

# OPINION

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## Editorial

### Ottawa needs to boost incentives

As the price of crude oil topped \$54US a barrel this week, homeowners have good reason to look for ways to curb heating costs.

It's time for the federal government to give both homeowners and the environment a helping hand by mandating stricter building standards.

Energy-conscious homeowners can retrofit their houses with better windows, insulation and furnaces and receive a government rebate, in addition to savings in heating and cooling costs. Operated by Natural Resources Canada, the EnerGuide for Houses retrofit incentive program offers \$650 back on a \$2,500 investment.

But if you're in the market for a new home and want the same level of energy efficiency, no help is available.

It means homebuyers are better off buying a standard home and upgrading later. As long as retro-fit rebates exist, where is the incentive to build new energy-efficient homes?

Ottawa is sending a mixed message. The R-2000 program promotes the use of cost-effective, energy-efficient building practices and technologies. It's a strict standard, requiring builders to complete a certification program—one that only a handful of builders in York Region have undertaken.

The reality is, it shouldn't be an option. All new homes should be built with energy efficiency in mind and building codes should be amended to make these upgrades mandatory.

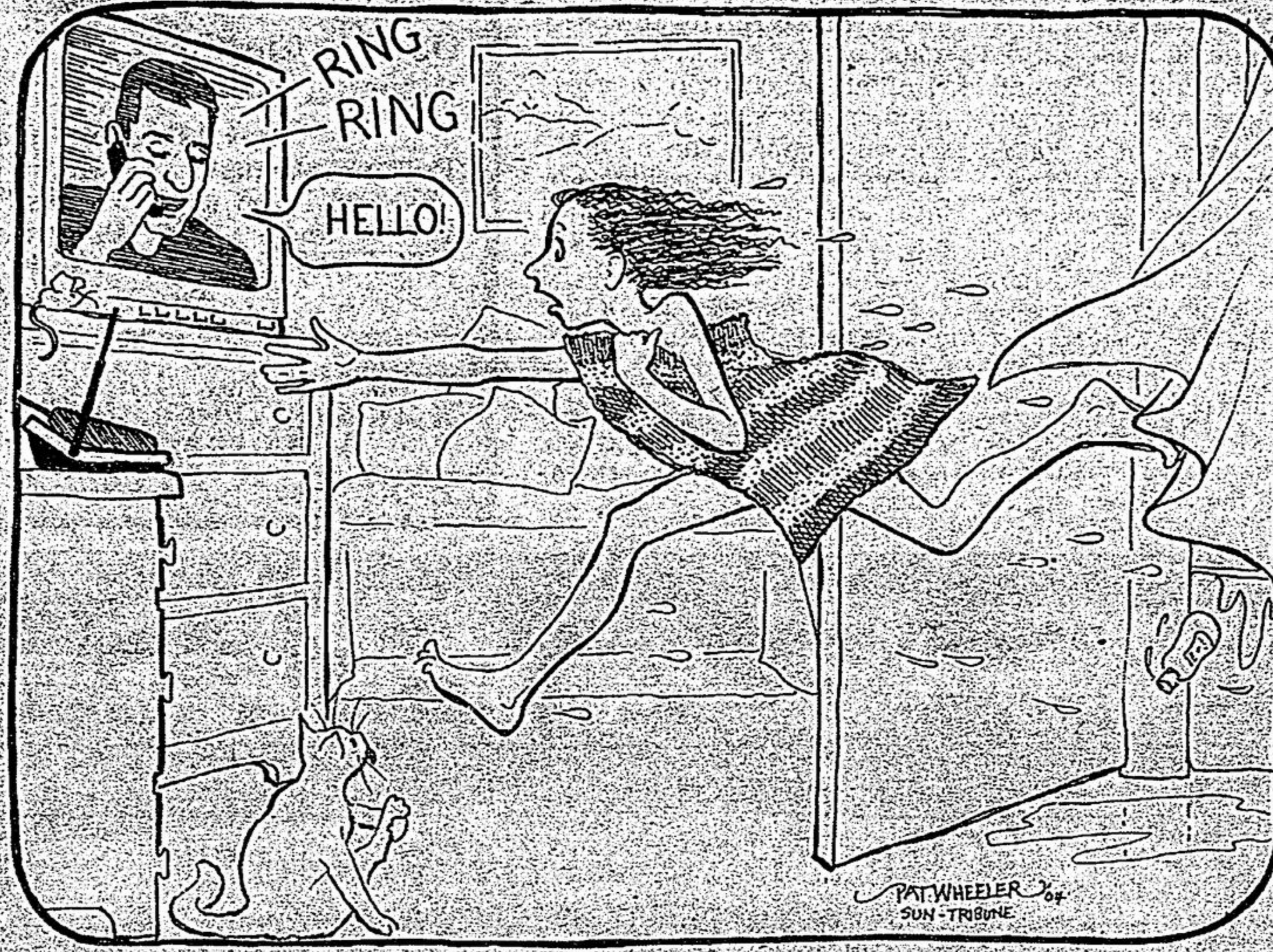
Precedents exist. Recognizing the problem of harmful emissions from aging vehicles, Ontario implemented its Drive Clean program in 1999, requiring regular testing. And since the 1970s, car-makers have been faced with increasingly stricter emissions standards.

