

# OPINION

PUBLISHER: IAN PROUDFOOT

TELEPHONE: 905-640-2612 • FAX: 905-640-8778  
 Email: jmason@ymg.com website: www.yorkregion.com

## Editorial

### Photo radar must not be used to pad budgets

No one likes a speed trap. And no one welcomes the costly ticket that goes with being caught. Most drivers, after all, believe while they may have been speeding, they were doing so safely. Who would endanger his own life by driving recklessly? But as York Regional Police would tell you, speeding contributes significantly to the growing carnage on our streets. And while the force has taken creative measures — a police helicopter and unmarked mini-vans, for instance — to catch speeders, it is still overwhelmed. It's little wonder seasoned officers have been calling for the return of photo radar. But they don't want it to be limited to the 400 series highways, roads statistically safer than most would think. They want photo radar in the heart of York Region, on roads that have become hot spots for speeders, roads officers can't police effectively.

"Depending on how we deploy photo radar, it's going to allow us to provide better coverage," Staff-Sgt. Tom Carrique says. Photo radar could be an effective tool to battle speeding on local roads.

The spectre of knowing it may be used on Bathurst Street, Woodbine Avenue or 16th Avenue alone would slow down drivers. No one would know when they may get that dreaded speeding ticket in the mail.

But if photo radar is used by York Regional Police, it must not be a cash grab.

It has to be about safety. That means it can't be set up on highways that are relatively safe but see their fair share of speeders. That makes photo radar an assembly line of quick-hit tickets.

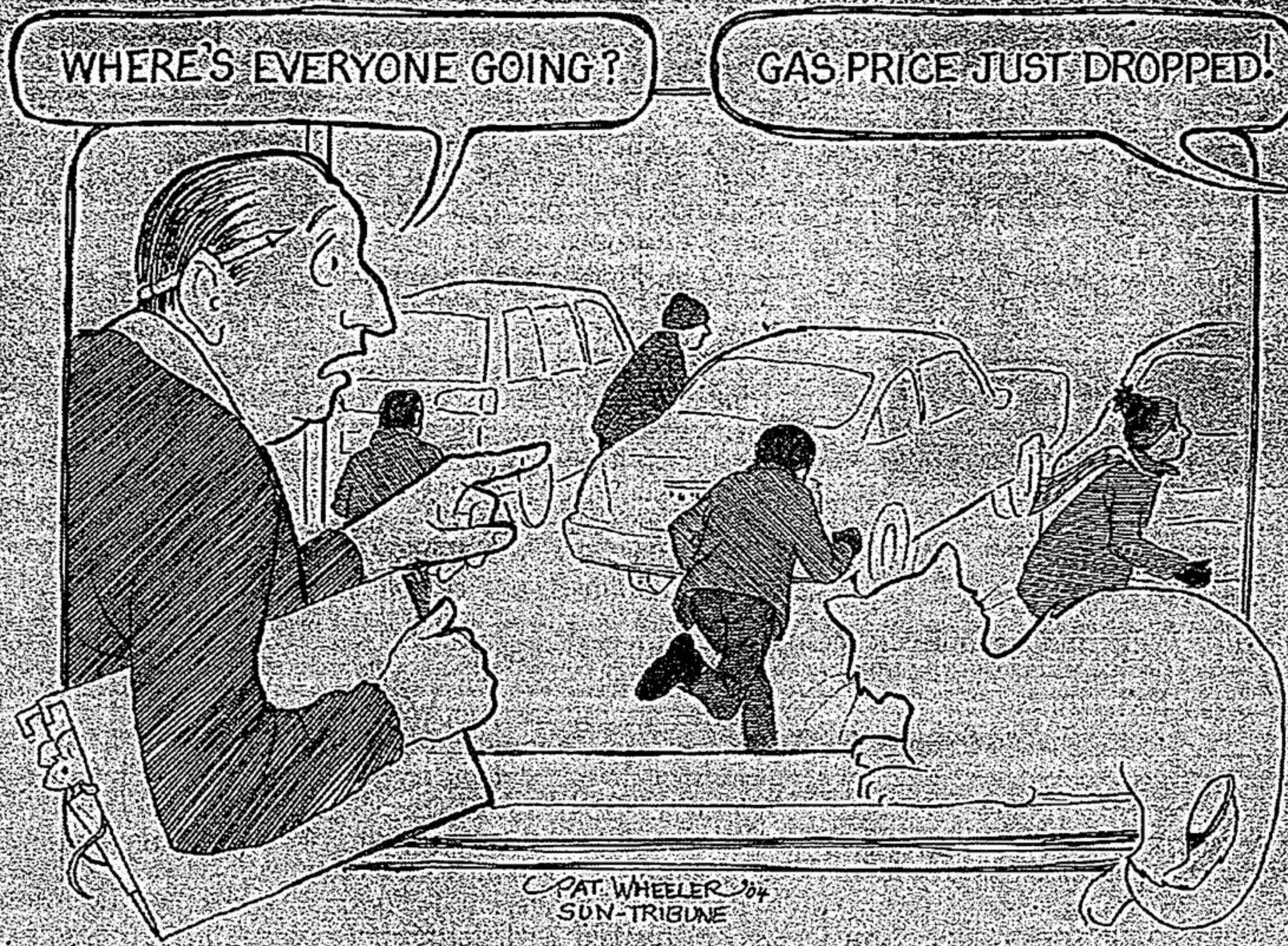
Originally, Premier Dalton McGuinty said photo radar revenue could be used to tackle Ontario's projected \$5.6-billion deficit.

