

# OPINION

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## Young people need a leg up - who's listening?

Society is paying lip service at best to our youth. We say youth is our future - we're working hard for our children - we've given them the best of everything. Have we really?

Have we seen to it that when school is out, there's a place to hang out? Is a shopping plaza the best we can come up with? Even a shopping plaza is better than nowhere at all, but even there security people discourage young people's presence. What about some of that surplus warehousing space being put to creative use?

If youth really is our future, where's the commitment to them, where's the training, the contact with community leaders, the opportunity for them to develop their personal skills?



Viewpoint

Jo Ann Stevenson

Where's the support for the few group homes which exist for troubled teens?

One youth centre in Stouffville is planned through the efforts of the Weekender and local service groups.

And sure, sports are a terrific training ground for those who are able to participate. Co-operative programs through high schools and colleges give working people a chance to see

the potential young people have and to play a small part in developing it.

Some parents take time to listen to their young family members and help direct some of their frustration with being put on hold.

Can we afford as a country to let the rest drift?

Though schools are touted as the best resource our young people have, school funding is being cut.

Well some young people are not going to be passed by. It was heartening to learn of the coalition of students who demanded a stand on university funding cuts at a federal all candidates forum.

Similarly a group of young people in York Region want a

youth centre - they know it probably won't happen on time to benefit themselves. They're not taking a backseat and are becoming pro-active in partnership with a social community service department at York Region.

Young Canadians place second in homicides and third in suicides says the United Nations Children's Fund.

Must we wait for young people to become a political force before we recognize this waste and own up to this shame?

## Artist curmudgeon paints for the people

I don't know about your situation, but my take-home pay is definitely not keeping up with the times.

We live, after all, in an age when an amiable young thug by the name of Wendel Clark makes a million bucks a year as captain of a gang of shiny players called the Maple Leafs.

That's more than I make.

We live in an age when a pigskin-toter by the name of Rocket (The Dud) Ishmail scammed approximately ten million bucks from his employers in return for not playing all that well for less than three seasons.

That's a lot more than I make.

We live in an age when a journeyman ham like Bruce Willis can command - and get - 12 million dollars to star in a movie. And this is after a string of cinematic duds from which the faithful moviegoing public stayed away in droves.

That too, is a lot more than I make.

We live in an age when Michael Jackson, a squeaky-voiced androgynous wuss who likes to dress up in bellhops uniforms and have his hair ironed and his skin bleached - gets \$65 million dollars from Sony Corporation to make a tour of Japan.

That's more than the GNP of several Third World countries.

I'm not complaining, mind you. I make enough to keep shingles over my head and shoe leather between my bunions and the sidewalk.

As a matter of fact, I probably make just about all the dough I can comfortably handle. It may be failure of imagination on my part, but I'm not sure how good I'd be if somebody suddenly dumped \$65 million or \$12 million or even a measly million bucks in my lap.

Such numbers are nuts! Nobody needs that much money. What's Bruce Willis going to do with another \$12 million - get a face lift for his smirk?

And Michael Jackson needs another \$65 million? For what - to buy more Ferris Wheels and Merry Go Rounds for his 2700-acre kiddies' ranch in California?

We've got our money priorities way out of whack - and not just the greedheads at the top of the pyramid either. Let's face it - the money I make may be chump change to Michael Jackson or

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Basic Black

Arthur Black

Bruce Willis or Wendel Clark - but I'd qualify for aristocracy in Bosnia, Ethiopia or Haiti.

And then there's Theodore Major. Chances are extremely good that you've never heard of Theodore. He's a wizened little gnome of a man, 85 years old, who lives in a shabby brownstone house in Wigan, England. Theodore Major's health is failing, and that's too bad because last month he found himself in trouble with the law.

The problem is the house right next to Theodore's. Theodore bought it 16 years ago, and uses it to display his paintings, free of charge to anyone who cares to come in and look at them.

Theodore Major is a painter, you see. As a matter of fact, according to John Berger, a respected art critic, Theodore Major is "among the best English painters of our time."

He's also a bit of a curmudgeon. When the local town council ordered Theodore to pay a poll tax of nearly \$4,000 on the house of paintings, Theodore told the town council to go jump in the canal. The town council sued to have Theodore committed to prison.

At the trial, it was revealed that Theodore Major was living on a state pension of \$150 a week.

But, the magistrate rumbled, surely as one of the country's best painters, Mister Major had merely to sell off one or two of his canvasses, pay the fine and retire on the profits.

Theodore Major drew himself up and replied "Not to the people who want them, the rich people. I painted these pictures for ordinary people to see, and they do come. I never paint for money - I never have. I am an artist and I paint for people."

The magistrate was so impressed that he ordered the charges dropped and came down from the bench to shake Theodore Major's hand. Amen, Milord. An artist who performs for the people. What a concept.



Adam®

by Brian Basset

