

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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EDITORIAL

GTSB should lead study on effects of urban sprawl

For many York Region residents, the battlegrounds are set.

There's the Oak Ridges Moraine, the environmentally sensitive landform threatened by ongoing development.

There's green King Township, its pristine farmland under attack from the extension of the Big Pipe and the feared development that goes with that extension.

Farmland in East Gwillimbury, Shoreline in Georgina, Picturesque Kleinburg. All threatened.

Residents in York Region have made it clear they appreciate a fine balance between preservation of our natural beauty and necessary development to support our anticipated quality of life.

So, as Toronto offers \$200,000 to launch a study of the impact of low-density development on our region — and the entire Greater Toronto Area, for that matter — residents with concerns about our environment and about the urban sprawl that is enveloping us have every reason to welcome such a gift.

Or do they? Let's think about the issue and the offer.

Urban sprawl, the result of planning processes that saw subdivisions springing up in all corners of our region (and neighbouring regions), has pushed nature to the limit. There are fewer green spaces within communities. Animals are being stranded as they're surrounded by bricks and mortar.

It has placed increased pressure on our services — social services, health services, recreation programming. It has congested our highways and illustrated how woefully inadequate our public transit systems are.

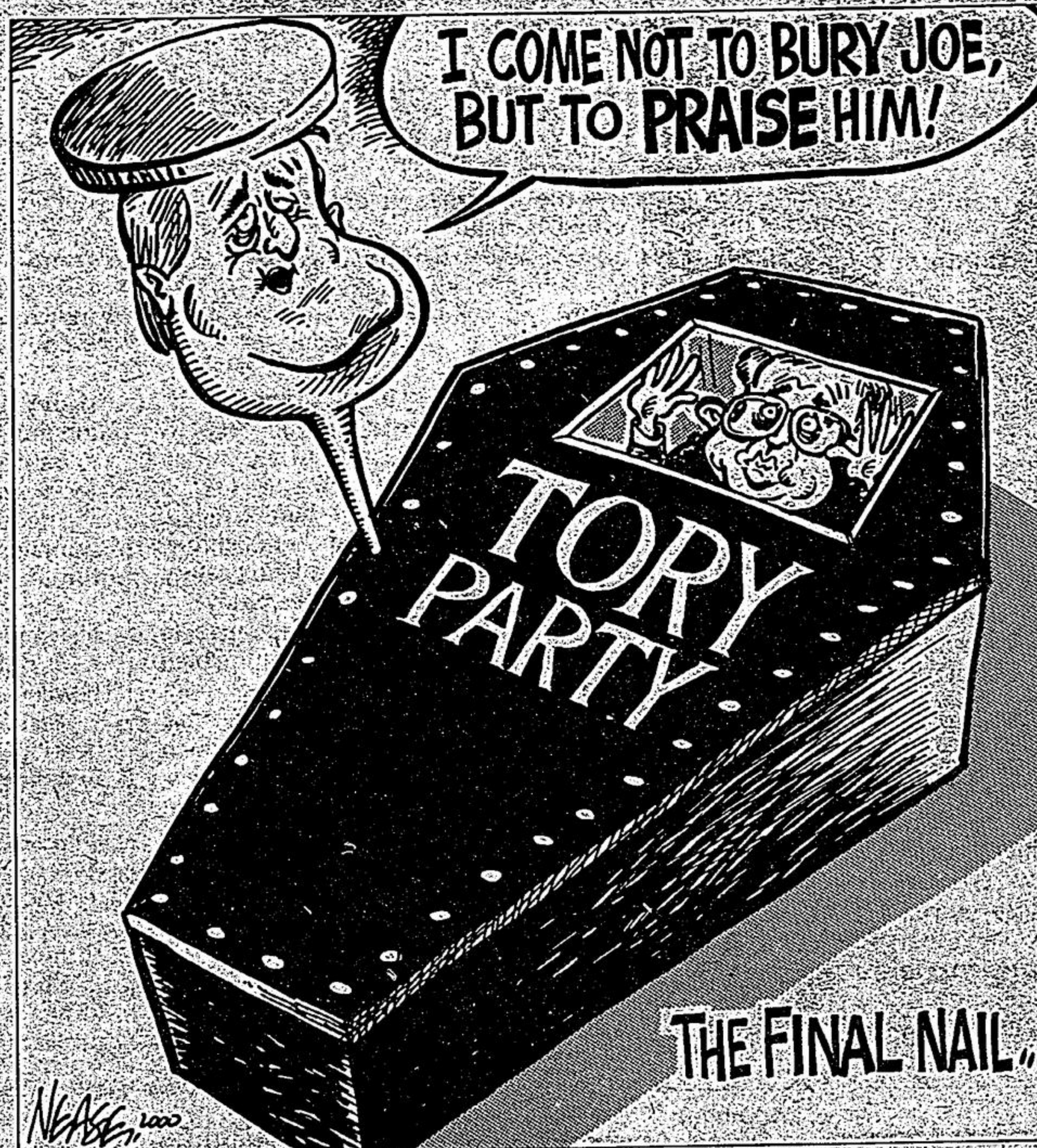
Now, let's look at the offer. It's tremendous that Toronto, as the epicentre from which the Greater Toronto Area radiates, wants to study the effects of sprawl outside and inside its boundaries.

