

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
6244 Main St. - Stouffville, Ont. L4A 1E2

Publisher - Ian Proudfoot
General Manager - Alvin Brouwer

Editor-in-chief Brenda Larson	Advertising Director Debra Weller	Business Manager Margaret Fleming
Regional Editor Brian Kirlik	Classified Manager Stacey Allen	Office Manager Vivian O'Neil
Editor Tracy Kibble	Distribution Director Barry Goodyear	Operations Manager Pamela Nichols

EDITORIAL

Region-wide fire service should be a priority

York Region council has taken the first step in creating a regional fire department. That step, centralizing the dispatch system, is the easiest decision councillors have to make.

The equipment in the four dispatch centres now operating in Richmond Hill, Vaughan, Markham and Newmarket is growing old and will soon need to be replaced.

Why buy four different high-tech systems when you can buy one top-of-the-line system that will be able to keep pace with growth in all five urban municipalities for less money?

To make sure the dispatch centre meets these requirements, the region is hiring a consultant to study the issue.

However, Newmarket Mayor Tom Taylor can't be blamed for his skepticism about whether this project will ever come to fruition. Taylor says he wants some reassurance, centralized dispatch has the support of all municipalities before he commits to his share of the \$61,000 study cost.

After all, the creation of a regional fire department has been delayed by political bickering for years.

It seemed regionalization was just around the corner when Ontario Fire Marshal Bernard Moyle raised the idea, with the widespread support of regional councillors, in 1995. But the move was stalled by arguments raised primarily by local councillors and firefighters themselves.

In January, regional chairperson Bill Fisch indicated a regional fire department would be a reality within a year. That goal is now clearly impossible.

Fisch is now hoping a regional department will be in place in two to five years.

The arguments in favour of regionalizing fire services are so strong that it seems absurd anyone would oppose it. The region's taxpayers could save an estimated \$96 million over 25 years if the five urban municipalities combine fire departments — more than \$100 million if the four rural towns are included.

However, several questions must be answered before a regional fire department can be created.

- How will it be funded? Officials in Aurora and Newmarket have expressed concern that a proposed funding formula could increase their costs while the three southern municipalities would save millions.

- How will it affect firefighters? Although regional officials say they'll try to avoid layoffs, unions are understandably concerned. Firefighters working under different collective agreements would have to agree to a common set of working conditions.

If politicians can't agree on these issues, the entire project could be torpedoed.

Rushing the process without giving full consideration to everyone's concerns will only lead to the bickering and infighting we've seen over amalgamating services in the Toronto mega-city.

We support the concept of regional fire service, not to mention regional ambulance and regional transit. But it's important to take the time to ensure that all concerns are addressed and every part of the region is well served by the system.

