

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune
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Editorial

Cause to feel positive about Ontario

More than 60 warmed-over promises, eight new ones and five costly new bureaucracies is the Conservative party's tally on the provincial Liberals' throne speech yesterday.

The opposition is, of course, attempting to make the most of "the scandal" of Finance Minister Greg Sorbara's resignation amid a criminal investigation into accusations of fraud the day before the unveiling of the government's fall legislative agenda.

Mr. Sorbara has yet to be proven guilty of anything and immediately tendering his resignation now that his name appears on RCMP documents was, indeed, "the right thing to do", as Premier Dalton McGuinty told the York Region Newspaper Group.

As for the "stormy territory", at the risk of upsetting purveyors of doom and gloom, there is cause to feel positive about the future in Ontario.

The grounds before Queen's Park were notably clear of protesters as Lt-Gov. James Bartleman read the throne speech. No placard-waving, chanting teachers, public servants or doctors were to be seen — they all settled contracts with the province.

York Region's three hospitals learned last week they will share \$2.2 million for additional surgeries and MRI exams.

That news came on the heels of the announcement the new \$60-million Southlake regional cancer centre had finally been given the go-ahead by the province, which will fund about 70 per cent of construction costs.

Without a doubt, the throne speech abounds with previously announced initiatives and promises, such as bringing more skilled immigrants into the province, improving waiting times in the health care system and investing in post-secondary education.

The throne speech targets education and skills training for young people and immigrants, health care, innovation and infrastructure; it is time to see those initiatives get under way.

In the meantime, the speech contained good news in \$6.2 billion more being invested in our universities and colleges, apprenticeships and skills programs and a pledge of 25,000 new child care spaces.

Of a particularly positive note is a move toward accountability in public service; the Liberals are pledging a money-back guarantee on online birth certificate applications if they take longer than 15 days.

Now that's something new.



Letters to the Editor

Fair traffic flow unfair to residents

We are big fans of the Markham Fair and have been attending since we moved into the area seven years ago.

We have driven, been dropped off or even walked to the fair because of its close proximity to where we live.

This year, after dropping off my daughter at the fairgrounds, I was driving home eastbound along Elgin Mills Road, hoping to make a left turn on Hwy. 48 My house is at the northeast corner of the intersection.

To my dismay, I was not allowed to turn north or go east. I was only allowed to go south on the highway.

So, I had to drive all the way down to Major Mackenzie Drive, find somewhere to make a U-turn, and then drive back up 48 to get home.

Meanwhile, one concession to the west, at the intersection of Elgin Mills and McCowan, traffic was allowed to flow in all directions.

If that could be done on the west side of the fairgrounds, why couldn't the same be permitted on the east side?

Was someone not doing their job properly or did organizers overlook the need to use that intersection for all directions?

I hope arrangements can be improved when the next fair comes around.

C. TANG
 MARKHAM

Regional bulletins a waste

I just received a bulletin in my mail issued by York Region called: Water for Tomorrow, issue no. 14. In it, the region is talking about climate change and is thanking all of us for helping to save our water.

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

When I read this, I had to ask myself, are these people for real? Here they are asking us to cut down on our water usage while they are pumping millions of gallons every minute, for years now, down the drain for a sewer pipe.

Because of it, the region creates irreparable damage to our eco systems, collapses roads and dries up hundreds of wells, as well as ponds and streams.

Further on, they try to tell all of us what kind of spring bulbs to plant for next year's flowers.

I don't think our tax dollars should be paying for completely unnecessary information of that kind. If York Region has too much money, cut our taxes.

The region has no business sending out bulletins of this kind telling us how to plant our flowers. We get that information for free in every garden outlet. I think someone is creating a job for him/herself and should be fired for wasting taxpayers' money. Furthermore, these completely useless flyers add to our waste problems.

Everyone should demand the region stop this waste of taxpayers' money and this bulletin madness and, while they're at it, stop wasting millions of gallons of our precious water by shutting down the pumps for the sewer pipe now.

HEINZ NITSCHKE
 MARKHAM



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Thanksgiving diary: football, forest walks, hungry neighbours

With apologies to my pals from Tonawanda and south, it almost seemed too American to kick off our Thanksgiving weekend with football.

At least it was of the three-down variety, with a strong Stouffville flavour to the recipe.

The annual Markham Bowl pits the town's only high school football programs, Markham High and Brother Andre, against each other. Call it *Friday Night Lights North*.

It's a junior-senior doubleheader and homecoming weekend combined, with grads from both schools returning from university to renew old acquaintances and cheer on the alma mater.

For the record, Brother Andre, with several Stouffvillites on the roster, won for only the second time in the 11-year history of the event, 35-14, giving bragging rights to head coach Rick Maloney over fellow Stouffville resident Mike Feasby, his counterpart at Markham High.

The big crowd, rah-rah school spirit and the brisk October temps makes one wonder why Stouffville District Secondary School dropped its fledgling program three years ago.

The weather has not been cold enough to turn our regional forests into the technicolour wonders they will soon become.

But that didn't deter what seemed like every horse, dog and their owner from trekking through the Eldred King Woodlands, north of Ballantrae, on the weekend. Some, of the four-legged variety, even ventured into the icy water.

Back home in Stouffville, a lone maple at the neighbouring farm has turned, making it stand out from the crowd. The earth-moving machinery that has turned the once fertile soil to ugly dirt will soon make it sprout houses, obliterating the view of the trees, anyway.

A weekend chat with Esther Powell, co-ordinator of the Whitchurch-Stouffville food bank, drives home the true story of Thanksgiving.

Forget the two SUVs in every driveway; there are still plenty of needy and hungry people in our community.

Next time you're pushing a cart through a local grocery store, buy some extra non-perishables and place them in the food bin.

It can be Thanksgiving every day. *Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.*

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