

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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EDITORIAL

Say goodbye to provincial tax cuts

So, what's in the new Ontario budget for us? If you were expecting another Tory tax break, you will have to wait. Forget about commitments from the Mike Harris government for further tax reductions. In fact some people will pay as much \$447 more thanks to the first budget of the Ernie Eves government. On hold are:

- Removing the 20-per-cent surtax on your income, if you make between \$58,000 and \$68,000.

- Reductions to income tax rates in the lowest income levels.

- Plans for private school tax credits to rise from 10 per cent to 20.

If more funding translates into a better health system, you could get better care in York Region's three hospitals.

Here's the lowdown:

- The public school system asked for \$1.1 billion but received only \$400 million. Will cuts to the system, as forecast by some school boards, follow?

- If you smoke, you're paying more, post-budget. The province raised the price of a carton of smokes by \$5 while the federal government passed on a \$4 increase. That brings the price of a carton to more than \$50. (What happened to the strategy of raising the price of cigarettes to discourage smuggling across the U.S. border? Can we expect a return to the smuggling game?)

The good news is increased spending:

- \$1.7 billion for health care.
- \$245 million for clean-water initiatives, obviously following on the heels of the second Walkerton report.

"The Eves government and in particular Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Chris Hodgson should be congratulated for addressing the results of a generation of neglect of municipal water and sewage systems," said Dave Pagnan, president of the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association.

If you drink alcoholic beverages, you'll be relieved to know that rumoured tax hike were just that, rumours.

Will fewer people smoke, due to higher cigarette prices and will that take a load off of our health system? Will convenience stores in Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville sell fewer cigarettes?

Stay tuned, Ontario.

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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OPINION

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Dave Teetzel

People can't pick and choose nature they encounter

There's this game I play with the birds.

They come in the air vents in my house every morning. I get up and run the bathroom fan. I think this scares them away, but maybe it just drowns out the chirping.

I slap some tape over the slats on my vent, they pull it off. Usually around this time of year, they get fed up and move into my neighbour's vent.

I could put wire mesh over the opening and keep them out for good, but it hardly seems sporting. After all, the area was bird habitat long before it was my habitat.

In one Newmarket neighbourhood, people are looking for a little more protection than duct tape and fans can provide after finding signs of a black bear prowling through composters last week.

Residents said the town and the Ministry of Natural Resources aren't doing enough to protect people. The town responded by distributing notices advising people to watch out for bears.

It would be difficult to do much more since Mr. Bear hasn't been seen in Newmarket since. But you don't have to go very far to meet him.

Smokey was spotted last month in the bush near Udora (a hamlet that straddles the York/Durham border in the region's north end) and last weekend he turned up at a backyard bird feeder in Sutton — not far from the site of a planned condominium development.

In previous years, I recall bears being spotted near Bloomington Road in Aurora and even as far south as a McDonald's on 16th Avenue in Markham.

Richmond Hill has had issues with coyotes, as have other southern York municipalities and even Toronto.

Coyotes like to run around and hunt in wooded ravines. People like to buy homes backing on to wooded ravines. Coyotes like to howl and eat small pets.

You can see where the conflict might arise. We recently ran stories about the frustration of having raccoons, skunks or squirrels move into your house.

What these situations have in common is people who have purchased homes in nice 'natural' areas (i.e. their properties abut and were probably carved from wildlife habitat), but want to pick and choose the 'nature' they encounter.

Ministry of Natural Resources Ministry supervisor Ian Buchanan said, in his 13 years on the job, he was unaware of public safety in York Region ever being threatened by a bear.

In the past century, there have been six serious bear attacks in all of Ontario.

I'm not saying I wouldn't freak out if I met a bear while strolling through the park. But I'm far more concerned a wild animal wandering into a subdivision will be hurt by people than vice versa.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Newspaper's coverage of biker funeral inappropriate

Re: Bikers, brothers say bye, June 13:

Was it really necessary to run the funeral of Whitchurch-Stouffville's Jesse Gray, the son of a Hell's Angels member, as if it was something to approved of? Or the hypocritical eulogy? Not something for the district to be proud of.

PERCY BARBER
MARKHAM

Confronting bullying crucial to society's well-being

Re: Problems at Markville Secondary blown out of proportion; letter to the editor by Claudia So, June 15.

As an individual who spent last summer working on the "Put the Brakes on Bullying" project for York Region schools as part of the CAYRE (Community Alliance for York Region Education) group, I was disappointed to read Ms So's opinion on the subject.

In a society where children are committing murder and suicide as a result of being bullied, I fail to see how confronting bullying head on can be anything but extremely crucial to our society's well being at large.

Ms. So also asked "How can you judge an individual by his or her actions?" The answer is very simple. Our society is built on judging others based on their actions.

The sooner our youth learn this fact of life

the better off they will be.

I was also stumped as I read that these kids are "actually intelligent individuals who don't deserve to be trash-talked by the media and should be getting a bit more respect." How is choosing to harm someone else a demonstration of our intelligence?

Our society cannot afford to ease up on bullying, we must endeavour to end it with all of our available resources.

KERON CATO
MARKHAM

CORRECTIONS

In last Thursday's Economist & Sun/Tribune, an incorrect version of the editorial cartoon was used.

In Tuesday's Economist & Sun, the last part of the letter of the week was inadvertently left out. Here is the missing section:

In this respect, the ideological requirements of the cardinal principle of "Jewish exclusiveness" have thus been given absolute precedence over the moral and legal requirements of inalienable human rights.

How could any self-respecting person presume Zionist Israel to be a peace-loving country when its entire existence is based on the hijacking of an entire people, namely, the Palestinians?

Ibrahim Hayani
Unionville

The Economist & Sun/Tribune regrets the errors.

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