

OTR

FEBRUARY 2025 • NO. 86



ENDING ON A HIGH NOTE

Stouffville's Bach to Blues disbands
after 25 years of making melodies

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 Stouffville

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LAST MONTH IN STOUFFVILLE:



Kasador performing at Harmony Hall for Wintersong, the annual festival showcasing a diverse lineup of 50+ musical acts and street performers. The festival took place January 23rd to the 25th at multiple Stouffville venues.

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the first edition of *On The Road* for 2025. If you haven't already done so, please pick up a copy of the 2024 *Stouffville Year in Review* at Town Hall or any other Town facility. We didn't get a chance to mail it out because of the postal strike. It is a complete recap of all the great things that happened last year!

You can say this edition of OTR is heavy on retirements. David Barthau, a long-time Stouffville businessman, announced he was closing Barthau Jewellers late last year after 46 years. OTR's Bruce Stapley caught up with him to reflect on his tenure as one of Stouffville's top jewellers. Also calling it a day is the Bach to Blues Company. I recently sat down with some original choir members to reminisce about the old days, reflecting on the music, memories, and moments that shaped their history.

Happy February, everyone, and have an extraordinary March Break. The next edition hits the streets on April 2nd.

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Photographs on cover, page 4 and 7 by Casey Cunningham. Photo on p. 3, 19 and 22 by Valeria Mitsubata. Photos on p. 16-18 by Dennis Hristovski.

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Skating Under the Stars

by Brandi Pickering

2024 marked the grand opening of the much-anticipated Memorial Park Multi-Purpose Trail, quickly becoming a favourite spot for locals. This 275-metre pathway is built for year-round fun. In warmer months, it's ideal for walking, scootering, and rollerblading. As temperatures drop, the refrigerated trail transforms into a family-friendly skating destination, perfect for all ages. It's a place where kids can practice their first glides, with parents by their side.

Now open for the season, the Memorial Park Skating Trail offers Stouffville residents a place to make memories and stay active this winter. The trail was made possible through funding from the Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

Safety First

The trail operates only during posted hours when conditions are safe. It may close without notice due to weather or maintenance, so check the Town's website before you visit, or check onsite signage for updates.

This unsupervised trail is open to all ages, but users skate at their own risk. To maintain a safe and welcoming experience, hockey, shinny, and unsafe activities like speeding or horseplay are not allowed. CSA-approved helmets are strongly recommended, especially for children, and skaters under 10 must be accompanied by an adult.

Please follow the skating direction, avoid standing on the trail, and use designated areas for breaks. Pets, strollers, and food or drinks are not permitted on the ice. For added accessibility, wheelchairs and personal assistance skating devices are welcome when supervised.

Make your plans now to experience the beauty of skating under the open sky at Memorial Park or during a classic public skate session. This winter, you're never more than a short trip away from an unforgettable outdoor skating adventure with family or friends!

For more details, please visit the website at townofws.ca/skatingtrail

Don't Own a Pair of Skates?

Thanks to the Cutting Edge Pro Shops located in the Stouffville Arena and Stouffville Clippers Arena, that's no longer a problem.

Offering a wide selection of skates in all sizes, Cutting Edge makes it easier and more affordable than ever to get on the ice. A new rental program allows visitors to rent skates directly from the Clippers Complex or the Stouffville Arena and use them on the Memorial Park Skating Trail. The program offers an affordable price point, ensuring that more community members can experience the joy of outdoor skating. You can now rent high-quality skates and helmets, making it a convenient option for spontaneous winter outings.

For information on rentals, pricing, and availability, visit the pro shops at the Stouffville Arena and Clippers Complex or visit cuttingedgeproshops.com



Skating Trail Hours of Operation

9:00 AM – 9:00 PM, 7 days a week

New Arts Centre Shines with Stained Glass Splendour

by Susan Tucker



Standing in the middle of the Stouffville United Church's sanctuary, you are enveloped in what feels like an ethereal glow, as sunlight pours through the intricate stained-glass windows adorning the 132-year-old walls.

There is a sense of profound stillness, yet the space hums with a quiet, sacred energy, as if the very light carries the prayers and hopes of generations past.

It is through these stained-glass windows that the vision arose for one of Stouffville's newest performance arts venues: the aptly named Stained Glass Centre for the Performing Arts.

The church, formally the Stouffville Methodist Church, was built in 1892 by popular builder and contractor Nathan Forsyth. Additions were added in 1950 and 1977. It is located at 34 Church St. N. in the heart of downtown Stouffville.

Extensive renovations in the summer of 2024 saw the church pulpit transformed into a performance space, with a new stage, state-of-the-art sound and lighting systems, a new organ, and many other changes required to turn this space into a highly sought-after entertainment venue.

"We had Wintersong's primary headliner, Land of Talk, perform here in January to rave reviews," Parry said.

The incredible pipes from the 90-year-old organ still adorn the back of the stage, maintaining the wonderful historic element of the building.

"During the renovation, a solid foundation was discovered under the old stage," Eles pointed out. "It just showcases the quality of craftsmanship from back in the day."

"The acoustic quality is incredible, the space has been designed for maximum effect all-around sound, and for viewing, there is not a bad seat in the house," Parry said. "From floor level to balcony seating, there are no obstructed views so everyone can enjoy the whole experience of each show."

The Centre offers an exceptional space for all kinds of performances, from professional and amateur theatre to live music—whether it's a solo acoustic set or a full-on rock band.

Whether you're looking for an intimate performance space for smaller events or need to fill the house with all your guests, this new centre offers many options. It is fully accessible for anyone with mobility issues and has space downstairs to host receptions and green rooms for performers.

Visit stouffvilleuc.ca to book a visit or a rental.



Above: The Breck School of Highland Dance performed at the venue over the holiday season. Image provided by Stained Glass Centre.



From left: The Advisory Board for the project included Joanna Parry, Theresa Carr, Jean Painter, Winona Eles, Jim Eles, Nikki Devereux, Dave Duggan, Chris Farhner, Kathryn Burke, and Reid Andrews (not pictured).

Last month I received a full tour of the church from members Joanna Parry and project manager Jim Eles.

"The church members knew a change needed to happen," Parry said. "With a wealth of local talent and a venue known for its exceptional acoustics, the idea of creating a new theatre naturally came to life. It was all inspired by the community's passion for the performing arts."



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Ending on a High Note

The Journey of Bach to Blues – Stouffville's Choral Group with Heart by Glenn Jackson

The small newspaper ad in the *Stouffville-Sun Tribune* read: "Anyone who enjoys singing while raising money for worthy causes can call the music directors."

Well, a lot of people called the music directors, and for the next 25 years, Stouffville's Bach to Blues Company called the stage their home. Over 30 singers and accompanists were members at one time or another, gracing the beautiful

churches and theatres of Stouffville and surrounding areas.

Last June, the curtain came down for the last time.

"We came and sang, raised money, and had a lot of fun doing it!" said Ann Gage, Bach to Blues music director.

I had the chance to sit down with Ann and longtime members Liz Lightfoot, Luanne Griffin, Gary Burke, Gerald Reesor-Grooters, and Stewart McElroy

earlier this year to talk about the glory days and reminisce about one of Stouffville's most popular choirs.

"We started as an enthusiastic group of 26 people in the first year," remembers Luanne, who has sung with the group since the beginning. "We peaked with 32 people at one time. There was no commitment required other than attendance at rehearsals for the current season, so our numbers changed each season."



Left to Right: Original members of Bach to Blues
Stewart McElroy, Luanne Griffin, Gary Burke, Ann Gage,
Liz Lightfoot, Gerald Reesor-Grooters.

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To the interview, Luanne brought a large stack of what appeared to be every newspaper article, advertisement, and program ever published about the group. “I have everything from day one,” she said. There were enough memories to make a museum jealous.

Folk to Broadway and Everything in Between

The group formed in 1998. “Wanda Stride and I performed in a play in Uxbridge,” recalls Ann. “And we wondered what else we could do for the Stouffville community by way of a choir. We didn’t want acting, choreography, just voices. Hence, the Bach to Blues Company was born and, as they say, the rest was history.”

“We were not a church choir, but a choral group who loved to sing folk, Broadway, sacred, Celtic, Canadiana, and everything in between,” Griffin recalls. “We wanted to represent all genres.”

