

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE THIS MONTH

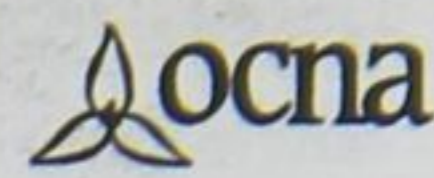
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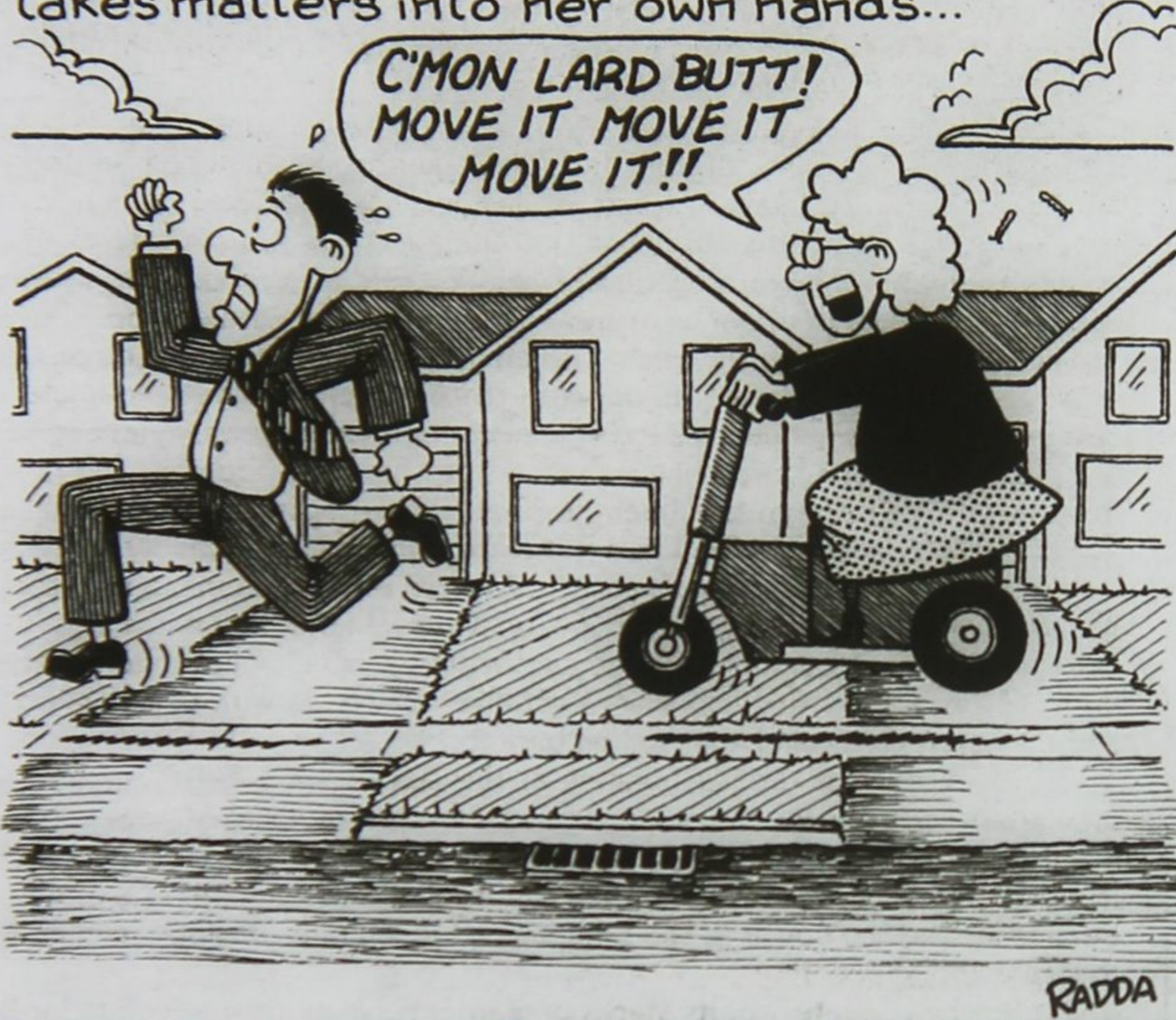


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Concerned over recent reports linking suburban living with obesity, Miss Thistle takes matters into her own hands...