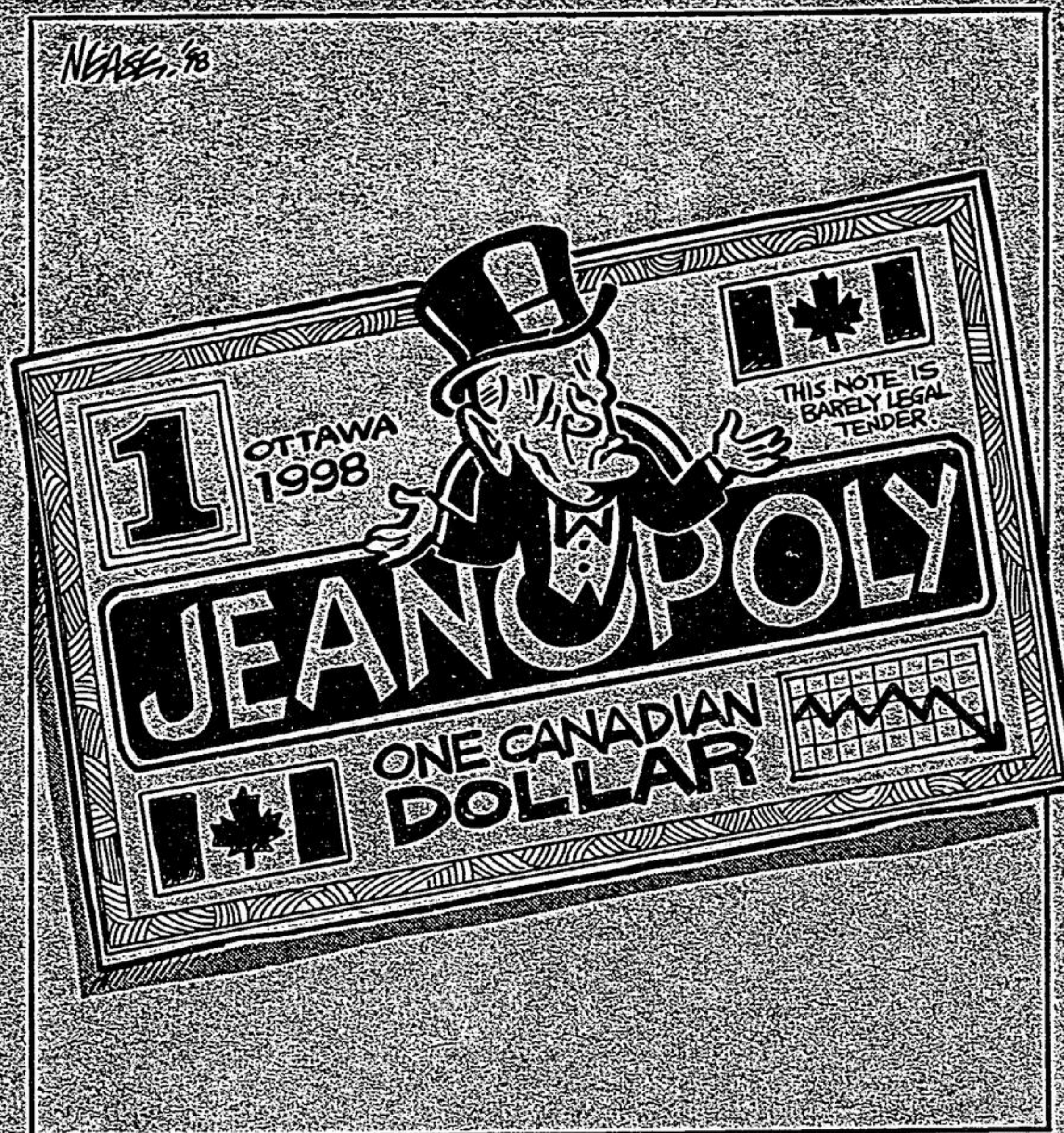
CORRECTION

The editorial in Tuesday's edition, *York Region must act to fix its waste woes*, incorrectly reported that officials may consider a dump site in York to accommodate the region's trash.

In fact, the region is studying alternative dump sites to Keele Valley, but none of the locations are within York.

We regret the error.

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lemonville family thankful for their loving lifestyle

This letter is being written in response to your article entitled Hamlet maintains its quaint roots in the Aug. 20 Tribune. The next line reads "Tiny Lemonville changing with the times, and it may not be for the better." I could not allow this point to be published without clarification.

My husband, Michael and I stumbled upon Lemonville in 1981. We were married in the Little White Church on the Hill and our three children have attended and been christened at the Lemonville Church. We live in the comfort of knowing our neighbour is always there for us.

My thanks go out to the families of Lemonville that were here before us. We were welcomed with open arms as one of the family.

Living here has given me the faith that even in the busy world there is a place called "Lemonville" where my children learn what it is to be a part of a caring community. They will always be able to come home to the love and support of a large family of neighbours.

The spirit of Lemonville is going strong and any newcomers catch the fever and continue the tradition. As you illustrated in your article, for decades people have been proud to say they live in Lemonville and we are determined to continue in the lifestyle for which we are admired.

