

Stouffville Tribune

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9 Heritage Rd., Markham, Ont. L3P 1M3

Publisher: Ian Proudfoot

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OPINION

TELEPHONE

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

FAX: (905) 294-1538

EMAIL: newsroom@econsun.com



Tracy Kibble

Region's lack of interest in Lake Simcoe is appalling

York Region politicians appear to be all talk, no action when it comes to the environment. Last week's decision to snub the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and its request for more cash to clean up Lake Simcoe proves this point.

(Let me first confess I live on Lake Simcoe and feel justified in my passions.)

It seems chairperson Bill Fisch believes others should pick up the tab to save Ontario's sixth largest lake since "we don't get that much of the total value." This despite the fact the lake brings in \$200 million each year as a recreational resource. This despite the fact the region has just hired a tourism promotion co-ordinator.

This despite the fact seven of York's nine municipalities are directly affected by the lake's health.

Fisch pointed out only 25 per cent of Lake Simcoe's shoreline is in York Region, so why should we be expected to pay 72 per cent of its cleanup? In essence, he's saying the lake isn't important enough to find the extra dollars.

The region claims it isn't happy with the authority's funding formula, which was determined by population and tax assessment.

With its 700,000 residents, York Region is a powerful force. But it seems that power is only touted when it benefits a political agenda.

Fisch's inference the region already gives the authority \$300,000 toward its annual budget is laughable.

I guess the philosophy, the rich should pay, only applies when York Region passes out its annual property tax hikes, not when it comes to helping secure one of the Greater Toronto Area's most precious natural resources.

York Region has agreed to give the authority \$50,000, an insulting amount considering politicians expense more than that on food and entertainment.

And in York's 2001 Business Plan and Budget, there is not one mention of the environment or the region's funding plans to help preserve it.

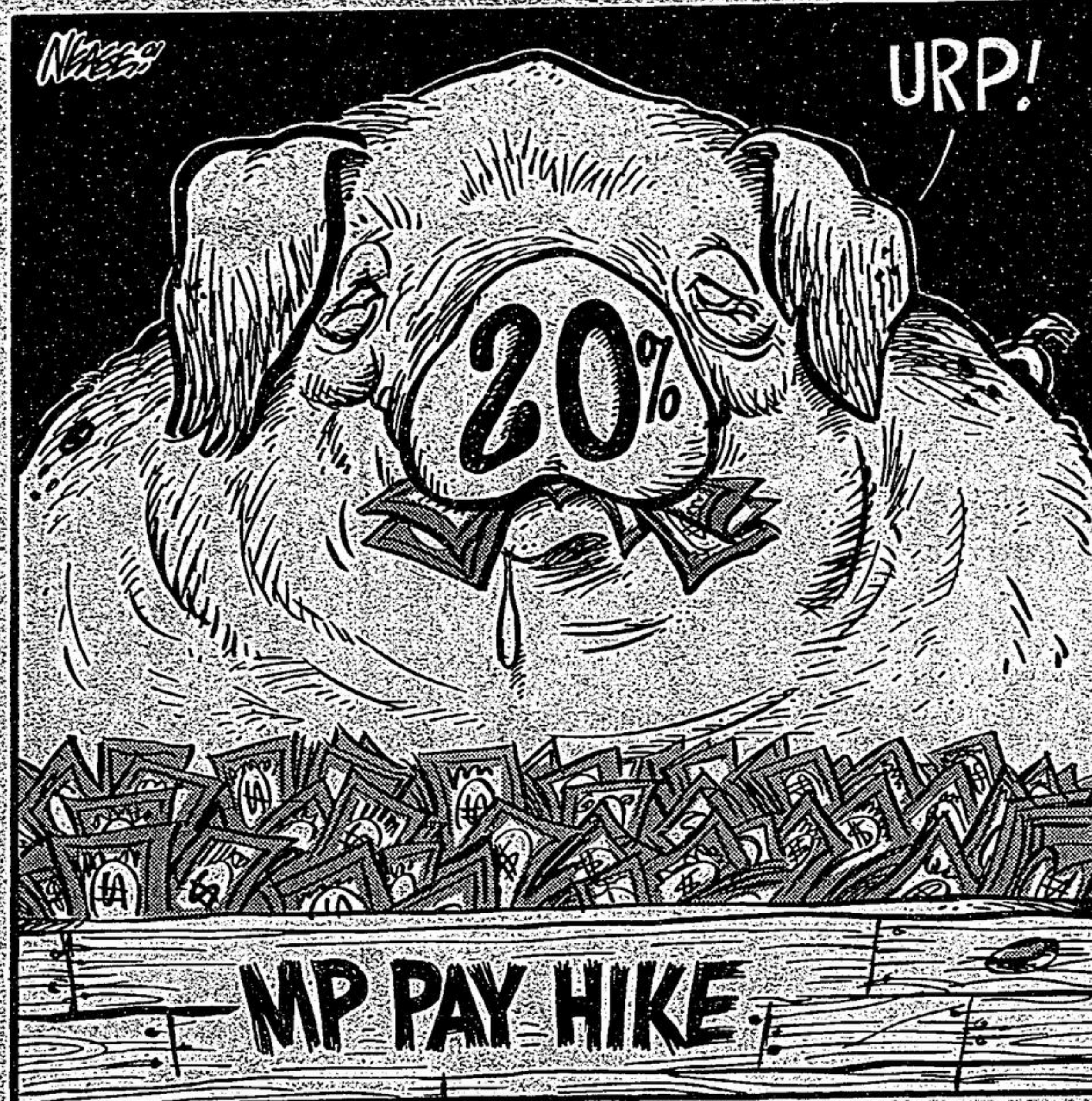
In its Greening of York Region Initiative — a flimsy 31-page discussion paper — Lake Simcoe isn't even an afterthought.

