

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
37 Sandiford Dr., Suite 306, Stouffville, Ont., L4A 7X5

Publisher - Ian Proudfoot
General Manager - Alvin Brouwer
Editor-in-chief - Brenda Larson
Advertising Director - Debra Weller
Business Manager - Margaret Fleming
Regional Editor - Brian Kirtik
Classified Manager - Stephen Mathieu
Office Manager - Vivian O'Neil
Editor - Tracy Kibble
Distribution Director - Barry Goodyear

EDITORIAL

Federal tax cuts would help all Canadians

In the coming months, Vaughan-King-Aurora MP Maurizio Bevilacqua will be asking for our opinions on tax cuts and tax reform.

In his capacity as finance chairperson, Bevilacqua will be conducting a series of town hall meetings across the country to help Finance Minister Paul Martin prepare the next budget.

And in a letter circulated to all MPs and several national organizations, Bevilacqua has specifically asked for ideas on tax cuts and tax reform.

Let's hope this means the federal government is finally getting serious about tax relief.

Liberal MPs will argue that their government has been cutting taxes all along.

This year's budget reduced the basic personal exemption and removed the 3-per-cent surtax on income above \$50,000.

And, according to Bevilacqua, the federal government has delivered \$16.5 billion in tax cuts over the three years before that.

But for most of us, those tax cuts were so insignificant they were wiped out by increases in Canada Pension Plan contributions.

The federal government is projecting budget surpluses of \$10 billion a year.

Although politicians often view a surplus as a pot of money to be spent however they see fit, it really represents the amount of taxes the government collected beyond what it needs.

If the federal government is expecting to collect \$10 billion a year more than it needs, it is morally bound to reduce taxes.

Chambers of commerce across the country are calling for reductions of approximately \$9 billion over two years — less than half of the projected surplus.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien is non-committal on the idea, preferring to divide the money evenly between tax cuts, debt reduction and new social spending.

Bevilacqua's letter also seeks input on new areas of social spending; one suggestion from many Liberals is that it be used to combat child poverty.

Recent uses for surplus federal funds include a \$2.5-billion millennium scholarship fund and restoration of provincial health transfers. The problem is that, although \$10 billion seems like a lot of money, once it's divided into several pots and spread across the country, it makes for an insignificant tax cut, barely a drop in the bucket of the national debt and a few programs that might generate a few election-friendly headlines but can't really address a problem as vast as child poverty.

