

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune
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Editorial

Facts first, then election

It's always tempting to want a little revenge when you've been wronged. The quicker the better.

And there's no doubt Canadians, regardless of their political ilk, are feeling wronged these days.

Who wouldn't want a chance to get back at those responsible for what witnesses at the Gomery commission have painted as a classic case of political corruption? The testimony given by advertising executives alleging favoritism and kickbacks to the Liberal Party are nothing less than earth shattering.

And the opposition parties, as well as many taxpayers, want political blood.

Now.

But as veteran Richmond Hill Liberal Bryon Wilfert said, let's wait until we hear all the facts in the adscam case before rushing to judgment.

And the ultimate judgment in this case means another national election less than one year after voters chose a minority Liberal government.

Even Mr. Wilfert's Conservative counterpart, York-Simcoe's Peter Van Loan, wants to hear all the Gomery commission testimony before another election.

Granted, his motive may be to get more ammunition, but he, too, realizes the whole sordid story should be told before Canadians return to the polls.

For his part, Prime Minister Paul Martin sent an open letter to card-carrying Liberals in which he suggests both sides of the story still need to be heard.

"Like all Liberals and all Canadians, I'm offended by what I've heard in recent testimony. If even part of it turns out to be true, it is abhorrent to us all," he wrote.

Some Liberals have argued Mr. Martin should be commended for creating the Gomery commission to get to the bottom of the adscam controversy.

It's unlikely former prime minister Jean Chretien would have done the same.

Mr. Martin should get some credit for starting an inquiry that had inevitable fallout for his party.

But even if Mr. Martin sought out the truth, that doesn't mean he should be immune to its ramifications.

He was, after all, finance minister at the time of the alleged skullduggery. Those ramifications will undoubtedly come in one form or another.

But for the time being, Mr. Martin and his party, faltering as they are, should be allowed to carry on the everyday business of government until the Gomery commission has concluded.

Then, with all the facts in hand, he should throw himself and his party at the mercy of the Canadian people.



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Give theatre project to TV show renovation experts

Forget going through 10 years of municipal hoops and coming up with bupkiss.

The folks attempting to transform Stouffville's old town hall into a theatre for the performing arts should have gone right to the top — the people at Town Haul on The Learning Channel.

If you don't know the show, think of the This Old House or Trading Spaces home renovation series, but on a far grander scale.

The designers and tradespeople take on an entire community as they renovate small town America one municipality at a time.

Most recently it was Laurens, S.C., where the crew:

- created an outside amphitheatre (that sounds close to home);
- worked on a park and its river (see current Stouffville Memorial Park planning process);
- rebuilt and renamed the Firewater Café for teenagers (see renewed calls for youth programming here) and;
- worked on a farmers market in the town square (see recent efforts to replace the closing Stouffville Country Market with a downtown alternative).

Sounds like Town Haul would be a perfect fit for Whitchurch-Stouffville, Ont. And while the show's here, we'll get the crew to spruce up a few businesses on Main Street (you know who you are) and leave some design ideas for a new high school and arena, the next major public-money projects this town's likely to see.

If the show would even venture north to the shadows of Canada's largest city, Forget awkward Bush-Martin relations. The difficulty would be local politics. The four-hour hornet's nest that was last week's meeting of town council on the latest town hall theatre plan is the stuff of real-life TV, but on PBS or TVO, not TLC.

The meeting and its theatrics was all the buzz at Tim Hortons, Jugheads and Country Style the next morning. No caffeine required.

Same for calls to this editor's office, complaining about the loud and unprofessional antics of the crowd, the lack of support for the project by council and the presentation by the town's consultants.

Town Haul? Maybe The Jerry Springer Show would be more appropriate.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.

Letters to the Editor

Councillors did right thing by rejecting town hall theatre

Re: Town hall theatre rejected, April 14.

That was an emotional meeting last week at Whitchurch-Stouffville council.

They were all there: dancers, singers, artists, actors and our town's volunteers.

The line of residents pleading for the proposed cultural centre at 19 Civic Ave. was long. The voices bringing forth concerns and different options were few. Still, our councillors voted no to the disappointment of most of the crowd.

I want to congratulate them on their wisdom and conscientiousness. I do not believe this is "not about money but about spirit".

This has to be about functionality and sustainability.

This is not about "weak politicians" and "the voice of the public not being heard".

Do political decisions have to be based on those voices that make themselves heard? In that case, the fine line between democracy and the dictatorship of interest groups will get crossed to the disadvantage of all.

I am happy and proud to be a resident of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Happy because there will be a cultural centre in the foreseeable future and proud of our councillors who are guided not by any lust for votes but by their sense of duty and responsibility.

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 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@yrmg.com

Small town status safe

Re: Tattoo parlour scares residents, March 31.

No matter what the encroaching subdivisions encircling Stouffville bring, our small town status is safe for now. Two recent examples, one silly, one serious, are ample proof.

Nothing more can be added to the tattoo parlour debate that already has not been said in these pages. It's the 21st century folks, time to move on.

The second example is one that speaks to the quality of character in this community. It has existed here long before we needed a taxpayer funded program to tell us what we already knew.

There's a particular family in town in a real jam. They haven't said much — they didn't have to. Friends, neighbours, people who care, are pitching to help with household repairs, providing moral support and quietly collecting funds to help them out.

No one asked for help — you don't have to in small towns like Stouffville.

DAVE DEELEY
 STOUFFVILLE

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