

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE THIS MONTH

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Whitchurch Stouffville this Month

LOCAL NEWS VIEWS HAPPENINGS

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Opinion

Cultural Oasis Deserves Town's Support

Whitchurch-Stouffville has the great good fortune to contain the only free admission public art gallery in York Region.

The Latcham Gallery, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, is a cultural jewel in a town where the arts have often received short shrift. In addition to hosting an exciting and diverse program of exhibitions, ranging from the recent haunting installation, *Engineered*, to the excellent annual Juried Exhibition, the gallery offers a wide range of classes, workshops and programs for people of all ages throughout the year.

It also provides a unique opportunity for local students to display their work in a professional setting and encourages hands-on participation in art activities for children on themed family days. But while the arts are a fundamental part of human existence, they are all too often dismissed as an elitist frill. Novelist Stephen King neatly summed up their importance when he said, "Life is not a support system for art. It is the other way around."

As a recent report on gallery financing pointed out, "What the library does with the printed word, and the museum does with local history, The Latcham Gallery does with art." To continue its heroic efforts, however, it urgently needs more money from the town.

Recently, the gallery successfully applied to the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) for a four-year grant, totalling \$200,000, with the proviso that it would have to lobby for increased funding from the municipality to replace all Trillium funding by 2007. In 1992, municipal support for the gallery peaked at \$48,049; for 2004, the facility has requested a grant of \$30,000. So far this year, the town has committed \$5,000, in addition to supplying rent free space and utilities.

Despite severe setbacks and financial uncertainty over the years, the gallery, which has been aptly described as a "cultural oasis for Whitchurch-Stouffville", has made it through its first quarter century, with the help of a determined and outstanding staff, more than 100 dedicated volunteers and generous local sponsors. It should not be forgotten that the gallery provides fiscal, as well as cultural, benefits to the community, attracting more than 9,000 visitors a year, many of whom also visit local retailers and restaurants.

Our new council has expressed a desire to provide more support for arts and culture in Whitchurch-Stouffville, a stance this newspaper heartily applauds. What better place to start than with our own unique public art gallery?



Letters

Local support for reunion was tremendous

To the Editor:

On July 2 and 3 Stouffville High School hosted its 50th Anniversary/Reunion celebration. An estimated 1,400 alumni and guests attended the open house and social activities over the two days.

This celebration was the success that the committee hoped it would be. We hosted alumni returning from every

corner of the world and they in turn were ecstatic to be given the opportunity to re-acquaint themselves with past classmates and friends. Regrettably it was not possible for us to locate all students and teachers of the past 50 years but the committee made every possible attempt to do just that.

The 50th Anniversary/

Reunion committee thanks everyone who had a part in making this milestone the success it was. The support provided by the many volunteers and businesses in town demonstrates why Stouffville is such a desirable community to live in.

I would like to personally thank all the committee members for the many

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Sounding Off

Do you think you will utilize the new bus service starting in September?



EVA HARDY

We (seniors) have waited long enough for transportation to get around town from the east side to the west side.



JAY SUGDEN

It will save me riding my bike all the time and it can get me places quicker (to work on time). They should consider bringing the service to Cedar Beach at the Lake (Musselman's).



JESSIE SARAFIAN

I will use it to go to work on the other side of town. I can use it for other places in Stouffville and save my parents from driving me.



JOSH MYNTTINEN

I will use it to go to work at McDonald's and just to get across town.



VELDA PHILIPS

I know I will use it. Mostly to go shopping; groceries, the drug store, and banking. It will be handy for doctor's appointments.