Since then, however, Transportation Minister Harinder Takhar has said the money would be used by municipalities. That's the wrong approach.

Municipal police forces should only see enough of the revenue to offset the cost of running photo radar locally.

Not a penny more. The revenue should not be used to pad police budgets. That way, the motive for photo radar quotas can be more easily resisted.

Safety comes first. If results are clear — fewer deaths on our roads — photo radar will eventually be welcomed.



## Letters to the Editor

### Council should know benefit of creepy, crawly things

*Re: Snakes for park scare councillors, Jan. 15.* Kneejerkers were the sounds of Whitchurch-Stouffville council when Mark Carroll proposed what Councillor Phil Bannon called a snake pit. Most people respond with a knee-jerk reaction when in close proximity or at the sight of spiders, snakes, bats and most things creepy and crawly. This, I think, is quite normal unless you're eight years old.

I'll never forget my knee-jerk reaction when my son came home with fur on his lips from the caterpillar he just ate. He is older now and would only react with passive curiosity of watching *Fear Factor*. I digress.

A mature, thoughtful response to Mr. Carroll's proposal would have been a more knowledgeable reflection on the benefits of these creepy, crawly things.

I freak out when the first bat swings by during the summer mosquito hunting season. Then reason sets in and the thought of how infection by a mosquito with West Nile virus could be minimized.

Now I live with nature a little more, since I built my first bat house. I think the idea of a habitat for butterflies, bats, birds, snakes or whatever would be an educational bonanza for school children.

People who buy homes in that area might even reflect on the Country Close to the City atmosphere. Sounds to me like we have some city slickers

The Stouffville Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Stouffville Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space. Write: Letters to the Editor, 34 Civic Ave., P.O. Box 154, Stouffville, L4A 7Z5, e-mail jmason@ymg.com

on council who react too quickly and do not really consider what has been proposed. The environmental benefit to those who decide to live nearby might be appreciated. Not to worry if nature is out of control and we are overrun with birds, bats, butterflies and, heaven forbid, snakes, we have weapons of mass destruction.

BOB LEWIS  
BLOOMINGTON

### Candidate's comments naive

*Re: Fear mongering at work during town election campaign, letter to the editor, Jan. 8.*

After reading Ron Snider's letter, I considered a word for word rebuttal. However, the 2003 council candidates naive, out-of-context remarks and insults to the residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville are hardly worth the effort.