While the upfront cost of buying an energy-efficient home can be a tough pill to swallow, it means cost savings in the long run. Eventually, programs such as the EnerGuide for Houses initiative will no longer be necessary.

We're not suggesting all homeowners should be forced to bring homes up to the standard.

Yet the reality is we consume a massive amount of natural resources and if we are realistic about meeting reduction targets, drastic measures are needed.

It's a small price to pay to extend sustainability of our natural resources, not to mention cutting down on pollutants.



## Letters to the Editor

### Wigs for Kids event a success

Thank you for covering the Wigs for Kids/Canadian Cancer Society fundraiser Sept. 26. We collected 29 pieces of hair and more than \$1,300.

I received a number of phone calls from individuals and salons regarding hair donations due to the article by reporter Hannelore Volpe.

I would like to thank Giant Tiger for helping with the advertising, Maple Leaf Foods and A&P for donating food, Robert Spencer for donating T-shirts to the students volunteers who participated and earned community hours. Thank you to the Anne Milne School of Dance, Jayne Harvey and the members of the Bradstock Band, Cris Cuddy and Robin Edgar, for performing.

A big thanks to Colleen Johansen, who cut all that hair and people who braved donating their hair, including John McCracken, Jr. (who raised \$685), Michelle, Julie, Mary, Tammy, Jim Lyons, Jake, Goddard and Kevin and Blair. There was a new look for everyone, including me.

Thanks to the salons, First Choice, Headlines, Salon 2000, Massimo, Fame and No Frills Hair Cutters, for informing and collecting hair.

Thanks to Bill Wallace for donating the public address system, photographer Greg King, members of the Stouffville Royal Canadian Legion and, of course, everybody who made pledges. It was a fun time and we hope to see everyone out to support this event again next year.

To find out how to donate hair or how to help, call 905-642-5753.

**DEBORAH LECKIE**  
STOUFFVILLE

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@yrng.com

### Police chopper caught car thieves

Re: Police shouldn't use helicopter to pursue dirt bike thieves, letter, Oct. 7

I have to disagree with Arlene Reesor about when to use helicopters. The resource is there to use and, quite frankly, you do not know whom you are chasing until you catch them.

Yes, maybe they were stealing a dirt bike today, but what did they do yesterday when they left their fingerprints or faces behind?

You probably don't care much about the dirt bike because you don't have one, that's understandable as I don't care much about them, either.

But you might say it was OK to use the helicopter if they were trying to steal your car. A few months back kids stole mine and several others in Stouffville. Police used their helicopter to catch several of them. I have the video and enjoy watching it.

**RON BOYD**  
STOUFFVILLE



## Off The Top

with Jim Mason

### Hit the road in your home town, fall seekers

For many of us who call Stouffville home, the world goes no farther north than Millard Street.

We go south to work, play and eat, as if the world was tilted, preventing us from heading north. The GO train stops here. The GO bus veers into Durham Region.

But, trust me, there is life north of Stouffville, as many of our good readers will echo, I'm sure. I can feel my in-box filling up already.

Truth is, half of the 24,000 of us here in wonderful Whitchurch-Stouffville live outside of Stouffville. We're spread out in hamlets from Gormley to Vivian, along gravel country roads and cushy estate cul-de-sacs.

And it's a sweet ride, especially at this time of year.

Strap the kids in the SUV, throw a blanket and lunch in the back, then put some Blue Rodeo and Jackson Browne on the CD changer.

Let's cruise

If southern Whitchurch-Stouffville is being invaded by earth-movers and billboards selling new homes, the north is not immune. Farm fields north and south of Ballantrae (on Hwy. 48, five minutes north of Stouffville, for the newcomers) are getting their own makeover, complete with housing and pavement.

All signs point to the same action in Bloomington, on the Ninth Line north.

If there's a Nirvana in our municipality, it's the northeast corner, east of 48 and north of Aurora Road, especially come autumn.

Trusting the New VR's (it's still new, isn't it?) leaf colour guide, we're near prime time. The hardwoods are alive with reds and yellows, brighter than a Calgary Flames jersey.

Enjoy your lunch in the regional forest on 48 or over in the Vandorf Park, on Woodbine Avenue next to the town museum, on the municipality's west coast.

In between are farm markets, apple orchards, wineries and the cool waters of kettle lakes.

It's not Niagara, the Finger Lakes or Muskoka. It's our home town at its finest.

Jim Mason is editor of the Stouffville Sun-Tribune.

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

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Classified: 1-800-743-3353 • Distribution: 905-294-8244

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

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