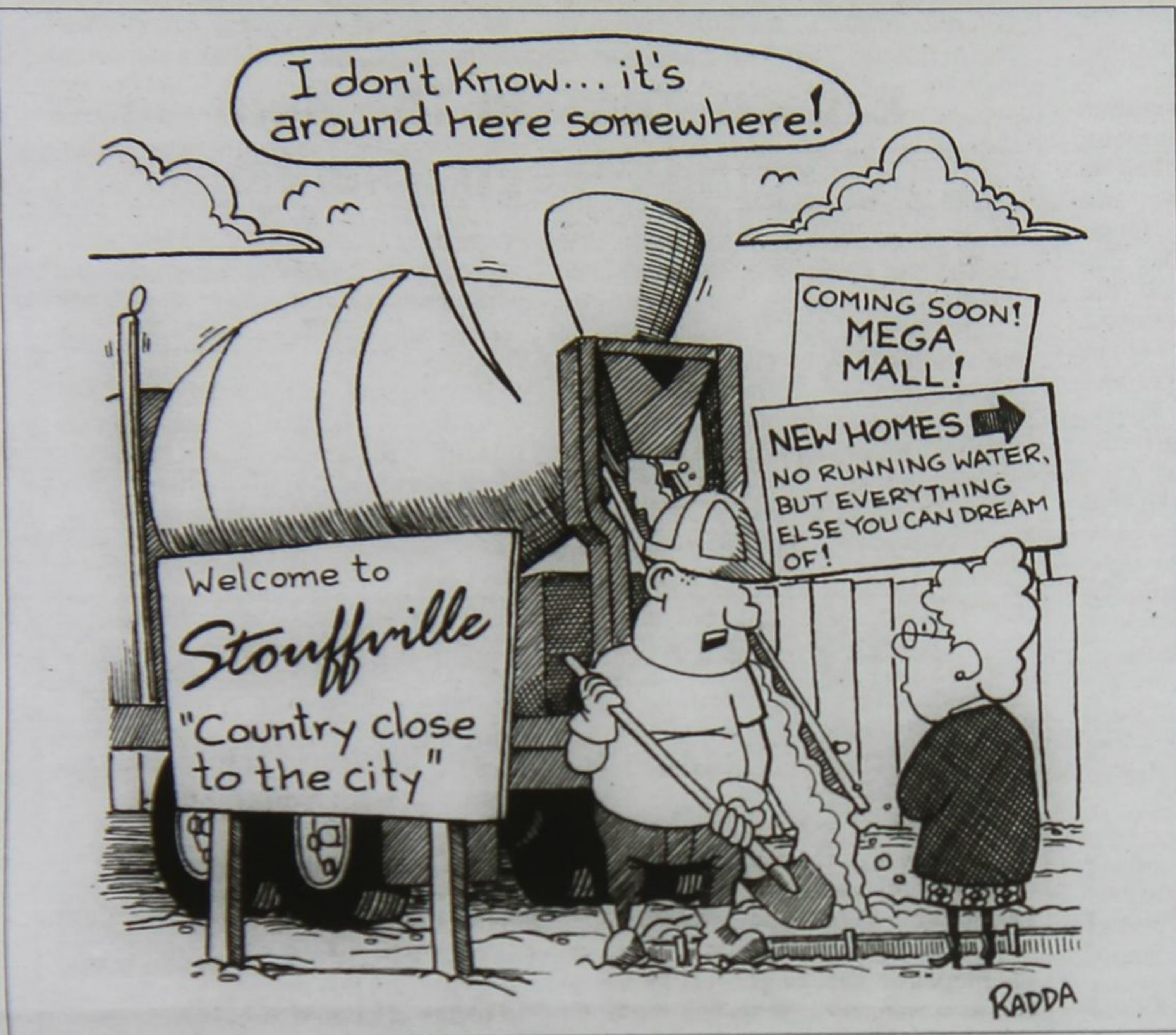
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**Opinion**

**Opening Doors To A Better Future**

If a plan to build a 'big box' shopping complex at the west end of town on Hwy. 48 is approved, Whitchurch-Stouffville could move a giant step closer to becoming just another faceless Toronto suburb.

It is encouraging, however, to note that the mayor is reviving the idea of transforming the old town hall into a theatre and arts centre, a facility which could become the focal point of downtown renewal and provide an opportunity for Stouffville to maintain its small town ambiance. At the same time, providing services which will please everyone in an era of unprecedented growth is no easy task.

Residents want to live in a country setting, but many of them also want easy access to big stores, fast food outlets and state-of-the-art recreational facilities. One of this community's biggest problems is the lack of a viable alternative to Main Street, which is becoming increasingly clogged with through traffic.

Downtown, empty store fronts and neglected buildings in various stages of decay have become a blight on what was once an attractive and bustling community centre. Despite this, some excellent stores continue to do good business, proving that the concept of a vibrant downtown should not be dismissed as an impossible dream.

While the decline of downtown centres is a problem faced by many communities as suburban sprawl engulfs the landscape, some have managed to buck the trend. Years ago, a bypass was built so that through traffic could avoid Unionville's picturesque Main Street, which was once on a direct north-south highway. Queen Street in Port Perry is another beautiful example of a successful downtown filled with delightful and unique stores, while chains and fast food outlets are located on the highway which bypasses the town centre.

Developers build big box stores because people shop in them. At present, a lot of residents shop elsewhere, and building new stores will encourage them to spend more money here, as well as providing more community jobs.

With leadership from council and support from residents, we believe it's possible for convenience and small town charm to co-exist. As we prepare for an influx of visitors for Doors Open Whitchurch-Stouffville on June 5, it's worth remembering that we're celebrating our heritage.

And it's a rich and wonderful heritage, one that we should all appreciate and seek to preserve.

**Letters**

**Hospital parking fees a taxing issue for residents**

To the Editor:  
 Re: Hospital parking a hot ticket concern.  
 The cartoon was right on the money, so to speak. "Where Has All The Money Gone? -- Long Time Passing!" Does that sound like an old refrain?  
 Remember when the government brought in the lotteries to raise money for the health care system? Remember when casinos were

allowed to open to raise money for health care? Both of the above are huge money generators, raising millions and millions of dollars, yet nothing has changed.  
 Now we're being "taxed" again to use the Markham Stouffville Hospital parking lot at rates even higher than in downtown Toronto. I remember a time when parking was free at hospitals. You are there

because you have to be, not for recreation, or a jolly day out seeing the sights.  
 Where is all the money going? We need answers. Write to your MPP and MP and demand answers! And make sure to send a copy to the chairman of the board of directors of Markham Stouffville Hospital.  
 Helen McKenna  
 Goodwood

**Sounding Off**

**What are your feelings about the proposed power centre for the corner of Stouffville Rd. and Highway 48?**



**CHARLENE JONES**  
 It has challenges and it has possibilities, so that if it is handled well it will serve the growing Stouffville community.



**DEBBIE GREENHAM**  
 I'd like to see different stores rather than the big box stores which we have close enough around us.



**JIM BELL**  
 I'm worried that too much growth too quick will hurt the small town feel that I love so much.



**LAURA POWELL**  
 I have mixed feelings. My concern is traffic congestion and the fact that shopping is again going west from the main downtown core.



**PAUL OBERT**  
 I'm willing to drive to Markham for those type of stores. I like the country effect.