

# Comment Page

## Editorial

### Suspension has queries flying re Canada Post

Something seems amiss in the upper tier of Canada Post management.

The recent one-week suspension of Stouffville Postmaster Gary Fisher — a man with 30 years of experience — invites questions.

Is this latest move by the managerial powers that be in downtown Toronto just another in a long line of Canada Post blunders that illustrates the sorry state of the corporation?

Canada Post is keeping mum, so it's anyone's guess.

On a larger scale there are recent scandals involving allegations of job-selling in west-end Toronto and horror stories about iron-fisted management techniques at other postal outlets.

Here, we have a postmaster with a proven track record. Was he suspended by his superiors because of their own ineptitude? Off the record reports from customers on the rural route which is the focus of the issue, as well as indications from those close to the scene show that Mr. Fisher is not at fault here. And the word scapegoat has surfaced more than once.

It's all too bad, considering Canada Post finally won the public over in its much-maligned community mailbox program and then managed to post a profit after years of running in the red.

Even for a week, Mr. Fisher's absence in the Main Street post office will be noticed.

### Track bid gains steam

Whitchurch-Stouffville Town Council cheerfully threw its support behind Stouffville District Secondary School students last week in their bid to get a running track — and rightfully so.

Town officials have asked staff to report back on ways the school will be most able to achieve its goal. It's a positive step by the town, following positive steps all along the way by SDSS Student Council Presi-

dent Julian Franklin, and the York Region Board of Education.

Julian's quest is gathering momentum. Surely, the end will soon be in sight.

Ward 4 Councillor Wayne Emmerson put it best in saying the town "needs another project, something to get the ball rolling."

With the collective energy of local residents behind the project, it's a sure-fire success.



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### Attitudes the problem

## Case for affordable housing

Why are people so threatened by poverty?

Poverty is not a contagious disease. It is a social ailment caused by a number of factors too complicated to get into here. But it is not the presence of poverty that corrupts.

It is society's folly in isolating the needy families in low-cost ghettos of despair and hopelessness. Without positive role models, how can anyone hope to better their position in life?

It is ludicrous to compare the proposed affordable housing project in Uxbridge to the squalor of the Jane-Finch corridor or Toronto's Regent Park — both large, densely-populated urban areas.

Durham Region Non-Profit Housing corporation is proposing an attractive 44-unit townhouse complex on Reach St. with a grand total of 22 subsidized units. So what is the problem?

The problem is, neighbours do not want affordable housing in their backyards. That was painfully apparent at a recent public meeting.

Build low-cost starter homes instead, some dissenters cried. I



### Viewpoint

Deb Bodine Champion

agree. Uxbridge needs low-cost housing for young families who are just starting out, so that those who grew up in the town can raise their families here.

But that does not preclude a non-profit housing development. Both are needed.

Renters are being unfairly stereotyped by some opponents to the Reach St. housing project, perhaps out of ignorance, perhaps as an excuse to keep affordable housing at bay.

Most people who rent do not do so by choice. They do it because they can't afford to purchase a home.

But I do not understand why some people assume that unless a person can afford to buy a house, they are dangerous. Contrary to common belief, most renters are not monsters.

Until last November I lived in a townhouse complex in Markham, where affordable housing is non-existent. (That's why we moved.) Although our unit was owned, almost half of the 54 units were run by absentee landlords.

With very few exceptions, the rented units were cared for just as well as the owner-occupied units. Most people took pride in the pretty, well-maintained complex and strived to keep their unit at par with the others.

Renters plant gardens too. The occasional exception to the rule inevitably occurred when a unit was rented out to a bunch of singles who used the place to crash and party. That is not the kind of tenant slated for Reach St.

Other opponents of the project argue that Testa Heights needs a

park. I agree, the children living in the area deserve adequate park facilities as soon as possible. But it is not an either/or situation. Having a park does not preclude affordable housing.

I consider myself a responsible citizen. I am actively involved in my community. I take pride in maintaining the outside appearance of my home, I take an interest in my children's schooling, in preserving our natural environment, in finding acceptable solutions to the garbage crisis.

I am a good neighbour. But the fact of the matter is, in my position as a freelance journalist — or even if I was a full time staff member — I could not afford to support my family without my husband's income.

At the public meeting, a single mother who teaches Uxbridge students spoke of her difficulty in finding adequate shelter for her family. She moved eight times in three years. She is a responsible citizen and deserves adequate housing.

Yet, she was verbally attacked after the meeting by an irate woman who accused her of not working hard enough. She already teaches school full-time; what else is expected of her? Is she expected to deliver pizzas too?

And how many women are out there — yes, even in Uxbridge — who are remaining in intolerable or abusive relationships because financially they wouldn't be able to make it on their own?

What about Richard Tutty, an Uxbridge resident struggling to make ends meet on \$561 month disability pension? Is he forced to live in a room and board situation that eats up half of his monthly income forever?

Another argument against the housing project centred around the school overcrowding issue. Where was the public uproar when other residential developments were proposed? No one cries overcrowding when estate subdivisions go in.

A recent provincial study — the first Canadian study ever done to determine the effect of non-profit housing on property values — verifies similar findings in the States. There is absolutely no evidence to indicate property values are negatively influenced by government-financed housing.

Yet 60 per cent of the population believes the presence of affordable housing will hurt their property values. And there is the real problem. Once upon a time communities looked after their own. Sadly, it looks like those times are gone.

### Editor's Mail

## Town's support much appreciated

Dear Editor:

I wish to thank everyone, in and out of Stouffville, who have expressed their concern for my son, Shane, who is recovering from severe burns at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children.

While I haven't had time to return the countless phone calls, I would like to acknowledge both the calls and concern via this letter.

You hear about how this town rallies around people in their time of crises, but you don't really appreciate it until you experience the misfortune yourself.

My thanks go to the Bank of Nova Scotia which has informed me of a trust fund being set up for Shane. This kind of thing is so difficult to accept, as none of us like to receive charity.

Please continue to inquire and to visit at the hospital. Shane should be able to receive visitors in a few weeks.

In the meantime, he can only be peeped at through the hospital room window.

His progress is slow, but positive. He is aware of the fact it could have been much worse for him.

While the road ahead is long and painstaking, his attitude is great and he's fighting it like a trooper.

Sincerely,  
Bruce Stapley  
Stouffville

### Fill our mailbox

The Tribune welcomes letters from readers on current topics. Letters should be 500 words or less and typed or neatly printed. They may be subject to editing for length at the discretion of the editor.

They must be submitted by noon Monday to appear in the Wednesday Tribune.

Letters may be submitted to the office at 54 Main St. W. Stouffville, P.O. Box 40, L4A 7Z4.



Musselman's Lake resident Ken McKay was out for a bite or two at Mill Pond in Uxbridge recently. Mr. McKay, 28, sat patiently, rod in hand, waiting for a nibble. At last report, he hadn't yet landed the big one.