With his natural ability to obfuscate the facts, Mr. Snider's political career is assured.

Who is he trying to fool? Earth to Ron Snider: Is anybody home?

SANDRA CARVELLO  
GORMLEY



## Off The Top

with Jim Mason

### Still an easy read 40 years later

Sorry kids. I'd love to tell you I was born with printer's ink coursing through my veins or I lived Tom Sawyer before reading it. But the True Literary Tales of Jim Mason just aren't that exciting.

Glad Park Public School in Stouffville is marking Family Literacy Day Tuesday, with guest readings from Mayor Sue Sherban, Stouffville Spirit hockey players and others.

Local journalists, including this guy, were asked to write about their reading experience for the students. It's certainly memorable, but not all that spectacular, with plenty of foreshadowing, now that I think about my early reading habits.

When I raced home from elementary school in the 1960s, it wasn't to catch the latest episode of *Batman* or *Leave It To Beaver*. I went straight for the mailbox to retrieve the local paper and, hopefully, that week's edition of *Life* magazine.

Before 24-hour TV news and all sports stations, this was our window on the world: The Vietnam War, the six-team NHL and Trudeaumania.

I was hooked. For Grade 5 current events class, I clipped extra stories to share with less interested pals. Just spreading the news.

If I needed more, the public library was only a block away. It was a peaceful sanctuary, away from the noisy playground and hockey rink. And it served up all this neat stuff, free of charge.

Newspapers from across the country and the latest copy of every major magazine, let alone the mountains of books and encyclopedias.

The shelving in my room was jammed with dog-eared copies of most Hardy Boys offerings and Scott Young's timeless books for kids.

But it was that daily newspaper, from the quirky Queen's Park columnist to the death notices that grabbed me. Maybe because it was so current.

I haven't changed that much, but my world has. Instead of one small-city daily in northwestern Ontario, here we're blessed with four dailies plus this twice-weekly local paper.

If we're not spoiled enough in the GTA, I log on to the Internet and read newspapers from the world, with bookmarks for papers in one of our favourite destinations: Tampa Bay, and my home town of Thunder Bay.

Some things haven't changed. Jim Mason is editor of the Stouffville Sun-Tribune.

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**  
 A Metroland Community Newspaper

34 Civic Ave., 3rd Floor, Stouffville, Ontario L4A 7Z5

Phone: 905-640-2612 • Fax: 905-640-8778  
 Classified: 1-800-743-3353 • Distribution: 905-294-8244  
 Website: www.yorkregion.com • Email: jmason@ymg.com

Member: Ontario Community Newspapers Association,  
 Canadian Community Newspapers Association,  
 Ontario Press Council

<b>Editor in Chief</b> Debra Kelly	<b>Business Manager</b> Robert Lazaruk	<b>Sales Manager, New Business Development &amp; Distribution</b> Dawn Andrews
<b>Editor</b> Jim Mason	<b>Advertising Director, Retail Sales &amp; Flyers</b> Nicole Fletcher	<b>General Manager, York Region Printing</b> Bob Dean
<b>Reporters</b> Joan Ransberry, Hannelore Volpe	<b>Advertising Director, Classified, Real Estate &amp; Events Management</b> Gord Paolucci	<b>Director, Marketing &amp; Promotions</b> Debra Weller
<b>Retail Sales Manager</b> Steve Kane	<b>Managing Director, Real Estate</b> Mike Rogerson	<b>Shows Manager</b> Stacey Allen
<b>Sales Representative</b> Susan Berry	<b>Director of Production</b> John Futhy	<b>Classified Manager</b> Ann Campbell
<b>Production Manager</b> Pam Nichols	<b>Distribution Manager</b> Barry Black	
<b>Office Manager</b> Vivian O'Neil		