“I’d have to say my favourite show we ever did was the 60s Highlights concert,” said Geralde who spent over 20 years with

the group. Along with singing and being the flute accompanist, Geralde helped with marketing, promotion, and even directing on odd occasions.

Co-founder Wanda did double duty originally as one of the choir’s directors and their accompanist. Wanda went on to become a United Church minister. She created the group’s logo and came up with the choir’s name, Ann says.

The name Bach to Blues Company reflects the vast diversity of their

“We are a group of singers dedicated to producing beautiful mixed voice harmonies: who aim to share our love of vocal music by participating in concerts to entertain, or to help raise funds or awareness of noble causes.”

BACH TO BLUES MISSION STATEMENT, 2000

repertoire—everything from Johann Sebastian Bach’s baroque concertos to the traditional basslines of the blues.

Over the choir’s 25 years they were blessed with many accomplished and dedicated rehearsal accompanists and guest artists, both local and from Toronto.

Members of the group didn’t necessarily need to live in Stouffville. “We had members from Keswick, Port Perry, Markham, and Durham,” Ann recalls.

Singing in Many Venues

According to Luanne’s memory and substantiated by her stack of archival material, Bach to Blues’ first concert was on June 6th, 1998, at Christ Church Anglican as guest artists for another Stouffville choir, Men of Note.

A *Sun-Tribune* ad for another concert, held under the tent at the Christian Blind Mission on Stouffville Rd., mentioned that guest artists included “The Village Brass, soprano Lauren Christoff, and Edith Hawkins on the Celtic tin whistle.”

Although the group played many diverse venues over the years, they considered the Christ Church Anglican

Stouffville, on Sunset Blvd., their main stage.

“The Anglican Church was more accessible than other venues in town at the time,” Ann recalls. “Many of our audience were seniors, and they much appreciated the ease of getting into the venues where we sang.”

The choir gave performances over the years at Buckingham Manor, Stouffville Creek, Parkview Village, and Eastern Gate.

Music with a Cause

Advance tickets in later years were \$15 each, \$20 at the door. Ticket prices reflected costs such as accompanists, guest artists, insurance, and rentals.

They also contributed to local and some not-so-local charities, organizations, and individuals. “Over 25 organizations have benefited from over \$20,000 in contributions and donations from Bach to Blues over the years,” said Liz, who sang with the group for the entire duration. She is one of many who also performed in the old Music Mania shows of yesteryear.

Local groups that benefited from donations include the Whitechurch-Stouffville Food Bank, Markham Stouffville Hospital, Parkview Home Building Fund, Mayor’s Emergency Fund, Willowgrove for Fraser Lake Camp, and the Stouffville Emergency Care Fund.

In 2014, Bach to Blues special guest artist was Raven, a First Nations speaker, author, and storyteller, during their May Spring show at the United Church. Proceeds from that concert were donated to the water project for Pikangikum, a remote, fly-in Ontario First Nations community about 250 km north of Kenora, near the



Manitoba border, with a population of 2,200 people. This project aimed to bring running water and sewage-holding tanks to the community.

“We just couldn’t believe that in a country the size of ours and the wealth of resources that we have, there were people that didn’t have clean water,” Ann told the CBC at the time. “It hits home when you imagine your own grandchildren and children possibly being in that position.”

Bach to Blues continued their philanthropic efforts toward Indigenous causes by donating proceeds from a concert to the Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund.

“We always discussed whom we would donate funds to as a group,” Ann said. “Sometimes we were split on our opinions, but at least everyone had a chance to contribute.”

Various national and international groups have also been recipients of Bach to Blues’ generosity, including the Stephen Lewis Foundation and Habitat for Humanity.

Widespread Generosity

The group also routinely contributed to families and individuals who were going through rough times. Part of the 2016 Christmas concert proceeds went towards the family of former Stouffville resident Peter Reed. Reed, son of former Stouffville United Church Rev. Wayne Reed, was involved in a life-threatening

car accident in Richmond Hill in the summer of 2016.

Another recipient was Luke Anderson, a Stouffville man who suffered a spinal injury in 2002 that left him in a wheelchair. Anderson is the founder of the StopGap Foundation in Toronto.

Part of their Spring 2015 concert proceeds went to the Fraser Lake Camp at Willowgrove in memory of long-standing Bach to Blues member John McDowell, who died earlier that year.

“It was always important to us that the music came first,” Ann said. “We didn’t perform benefit concerts—we just happened to donate some funds from our concert(s) to a cause.”

Follow the Leader

“It was very clear from the beginning that Ann was in charge,” said founding member Gary Burke, who was in the group until 2013. “She told us at the beginning she would be the musical director and make music choices. She will listen, but ‘it’s not a democracy,’ she said. And for that, I am very grateful.”

“It saved a lot of feuds, and there were very few disputes—something a choir doesn’t need,” Gary said. “I did listen though!” Ann retorted with a smile.

All You Need is Love

Bach to Blues got worldwide attention in 2009 when, on December 7th at 1:30pm, musicians and singers worldwide

simultaneously performed The Beatles’ “All You Need is Love” as part of the Starbucks Love Project. The initiative, sponsored by coffee giant Starbucks, aimed to raise awareness of AIDS needs in Africa.

Bach to Blues were included in the video, singing at a hockey arena, proudly holding the Canadian flag, at just over the 3-minute mark. The video can still be found on YouTube.

The End of an Era

The choir is extremely grateful to the many people who supported them over the years in their rehearsals and concerts, not the least being their audiences.

Bach to Blues tried their hardest to keep going. Their last concert was a small Christmas 2023 concert, and they officially called it a day last summer. “Even though we tried to recruit—something we never had to do in the past—no one came forward. We had some male members pass away, and it was difficult to replace them,” Ann said. “So, we decided to ‘retire.’”

If there was one thing I noticed while talking to the group, it was that even as the music fades, their friendships, camaraderie, and genuine love for each other will continue.

As I wrapped up the chat, someone suggested they all grab a coffee at Starbucks. I’m fairly certain they spent the next couple of hours reminiscing about everything they forgot to tell me!



ROAMING AROUND with Jim Thomas



Contact Jim Thomas, thomas-jim@rogers.com

Happy Old Year

Whitchurch-Stouffville's past year has been 12 months of progress. While the silver-aged, like myself, may glance back with a yearning for the era in which we were a close-knit village, we should honestly admit we've now reached the level of a fantastic town. Thanks for this goes to a progressive mayor, members of Council and department staff, plus a bevy of dedicated volunteers. The Stouffville of 2025 is much improved over the Stouffville of 1951 when I first set foot on site. Indeed, residential, commercial and industrial build-up can create problems, but current positives far outweigh past negatives. Here are a few examples.

Strawberry Festival

The annual Strawberry Festival has become an entertainment anchor, welcoming up to 30,000 people during Canada Day weekend, many of whom travel a distance. The wheels of this year's Festival are already turning.

Terry Fox Run

More than 1,000 participants in the Terry Fox Run raised over \$85,000 in the 2024. This increases net earnings since 1982 to more than \$2,000,000, the eleventh highest in Ontario. 2024's event was co-organized by Stacey FitzPatrick and Adele Palmer.

Music Scholar

The 30th annual 'Student Music Scholarship Concert' played to a full house at Stouffville District Secondary School (SDSS). More than 400 students, representing nine schools, took part. The 2024 music award, sponsored by St. James Presbyterian Church, was presented by Rev. Joan Masterton to 17-year-old Kendall Jones, a Grade 12 SDSS student. Staff music director Diane Marlatt said, "Outside the school, Kendall is very involved in the community and at events in Richmond Hill, Newmarket, and Uxbridge. In addition, she's performed in competitions, including 'Stouffville's Next Star,' 'Markham Fair Teen Talent,' and the CNE's 'Rising Star' and 'Youth Day.' In Stouffville, Kendall has sung at several retirement homes and at local hockey games." Diane describes Kendall as being "very positive, leading by example with a love of music shining through at every opportunity." Replies Kendall: "I love being a part of an artistic community that continues to challenge and support me."

Watch Your Step

A Town safety measure that's winning public approval is the creation of a push-button illuminated Main St. crosswalk near the GO station. A warning, however: Pedestrians should never immediately step out from the curb when lights begin flashing, as some motorists are unwilling to stop.