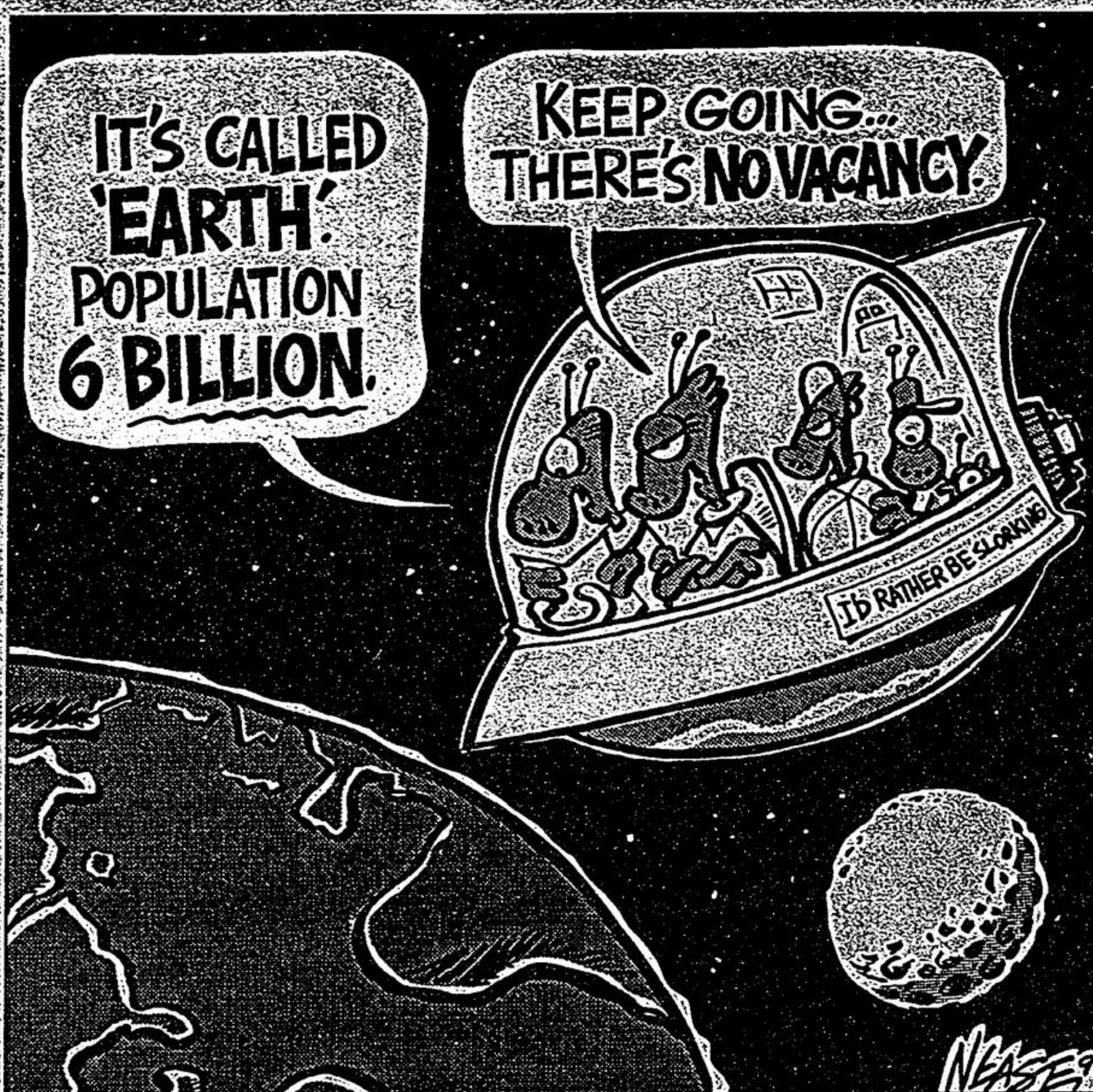
On the other hand, the chambers have costed out their still rather modest tax-reduction proposal to mean a \$474 tax saving this year for an Ontario family of four with a household income of \$65,000. Next year, the chambers' proposal would cut that family's taxes by \$1,013.

The chambers also propose to hold program spending increases to mirror population and inflation hikes. All year-end unanticipated surpluses would be directed to debt reduction. This may or may not be the best formula to build Canada's economy. But it is a clear direction, costed out and far better than the politically expedient, economic waffling favoured by Chretien.

Finance Minister Paul Martin has indicated he considers reducing taxes to increase productivity a high priority. Bevilacqua has indicated that taxes are on the table for his meetings this fall — and traditionally he has held at least one of these meetings in York Region.

Perhaps, if we participate in this process and make our views known loud and clear, we'll finally prod the federal government in the same fiscal direction as the province and most municipal governments — letting taxpayers keep more of their hard-earned money.

OPINION



Doug Devine

York Region politicians face impotent future

Now that regional chairperson Bill Fisch is finally getting mad about sending Toronto \$90 million a year in social funding, imagine how upset he'll be when York taxpayers are forced to help pay for Toronto's homeless shelters, the TTC and repairs to Toronto's aging roads and sewers.

As ridiculous as that may sound, the wheels are already in motion to add all three of those expenses to York's property tax bills, and thanks to the Tory municipal restructuring, Fisch and the rest of York's 75 politicians may be powerless to stop it.

Fisch and many of York's mayors got a glimpse of their impotent future at last week's meeting of the Greater Toronto Services Board.

First it was Toronto councillors Howard Moscoe and David Shiner bluntly criticizing York's pathetic patchwork of public transit, which they say has made it difficult to discuss integration with the TTC.

