

Souffville
Sun-Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
34 Civic Ave., Stouffville, ON L4A 7Z5

PUBLISHER *Ian Proudfoot*

OPINION

EDITOR IN CHIEF
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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Agencies should demand answers from Yellow Brick House

If you become a homeless woman or child or are trying to escape an abusive relationship in the Markham and Stouffville area, you will be directed to Yellow Brick House in Aurora.

It is one of the two women's shelters in York Region (the other one is Sutton). Unfortunately, some major cracks in the "foundation" have recently been exposed.

Management recently demanded its employees vote on a collective agreement that would result in the termination of several longtime front-line workers, while many remaining employees would receive substantial wage increases.

In recent years, executive director Filomena Williams has been quoted in local papers about a lack of funding for the shelter. If this is the case, why are raises being offered? Workers are not asking for raises. Would the money not be better used to do much needed repairs at the shelter?

It also seems management has tried to squash support for its workers from the women staying at the shelter.

It is time the government agencies that oversee this public foundation start demanding answers from its board of directors and executive director. Yellow Brick House provides an important service to our community, but right now its foundation is being shaken to the core. Hopefully, it will not fall down.

MARK COOPER
MARKHAM

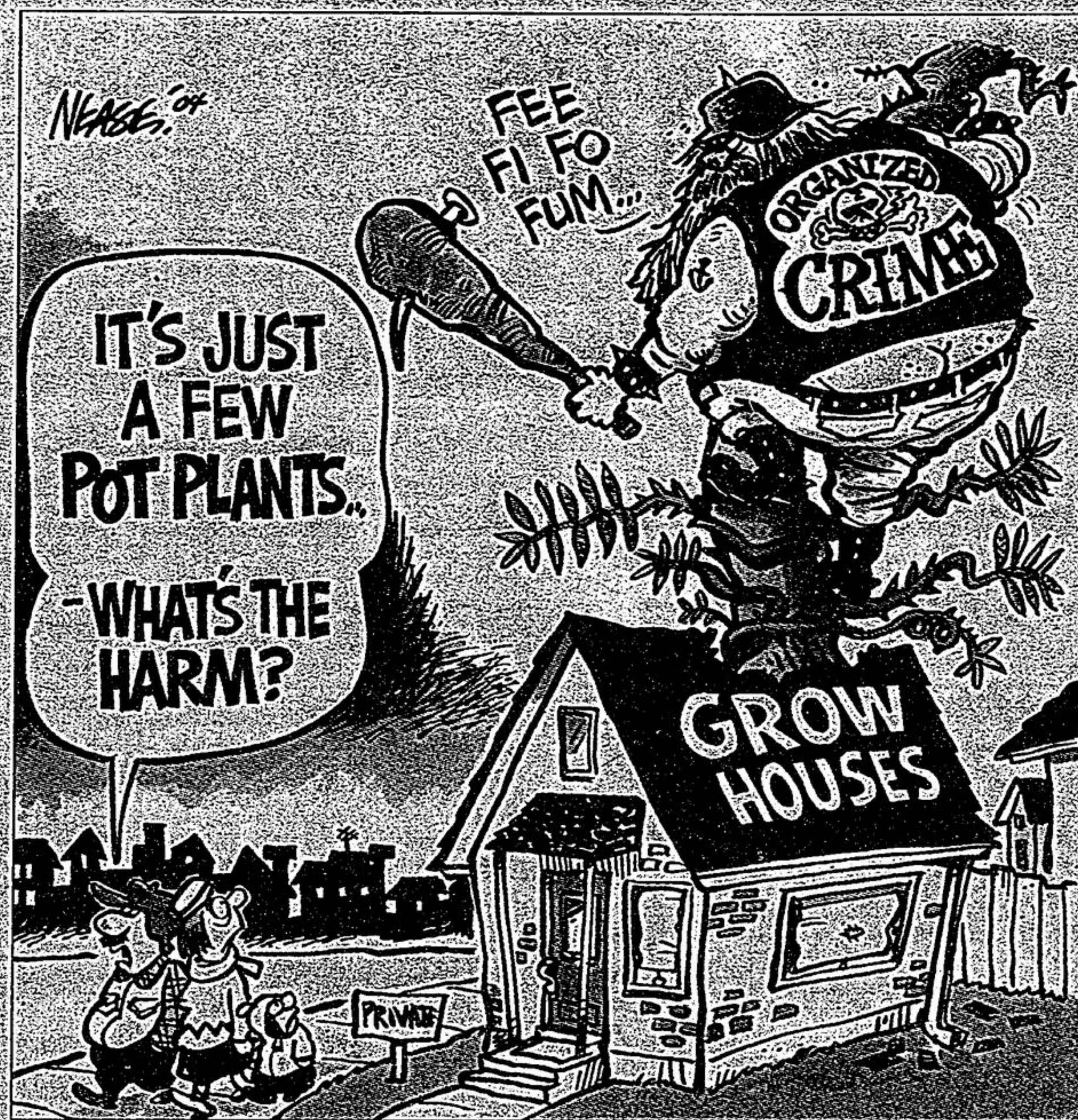
Union rep's comments on labour relations unjustified

Re: *Town, employees at loggerheads, Jan. 10.*

Comments made by Canadian Union of Public Employees business agent Brian Atkinson were uncalled for and unjustified. Who does he work for or represent, the employees or municipalities?

It would appear he is trying to make points with municipalities by painting Markham employees with a bad brush. His comparison of 350 Markham employees to 32,000 City of Toronto employees is uncalled for and unjust toward the whole 905 membership.