RADDA

Opinion

A Step In The Right Direction

A recent CBC Radio report quoted two new American studies linking obesity and high blood pressure to suburban living.

The reason for this, the report noted, "was that people who live in the suburbs can't walk where they need to go as easily as people who live in cities. They use their cars a lot more."

Urban geographer Karen Tomic of the University of Alberta was quoted as saying, "What we know is the likelihood of someone being obese is much lower where they can walk to shops and services near where they live. We tend to see fast food outlets located on major arteries where there's a lot of car traffic. They're geared toward a car-oriented culture."

Sadly, our own community planners have embraced suburban sprawl with gusto. Sidewalks are either inadequate or non-existent in our brave new town and the majority of shops and services are located in areas which can hardly be described as pedestrian-friendly.

We believe that this issue should be front and centre as we approach the November municipal election. Although we cannot change what has already been approved and constructed, we can tell potential candidates for council that we would like to see more sidewalks and a renewed emphasis on our original downtown area.

Our former town hall, a fine heritage building, is being left to disintegrate. The patio area outside, which would make a fine location for a farmer's market, artist displays, musical performances or an outdoor cafe, is empty except during special events. Yet other communities have succeeded in recreating vibrant town centres, which can be reached as easily on foot as by car.

According to the CBC report, urban planners have become increasingly aware of potential health hazards posed by the suburban model. In the words of planner Austin French, "We create local service centres so that there's more commercial activities happening within proximity to the homeowner so they have more of a chance to walk for basic services."

One of the topics we focus on in this month's issue is health. We hope our new council will ponder the role they can play in promoting residents' health by creating an environment which encourages walking. If we want to maintain our small town atmosphere, we must take action now.

Otherwise, honesty will dictate that it's time for a new community slogan -- "Suburb close to the city."

Letters

The kids aren't okay, they need something to do

To the Editor:

Stouffville is a small town on the brink of becoming a large one. Since 1990 it has grown at an unbelievable rate. In the past five years alone, Stouffville has added a McDonald's, East Side Mario's, Burger King, Sobey's, Radio Shack, Blockbuster, Quizno's and many other facilities.

The problem is, aside from

the skate park, there's really nothing else for teenagers to do in Stouffville. If you don't have a car it's a long walk to any fast-food restaurant, and if you don't skateboard then there's no use for the skate park.

What kids, or more specifically teenagers aged 16 to 19 want is a place to go where they can hang out and not be

bothered by the police or the town.

Historically, teens in Stouffville have not had a great reputation. Maybe if they had something to do they wouldn't have this bad rep. Adults don't want kids loitering around their businesses and they don't want them to be causing trouble.

Please turn to page 9

Sounding Off

What does having pets mean to you?



DARLENE JOHNSON
 It's a relationship like no other. It's very therapeutic and a real stress reliever. Owning a pet makes it easy to meet people, it's a real ice-breaker.



DAWN SNODDEN
 To me it means companionship and it's fun. I have one of everything except cats. It's my passion and I love being around them.



FRASER WALLACE
 A pet is a friend when there's no one else around and they're good company. I like a pet to be loyal and I don't like an animal that's too large or one that misbehaves.



TABATHA JUDGE
 It's good to have a pet because you get to pet them all the time and if you don't have a brother or sister you can pretend it's your friend. You can talk to them, walk with them and play with them.



JOSH MUIR-BATEMAN
 It's really hard to have pets because they're a lot of work. I have three dogs and two cats. It's good to keep them inside in the winter. They are really fun and cute.