There is no question municipal growth in the GTA has an impact on Toronto — whether it's from residential or business relocations, or traffic flooding into crowded city streets, or region-dwellers seeking city health or social services.

Undoubtedly, Toronto belongs in such discussions.

In fact, we believe such a process would more appropriately be spearheaded by the Greater Toronto Services Board, in partnership with the affected regions, including Toronto.

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Consumers must be wary about the hazards of tattoos, piercing

It was with great interest that I read the recent Etcetera article on tattooing and piercing, *Body Language*, that appeared May 25.

Tattooing and piercing is becoming increasingly popular and mainstream, and as more people consider this form of body art they should also be aware of potential health risks.

Any time the skin is pierced or tattooed, there is a chance of infection or allergic reaction.

Tattooing and piercing can be done safely, but improperly administered tattoos and piercings can result in serious illnesses like Hepatitis B and C, HIV and a number of other viral and bacterial infections.

Also, in order to prevent the spread of infection, people cannot donate their blood for one year after getting a tattoo or piercing.

The practise itself is not regulated, and no law prohibits a person of any age from getting a tattoo or piercing.

I was pleased to read the Keswick establishment featured in the article insists on parental involvement for clients under 18 years because open communication between parents and children who are determined to get tattooed or pierced is the best way to prevent infection and protect long-term health.

Reputable and experienced artists will make infection control a priority by practis-

ing good personal and work hygiene, and by using sterile or disposable equipment.

In York Region, tattoo and piercing businesses are inspected annually by public health inspectors according to Ministry of Health protocols, but consumers should be aware of the need for cleanliness and safety.

CATHERINE WHITE, MANAGER
SEXUAL HEALTH PROGRAMS
INFECTIOUS DISEASES CONTROL DIVISION

Public pressure needed to prompt environmental action

For the past two years, I believed the Oak Ridges Moraine would be protected from development.

Without legislated policy and a freeze on development from the Ontario government, such protection will not be provided.

Public pressure did change Richmond Hill council's direction. However, now the public is definitely out of the loop as these proposed developments are before an appointed body, the Ontario Municipal Board. These judges will decide what is best for our community, leaving the public with only two evenings out of 12 weeks of hearings for input.

Please call your representatives and persuade them to translate talk into action. It's time for all levels of government to step up to the plate and protect the future of all.

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Frank Daggett

Lori Patrick has made a difference in the world

Lori Patrick's decision to raise the alarm about the presence of toxic mould at the Newmarket courthouse has shown how one person's acts can benefit others.

It also shows how a decision to talk to the public, through the pages of a newspaper like ours, can help ensure an issue isn't swept away without examination and resolution.

As a result of Patrick's complaints, the Ministry of Labour has ordered four courtrooms and five judges' chambers closed indefinitely due to the risk of toxic mould. And the problem could easily have gone unnoticed or at least unmentioned.

It takes some courage for one person to speak up, risking ridicule from their peers, their employers and the public. As it turns out, Patrick was not the only one suffering the ill effects of mould and, once she stepped forward, she was suddenly engulfed in a wellspring of support from her fellow workers.

In short, Patrick could have been considered a whiner and easily ignored as such, but after missing 12 days of work since January, the York Regional Police civilian employee chose to do something.

Events in Walkerton could have unfolded much differently had someone had the ability and courage to come forward sooner, risking possible ridicule but armed with damning results showing unhealthy levels of E. coli contamination in the town's water supply.

It's definitely easier to sit back and trust that "the system" or someone else will deal with the problem and will somehow make it go away.

As it turned out, Patrick needed the media to get her case heard and we're glad we were here to listen.

Once we told her story, Patrick was supported not just by other workers, but by the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of the Attorney General, which operates the building.

From our perspective, we have to decide when a whine is truly a worry — Patrick's case definitely fell into the worry category, dismissing any concerns that some people might feel we were sensationalizing a situation just to make good headlines.

Officials have made it crystal clear they don't want workers like Patrick to feel unsafe or unhealthy in the building and that efforts are under way to correct the mould problem.

If Patrick hadn't spoken out, would the situation still be festering?

And if we hadn't listened when Patrick talked to us, if we hadn't publicized her plight, would the support from all parties been so strong and forthright?

Would we be witnessing the action we're witnessing now?

Just asking because, you know, the Lori Patricks of the world are few and far between.

LETTERS POLICY

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

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