Political Leader

After 27 years in municipal politics, including offices of mayor and councillor here, Fran Sainsbury has retired. In doing so, she leaves behind a record of service unparalleled by local legislators. A successful leader in the ultimate closing of a worrisome landfill site, the now 86-year-old Sainsbury later moved from Stouffville to serve as mayor of Clearview Township. She then spent the next eight years as a councillor in the Town of New Tecumseth which includes the communities of Beeton, Alliston, and

Tottenham. In 1981, Fran was named Stouffville's 'Citizen of the Year.' Prior to entering politics, she served on the teaching staff of Ballantrae Public School.

Warming Places

I'm on a mission. For the past six months, I've raised concern for people experiencing homelessness, who choose Stouffville as a temporary 'home.' During warmer months outdoor sleeping quarters, while uncomfortable, are common. However, during winter months, they're not. A warming place is needed.

Welcome Cyclists

During the past summer and fall, dozens of cyclists, many from Toronto, have regularly visited our Town, mostly on weekends. They're welcome. However, riders should know the same rules apply in Stouffville as in Toronto. Cycling three abreast is a risk of injury, even death.

Music at its Best

Past Stouffville residents have been treated to many exceptional music performances, but none better than a concert in Memorial Park, presented by the Kindred Spirit Orchestra, directed by Christian Alexander, and conducted by Matheus Coelho. The open-air audience was estimated at 4,000. Congratulations to the Town Events team for bringing this marvelous show to our community.

Provincial Champion

Congratulations to Stouffville's Brooke Beaton, 2024 provincial equestrienne champion. Competitions were held recently in Erin, Ontario. The 18-year-old was the recipient of \$500.

Driving with Caution

We've heard few complaints regarding roundabouts at Ninth Line North and Tenth Line South, but of several hair-raising experiences at Hwy. 48 and Bloomington Rd, largely due to the presence of many dump trucks. Approach with caution and obey the signs, police advise.

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BIRTHDAY PARTIES

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Latcham Gallery Provides *Threads for Thoughts* by Jeffrey Nye

What if, instead of scrolling on their phone, a person resolved to begin each day with a creative act? That is what Afghan-Canadian artist, Shaheer Zazai, did on January 1st, 2013, when he purposefully opened Microsoft Word to make a design using 2013 characters. What began as little more than a creative distraction from his daily scrolling eventually led Zazai into a new form of art production that he never intended to pursue. You never know where a resolution will take you.

All the works in Shaheer Zazai's new exhibition at the Latcham Art Centre, "Another Word for Translation. Another Thread for Thought." first existed as Microsoft Word documents, the cursor blinking, waiting for the artist's next decision. Gradually, Zazai became aware that his process was like the weaving of Afghan carpets—elaborately patterned

artworks created using grids of knots of different coloured thread. With that realization, he regarded his vibrant Microsoft Word pieces as "digital carpets." Zazai then began translating his digital carpets into actual handwoven carpets and, later, into Jacquard-woven tapestries. This led the artist into a conversation with his Afghan heritage and the interesting relationships between digital images and traditional textiles.

This exhibition includes examples of Zazai's wide-ranging digital carpet explorations: digital prints, videos, Jacquard tapestries, and handwoven carpets. Through these varied media, Zazai traces the technological progression from traditional Afghan handweaving to the development of the Jacquard loom, which informed the design of early computers. The exhibition is warm,

welcoming, and rich in ideas, reflecting the artist's playful approach to art making. This must-see exhibition is on view from January 10th to February 22nd.

The Latcham Art Centre is located in the Leisure Centre, 2 Park Dr. Admission is free! Visit latchamartcentre.ca



Above: Visitors can get up close and personal with the works of Afghan-Canadian artist Shaheer Zazai at the Latcham Art Centre until February 22nd.

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(Left to Right) Mayor Lovatt, Trish Singh, Jimmy Singh, Councillor Sherban at the Vibe ribbon cutting ceremony on January 10th.

Vibe Event Space

Vibe Event Space is ready to host your birthday parties, anniversaries, small weddings, corporate events, and more. The idea to create an event space started when residents Jimmy and Trish Singh went searching for a dedicated event space in town for their child's birthday and couldn't find one. They are excited to bring this opportunity to their hometown and can't wait to welcome you.

The space is located at 117 Ringwood Dr. Unit 6. Email vibestouffville@gmail.com to schedule a tour or book your event.



(Left to Right) Matthew Mesa, Councillor Sue Sherban, Jeremy Mesa, Jose Mesa, LuxeBeam owner Minerva Hernandez, Mayor Iain Lovatt.

Wrinkle Away

Whether you battle acne, dull skin, or fine lines, Dr. Wrinkle Away Clinic in Ballantrae has therapies designed to rejuvenate, nourish, and revitalize your skin. Treatments include gentle exfoliation, RF microneedling, CO2 resurfacing, nourishing serum, and more. Experience your treatments in a relaxed environment using luxurious products with skilled professionals.

Dr. Wrinkle Away is at 15301 Hwy. 48, Unit 14, open Monday to Saturday. Call 905-642-8626 or visit drwrinkleaway.ca to book your consultation.



(Left to Right) Emad Saheb, Mayor Lovatt, Dr. Shaimaa Hussain, Olivia DiGirolamo, Councillor Maurice Smith, Dr. Wisam Jaber.



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Closing Time for Barthau Jewellers

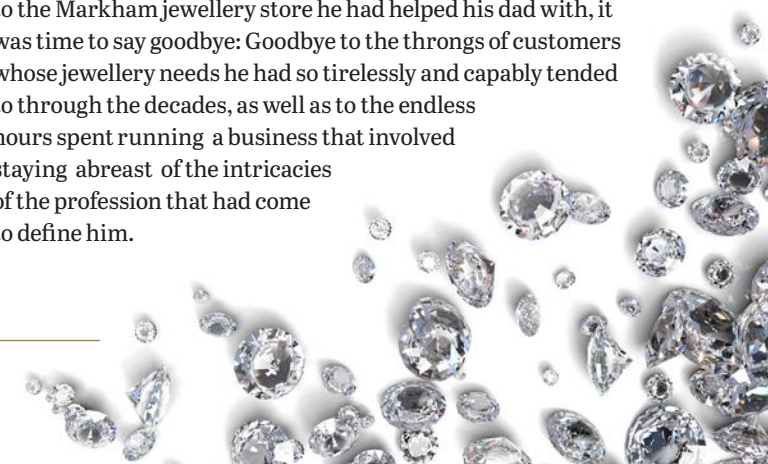
BY BRUCE STAPLEY

*Certified Swiss Watchmaker/Goldsmith/Gemologist David
Barthau Has No Regrets After 46 Years in Business*



The sands of time have finally run out for Stouffville's most iconic jewellery store.

After 46 years in three different Main St. Stouffville locations, Barthau Jewellers closed the door for the last time in December. For second-generation jeweller David Barthau, who in 1978 set up a sister operation in Downtown Stouffville to the Markham jewellery store he had helped his dad with, it was time to say goodbye: Goodbye to the throngs of customers whose jewellery needs he had so tirelessly and capably tended to through the decades, as well as to the endless hours spent running a business that involved staying abreast of the intricacies of the profession that had come to define him.



“It’s about being involved with people for special occasions, whether it be graduations, birthdays, milestone anniversaries—all the happy things”

– DAVID BARTHOU



David’s success as a jeweller was mainly due to his deep understanding of the importance of the goods he sold and the timeless family treasures he repaired, restored, and created.

“It’s about being involved with people for special occasions, whether it be graduations, birthdays, milestone anniversaries—all the happy things,” said David. “And the memorials that I’ve done for people so they can carry a piece of what belonged to their loved ones, recreating or sizing an old piece of jewellery that someone has worn and touched for so many years so that somebody of another generation can wear it. We were able to reset diamonds or gemstones into another ring to give them new life.”

For David, it was always essential to keep up with the times when looking after his customers’ special requests. “You have to adapt to change, change is inevitable. Some of the old ways are still the ways we would do things, but there are new ways of doing them. I’ve kept growing, expanding, learning, and moving forward.”

He prided himself in offering customers the most advanced capabilities in jewellery design. “We had a computer-assisted design (CAD) centre on-premise; we could grow a model of the ring we were going to make, or sometimes send a video of the design we were going to create so they could see what it was going to look like. I was one of the first to get a laser machine for repairing and making jewellery over 20 years ago.”

