

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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EDITORIAL

Why no cheering over health report?

Something's up if a government doesn't want to share good news.

The Ontario government has been sitting on a May 2001 report that gives the province's 56 community health centres the high-five.

Teams of physicians and other health professionals typically work together at the centres, providing not only primary care services, but emphasizing health promotion and disease prevention.

The non-profit organizations are established and governed by a community-elected volunteer board of directors.

Why not trumpet the success of the centres — one of the best ways to alleviate overloaded hospital emergency rooms, according to the two doctors who wrote the report — particularly when the model for health-care provision in Canada has been under intense scrutiny?

Gary O'Connor, executive director of the Association of Ontario Health Centres, is frustrated by the Tory tactics.

At least six York Region groups — along with about 100 more in communities across the province — have applied to the ministry to open community health centres.

Yet, more money hasn't been forthcoming, despite vague assurances and indications of support, Mr. O'Connor says.

The government's lack of response is curious, given Premier Ernie Eves' remarks in the throne speech last May.

He said the Ontario government would demonstrate leadership by "debating honestly the future of health care, while protecting the universality of the single-tier system that is the hallmark of our province and our country".

Rather than demonstrate leadership, the Tories have continued to point fingers at the federal government. Rather than encourage debate about health-care models, the Tories shut the door on it by sitting on the report.

Community health centres would help alleviate the crisis caused by chronic underfunding in York Region.

Mr. O'Connor urges residents to lobby the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, as well as their local MPPs, to bring this model of health care to their communities.

The Tories need to provide the leadership suggested in the throne speech by setting aside any political agendas and providing health-care-challenged communities such as York Region the option of community care centres.

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stouffville developers should pay attention to lifestyle concerns

When it comes to proposals for new housing in Stouffville, much development is inevitable. What is hopefully not inevitable is that the quality of life, in the broadest sense, is not changed for the worse.

These developments are profitable and they should be; the more livable and pleasant the surroundings — country close to the city — the more valuable the lots and homes.

Contiguous green and woodland spaces and trails leading from Beryl Lane, O'Brien Avenue, and Park Drive are vital for the health and vibrancy of current neighbourhoods as well as new ones.

The new developments should focus on foot and bike trails as a viable means of getting to Main Street, letting automobiles use the "long way around" for major shopping and inclement weather.

Efforts should be made to encourage native bird species to stay in the green spaces to create a non-token wildlife corridor which walkers and joggers will also enjoy.

The contentious issue of density has been raised as it relates to contradictions of affordability with quality of life Stouffville-style.

In my opinion we need to ensure a good mix of housing and by that I mean spreading smaller homes through the community in some of the nice locations to avoid stigma-

tized neighbourhoods and encourage good community building.

I wish all developers 20 years from now will be known for the creative, livable community they created while keeping their shareholders content.

IAN BATT
STOUFFVILLE

Thanks to all who helped with Markham Festival Run

The Markham Festival 5K and Mile Run was a success again this year thanks to the help of many dedicated people. We would like to acknowledge and thank our sponsors: Running Free, Scotiabank and Pepsi.

Councillor Jack Heath of Ward 5 helped get the track fixed and started the race. Ruth Russell and the Markham Centaurs Running Club assisted in organizing the races and helped on race day.

Thanks to the Markham Baptist Church, Mr. Alfred Janach and Mr. Alex Jackson for their help. The Rouge River Community Church Youth Group and a few of the Markham Cadets marshalled along the course.

John Posca of Running Free did a great job on the results and was generous in donating prizes. Results are on its website: www.runningfree.ca

JOHN DE FINNEY
RACE DIRECTOR

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

Stouffville Tribune

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

Classified:
1-800-743-3353

Distribution
(905) 294-8244

distribution@econsun.com

TELEPHONE

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

FAX: (905) 294-1538

EMAIL: newsroom@econsun.com



Dave Teetzel

Why should we believe anything cops say now?

Why should I believe a word you say?

That's the question reporter Roger Varley is threatening to ask at every York Regional Police news conference after learning homicide detectives released a fake sketch of a suspect in the murder of Maria Wong.

Journalists become angry when sources con them into printing phoney stories. Our credibility is all we have and if people think we're printing lies, they will stop reading. That's why if we make a mistake, we correct it.

The following information, published in June 1999, was erroneous:

"(York Regional Police Det.-Sgt. Les) Young released a composite sketch of his prime suspect, the man he believes to be the killer, but said at least one other person was involved.

"A number of witnesses saw the person in the composite and one other person," Det.-Sgt. Young said, adding six or seven people have come forward, some only recently.

"We don't have enough of a description of the second person to make a composite. From the best we can tell, they waited for her to arrive home and open the (automatic) garage."

In fact, the sketch was adapted from a picture of Christian Ortiz. While it's true Mr. Ortiz was the prime suspect and is now one of four men on trial for stabbing Mrs. Wong to death, it is not true police were trying to identify him.

They knew exactly who he was and released the composite to rattle the suspects' cages, hoping they would give themselves away.

York Region Newspaper Group regrets the error. Apparently, Det.-Sgt. Young does not. "It was somewhat misleading but not outside the bounds of the law," he said at the trial last week.

I would guess most people don't share the media's opinion of these tactics. Most would probably say if lying to some press weasel helps get a killer off the streets, the cops should go for it.

But the next time we publish a police sketch and a request for information, will you take it at face value, or will you suspect the cops have ulterior motives?

When York Regional Police say they can't release the name of a Toronto police officer arrested for murder because it would endanger unnamed innocent parties, will you believe them?

If you witness a violent crime and police promise you and your family protection if you offer information, will you co-operate or will you remember police think it's OK to lie to solve a case?

If you are on the jury at a murder trial and you learn a police officer knowingly released false information as part of his investigation, will you consider his testimony credible? Or will you ask, "Why should I believe a word you say?"