

Stouffville Tribune

Serving the community since 1888
A Metroland community newspaper
9 Heritage Rd., Markham, Ont. L3P 1M3

PUBLISHER Ian Proudfoot

EDITORIAL

New federal riding boundaries sensible

Most Aurorans are likely too busy to care about in which riding they will vote during the next federal election.

Most of the town's 43,000 residents are working, paying bills, driving their children to and from extracurricular activities and getting on with their lives.

They have better things to do than make a fuss about the name of a new federal riding or why the town is being sliced for political purposes.

If Aurora's residents actually did develop a deep interest in political boundaries, however, most would find the proposals logical and fitting, taking into consideration population equality, as well as geographical, environmental and economic similarities.

Elections Canada has proposed to split Aurora down Yonge Street and make the growing east side of town share its politicians with Whitchurch-Stouffville and rural parts of Markham.

All three areas are sitting on environmentally sensitive land and share many of the same interests. The new riding would be called Oak Ridges-Markham.

It makes good sense if you look at a map because Aurora has a lot more in common with Stouffville than it ever had with Vaughan.

Meanwhile, the tiny west sliver of Aurora and the bulk of the town's population would share a new riding called Newmarket-King-Aurora.

The Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario revealed it also wants to deal with York's exceptional population growth by creating separate new ridings called Vaughan and Richmond Hill.

It would split the current riding of York North, combining Georgina and East Gwillimbury with part of Simcoe County for a riding called York North-Simcoe.

Oak Ridges would lose most of Richmond Hill, keeping only the northern part of town.

Despite any logistics regarding population, having Aurora west of Yonge left to another riding called Newmarket-King-Aurora is an arrangement Aurora Councillor John West and Vaughan-King-Aurora MPP Greg Sorbara were quick to say they'll oppose.

Perhaps it's an identity crisis Aurora politicians are struggling with.

They have been lobbying for a new boundary since 1994, when the town was linked with Vaughan.

Whatever the reasons, Aurora's electoral boundary changes aren't likely to make much difference to average homeowners.

paying taxes in Aurora.
The issue has given some people in town a reason to make noise, however.

Then again, a little political attention from the Liberals during their tumultuous leadership squabbles might not hurt.

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Anti-smoking crusade is attempt to take away public's freedom

Re: No system can remove cigarette carcinogens; letter to the editor by Jack Heath, Aug. 29

Although it was a respectable effort on the part of Mr. Heath to explain his proposal for a total smoking ban, he has failed to address some of the more vital concerns regarding this issue.

When we endeavour to look past the reports of advisory committees, another truth is exposed.

I will not attempt to argue with the findings of numerous scientific studies; the dangers of smoking have been sufficiently proven.

However, what any rational person should object to is the way in which our government is attempting to destroy our freedom.

In our society, we have the right to make personal choices, and in this case it is our right to smoke if we so choose. Likewise, it is the right of a restaurant owner to choose how he or she runs their business.

The only exception to those rights is when our actions result in the violation of another individual's rights.

The argument of second-hand smoke has been addressed numerous times, without the understanding that it is also the choice of non-smoking customers to patronize the establishment. Should they believe it is detrimental to their health, they are by no means forced to enter the building. Should the owner then feel

The Economist & Sun/Stouffville Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Economist & Sun/Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

Write: Letters to the Editor, 9 Heritage Rd., Markham, L3P 1M3, e-mail letters@econsun.com

that smoking is resulting in a loss of customers, it is his or her right to disallow smoking.

I am not a smoker, but that is my choice. When a government seeks to eliminate the freedom of its citizens, we must question where to draw the line.

ERIK FLETCHER
UNIONVILLE

Politician correct to fight for smoking ban in York Region

Re: Politician's anti-smoking vendetta out of touch with reality; letter to the editor by Jack Sands, Aug. 24.

Smoking is a nuisance to the public. I think it is right that Vaughan Councillor Joyce Frustaglio bans tobacco.

I agree with Mr. Sands: banning drugs will not solve the illegal drug problem, but a ban would at least not help proliferate it. The same goes for smoking.

JOHANN ENGEL
MARKHAM



Dave Teetzel

Illegal deficits? York has been there, done that

Whatever challenges York Region's school boards face in the coming year, their leaders say they have at least one reason to be happy. They aren't Toronto, Hamilton or Ottawa.

Those boards couldn't stomach the cuts required to balance their budgets, as required by law, so the Ministry of Education has taken over, appointing axemen to do the dirty work.

But can we afford to be smug? Or is it only a matter of time before we find ourselves in the same position?

After all, the York Catholic board squeaked out a balanced budget this year, but warned it won't be able to repeat the feat without more funding.

The province is reviewing the funding formula and administrators are optimistic schools will get more money for teachers and building maintenance.

Reality is, the local Catholic board beat Toronto to the punch in running an illegal deficit to force a showdown with the government. Back in the '90s, it ran a deficit to protest funding policies and suffered a similar humiliating slapdown.

Back then, our schools were crammed because it took forever for the province to approve a school. The Catholic board ran up its deficit building much needed schools without funding.

The current formula has allowed schools to be built much more quickly.

Toronto's \$90-million deficit, on the other hand, is a result of refusing to close schools.

Back when education was funded primarily from property taxes, the city benefited from significant business tax dollars and spent far more per pupil than any other board. That meant good programs and quality facilities.

But the new funding formula says, "this is what it costs to educate a student in Ontario" and funds boards based on the number of students. Toronto's enrolment isn't growing like ours, so it can no longer afford to provide services people count on.

Thanks to its rebellious past, York's Catholic board has already been through cutting valued programs.

One of Toronto trustees' main arguments is their schools need more funding because they cope with big city issues, such as large populations of ESL and special needs students.

York Region faces these issues. In fact, Catholic board chairperson Elizabeth Crowe says the special education population in her schools is growing faster than the mainstream.

Meanwhile, the number of special education teachers in public elementary schools has been cut from 122 five years ago to 60 now, according to local union president Wendy Van Stralen.

EDITORIAL

Editor Jim Mason
newsroom@econsun.com

ADVERTISING

Retail Sales Manager

Steve Kane
stevek@theliberator.com

Sales Manager, New Business
Development & Distribution

Dawna Andrews
dandrews@erabanner.com

Classified Manager Ann Campbell
annc@erabanner.com

Real Estate Manager

Mike Rogerson

PRODUCTION

Electronic Communications

Manager John Futhy

jfuthy@yrng.com

DISTRIBUTION

Distribution Manager Barry Black

bblack@erabanner.com

ADMINISTRATION

Office Manager Vivian O'Neil

voneil@econsun.com

York Region Events

specials@yrng.com

Managing Director

Debra Weller

debrau@econsun.com

Shows Manager

Stacey Allen

stacey@econsun.com

York Region Printing

General Manager Bob Dean

bdean@yrng.com

EDITORIAL

905-294-2200 /
Fax: 294-1538

ADVERTISING

294-2200/ Classified: 1-800-

743-3353/ Fax: 853-4626

DISTRIBUTION

905-294-8244

Canadian Circulations Audit Board Member

Ontario Press Council

Stouffville Tribune

Serving the community
since 1888

A York Region Newspaper Group

The Stouffville Tribune, published every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, is a member of the Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. Metroland is comprised of 70 community publications across Ontario. The York Region Newspaper Group includes The Liberal, serving Richmond Hill and Thornhill, Vaughan Citizen, Markham Economist & Sun, Stouffville Tribune, Stouffville Sun, Georgina Advocate, York Region Business Times, At Home, Good Life, yorregion.com and York Region Printing.