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THE TRIBUNE Comment & Opinions

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EDITORIAL

Shame on MPs

It's good to know that Liberal MPs across Canada felt they did the right thing in Tuesday's vote in House of Commons concerning compensation for hepatitis C victims.

It's good to know they think that way. The reality, however, is that they did not do the right thing. Governments always talk about listening to their constituents, and taking a stand on moral issues. Candidates especially love to talk like this during election campaigns. Of course, it's a load of garbage.

Tuesday provided Liberal MPs to put their money where their mouth was when it came to doing the right thing. They failed.

Liberal MPs from across Canada chose party discipline over a moral decision. They chickened out.

Obviously they were taking the lessons of past GST dissenters such as John Nunziata to heart. Nunziata voted against the government on the GST question and was kicked out of the party.

He did the right thing and was rewarded by his constituents in last year's federal election by being re-elected as an independent.

What is most galling about Tuesday's vote is to hear some Liberal MPs saying that it broke their hearts to vote against helping the hepatitis C victims.

Honestly, they had an opportunity to make a change for the better, but decided looking after their own political interests was more important. And now they want us to feel sorry for them? They should be hiding their heads in shame, not seeking the public's sympathy.

CHRÉTIEN LIKENS HIS CUBA VISIT TO THE POPE'S...



Vandorf committee defends position

Dear Editor,

We are writing to respond to an article written by Elaine Stewart in her column "Vandorf's Voice".

It is unacceptable that this column be entitled "Vandorf's Voice" since the opinions voiced are not the opinion of Vandorf, but rather the opinion of Elaine Stewart. The column's name is misleading.

In Elaine Stewart's letter to the editor published Saturday, April 4, she admits she chose to leave half way through a Vandorf Ratepayers meeting and Vandorf Park Plan presentation choosing not to inform herself of its details.

Stewart chooses to remain "misinformed" regarding the park plans' details and a misrepresenting a well supported community project. This is irresponsible.

The Vandorf Park Plan has the support of over 150 residents in a petition, the Vandorf Ratepayers Association, where the Park Plan has been presented to the community twice in the last year, the Preston Lake Ratepayers Association, The Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee of Whitchurch-Stouffville. The Vandorf Park Committee is an official sub-committee to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. The Park Plan will be implemented over a three to five year time frame.

As the Park Plan progresses in its final stages of development, the plan will be presented to the community through two final public meetings. This will give people yet another opportunity to educate themselves about its details and comment on them. This committee welcomes comments and suggestions from the community to ensure the final park plan

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meets the needs to ensure understanding.

The Park Plan does not and has never recommended that the willow trees be "cut down", but rather, plans to prune them in keeping with good management and discard any dead or diseased debris resulting from neglect.

The parks & recreation department, through expert engineer consultation, deemed the old jungle gym equipment unsafe (several children had been injured) and therefore it was removed. New equipment has been implemented according to what was budgeted for that year. The park plan includes recommendations that additional equipment for the older child be implemented in the future in accordance with budget scheduling which will also result in safety upgrades from past equipment.

The park plan has carefully considered all the functions that take place in the park, for example, the fireworks display and various events put on by the museum. It is for this and many other reasons that the plan strives to make the park more user friendly, safer and accessible to the broadest cross section of our society. This is a goal that should be important to all of us regardless of our own personal status.

One way to make the park and the whole community more accessible is through pathways inside the park and along Woodbine Ave. Parents and children will always have to consider safety where there are cars, as do all citizens anywhere in Ontario where people and cars co-exist.

The parking lot issue of safety as

proposed in the plan has been dealt with in a very esthetically pleasing manner.

Trees along the pathway buffered with an island of grass ensures four things: most importantly, it keeps children and families on a safe pathway while coming from or going to their cars; it keeps vehicles out of the park, provides shade and will drastically enhance the beauty of the park. A chain link fence on the other hand does not consider the safety of people walking into the parking lot, does not provide shelter from the sun and is an esthetically unpleasant, institutional and a dated approach. The suggestion to soften the chain link fence through the use of cedars is unacceptable. Cedars serve as a haven for mosquitoes which would further compound the already disproportionate population of this insect given poor park drainage and overgrown brush. Furthermore, a cedar hedge would create a visual barrier, impairing police supervision and the watchful eyes of the community.

The park plan does not necessarily attempt to turn the Vandorf Park into a "Toronto Park" as Stewart's column suggests but rather a park for all people where issues on safety, accessibility and beauty have been addressed.

If Stewart is so concerned about our community becoming like "Toronto", perhaps she should consider working with her local ratepayers in protesting against potential industrial/commercial development instead of opposing local community-supported park improvements.

Finally, one must question Stewart's actual last use of the park given her reference to bridges which are in disrepair. The bridges in the park have been replaced over the past two years and

brought up to standards.

As for the rest of the article, it is clearly the opinion of the author. *The Tribune* meant well in allowing Vandorf to have a voice, but clearly a self-appointed spokesperson is a dangerous threat to our democratic initiatives. Journalism at best, represents the facts and does not misinform nor does it falsely claim their opinion to be that of a whole community. Vandorf does not benefit from this kind of misleading journalistic representation. Stewart's point of view on a community park is clearly not based on the majority of the Vandorf residents and therefore has no place in a column entitled "Vandorf's Voice".

We suggest she abandon her fantasies concerning a park which she has so fondly looked upon from afar given past memories.

Grounding herself in the needs of an evolving and sensitive community combined of both new and long term residents, will ensure our vitality as a community into the next millennium, maintaining our unique rural identity. Elaine Stewart, you have inspired us to carry on and make memories for ourselves and the children of our community we hold so dear!

The Vandorf Park Committee
D. Ottone
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C. Laflamme
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Editor's Note: A column is not always based solely on fact, as is an article. A column can be the opinion of the writer and is the only forum in which an opinion can justly be given. Elaine Stewart, given her many years living in Vandorf, is entitled to her informed opinion.

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