

# Rural Reflections

Signs Reflect Our Changing Landscape

by Ruth LeBlanc



Looking at the world through rose-coloured glasses can sometimes be a dangerous thing.

They colour the reality of what you see with what you want to see. Take, for example, rural country living. Until very recently I was convinced that I was living in a country sanctuary, untouched by all the progress growing and popping up everywhere except, of course, around my little piece of the pie at Musselman's Lake.

Boy, have I been living in a bubble. Driving down our treed and

shady cedar-lined road, I have always had the best of both worlds. A perfect blend of country, just a short jaunt from the city.

My thinking in hindsight was too like Pollyanna's -- too perfect, not realistic, just the life I wanted to hang on to, my perfect, impossible country dream of wide open spaces that would always remain that way. I think this mentality comes when you have lived in the city too long.

The other day, when driving north of Stouffville on the 9th Line, I took a good, long, hard look at what was happening all around me and on my own street. My rose-coloured glasses lost their glow and I saw the signs of things to come staring me in the face.

Real estate signs I have passed countless times began to sink in with their meaning leaving me a little shell-shocked. Those numerous signs stand in farmers' fields, open fields and places that are home to wildlife and hikers alike. A lone hawk sat on one of the poles, looking as dismayed as I felt.

At the corner of 9th Line and Bloomington Rd. there will be a new development of homes. The pond at this corner is home to a prehistoric blue heron that flies between the different little pools of water, landing quietly and gracefully. I worry about

how the wildlife is going to survive as the land gets developed around its natural habitat.

Drive around the lake and virtually every vacant plot of land is up for sale. This is not necessarily a bad thing. The Oak Ridges moraine will keep us protected and development does not mean death to a community, but new life celebrating what we as rural routers value.

This month my hubby and I will have spent the last 19 years living at the lake. We love our quiet lifestyle and used to place bets on how fast the lake would develop. In 1984 we thought if we had 10 years without the lake exploding with homes around us, it would be a very good thing.

Now, nearly 20 years later, the inevitable has started to happen. Our little street at the lake will soon have new homes in the vacant, forested fields. If they like it half as much as we have, they will never leave. Humans are creatures of habit and old habits die hard. Not welcoming change is human because of the fear of the unknown. Therein lies the necessity of the occasional use of those rose-coloured glasses.

Just remember, builders build houses but people make the community.

## 2003 Music Award

Wanda Stride, organist and choir director at Stouffville United Church, is the Music Town, Ontario award recipient for 2003. The awards' presentation was made by last year's winners, David and Sharon Baxter, at the 14th annual Sacred Music Festival June 26. The concert was part of Whitchurch-Stouffville's Strawberry Festival weekend.



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Willowgrove Primary School, located on McCowan Road in Stouffville, is adding a Junior Kindergarten program this September.

The school was established in 1994, offering Kindergarten and Grade 1. It was expanded in 1995 to include Grades 2 and 3. The school emphasizes Christian values and has a strong focus on outdoor education.

The teacher for the Junior Kindergarten program will be Collette Warriner. She has over 20 years of teaching experience at North Markham Nursery School.

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