David realized from the outset that to be fully accepted as a viable business in a small town it was essential to become immersed in both the business community and the community at large. Having seen the success of the Downtown Business Improvement Area in Markham while working with his Dad, David set out to bring the concept to Stouffville upon his arrival in the late 1970s. “I thought it was a good idea to get together all the businesses contributing an equal share for some funds for the Downtown to use,” David recalls. “That’s when they started the beautification program where they planted the trees Downtown, did the sidewalks and came up with the development plan that they referred to for numerous years.”

David also played an important role with the Stouffville Chamber of Commerce, serving as Chair in the late 2010s. “I was involved with the installation of the digital message board in Downtown Stouffville. That was my idea for Canada 150,” he said.

His commitment to the Stouffville community has seen him sit as a long-time member of the Stouffville Lions Club. He was the Club’s President for a term and has also served at the District and Regional levels. He helped bring about the Club’s Vision Screening initiative that identified students at Stouffville elementary schools with vision problems in the early 2000s.

And despite having no previous newspaper experience, David co-founded and was Board Chair of the community-owned and operated Stouffville Free Press monthly newspaper that had a successful 14-year run in town at a time when it had become difficult for print publications to succeed at the all-local level.



“We felt it was important for Stouffville to have its own independent community newspaper,” he recalled. “I wanted to become involved in the community, to treat people the way you would like to be treated, being able to walk down the road and have people acknowledge you. I would always look and ask, ‘How we can make things even better here in town?’”

Like his father’s jewellery store in Markham, David’s enterprise also included other family members. His wife Janet looked after the bookkeeping while helping in the store when needed. Their son Darren came on board at the turn of the century and became a proficient jeweller in his own right.

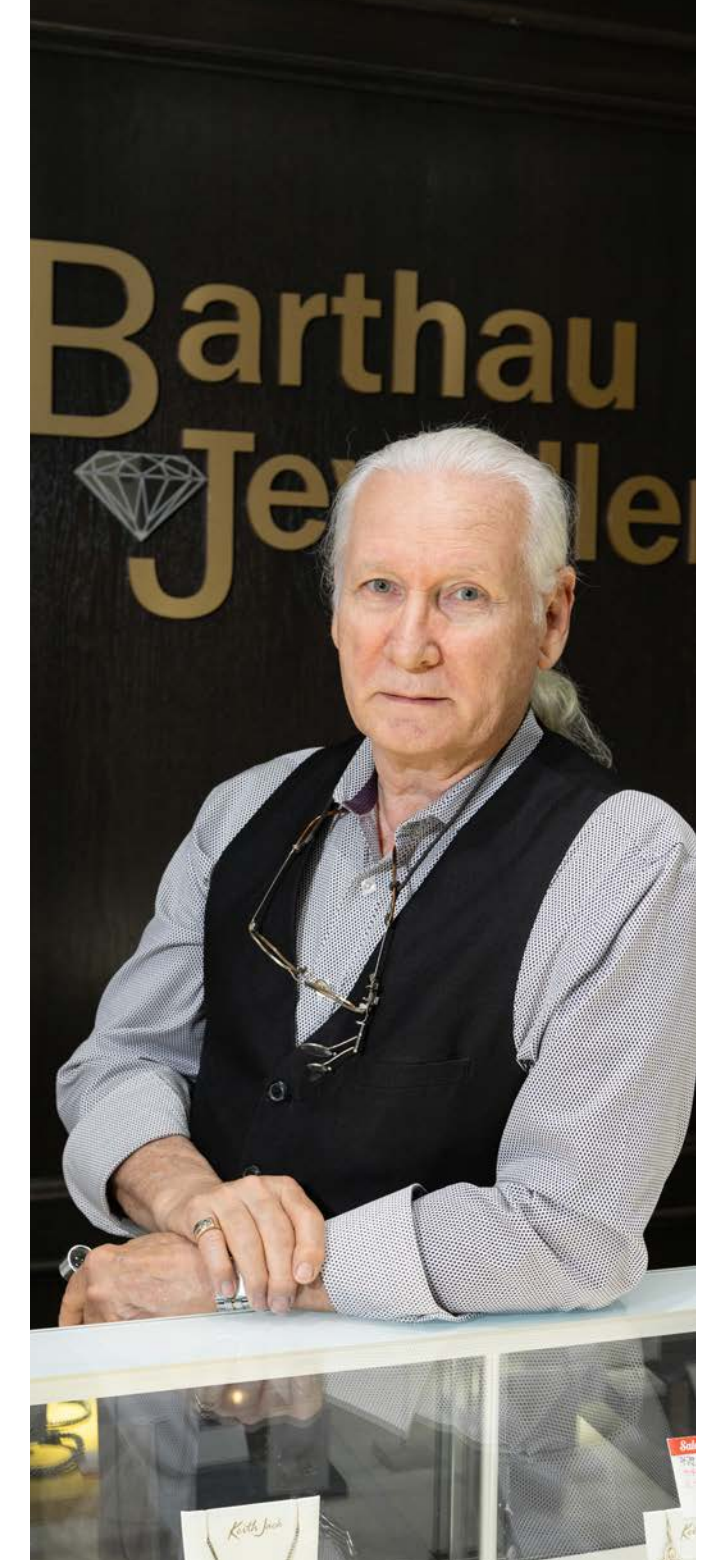


David and Janet both admit they will miss the hundreds of customers they encountered on a regular basis. “One hundred percent I’ll miss it,” said David. “The outpouring from the public has been really humbling. The customers and the Town have been so good to us.”

Janet said there was a sense of sadness that came with finally closing the store and saying goodbye to those who had come to depend upon them for their complex jewellery needs. “It’s a double-edged sword; it’s been a part of our lives for so long,” she said. “It’s been rewarding being a part of the important times in so many people’s lives. Customers were coming in and asking where they can go now to get looked after.”

As for what lies ahead for Janet and David as they leave the everyday work world, they have yet to chart their new life course. David hasn’t ruled out some sort of connection to jewellery. “It’s in my blood. I’ll likely still do some jewellery-related things.”

Janet said they won’t be jumping into anything right away. “We haven’t figured out exactly what we want to do. We have some ideas, but it will take a while to wind things down. We might take a few trips, find out what it is that works for us. It’s going to be a major period of adjustment.”



“The outpouring from the public has been really humbling. The customers and the Town have been so good to us.”

– DAVID BARTHOU





TAKING ATHLETES TO THE NEXT LEVEL

by Cassandra Papas

When Catherine Horber’s children asked for a place to improve their sports skills, she realized there was no local facility offering a complete, well-rounded training experience. Partnering with professional basketball player Jamal Mayali, she co-founded Level Up Sports Skills Training to fill that gap. Today, Level Up is helping athletes of all ages reach their full potential through holistic, personalized training.

At the heart of Level Up is the belief that success comes from addressing every aspect of an athlete’s development. “We’re like a supplement to regular team training,” Catherine explains. “We focus on the details that help athletes excel.”

The two state-of-the-art facilities reflect this commitment. The facility on Mostar St. specializes in skills training with professional coaches, offering personalized assessments and semi-private lessons tailored to each athlete’s needs. The Athletic Performance Centre on Main St. emphasizes strength, agility, and recovery, offering services like nutrition planning, sports massages, and conditioning programs specific to each sport.

Level Up also caters to the community with programs for families, including boot camps for parents, senior fitness classes, and mindset coaching for athletes navigating the pressures of competition. “When families embrace wellness, kids are inspired to follow,” Catherine says.

Mentorship is a cornerstone of Level Up’s philosophy. Jamal, who has competed at the highest levels globally, shares his experiences to help guide young athletes. “It’s not just about skills—it’s about building confidence, discipline, and resilience,” he explains.

Passionate about improving athletes right here in Stouffville, Level Up collaborates with local schools and leagues to provide athletes with professional-level resources. Catherine and Jamal have ambitious plans to expand, including developing a Level Up Academy to help athletes access scholarships and professional opportunities.

- 📍 200 Mostar St. Unit A116 & A117
- 🌐 levelupsports.ca
- 📱 @levelupsports
- ✉ levelupsportsskillstraining@gmail.com
- ☎ 416-573-5378



Top: Cutting-edge training facility fostering a productive learning environment. (Image courtesy of levelupsports.ca)
Above: Players in action at Level Up Sports Skills Training, showcasing their skills. (Photo by Taylor Ventura, @tjvmedia)

Sponsorships Strengthen our Community

by Brandi Pickering

The Town of Stouffville is thrilled to launch its 2025 Sponsorship Program, an invitation for businesses and organizations to engage with our community through diverse and dynamic events. From cherished annual traditions to new, exciting initiatives, this program offers a unique platform for sponsors to connect with residents and visitors alike.

