

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
9 Heritage Rd., Markham, Ont., L3P 1M3

Publisher: Ian Proudfoot
General Manager: Alvin Brouwer
Editor in Chief: Brenda Larson
Director of Advertising: Debra Weller

Deputy Editor: Debora Kelly
Editor: Jim Mason
Production Manager: Pam Nichols
Distribution Director: Barry Goodyear
Online Publishing Manager: Margaret Fleming

Classified Manager: Ann Campbell
Retail Sales Manager: Stephen Mathieu
Inside Sales Manager: Stacy Allen
Business Manager: Rob Lazaruk
Office Manager: Vivian O'Neil

EDITORIAL

Well, now we know who had the hidden agenda during the federal election campaign.

Apparently it was not "the dark forces", as Prime Minister Jean Chretien fondly calls Stockwell Day's Canadian Alliance Party, but the little guy from Shawinigan himself.

At the prime minister's urging, the Liberal government is contemplating a far-reaching review of all its spending and programs in a bid to eliminate poverty in Canada.

Wow.

And there should be peace on Earth, too.

Opposition MPs and provincial premiers are accusing Chretien of electoral trickery for proposing the exorbitant welfare program only two weeks after the election — even though it was never mentioned once during the 36-day campaign.

Officials insist Chretien had said he planned to use half the ballooning federal surplus to combat Canada's social woes — er, he just didn't specifically mention massive spending to alleviate poverty.

Do Canadians look like they fell off the maple syrup truck yesterday?

Given the endorsement Canadians handed the Liberals by returning them to office as a majority government one can see how Chretien, in his arrogance, might assume it is his rightful duty to proceed with this grand vision.

Would Canadians have returned the Liberals to office if they had known just how determined Chretien is to go down in history as the leader who eliminated poverty?

Day — who, understandably, is making no attempt to choke back the "I told you so" — said Chretien should name a mountain after himself if he wants to leave a lasting legacy, rather than spend billion-dollar dollars to fund a cradle-to-grave welfare program.

Canadians have been there, done that, with the Liberals' grand spending programs. And we had the deficit to prove it.

In 1995, Lloyd Axworthy, then Human Resources minister, tabled a report on guaranteed annual income in the House of Commons, which stated nothing more than "a token-guaranteed income" could be provided without dramatically boosting taxes.

It's too late to make your views known in the most effective way, at the ballot box, but you can certainly tell your MP what you think.

Demand to know why you weren't told about this plan a month ago. Insist the Chretien government not create another HRDC fiasco.

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.

Write: Letters to the Editor,
9 Heritage Rd.,
Markham, Ont., L3P 1M3
Email: letters@econsun.com

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Teachers have a rich pension fund, so gov't. should be let off the hook

Re: Teachers are trying to make 'real world' a better place, a letter by J. Evans.

Interesting opinion about 'teachers world' versus 'real world'. However, the letter implies the current teachers' contract offer is the "lowest common denominator in life".

Somehow, the analogy of an amoeba to teacher employment standards does not fit, especially when you consider the asset value of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan is more than \$68 billion.

This is bigger than the GNP of some Third World countries. Teachers retiring this year look forward to an annual pension of \$38,000 or more. With its current annual growth of more than 17 per cent, a teacher retiring 10 years from now will receive more than \$1 million in retirement income.

The OTPP reported a surplus of almost \$9 billion last year yet the provincial government has to contribute an additional \$1.252 billion of our tax dollars to this fund for 1999, and will owe more than that this year.

In addition, the OTPP is a stock holder in many corporations including Air Canada, Barrick Gold, British American Tobacco, Gulf Canada, Imperial Oil, Laidlaw, Molson, Petro Canada, Seagrams, Suncor Energy and many more. If all of this is not at the top of the corporate food chain, then it's getting very darn close.

In fact, since the OTPP with its 500

employees is obviously self-sufficient, why not let the government off the hook for future contributions?

Alternatively, why not use some of the surplus to boost teacher salaries?

D. JOYCE
Richmond Hill

Why did Markham voters elect a parachute federal candidate?

Congratulations Markham, you have now joined the rest of Ontario in electing the Liberals to a third majority government. Of course, the voters of Markham can say we elected a strong member who will fight for us. This is not true, since John McCallum lives in Oakville and does not know our issues.

Sixty-six per cent of Markham voters voted for John McCallum and the question is why? Some will say we voted for an honorable prime minister, which also cannot possibly be true, since the prime minister was unable to name one thing he has done the past seven years in the English leaders debate.

Moreover, his government has lost billions of dollars and crippled health care. Great work, Markham, I do not expect to hear any whining about not receiving a tax cut, the decline in the health care system, or the loss of billions of dollars during this mandate.

CHRIS DEELEY
Unionville

TELEPHONE

(905) 294-2200 / (416) 798-7624

FAX: (905) 294-1538

EMAIL: newsroom@econsun.com



Dave Teetzel

The province, not builders, should pay for hospitals

It's hardly a surprise the new president of the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association has no interest in paying a voluntary \$463-per-home fee to support hospital expansions.

The housing industry hasn't been required to pay development charges for hospitals since 1997, when the province greatly reduced the range of services that could be funded from the pockets of new home buyers.

Regional council was hoping to convince builders to kick in a total of \$20.8 million toward expansion plans at Markham Stouffville Hospital, York Central Hospital and Southlake Regional Health Centre.

This payment is particularly important to the politicians because they have already committed \$62 million to the hospitals — a sum that includes the development industry contribution.

The region doesn't have \$62 million in reserves, so without the building fees, we could be looking at a hefty tax increase.

Markham Mayor Don Cousens, the region's finance committee chairperson, says if the builders won't pay voluntarily, he'll lobby the province to reinstate the charges.

But the fact is, the big developers do make voluntary contributions to the region's hospitals.

I was at York Central Hospital's gala recently — and I can tell you it wasn't the newspaper editors who were buying multiple tables and purchasing silent auction items at well over the retail price.

And let's not forget York Region has the highest lot levies in the GTA — more than double what's charged in Toronto.

A builder might legitimately ask why new residents are being asked to fund hospital projects that clearly benefit everyone in the community.

Funding isn't the only part of the hospital business that has changed in recent years. Hospitals are increasingly operating at a regional level.

That makes perfect sense. But it means people in Willowdale may go to York Central for some services while a patient in Richmond Hill may go to Southlake.

So you can see why a builder might be confused when he is asked to contribute to the "local hospital" for his subdivision. What's local anymore?

If the developer is paying the piper, shouldn't he have the right to call the tune?

But that's not really the answer. The answer is much simpler. The province stopped municipalities from collecting development fees for hospitals.

The province is supposed to fund health care. The province should be kicking in the money to replace the lost lot levies.

Stouffville Tribune

Serving the community since 1888



Canadian Circulations
Audit Board Member



Ontario Press Council

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement #1403419
Subscription rates by mail: 1 year - \$69.55 (tuesdays only)

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/Wasaga Connection, East York Mirror, Erin Advocate/Country Routes, Etobicoke Guardian, Flamborough Post, Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Midland/Panetanguishene Mirror, Milton Canadian Champion, Milton Shopping News, Mississauga News, Newmarket-Aurora, Georgina Era-Banner, Northumberland News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Oakville Shopping News, Orillia Today, Oshawa/Whitby/Clarington/Port Perry This Week, Peterborough This Week, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, Stouffville Tribune, Today's Seniors, Uxbridge Tribune and City of York Guardian.

Phone: (905) 294-2200

Fax: (905) 294-1538

Classified:

1-800-743-3353

Distribution

(905) 294-8244

distribution@econsun.com