

# Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper  
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# OPINION



Brenda Larson

## Nothing wrong with work for welfare concept

Yes, there are problems with the province's Ontario Works workfare program.

Yes, there are fewer than 1 per cent of eligible welfare recipients working in any given month and only 5 per cent of participants have actually been in work placements.

Yes, the program isn't effective for everyone who may be eligible, such as single moms who can't find appropriate care for their children when they're on a placement.

But that doesn't necessarily mean the concept is a bad one and should be eliminated.

The critics have been back out in full force in recent weeks, as the province offered its report on the success rate of the program — or, rather, the lack of success rate.

### HOT-BUTTON ISSUE

The naysayers are crying foul over the concept of having workfare participants assigned to agricultural tasks, picking fruits and vegetables for farmers all over Ontario — as if there's anything wrong with asking people who are getting a handout from the province to do the same kind of hard day's work that Ontario farmers have been doing for generations.

Even Ontario Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty is getting into the act, with his call for a provincial audit of the program, even though his own party offered up a watered-down workfare program in its election literature.

And there are those who say workfare is the worst kind of hot-button issue, one that pits the haves against the have-nots, one that has otherwise decent people with good social values targeting the downtrodden, saying they're sick of paying for welfare moms to stay at home and drink beer and watch soaps.

### HONEST LABOUR

But the bottom line is this: there are still more than 300,000 people in Ontario who are on welfare.

Something has to be done to help these people find their way out of the welfare system and back into the working world.

There is no shame in picking vegetables.

There is no shame in cleaning parks.

There is no shame in doing some honest labour in return for welfare assistance from the province and its taxpayers.



## LETTERS

### Markham Village development plan raises concerns

Markham Village is among a vanishing few places where a strong sense of community pride and appreciation of historical significance are still present.

In 1998, town councillors, planners, and citizens of Markham joined forces to formulate a comprehensive vision for Main Street, Markham that would proclaim Markham Village is indeed a place where we take pride in our community and more than 200 years of heritage.

The support of this vision by community members was overwhelming.

It is in the spirit of this shared vision and concern for the preservation of the integrity of the village and Main Street that we submit this letter to appeal any decision to amend the official plan and zoning bylaw which would allow the 6.8 acres on the east side of Main Street, Markham South, between the library and the Rouge River, to be turned into 68 freehold and condominium townhouses.

We feel strongly that because of its location, this property should not be treated as just another parcel of land waiting to be bulldozed, paved over and jammed full of houses. This sight, all too familiar in Markham, is simply not appropriate to a location which is part of the gateway to Markham.

Certainly there is no vision in the proposed development. Please honour the pride, ideals and heritage of the townspeople and do not let this land be developed in this way.

We would hope that what we have written up to this point is enough to legitimize our appeal, however, we have other concerns we wish to briefly outline.

**Traffic:** Main Street, Markham traffic was listed as a main concern of constituents (of several wards) in the 1997 municipal election. This development proposes to enter and exit on to Main Street.

**Environmental issues:** A severe change in elevation exists on the proposed site and aesthetically this creates an unattractive high wall of buildings. The development will obliterate most or all of the trees, some of which are very old and are landmarks of Markham's heritage.

**Drainage:** The property drains into the Rouge River to the south and Robinson Creek (a critical spawning ground for rainbow trout) to the west.

It is our sincere hope that town councillors and residents hear our plea in reconsidering the proposal and honour the integrity of the vision for Main Street.

TREVELYAN BEARD, PETRA AND STEVE SIMMONS; DEBORAH AND MARK WEILAND  
MARKHAM

### Stouffville praised for stand on pool/library issue

I commend Mayor Wayne Emmerson for having the guts to tackle the pool/library issue in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Recently I read a comment wondering about the motives driving this council on this unpopular project.

It is called progress. The indoor pool has been talked about for about as long as the second ice pad was.

No matter where the pool is put, some group of "not-in-my-backyarders" will complain, the silent majority commend the council for taking this action.

As to the comments about depleting some of the \$5 million in reserves, I will remember them every time I drive down to Markham for my kids' swimming lessons and while I am down there I am buying our supper, doing a little shopping. That's all money that I would be spending in downtown Stouffville.

But no, lets keep the money in the bank and keep turning our downtown into a ghost town just to appease this small group.

Well done mayor and council.  
JOHN WILSON  
STOUFFVILLE

### Column on 'upspeak' gave reader a good laugh

Yes, as Roy Green so drolly lamented in his Aug. 28 column, "upspeak" among the younger crowd appears to be here to stay — whether the rest of us like it or not.

Adults who at one time urged mumbling kids to speak up are now, because of this strange way of ending a remark with a question mark where a period belongs, wishing they would speak down once in a while.

Green's tongue-in-cheek guesses as to how far back this curious habit goes gave me a

good laugh.

However, while most of us might tolerate it in the still wet-behind-the-ears members of society, I, for one, don't find this rising intonation all that amusing when indulged by supposed grown-ups in somewhat influential speaking positions. For instance, that newsreader who irritates your columnist by ending a brief lead-in to an item by with an "invisible question mark".

He is far from the only radio or TV newscaster whose odd variations in voice inflection leaves listeners as uncertain as he himself seems to be. Green's assumption that they do this "on purpose" could be right. Like some teenagers, they are still so unsure of what they are doing that they use this upward swoop as a means of asking our permission to continue. Grow up, you guys.

Why doesn't somebody wise them up to the fact that the speech patterns they fell into as adolescents were fine among their peers, but talking to a mass audience calls for much more mature speech-craft? Almost everybody knows that what's OK in juvenile conversation can be unwelcome in adulthood.

With 14 grandchildren, I'm quite resigned to hearing some of them adopt "upspeak", but I doubt very much that their great-grandfather would have been.

My father was unbending in his views on improper use of the voice and I can see him shaking his head as he mildly reproved them by saying with a slight frown, "I'm a little puzzled. Are we to regard what you just said as a comment or a query?"

As to how a few ninnyes deliver their lines over the airwaves, I don't believe we are "doomed" as Green kiddingly sighs, because of them.

Nevertheless, I'd like the networks to be a bit more discerning in their choices of on-air personalities.

MARGARET STAPLEY  
STOUFFVILLE

The Stouffville Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Stouffville Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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## Stouffville Tribune

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