

## Stouffville Tribune

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

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# OPINION



## LETTERS

### Consumers being ripped off by hydro utilities

I keep reading in the newspapers Mike Harris, Chris Stockwell, etc. state that hydro rates won't go up. So I decided to check my hydro bills.

Using old-fashioned mathematics, I compared 2001 and 2002 for the March-April period of approximately 100 days (note this period is prior to deregulation).

I found, in 2001, I used 5,940 KW for a total cost of \$431.70, or 0.0727 per KW. In 2002, I used 5,550 KW for a total cost of \$490.39, or 0.0884 per KW.

My math tells me this is an increase of 21.6 per cent.

The surprising part of this situation is the total increase in rate is made up of a distribution charge and monthly customer charge.

The energy rate is still the same at 0.0727.

I assume the 2001 rate covered energy, distribution and monthly customer charges. If that is the case, we have another classic case of consumer ripoff.

G. LAKE  
MARKHAM

### Town should do its part to keep roadside weeds under control

I just read the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville notice to residents asking us to destroy all weeds on our property.

As a farmer from 40 years ago, I know how to get rid of their weeds. Walk and pull. But who owns or should look after the roadsides? Is that not up to the town to make sure the weeds are kept cut?

Farmers used to look after the front of their own properties until the town took over and sprayed roadsides.

Now it says spraying is bad. So why is the town not keeping weeds under control?

I wonder if anyone at the town offices has driven up Ninth Line in the fall and noticed the sowthistles, goldenrod and milkweed.

When I went to school, in science class, these weeds were called parachutes, meaning they blow for miles.

Last summer on a light day, there was so many weed seedlings blowing around it looked like a snow flurry.

So, I say when the town starts doing its

## 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.,  
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job and setting an example, then maybe property owners can do theirs.

DOROTHY WAGG  
STOUFFVILLE

### Automobile cellphone ban irresponsible, unenforceable

*Re: Banning cellphones while driving, just another intrusion, editorial, May 2.*

The inappropriate use of cellphones by drivers is part of a serious traffic safety problem — distractions can be dangerous behind the wheel.

Some say the solution is to ban drivers from using cellphones. The Canada Safety Council disagrees.

Careless driving laws are already in place to prosecute drivers who do not make the driving task their top priority. For example, Ontario drivers caught talking on cellphones, eating or applying makeup are subject to a \$325 fine and six demerit points. Similar penalties apply in other provinces.

Where is the evidence cellphones are making our roads unsafe? Proponents of laws against cellphone use cite a 1997 study by Dr. Donald Redelmeier.

The sample group in that study was small and biased — 699 Toronto drivers, all of whom had cellphones and had been in a collision. Moreover, the study was based on data from 1994-'95.

Since then, exposure has skyrocketed, with no corresponding increase in collisions.

The number of wireless subscribers in

Canada has more than quintupled, from 1.8 million at the end of 1994 to more than 10 million today, while road fatalities dropped by 10 per cent.

With so many cellphone users, a ban would undoubtedly be flouted.

The Canada Safety Council sees a need for more public awareness and education, and strict enforcement of the existing laws.

Tips for drivers with cellphones appear on CSC's website and in its defensive driving courses.

Regulation could negate the safety benefits of having a phone in the car.

When you're stuck in traffic, calling to say you'll be late can reduce stress and make you less inclined to drive aggressively to make up lost time.

There are more than three million 911 calls per year from mobile phones to report emergencies and dangerous situations. Indeed, many people want a cellphone in their vehicle specifically for safety reasons.

Driver distraction is a serious safety concern. Our society has, to a great extent, condoned multi-tasking while driving.

Most vehicles have cup holders. Many also have complex radios and sound systems. Omnipresent drive-throughs encourage drivers to pick up food and beverages. Drivers eat, discipline their kids, use cellphones and even shave or apply make-up on the road.

According to a study just released and commissioned by The StecAlliance and Canada Safety Council, fully 76 per cent of those surveyed admitted to performing personal or work-related tasks while driving.

In a study released last summer, five

years of United States crash data (1995-1999) were analysed by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center.

That study estimated about 13 per cent of all collisions involved driver distraction.

Only 1.5 per cent of these distraction-related collisions involved cellphones.

Drivers who pay more attention to the phone than the traffic create a hazard to other drivers.

However, as your newspaper's editorial stated, a cellphone ban would be counter-productive, irresponsible and unenforceable. There are far more effective measures to save lives and enhance traffic safety.

EMILE J. THERIEN  
PRESIDENT, CANADA SAFETY COUNCIL

### Cherry wrong to promote bodychecking in kids hockey

I'm very upset over Don Cherry's and Ron McLean's international television endorsement of bodychecking for nine-year-olds.

As a carded coach of kids under 12 for nine years, a volunteer children's hockey league administrator and player for more than 50 years, I believe I have more insight into this matter than these television entertainers. They are paid to be the devil's advocate on hockey issues.

The reason this is controversial in common sense is being challenged by nonsense.

These kids aren't mature enough to wisely and properly employ a bodycheck.

They don't think and react quickly enough to avoid injuring themselves or an opponent.

Their skill range is enormous, so there will be many "victims".

There can be a 70-per-cent body weight and height difference. Illegal checks will occur frequently.

There is not enough ice time to add these skills without sacrificing more important skills.

The gladiatorial combat on ice we call "professional hockey" has no place in our neighbourhood rinks. The NHL, its media sycophants and organized junior hockey arms should have no jurisdiction over children's hockey.

I want my kids to learn a game built upon skill, finesse, strategy and sportsmanship, not the goon-gangs game promoted by the likes of Don Cherry.

JIM REID  
RICHMOND HILL

### Stolen garden tulips honoured birth of daughter

It saddens me to think someone in our quiet, family-oriented neighbourhood would be so cruel as to destroy newly bloomed tulips in a front garden.

Flowers that were planted in honour of our daughter's birth were recently stolen from our front garden, leaving only adult-size footprints and clear-cut stems.

Having recently purchased our home in the Quaker Hill area, it saddens me to think such an event could occur.

S. DIAMANTOPOULOS  
NEWMARKET

## 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 (Thursdays only)

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9 Heritage Road,  
Markham, L3P 1M3

Stouffville Tribune, published every 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/Penetanguishene 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.