The 2025 calendar is packed with events that reflect the vibrant spirit of Stouffville. The “Stouffville Celebrates” series is a cornerstone of the program, featuring signature events like the award-winning Ribfest and Holiday Market, as well as last year’s breakout event, Symphony Under the Stars. These free, inclusive gatherings draw over 110,000 attendees annually, showcasing local and regional businesses, food vendors, and performers.

Favourites also include Movies in the Park, where families enjoy a film under the stars in Memorial Park, and new this year as part of a more robust partnership with Strawberry Festival, we have opportunities to sponsor the 40-year-plus tradition that remains a foundation of our community calendar leading up to Canada Day.

The 19 on the Park Concert and Patio Series adds a cultural flair, offering music, comedy, and family performances throughout the year. Meanwhile, the Museum and Heritage events, including the Antique & Classic Car Show, Doors Open Whitchurch-Stouffville,



and Santa Visits the Museum celebrate the Town’s rich history while offering year-round family-friendly favourites.

The 2025 Sponsorship Program also highlights signature fundraising events, such as the Stouffville Main Street 5K. Taking place in June, the event is once again raising funds for the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation.

Stouffville is more than just a town, it’s a thriving, connected community ranked #2 in Ontario and #1 in York Region by *The Globe and Mail* for livability. By investing in the 2025 Sponsorship Program, you can play a vital role in shaping a future where residents flourish and businesses succeed.

To learn more or to join this exciting journey, please visit townofws.ca/events or email sponsorship@townofws.ca

LEGION EVENTS

2ND SATURDAY
OF THE MONTH

Fun Bingo

Fun Bingo in the Legion clubroom every month at 2 p.m. Bingo dabbers available. 18+ years. \$10 for 3 plays, \$20 for 9 plays

3RD SATURDAY
OF THE MONTH

Erin Blackstock Live

Saturday, February 18th, 2–6 p.m. Erin Blackstock is a local singer/songwriter and full-time musician for the past 11 years. See her perform live in the Legion clubroom.

4TH SATURDAY
OF THE MONTH

31 Card Games

Try your hand at 31, a thrilling card game for two or more people. Legion clubroom Sign up: 1:30 p.m. Game start: 2 p.m.

LAST FRIDAY
OF THE MONTH

Dinner in the Clubroom

5 p.m.–7 p.m. \$18 incl. tax. Sign up in the clubroom or call to reserve your choice of time. (30-min-time slots) Walk-in orders based on availability.

FEB 14 – APR 30

District 'E' Seniors Literary Competition

All Ontario residents welcome to enter. Submit original entry for poems, essays, memoirs, short stories. Closes at midnight, April 30th. Submit electronic entries only to districtEseniorsliterary@gmail.com. For questions, email office@stouffvillelegion.ca





TERRY SILIMANIS and his sister, Elaine Makos (right), attended chemotherapy appointments at Markham Stouffville Hospital in 2024.

“If you had questions, they weren’t afraid to answer,” says Makos. “If you wanted a hug, they’d give you a hug. They were like family.”

The continued expansion of MSH’s cancer centre, which is made possible by the community’s generous support through Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation, is vital for delivering compassionate care to this growing region.

COLLECTIVE EFFORT

While MSH has an exceptional team of oncologists and surgeons, diagnosing certain cancers and providing effective treatments can be challenging for community hospitals. “Travelling to Toronto is a major obstacle for many patients,” notes Dr. Mateya Trinkaus, another medical oncologist at MSH. She adds that patients need access to groundbreaking research closer to home.

To bridge that gap, in November 2023, MSH partnered with the Princess Margaret Cancer Care Network. Within Canada, the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre (PMCC) offers unparalleled access to clinical trials. Ultimately, the goal is to co-partner with PMCC to run some of these trials in Markham.

A FUTURE OF POSSIBILITIES

After chemotherapy, Silimanis underwent radiation to shrink the tumour as much as possible. Unfortunately, due to a lack of response to the treatment and symptoms resulting from the tumour’s location, radiation was cut short.

“I basically hit rock bottom doing radiation,” he says. “But that’s how you show your colours and bounce back. I just said, ‘Screw it, do the surgery.’”

In August 2024, Silimanis had an operation to remove the cancerous tumour, his rectum and one foot of his colon. He also had a colostomy—a surgical procedure that allows stool to drain from your colon, out of a hole in your abdomen and into a bag. While the recovery has been challenging, Dr. Babak is impressed with his progress.

“I think he’s going to have a good outcome,” Dr. Babak says. “I’m just giving him everything possible to get there.” ■

SHLOMI AMIGA (TERRY SILIMANIS AND ELAINE MAKOS)

KEN'S KORNER: PODCASTER TALKS HOCKEY, WRESTLING, POLITICS ON POPULAR SHOW

Judge grew up in Stouffville playing baseball and bowling while following the Leafs, pro wrestlers

Ken Judge was a big-time sports fan as a kid growing up in the Stouffville area.

He kept detailed Toronto Maple Leafs statistics (his mom still has some of his handiwork), screamed at the family’s TV when things didn’t go well and played ball and bowled when he wasn’t attending pro wrestling cards at Maple Leaf Gardens.

Now 57, he’s doing many of those same things, albeit with a faithful and growing audience out there in Internet land.

The father of three is the host of Ken’s Korner, a sports podcast he launched on YouTube in May of 2022 that now has 1,000-plus followers on Facebook.

But don’t put the show in a corner.

Sure, Judge and his pals often talk about Leafs hockey, but there are also editions devoted to wrestling.

Others are straight up interviews with personalities, often not from the sports world.



Above: Ken Judge was invited by Boston Pizza to broadcast his podcast live from the Hoover Park Dr. restaurant last fall.

His guests have included Conservative hopeful David Elie, musician Jason Wilson, comedian Paul Haywood, Amazing Race Canada contestant/

wrestler Matt Burns, TSN Hockey Insider Chris Johnston, ex-NHLer Paul Lawless, and author Randi Durzin.



Above: Ken Judge on the job at the Stouffville Arena with Stouffville Spirit Jr. A players David Paglia (left) and Julian Demiglio. Spirit grad and NHL draft pick Ethan Werek is in the background.

Local interviewees have included ex-NHLer and current Town Councillor Keith Acton, Hockey Night in Canada icon turned author Brian McFarlane, Stouffville Spirit captain David Paglia, former CTV broadcaster and now podcaster Joe Tilley, and yours truly. All five took part in an episode of Ken’s Korner recorded live at Boston Pizza last fall.

Judge was texting with one-time guest and former Toronto Argonauts head coach/general manager Adam Rita as the team won the Grey Cup in November.

Judge’s background in the entertainment business included introducing 500-plus bands at venues over many years. He’s a natural, born with a booming but friendly voice and an ability to get people to appear on the podcast and talk.

SportsTown
with JIM MASON



Contact Jim Mason: jimmason905@gmail.com

“You’ve got a good voice,” another podcaster told him. “Have you ever thought about hosting your own show?”

Ken’s Korner was born. His first guest was veteran broadcaster Paul Hendrick, best known for his work on CHCH-TV and with those NHL Leafs.

Judge is quick to thank the many who have helped him create Ken’s Korner, including editors Mary Poulos and Shawn Fowler.

When Stouffville wrestler Gunner ‘The Iron Cowboy’ Lang hosted a card at the Stouffville Arena last April, Judge and his microphone were in the ring.

“I’m happy I’m on the media side and not the wrestling side,” Judge told OTR, “because I’ve seen how hard they get thrown down and how hard that ring actually is.”

Judge is back at the Ninth Line rink this winter, supplying intermission and postgame content for Stouffville Spirit Jr. A hockey broadcasts on 102.9FM WhiStle Radio. Judge and cohort Joe Moyer handle the interviews. You’ll also hear their morning sports updates on the local station.

Listen to Ken's Korner Podcast on YouTube:
[@kenskornerpodcast](https://www.youtube.com/@kenskornerpodcast)

Business Hall of Fame Inducts Inaugural Class

by Glenn Jackson



The inaugural Greater Stouffville Business Hall of Fame Dinner, presented by Hyson Properties, was held on November 26th at Station Creek Golf Club, Gormley. The sold-out event, hosted by the Greater Stouffville Chamber, celebrated the excellence of the local business community and announced the inaugural inductees into the Greater Stouffville Business Hall of Fame.

