

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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LETTERS

Premier Harris, seniors in this province don't have it so good

In regards to Premier Mike Harris saying Ontario seniors don't know how good they've got it in this province, I have this to say:

Mr. Harris, my 86-year-old mother is in a nursing home in this wonderful province.

Mr. Harris, how many baths do you have a week? My mother gets one.

Mr. Harris, how much do you spend on meals each day? My mother gets \$4.38.

Mr. Harris, when you need to go to the washroom how long do you have to wait for someone to take you? Some patients wait hours.

Mr. Harris, how would you feel if I told you the province spends \$136 a day on prisoners who do not have to be bathed, fed, walked, or exercised, but the same government spends \$60 on seniors in nursing homes?

Mr. Harris, how would you feel if you couldn't even go outside because the budget wouldn't allow for someone to take you out and you're not allowed on your own?

Ontario, this wonderful province, ranks last in the care it provides compared to nine jurisdictions in Canada, the U.S. and Europe, according to your own government-sponsored study. And you expect seniors to be grateful?

Mr. Harris, I suggest you feel grateful at the moment because next election you will not have a job, then I and seniors like my mother will be grateful.

GWEN POLLARD
STOUFFVILLE

Will appointment of moraine facilitator repeat past mistakes?

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Chris Hodgson has appointed Ron Vrancart, the former deputy Minister of Natural Resources, to facilitate the government's consultation on the Oak Ridges Moraine. Mr. Vrancart oversaw a government initiative that allowed sport hunting and mining in nearly all new provincial parks and conservation areas created during the Lands for Life process in 1999.

At that time, many concerned citizens felt betrayed by the Harris government's lack of

commitment to real protection in our provincial parks. We hope that history will not repeat itself and protection on the Oak Ridges Moraine will be of the highest level.

If Mr. Vrancart and the Harris government are serious about facilitating a true public consultation process for the moraine, they must not allow the freeze to thaw prematurely by allowing exemptions. A successful process run by Mr. Vrancart and Minister Hodgson will have in place, before the moratorium ends, a long-term land-use plan for the Oak Ridges Moraine that puts the environment first, not the short-term interests of developers.

JOSH MATLOW
EARTHROOTS CAMPAIGNER

It's time to ban development on Oak Ridges Moraine for good

An open letter to Premier Mike Harris, MPPs David Tsubouchi and Steven Gilchrist, and members of York Region Council:

The Oak Ridges Moraine and the Rouge Valley System are integral to the health and safety of the citizens of Ontario.

In the last 100 years "progress" has paved our farmlands, polluted our air and water, and is now causing global warming that is probably an irreversible ecological nightmare.

People are getting cancer and children are being born with autism spectrum disorders. These problems are being linked to our air, our food, our way of life.

But we can stop now and make changes that will bring back a cleaner, healthier way of life. Profits and taxation from development

should not be the reason we continue destroying our province.

For once do the right thing. Leave the Oak Ridges Moraine in a natural state so that our children can enjoy it. My mother grew up in North York where there were large areas of wetlands. Through this area now runs the Allen Expressway. I live in Markham many miles north of where she grew up. It's not uncommon to see a deer coming through the river lands south of Markville Shopping Centre.

But I've also seen deer hit by cars on the 407 and coyotes lying on the side of the 404. The Seaton trail, which starts in Green River, is now cut by the huge cement bridge of the 407.

We have taken over the land and nothing is going to change what we've done. But we can stop now. We can protect what's left. It's time to ban development on the Oak Ridges Moraine. Permanently.

ROB ROSNER
MARKHAM

Join our online discussions at yorkregion.com

Your opinion is important to us on our letters to the editor pages and on our website.

We invite you to join the ongoing discussions at yorkregion.com and you're welcome to launch your own discussion there, too.

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OPINION

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Frank Daggett

Commuting troubles can be reduced with more local jobs

Remember the brain drain, that exodus of skilled Canadians seeking high-paying jobs in the U.S.? It struck me recently, we have our own brain drain here in York Region.

Every morning, 100,000 of the region's brightest and best go south, lured by the call of the Big Smoke.

The catch is, the drain is becoming plugged.

Twenty-five per cent of the region's roads are crawling at peak hours. That's a pretty big hairball.

And it's growing. By 2026, it's estimated there will be 78 per cent more commuter trips to Toronto.

Maybe there's an upside to this commuter chaos.

Instead of letting valuable human resources go down the drain, why not make it more attractive for them to stay where they are, to not only live, but also work in York Region.

I'm lucky. My commute from Richmond Hill to Newmarket is a relative breeze.

While I guess I could be working downtown, I'd rather avoid the traffic and put my skills to good use closer to home.

I think others would do the same, given the chance.

York Region has a lot to offer employers. Space to set up shop and expand, a burgeoning consumer base next door to the country's biggest city, access to the rest of the province — and country — by road and rail and, to top it all off, a pool of educated, talented and energetic people. A pool growing larger every day as it is prevented from leaking southward.

Where's the hitch? Not only is it tough to commute to Toronto, apparently it's tricky just getting around in the region. Roads are congested, with 122 per cent more trips forecast within the region by 2026.

So, not only do we need more great job opportunities in the region, we should use public transit to get to them.

Luckily (I guess), the region assumed control of municipal transit systems four months ago and hopes to get one-third of us using a seamless transit service in 20 years. There's even a new name, York Region Transit.

Recently, our reporters tried out inter-region transit and, despite hopping from one system to another, found the drivers courteous, the timing fairly prompt and the overall experience reasonably pleasant.

The weird thing was, no one else was on the bus.

People are convinced York Region is a great place to live.

Now they must be persuaded to look for a job closer to home and leave their cars in the driveway.

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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