AUDREY O'HANDLEY
LEMONVILLE

Newcomers find values

It was with dismay that I read Joan Ransberry's profile on our beloved Lemonville. Both the subtitle and concluding paragraph were, to our community, as insulting as they were inaccurate. Grant and Marion Wells are stalwarts of our community. Their generosity, both in deed and kind never ceases to amaze me.

Norma Emery could not be further from the truth when she states "This type of caring is a thing from the past... it would not be well received by the new residents. They come from the city... they want to be left alone."

This type of caring is very much alive today in Lemonville. It is the "old residents" like Marion Wells and Jean Nauta who are passing on the community spirit to the new families. It is not unusual for us to be sitting in our kitchen and to have Marion "fly" in with freshly picked corn, carrots and cucumbers. Newcomers to Lemonville, who had a previous engagement, appeared with a huge platter even though they could not stay. They said they wanted to be involved.

When one moves to Lemonville, one experiences a different way of life. To a certain extent, the way of yesteryear. A lifestyle of looking out for one's neighbours and the security of knowing one is never alone. We as newcomers never stop being thankful for finding our old home in an area of old-fashioned values.

VALERIE CURGENVEN
LEMONVILLE



Debora Kelly

Bill 160 fight belongs in court, not the classroom

"Walk in my shoes," bemoans the York Region Catholic school board teacher in a letter to the editor as he attempts to justify why he and 2,700 separate school teachers are threatening to strike for the second time in less than a year.

But this time around — no matter how much you appreciate teachers, and what they do — there is no way to justify cancelling school for 45,000 Catholic students.

The board has asked a conciliator to allow it to change its teachers' contract. The union says it's strike time if that happens.

Teachers are protesting a move to have them teach more classes while preparation time decreases. And they want a 7.5 per cent salary hike, too.

The region's 2,800 public elementary teachers' contract doesn't expire until the end of the month, while 1,800 secondary teachers have voted to strike if negotiations fail.

But it's the province's Education Quality Improvement Act, aka Bill 160, that forced changes to existing contracts — even though labour laws say that can't be done — and robbed boards of their authority and money.

Which brings us to this ludicrous situation where teachers are threatening to strike against boards that are powerless to respond to their demands.

And I foolishly thought the Battle of Bill 160 ended last year when teachers were forced to return to the classroom.

But if the province thinks it can cajole the public into taking sides against the big bad ol' greedy teachers, it's sadly mistaken.

Yet, so, too, are the teachers, if they think we will rally to their self-righteous side — striking against the school boards is clearly pointless, other than to put pressure on the province. Been there, done that.

No one will stand for our children to be sacrificed in a political battle again.

The province and the teachers must take responsibility here.

The province must either return to schools boards the real power to negotiate with their teachers or step in and do the deal-making itself.

And teachers must take their battle to the courts and labour board, where it belongs.

Any other way means we all lose, students, parents, taxpayers, teachers and the province.

Stouffville Tribune

Serving the community since 1888

Phone: (905) 640-2100 • Classified: 1-800-743-3353 • Distribution: (905) 640-2100 • E-mail: thetrib@istar.ca
Fax: (905) 640-5477

The Stouffville Tribune, published every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, is one of the Metroland Printing Publishing and Distributing Ltd. group of newspapers, which includes the Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, Alliston Herald/Coliner, Barrie Advance, Barry's Bay This Week, Bolton Enterprise, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Shopping News, Burlington Post, City Parent, Collingwood/Wasaga Connection, East York Mirror, Erin Advocate/Country Routes, Etobicoke Guardian, Flamborough Post, Georgetown/Independent/Action Free Press, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Markham Economist & Sun, Midland/Penetanguishene Mirror, Milton Canadian Champion, Milton Shopping News, Mississauga News, Newmarket/Aurora, Georgina Era-Banner, Northumberland News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Oakville Shopping News, Orlia Today, Oshawa/Whitby/Clearington/Port Perry This Week, Peterborough This Week, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, today's Seniors, Uxbridge Tribune and City of York Guardian.