The Greater Stouffville Business Hall of Fame is an initiative launched this year by the Chamber to honour the exceptional contributions of local business leaders who have significantly shaped our community. According to Chamber Executive Director Christian Buhagiar, the prestigious recognition celebrates the “remarkable achievements of individuals and families who have demonstrated visionary leadership, innovation, and business excellence over the years.”

The inaugural 2024 class includes Marvin and Keith Betz, along with their late father Ken; Graydon Card; Jay Reesor; Percy and Harry Schell, along with their late father Wesley; and sisters Patti Thompson, Debbi Conzelmann, Robin Kelly, and Jackie Fisher, granddaughters of King Cole Ducks Ltd. founder James Murby.

“The inaugural induction of these remarkable individuals and families into our Business Hall of Fame not only celebrates their exceptional achievements but also serves as an inspiration for future generations of business leaders in our community,” Buhagiar said.

Marvin, Keith, and the late Ken Betz were inducted into the Hall of Fame for their contributions to the community and pool construction industry through Betz Pools. Founded by Ken as a custom home building company, Betz Pools evolved into a leader in luxury pool design. The brothers’ innovation and commitment to quality cemented the company’s reputation for excellence and lasting impact on the industry. Betz Pools is located on Main St. at Palmwood Gt.

Graydon Card, owner of Card’s Appliances since 1968, is celebrated for nearly 60 years of dedicated service and community advocacy. Initially a hardware store, it has focused strictly on appliances since 1994. Known for his “hands-on” approach, Graydon, a founding member of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce, still works alongside his daughter at his Main St. location.

Jay Reesor, a pillar of Markham and Stouffville’s agricultural scene, has continued his family’s farming legacy since 1984. Founder of Reesor Farm Market and Reesor’s Market & Bakery, he provides fresh produce and baked goods, earning a loyal following. Now passing the business to the next generation, Jay’s impact lives on.

Brothers Percy and Harry Schell and their late father Wesley were honoured for their lasting contributions to Stouffville through Schell Lumber, founded in 1922. Percy, 93, managed the office, while Harry ran Harry’s Custom Woodshop. Their dedication to quality, service, and community has defined the business for over a century. It is now operated by the fourth generation on Edward St.

Patti, Debbi, Robin, and Jackie, granddaughters of King Cole Ducks founder James Murby, were inducted into the Hall of Fame for expanding Canada’s largest duck product company. Since 1951, their leadership, innovation, and commitment to sustainability have grown the business to 2.5 million birds annually, employing 180 people on Warden Ave., north of Aurora Rd.

The Chamber created tribute videos about each of the 2024 inductees, which can be viewed on their website at stouffvillechamber.ca/hall-of-fame

All of these deserving honourees will be profiled in future editions of *On the Road* magazine.

The Chamber is looking for recommendations for remarkable business leaders to be considered for induction in 2025. If you have any ideas, email Christian at christian@stouffvillechamber.ca



Advanced Care Medical Centre Now Taking New Patients



From left: Tessie M Parro, Precious Collen De Jesus, Dr. Mojdeh Kazemi, Dr. Saleem Kamalodeen, Dr. Alicia Persaud, Anesa Zarabi.

Advanced Care Medical Centre (ACMC), located at 155 Mostar St., is a trusted walk-in clinic led by Dr. Mojdeh Kazemi and Dr. Saleem Kamalodeen. The clinic is staffed by a team of six physicians, both male and female, offering in-person and virtual medical visits. ACMC is currently accepting new patients in need of a primary care physician.

ACMC provides comprehensive family medical care for all ages, including men’s and women’s health, pregnancy care, infant wellness checks, dermatology (by appointment), driver’s physicals, and travel medicine.

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A Legacy of Supporting Farmers

After nearly 39 years of dedicated service to the farming community, Bob and Betty Armstrong are retiring and closing a significant chapter in Stouffville’s agricultural history. The couple has owned and operated Hutchinson Farm Supply on Hwy 48, north of Bloomington Rd., since 1986.

Hutchinson Farm Supply has served agriculture and rural property owners in the northern and western parts of York and Durham regions for 60 years. The Armstrongs sold the dealership to Premier Equipment, a John Deere organization, effective February 1st, 2025.

“It has been a pleasure providing John Deere equipment and service to our customers for so many years,” Bob said. Bob and Betty purchased the dealership from founders Keith and Mary Hutchinson.

Their legacy was celebrated with a customer appreciation day on January 25th.

“I am very thankful for my staff, proud of the business, and grateful for the opportunities we’ve had to support farmers and the community,” Armstrong said. “I have a lot of respect and appreciation for the team at Premier, and I am excited for what the future holds for our team and the customers we serve.”

As Bob and Betty retire, their impact on Stouffville’s farming community will be remembered fondly. OTR wishes them a happy and well-deserved retirement!



Above: Betty and Bob Armstrong celebrate nearly 39 years of service at Hutchinson Farm Supply as they retire, leaving a lasting legacy in Stouffville’s farming community.

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- 🕒 10 AM – 2:30 PM
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- 👉 willowgrove.ca

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BRUCE'S MILL Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival

- 📍 3291 Stouffville Rd.
- 📅 March Break: 8th – 16th
Weekends: March 23rd, 24th, 29th, 30th and April 5th, 6th
- 🕒 9:30 AM – 5 PM
- 💰 Prices vary (free under 3)
- 👉 trca.ca

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7

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DINNER AT 8 PM

LOCATION:
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TICKETS:
EMAIL
INFO@PARTYFAIRYEVENTS.CA



21

HEARTS IN MOTION - STEER FRIENDS

TIME:
COCKTAILS AT 6 PM
DINNER AT 7 PM

LOCATION:
CRYSTAL FOUNTAIN EVENT VENUE

TICKETS:
[HTTPS://STEERFRIENDS.ORG/GALA](https://steerfriends.org/gala)



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Jared LEHMAN
905-591-2500

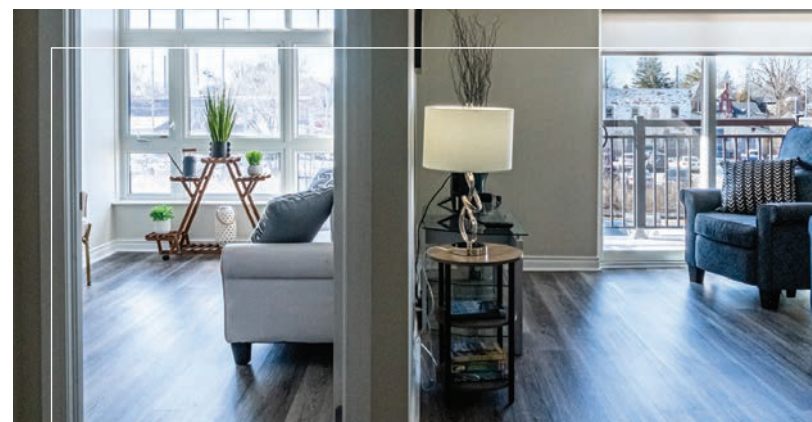
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Total Team M.L.S. & Brokers Sold all of Whitby-Stouffville, Stouffville, Grand Falls, and Team Total Experience Highest Avg. M.L.S. Sold Price All of Whitby-Stouffville 2024 (Based on Brokers/Teams with 2+ Sales or more) Highest M.L.S. Sale in Stouffville, June 2024 - \$817,180 Not Intended to Solicit These Agents Under Contract 2024 Highest M.L.S. Sale All of Whitby-Stouffville 2024 - \$817,180



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Contact Susan Tucker, OTRtipoff@outlook.com



Scoring Goals for Their Community

I have written before about Sam Daskalopoulos and his Scoring Goals for the Community charity hockey games. Now it's time to showcase his daughters, who have been very instrumental in the success of this initiative. Meet 16-year-old Anastasia, 14-year-old Christina and 8-year-old Isabella; they are the brains and the drive behind the two books that were born of this fantastic family project.

Currently a student at Bill Crothers Secondary School, Anastasia is a competitive dancer with plans to pursue a career in health care or teaching. Her passion for these two books was evident in the enthusiastic way she spoke about how the girls worked together so well, coming up with and sharing ideas.