If there have been grievances filed, then it is the unions job to adequately represent the employee. By the time Mr. Atkinson becomes involved in the situation (the arbitration process), it has been authorized by a number of local union representatives.



Having experienced Mr. Atkinson's type of representation as a former CUPE member, I can say this: good luck, because you'll need it.

RICK PRICE
MAPLE

Mayor moved quickly to get Vandorf rink operating

Open letter to *Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Sue Sherban.*

I would like to extend my appreciation for your prompt and speedy response to our concerns regarding the Vandorf Community Park.

We in Vandorf/Gormley appreciate your great effort in getting our skating rink in order. I wish you could see the overwhelming response from this area, including teens and young adults. The other night we had more than 30 people come out to participate in a friendly game of hockey.

Some of the people who knew us, the people who have been involved with the flooding and maintaining of the rink, thanked us for bringing it all together for them. We feel it has been a great success so far.

I truly believe we chose the right person for our mayor. Please extend our appreciation to Kelly Batt, Brian Tew and

leisure services director Tom Graham for getting the job done so quickly.

JOHN BERENQUER
VANDORF

York Region needs integrated rapid transit system

York Region has a population equivalent to Edmonton, Ottawa and Calgary.

What is quite dissimilar is those urban centres have integrated rapid transit systems.

Over the last decade southern York Region has grown exponentially. Employment is competing statistically with Toronto's central business district, yet it offers fewer transportation alternatives.

Municipalities with effective transit systems function more efficiently. In that light, York plans to create a rapid transit system, which will begin operation in 2005.

A public-private sector consortium will enhance our civic surroundings while reducing the financial burden on taxpayers and the region will control all assets with the authority to establish fares and service levels.

It's no secret elected officials have been challenged by increased traffic from new development.

This traffic decreases air and water quali-

ty, creates higher taxes for road repair and will inevitably decrease residential property values.

Public transit is a fundamental investment for the future. It also confronts the North America mentality that the automobile is the primary source of transportation.

Studies have shown an effective transit system substantially alleviates congestion. This would enhance the quality of life.

KIRK SUTHERLAND
MARKHAM

Tolls should offset damage done by vehicles

Re: *Liberals may be able to keep 407 promise, editorial, Jan. 8.*

I use Hwy 407 and I agree with The Economist & Sun/Sun-Tribune's stance: motorists ought not to criticize toll hikes when usage is on the rise.

Each of us chooses whether or not to use Hwy 407. With its long exit ramps and gradual curves, the 407 is a well-engineered, safe highway. Certainly, as tolls rise, drivers will question just how much this safety and convenience is worth. Fair enough if some drivers opt out.

In general, toll highways have a big potential benefit: they communicate and pass on more of the true total costs of driving (in the form of costs borne by our environment from toxic vehicle emissions) directly to motorists themselves.

In Ontario, however, much of this potential benefit was thrown away for good when the Tory government sold the highway to private interests.

Since that time, toll proceeds, which, if the 407 had remained in public hands, could have been used to fund public transit infrastructure, plant trees in urban areas and build windmills to generate clean, renewable energy for our homes, are instead funnelled to foreign corporate interests.

In other words, 407 tolls levied on motorists are not spent on compensating for the environmental damage done by us drivers.

The provincial Liberals are now tempted to wrestle with 407 management over toll levels, what a waste of our government's time.

My advice to Dalton McGuinty:

- Let the 407 owners do what they want with tolls, as long as they honour their contractual obligations. I predict tolls can climb a lot higher without overall usage shrinking.

- Convert 400-series highways in Ontario to toll roads, but keep them in government hands. I would happily pay \$15 to drive up Hwy 400 on a Friday afternoon if I knew toll proceeds were funding initiatives to reduce our damaging and unsustainable reliance on motor vehicle usage.

BRUCE RHODES
RICHMOND HILL

LETTERS POLICY

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

Letters to the Editor,
The Tribune,
9 Heritage Rd.,
Markham, ON
L3P 1M3

Email: letters@econsun.com

EDITORIAL
Editor *Jim Mason*
newsroom@econsun.com

ADVERTISING
Retail Sales Manager

Steve Kane
skane@yrmg.com

Sales Manager, New Business
Development & Distribution

Dauna Andreus
dandreus@yrmg.com

Classified Manager *Ann Campbell*
acampbell@yrmg.com

Real Estate Manager
Mike Rogerson
mrogerson@yrmg.com

PRODUCTION
Production Manager

Pam Nichols
pnichols@yrmg.com

DISTRIBUTION
Distribution Manager *Barry Black*

bbblack@yrmg.com

ADMINISTRATION
Office Manager *Vivian O'Neil*

vonelle@yrmg.com

York Region Events

Managing Director

Debra Weller
dueller@yrmg.com

Shows Manager

Stacey Allen
sallen@yrmg.com

York Region Printing

General Manager *Bob Dean*

bdean@yrmg.com

EDITORIAL

905-294-2200 /
Fax: 294-1538

ADVERTISING

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Souffville
Sun-Tribune

A York Region Newspaper Group
community newspaper
The Stouffville Tribune, published every
Thursday and Saturday, is a member of the
Metroland Printing, Publishing and
Distributing Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary
of Kastor Corporation. Metroland is
composed 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 Sun-Tribune, Georgina Advocate,
York Region Business Times,
North of the City, YorkRegion.com and
York Region Printing.