Although the criticism of York's transit woes hit the mark, it doesn't take a huge leap to realize what the Toronto councillors really want is suburban taxpayers sharing the huge TTC costs.

After all, don't thousands of York residents ride the TTC's buses and subways to work each day?

And isn't this the same "common-link" argument the Tories used to force regional taxpayers to share the city's social costs?

It gets worse. The same argument can be applied to Toronto's aging and faltering infrastructure, which a Toronto Board of Trade report warns is threatening the economic future of the GTA.

YORK'S INFRASTRUCTURE IS NEW

On that front, Fisch was quick on the defense, correctly pointing out that much of York's infrastructure is relatively new, and that we've been smart enough to set aside reserves to repair our infrastructure when needed.

But whether Fisch and the rest of the 905-region representatives on the GTSB can prevent the Toronto-dominated board from expanding its role — and its cost-sharing — is questionable.

And other regional services already mentioned as possible GTSB takeovers include policing, ambulances, water, sewers and garbage.

All of which could make the \$500 the average York homeowner is now sending Toronto each year look like a drop in the bucket.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Residents who supported blood donor clinic thanked

I would like to thank the participants and donors to the recent blood donor clinic at the Stouffville Legion on July 9.

It was an overwhelming response by concerned citizens of the Stouffville area.

Nadia James, donor services representative of Canadian Blood Services, was impressed by the number of donors at this clinic. She had projected 120 units would be collected, but it produced 210 registrations and processed 185 donors.

We believe the success of this event was the combination of information signs and posters and a front page story in the *Stouffville Tribune* of July 8 which pertained to the urgent need for blood.

We would like to thank Graham Fretz of the Stouffville Legion Branch 459 for the use of the hall; the CBS staff, technicians and nurses who worked constantly keeping the never ending flow of donors moving along; the many Stouffville Lions who registered and served the donors with food and drink; the first time donors who were willing to take the chance to give the gift of life; and the regular donors who always respond at the need.

IVAN HARRIS
STOUFFVILLE LIONS CLUB
BLOOD CLINIC VOLUNTEER ORGANIZER

Wagon Wheel Ranch an excellent neighbour

Regarding the accident at the Wagon Wheel Ranch.

I have been a neighbour of ranch owner James Coultice for more than 20 years. In that period of time I have not heard of one complaint, on the contrary I have been informed of incidents where unruly horses have been halted immediately. Coultice is and has always been an excellent neighbour.

As a parent with two children, I can deeply sympathize with the parents of the young girl who was killed. It was indeed a most unfortunate and tragic accident, and I am sure that nothing can possibly be worse than the pain suffered by the loss of a child.

From the moment of birth a parent must decide what is safe and what is not safe and direct their children accordingly. That is their responsibility.

No sport is 100 per cent safe and riding is no exception.

Unlike an accident, a lawsuit or a criminal charge is intentional, but it too has the potential to kill, just in different ways. No court decision can bring back a life. My sincerest sympathies to all who are involved.

DAVE MCMULLEN
STOUFFVILLE

OUR LETTERS POLICY

Letters should be no longer than 400 words and must include the writer's full name, address and a daytime telephone number so authorship can be confirmed. Anonymous letters will not be published.

Letters will be edited for clarity and space limitations. Please send your letters to: Letters to the Editor, Stouffville Tribune, 37 Sandiford Dr., Suite 306, Stouffville, Ont. L4A 7X5

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/Courier, Barrie Advance, Barry's Bay This Week, Bolton Enterprise, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Shopping News, Burlington Post, City Parent, Collingwood/Messaga Connection, East York Mirror, Erin Advocate/Country Routes, Etobicoke Guardian, Farnborough Post, Georgetown Independent/Action Free Press, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Markham Economist & Sun, Midland/Penatanguishene 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/Clarington/Port Perry This Week, Peterborough This Week, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, Today's Seniors, Uxbridge Tribune and City of York Guardian.