Christina is also at Bill Crothers and is an award-winning gymnast who gets excited when discussing the fun they had with the book. Ideas, arguing, coming together, and bonding were all part of the process; she loved it all.

Isabella attends Glad Park Public School and loves swimming and painting. She was the go-to expert for getting the verbiage in the book just right to connect with the kids the book targets.

Scoring Goals for the Community, founded in 2017, has been growing and developing each year with new ideas and plans to keep the initiative expanding. Charity games have been popular events that raise funds for various charities in Stouffville and York Region. The

next step was to create a mascot—from conceptual ideas to a naming contest, Ollie is now a life-size character that you can meet at various events around York Region when he's either promoting or attending the charity hockey games. He appeared at the Stouffville Market last year, earning many new fans.

I spent a fascinating evening listening to how the story developed and how Ollie came to life. Scoring Goals with Ollie is the first book they tackled. They wanted to give Ollie's mascot a back story of who he was and introduce his family. I won't give away any spoilers; you should purchase the book from Amazon, meet Ollie and his friends and know that all proceeds go to the Canadian Cancer Society. The girls started the creative juices by tossing out ideas; they would all make notes and come together as a family around the dinner table to connect all the ideas and form a story based on Ollie and his friends. They wanted a clear message of life morals that all ages can understand. I listened to these bright young ladies talk about collaboration, hard work, understanding, cooperation, perseverance, life lessons, their desire to send a concise message to readers, focusing on sight words, and having a steady story. It is a children's book, but parents will love it too.

The book focuses on Ollie, and we also meet his family and friends, all of whom are based on real people in the Daskalopoulos family. Family friends, friends from school and various activities, cousins, nieces, nephews—all special people that provide substance to the book.

But wait, there's more! There is now a second book, called Scoring Goals with Kiki. It follows the same process as the Ollie book, and it too raises money for charity. Kiki is not only a character from the first book, but she is also Sam's real-life older sister (an aunt to the girls) who lost her battle with cancer at the young

age of 50. The girls poured their hearts and souls into this book as well. The books have many hidden nuances, which are close to the heart of the family and have very special meanings.

There is something even more unique about these books. Hockey teams can partner with Scoring Goals for the Community and have books printed with all the players wearing that team's jerseys. The teams can then sell the books to raise money and help offset costs for the players. There is no cost to the teams to do this, it is yet another chapter in Sam's vision to raise money for various causes.

The next Scoring Goals for the Community charity hockey game is coming up on March 22nd at the Clippers Arena and will benefit Steer Friends, an incredible organization located on Innovator Ave. that provides day programming for adults with disabilities. They are in desperate need of a new adult change table, and a power hoist. Sam's goal is to be able to provide \$25,000 for these needs. If you are interested in sponsoring, donating, or getting books with your team's custom jerseys, please contact sam@scoringgoalsforthecommunity.com

These girls can now say they are published authors of two books at their young ages! They worked hard on these projects and should be incredibly proud of their efforts.



DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Transforming Main Street into a vibrant community hub



AN UPDATE BY GLENN JACKSON

In what seems like years in the making, phase one of Stouffville's Downtown Revitalization project got underway with a public Open House on January 30th.

Over 110 residents, business owners, and the just-curious filled 19 on the Park theatre in downtown Stouffville to hear Town staff, including those from the capital projects, public works, and communications departments, design consultants, and Mayor Iain Lovatt, give a crash course in what is to come over the next two or three years.

Revitalization of Main Street has been completed between the Tenth Line and Park Dr. This portion of the project covers Park Dr. to Edward St. Future work will cover Edward St. to Ninth Line.

Technically, the long-anticipated project started late last year when preliminary ground inspections began. Accardi Engineering Group Ltd., the contractors hired for the administration and design portions of the projects, are now beginning the design phase – the part of the project where the streetscape concepts, including trees, outdoor furniture, sidewalks and curbs, amongst other practical and aesthetic elements, are designed.

Much of the work, as outlined at the Open House, will be done underground. Watermains, sewer pipes, and other critical infrastructure will require a much-needed upgrade.

Previous revitalization work in the downtown core has been completed, or

is close to being completed, including work on O'Brien Ave., Lloyd St., and Edward St. Later this year, Edward St. will be opened to Millard St.

Enhancements to the Main Street streetscape, outside the scope of this revitalization project, have already begun. Last year, work started on the revitalization of Civic Square, which included the restoration of the Clock Tower (see July 2024's OTR) and expanding the square to the east. Early last year, a temporary crosswalk was erected at Lloyd St. and Main St., and studies continue with Metrolinx regarding train whistle cessation at the Main St. crossing.

Accardi is currently working on site inspections and preliminary reports. They will be starting the design portion of the project by the end of March, which will consist of extensive public consultation. The next public Open House is scheduled for late spring/early summer. Construction is anticipated to start sometime around summer or fall 2026.

Every edition of *On the Road* magazine throughout the project's duration will contain an update on the project's status.

Stay up to date!

Follow the project and sign up for the eNewsletter at townofws.ca/downtown

Sharing Market Blooms and Spreading Joy

by Susan Tucker

A weekly visitor to the Stouffville Market this past season was Glen Brubacher, a lovely senior who calls the Stouffville Creek Retirement Residence his home. Glen spent his career in the government service sector and lived in Ballantrae for 30 years, cultivating and lovingly caring for a large flower garden that he and his neighbours enjoyed. He came to the market each week with his vase to stock up on the beautiful fresh flowers from Claremont Meadows and take them back to Stouffville Creek to share the gorgeous colours with other residents before placing them in his own apartment to enjoy for the week.

The market is in winter mode, with four dates indoors at 6240 Main St. (the Stouffville 55+ Club building). The market kicked off on January 11th and will be there again on March 8th and April 12th. After that, shoppers will head back outside for the weekly market beginning May 10th.

For more information, call 647-945-8740 or visit thestouffvillemarket.ca



The Bottle Shed Foundation: A Legacy of Giving Back

by Michaela Ray

The Stouffville Lions Club is proud to continue the heartfelt legacy of the Bottle Shed Foundation, founded by Shaen Armstrong. Located in the Stouffville Clippers Arena parking lot, the Bottle Shed has become a symbol of community spirit, turning empty alcohol containers into opportunities to support local programs and make meaningful connections.



From left: Vernon Ward, Joe Cote, Ryan Henry, Ethan Ongman, Micole Rubinoff, Carl Vanseader, Janojan Kugan, Jonathan Gewarges, Tim Rochacewich pose in front of the Bottle Shed. Photo by Kira Hassard.

Making a Difference One Bottle at a Time

The Bottle Shed accepts empty alcohol containers, including beer cans and bottles, wine bottles and tetra packs, as well as glass and plastic spirit containers. Every item dropped off raises funds for initiatives that strengthen the fabric of Stouffville. While pop and non-alcoholic beverage containers are not accepted, the focus on recycling these specific items has already made a significant impact.

Community at Its Core

With deep gratitude to the Bottle Shed Foundation's original mission, the Stouffville Lions Club continues to prioritize supporting local causes, including providing employable skill-building opportunities for young adults with developmental delays. Volunteers

from The Able Network and other organizations play a vital role in this initiative, making it a true community effort.

A Vision for the Future

The Lions Club is dedicated to expanding the Bottle Shed's reach while staying true to its roots. Partnering with service groups like Scouts, Girl Guides, and sports teams, the Bottle Shed not only raises funds but also fosters collaboration and shared pride in the community.

Residents can drop off their eligible containers at the Bottle Shed or arrange for pickup for large donations by contacting stouffvillelions@gmail.com. For more information, please contact Tim Rochacewich at 905-640-4588.

Together, the community can make an impact even with small actions.

Smart Battery Recycling has Arrived in Stouffville

by Brandi Pickering

Stouffville residents now have a safer, smarter way to recycle their household batteries. Thanks to a partnership with Environmental 360 Solutions Ltd (E360S), a state-of-the-art outdoor battery recycling container has been installed outside Town Hall at 111 Sandiford Dr.

The container's design prioritizes both safety and convenience. Available 24/7, residents can drop off used batteries at any time. Advanced SMART sensors monitor battery volume and internal temperature. In the rare event of thermal activity, an integrated fire suppression system will be activated, ensuring safety.

With rising lithium-ion battery fires, this initiative addresses a growing safety concern. According to the Stouffville Fire Department, proper storage and disposal are crucial when preventing lithium-ion battery fires.