The region seems to be more focused on tree preservation, forestry, trails, hiking and "enhancing the region's natural heritage."

And on its State of the Environment map, the region acknowledges phosphorus levels in the region's rivers remain higher than the provincial target.

It's great to talk, but without action nothing will improve.

The region can't see the lake for the trees and that's pitiful.



LETTERS

Tim Hortons camps provide invaluable experiences for youth

I am writing this letter to recognize the overwhelming generosity of Tim Hortons. For more than 25 years, this organization has been providing children across Canada with the opportunity to enjoy a week at one of its fabulous camps.

For these children, the camp experience was something they would only dream about.

This year, thanks to several of Tim Hortons York Region stores, nine excited Little Brothers will be going to camps in Kentucky, Nova Scotia and Alberta.

There are also facilities in Quebec and Ontario and, if it could get any better, children always leave their home province to see another part of the country.

A mother of a former Little Brother couldn't say enough about her son's week at a Tim Hortons camp.

It was an amazing experience.

The facility was fantastic, the camp counsellors made a lasting impression and, to this day, her son refers to it as the highlight of his life.

Thank you to all who bought a coffee May 16 in support of the children.

The Big Brothers employees who volunteered on Camp Day were certainly kept busy.

Many thanks to Tim Hortons for caring about the future of children and for giving our boys this incredible experience.

KATHRYN HENDERSON
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
BIG BROTHERS OF YORK

Oak Ridges Moraine too valuable to destroy with development

I wish to add my support for saving the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Our Conservative government must be made aware of the natural water filtration system of the moraine, affecting more than 250,000 citizens requiring good drinking water.

A visit to this area dismays one with the number of side-by-side houses and destruction of trees, which are so important to our air quality.

The urban sprawl is overwhelming. This area should be developed prudently but, currently, it looks out of control.

We are fortunate to have much natural beauty around us. Let's not destroy it.

AUDREY COLTON
KLEINBURG

Board listened to concerns when making CAP program optional

The York Region District School Board, to be responsive to the concerns of parents, has agreed to allow school advisory councils the right to opt out of the Community Access Program, which provides computers to schools in exchange for allowing outsiders to come in and use them.

The board has been extremely pro-active in its efforts to allow individual school communities to determine whether or not this program is suitable for their school.

My thanks go out to those at the board who have gone out of their way to be responsive to parents' concerns about the safety of their children.

MARK SHENDROFF
THORNHILL

Environmental, social value of greenspace is lost in York Region

Re: More places needed to sit and socialize, forum told, May 29.

I believe the benefits of greenspace are enormous on physical, psychological, envi-

ronmental, social and, for some, spiritual levels.

Reading this article, I shook my head in sadness and disbelief that, piece by piece, some of our parks are being destroyed to make way for business advancements.

Particularly, I am thinking of the newly created parking lot across from York Central Hospital in Richmond Hill.

I believe a barometer of a region's health is where it places its developmental priorities.

The opportunities provided by parks complement the services provided by hospitals by offering a natural locale to exercise, interact and enjoy what the outdoors has to offer in a suburban setting. This is good recuperative and preventative medicine.

While not exactly paving over paradise for a parking lot, it was pretty close in my books.

ILAN STRAUCH
RICHMOND HILL

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9 Heritage Rd.,
Markham, Ont. L3P 1M3
Email: letters@econsun.com

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Phone: (905) 294-2200
Fax: (905) 294-1538

Classified:
1-800-743-3353

Distribution
(905) 294-8244

distribution@econsun.com