Environmental 360 Solutions' expertise in battery recycling is extensive. The new SMART outdoor battery container is the result of over two years of testing and

development, bolstered by 20-plus years of industry experience.

This new recycling container is built to last, even in the most challenging weather conditions and is fitted with advanced sensors that alert E360S when the container is full, ensuring timely pickup.

Stouffville's new recycling solution reflects the Town's commitment to environmental responsibility and community safety. Be sure to take advantage of this convenient service to ensure the safe and sustainable disposal of your household batteries.



Speed Enforcement Camera Locations Chosen

Council Also Discusses New Fire Station, Strawberry Festival, Business Registration

by Glenn Jackson

This monthly column summarizes recent Whitchurch-Stouffville Council decisions. Subscribe to our eNewsletter for more information: townofws.ca/councilnews

Fire Station 5-2 Design Approved

At the December 11th meeting, Council approved the final design and financing details for the joint Fire Station 5-2 and Paramedic Response Station at 4902 Aurora Rd. in Ballantrae. The facility's design focuses on operational efficiency, historical compatibility, and environmental sustainability, targeting LEED Silver certification.

The proposed budget for the project is \$9.75 million, with financing through the Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation. To offset costs, the current Fire Station 5-2 site at 15400 Hwy. 48 was declared surplus and therefore able to be placed for sale.

In conjunction with this approval, Council also approved the renewing of the Town's lease with York Region for the Paramedic Response Station on Hwy. 48. The lease, effective from January 1st, 2025, to December 31st, 2027, covers 1,000 square feet of space. Annual rent starts at \$23,370.72, increasing by 3% each year. The lease will end when the new facility at 4902 Aurora Rd. is ready in 2026.

Strawberry Festival Partnership

At the December 11th meeting, Council approved a collaboration with the Stouffville Strawberry Festival Board to develop a renewed partnership model for the 2025 festival. The Board will handle community-focused legacy events like the Pancake Breakfast and Picnic in the Park. The Town will oversee vendor management, logistics, entertainment, and marketing.

A Memorandum of Understanding will formalize roles, with ongoing evaluations for future festivals. The Town aims to offset costs via sponsorship and vendor

revenue to ensure sustainability. This year's festival will take place June 27th – 29th, 2025.

Mandatory Business Registration

At the January 15th meeting, Council approved a mandatory business registration program for all Stouffville businesses. It would charge all businesses in the Town a one-time registration fee and provide them with easier access to the Town's regulations concerning land use, building codes, fire codes, parking, signage, and all relevant community safety requirements.

Council directed staff to come back with details at a later meeting and to develop an online resource guide for new businesses.

Speed Enforcement Camera Locations Chosen

At the November 6th meeting, Council approved the locations of eight speed enforcement cameras. The locations are:

- Hoover Park Dr. (eastbound) east of Sandiford Dr.
- Hoover Park Dr. (eastbound) east of Kribs Dr.
- Hoover Park Dr. (westbound) west of Jacob Way
- Baker Hill Blvd. (northbound) south of Boadway Cres.
- Millard St. (eastbound) west of John Davis Gt.
- Millard St. (westbound) east of Braith Cres.
- Main St. (eastbound) west of Pine St.
- Main St. (westbound) east of Spring St.

A map of the locations can be found at townofws.ca/ase/map

Signs indicating the camera's future installation have been posted in their respective area. The cameras are expected to be installed in March.



Above: A rendering of the approved design of Station 5-2 and Paramedic Response Station in Ballantrae.

As dictated by the Province of Ontario, the penalties for speeders will be:

- 1-19km/hr over the limit: \$5.00/km
- 20-29km/hr over the limit: \$7.50/km
- 30-49km/hr over the limit: \$12.00/km
- 50 km+/hr over the limit: \$19.50/km

An additional Victims' Justice Fund charge is also levied on top of the fines above. A complete list of fine amounts can be found on townofws.ca/ase/fines

The installation of additional cameras would occur late in 2025.

COUNCIL & PUBLIC PLANNING MEETINGS

Upcoming Council Meetings:

Wednesday, February 19th – 1 PM
Wednesday, March 5th – 1 PM
Wednesday, March 19th – 1 PM

Next Public Meeting (if required):
Wednesday, March 5th – 7 PM

Agendas for Council and Public Meetings will be available on townofws.ca/council at 12 PM the Thursday prior to the meeting.

Anyone wishing to provide comments may attend the meeting in-person at the Municipal Offices. Contact the Town Clerk at clerks@townofws.ca

Listen live: townofws.ca/cmlivestream
Live posts on X: [@ws_townhall](https://twitter.com/ws_townhall)

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Stouffville

NOTICE OF THE PASSING OF BY-LAW

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville has passed By-law 2024-135-DS, amending By-law 97-88-MU, to designate Churchill Baptist Church (15336 Ninth Line) as a property of cultural heritage value under the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.18, Part IV, Section 29. For information or a copy of the by-law, contact heritage@townofws.ca or call 905-640-1900 ext. 2299.

FIRE SAFETY REMINDER

Working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms save lives! Replace batteries every six months, and alarms every 10 years. When you change your clocks on Sunday, March 9th, remember to update your alarm batteries too.

For assistance, contact Stouffville Fire & Emergency Services at fire.prevention@townofws.ca or call 905-640-9595. townofws.ca/homesafehome

\$8 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING FOR HOUSING

Stouffville has received \$8 million from the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) to support new housing initiatives as part of Canada's National Housing Strategy. Funding will help create additional housing units through seven local HAF initiatives and related projects. Visit townofws.ca/news to read more.

EVENTS

Register Now for Main Street 5K

June 15th, 8:30 AM. The third annual 5K and 1K Kids Dash, supporting the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation. Open to all runners and walkers. Register at townofws.ca/5k

RECREATION

Summer Camp Registration Now Open
Offering diverse programs in sports, arts, science, and more, camps provide a fun, inclusive environment for kids to connect and learn.

Register online at townofws.ca/active or visit the Leisure Centre. More details at townofws.ca/camps

Stouffville Card Show

Apr. 6th, 10 AM – 3 PM

Collectors and sellers of Pokémon, Magic: The Gathering, and sports cards are invited to join the free Stouffville Card Show at the Leisure Centre.

For more information on how to be a vendor go to townofws.ca/cardshow

March Break: March 10th-14th

Grab a March Break drop-in schedule at the Leisure Centre or sign up for March Break Camps—featuring sports, art, games, and more!
Register at townofws.ca/active

Spring Registration

Opens Feb. 25th, 12 PM for residents, Mar. 4th, 12 PM for non-residents. Most spring programs begin Mar. 31st.

19 ON THE PARK

2025 Concert Series

Kuné-Canada's Global Orchestra: Mar. 15th
Hotel California – The Original Eagles' Tribute: Apr. 2nd
Leisa Way's Opry Gold: May 16th
*Save 15% with a 3-event bundle!
Visit townofws.ca/theatre

Trivia Nights

Mar. 6th and Apr. 10th, 7–9 PM, 19+.
Prizes, raffle draws, and fun with friends. Snacks and drinks available for purchase. Visit townofws.ca/trivia

MUSEUM

EXHIBITS

The Ones We Met: Inuit Traditional Knowledge and the Franklin Expedition
Until Apr. 19th, 2025

Killing the Indian in the Child: Generations Lost
Until June 28th, 2025

EVENTS

Family Day at the Museum

Feb. 15th, 10 AM – 3 PM
Wagon rides, blacksmith demonstrations, museum tours, crafts, and more. Free!

March Break Camp: Game On!

Mar. 10th – 14th, 9 AM – 4 PM
Ages 6-12, \$295. A week of games, scavenger hunts, crafts, and outdoor fun. Register at townofws.ca/active

Easter Hoppings

Apr. 19th, 11 AM – 3 PM
Ages 2-7, \$15 per child
Egg hunts, crafts, and photo stations in the heritage buildings.
townofws.ca/museumevents

The Museum is open Wednesday to Saturday, 10 AM – 4 PM. We welcome bookings for education programs, group tours, and event rentals.

For more details, contact 905-727-8954 or wsmuseum@townofws.ca

VOLUNTEER FOR THE 19 ON THE PARK WORKING GROUP!

Help promote culture and the arts, engage the community, and support event planning at 19 on the Park.

Apply by February 21st, 2025. Details available at townofws.ca/cac
Contact clerks@townofws.ca

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