

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune
 A Metroland community newspaper
 34 Civic Ave, 3rd floor, Stouffville, ON L4A 7Z5
 PUBLISHER **Ian Proudfoot**

EDITOR IN CHIEF
 Debora Kelly
BUSINESS MANAGER
 Robert Lazurko
DIRECTOR PRODUCTION, INTERACTIVE MEDIA
 John Futhey
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR, RETAIL & FLYER SALES
 Nicole Fletcher
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR, CLASSIFIED, REAL ESTATE & EVENTS MANAGEMENT
 Gord Paolucci

DISTRIBUTION DIRECTOR, CIRCULATION
 Barry Black
DIRECTOR, CIRCULATION SYSTEMS
 Lynn Pashko
MARKETING/PARTNERSHIPS DIRECTOR
 Debra Weller
YORK REGION PRINTING GENERAL MANAGER
 Bob Dean

Editorial

Municipalities must react

Tony Wong is sorry. And the Liberal MPP for Markham should be sorry. Mr. Wong, parliamentary assistant for the ministry of research and innovation, called communities suffering from job losses "crying babies".

"It goes without saying that communities have suffered a loss of jobs, but what they should do is look for new ways to create jobs to develop their economy and not just come as crying babies to the province," Mr. Wong said in response to questions from the Conservatives.

It was, as even Mr. Wong acknowledges, the wrong thing to say.

It's no wonder some of the 52,000 workers who have lost their manufacturing jobs in the past year took the comment to heart.

And it's no wonder some hard-hit municipalities took umbrage, as well.

Labour groups, opposition politicians — even the Liberal-leaning Toronto Star called for his head.

But Mr. Wong insists he didn't mean the remark the way it came out during the heat of debate.

"I was not referencing any individual workers or particular municipality," he told the York Region Newspaper Group Tuesday.

While Mr. Wong publicly apologized for his comment, he's not sorry about the message behind it.

"I truly believe that the federal government, the provincial government, municipalities and industry need to work together," he said.

Hundreds of millions of dollars are poured into programs to help workers make transitions through apprenticeships and other support programs.

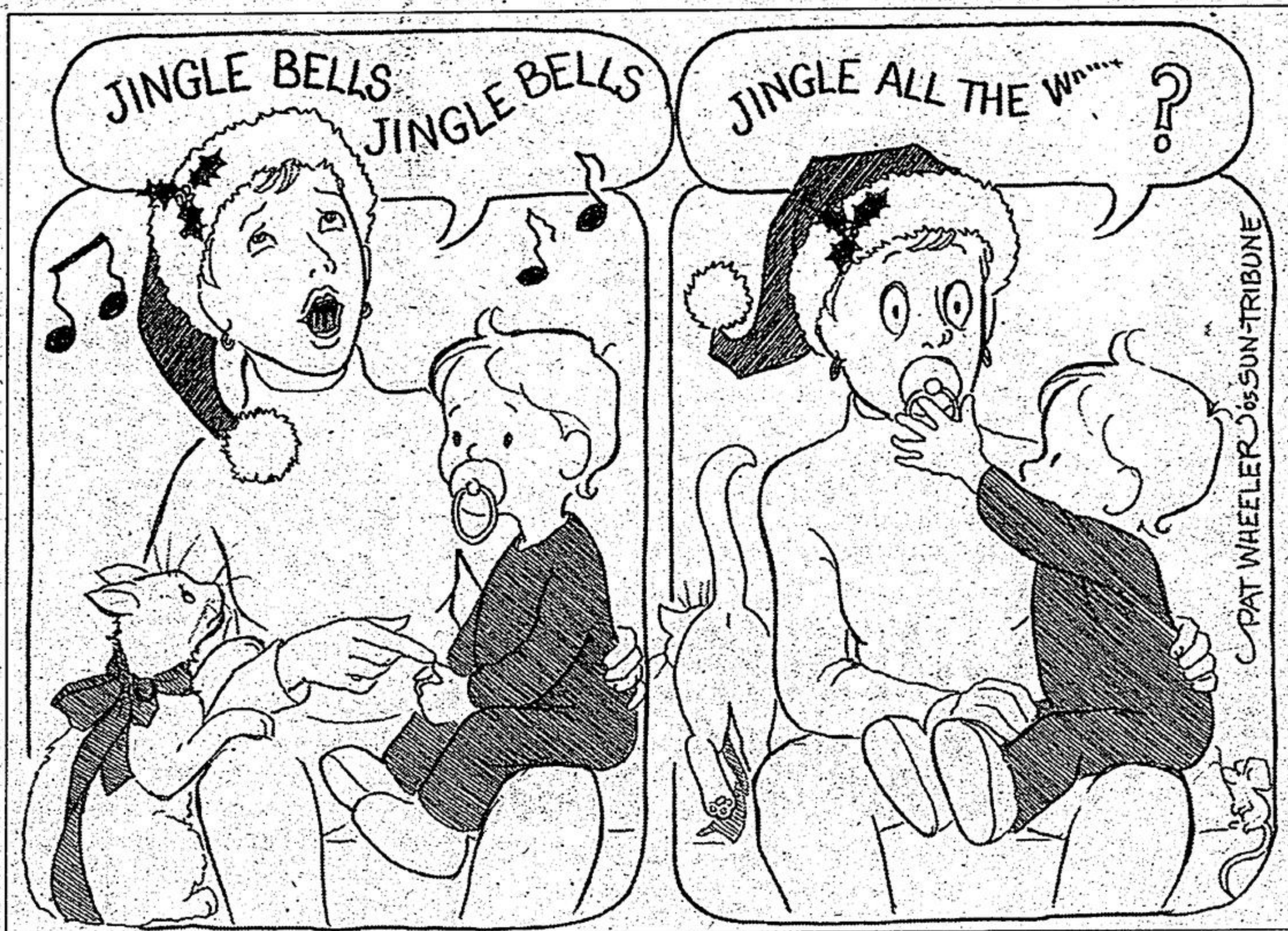
And, according to Mr. Wong, his ministry provides financial support and human resources to help municipalities find innovative ways to diversify their economies. But much of the forethought should come from the local level. In that, Mr. Wong is correct.

In a cut-throat competitive global economy, it isn't difficult to predict Ontario will continue to lose high-paying manufacturing jobs. So, municipalities must predict future trends and react now.

Markham itself, where Mr. Wong sat as a municipal councillor, is credited with creating its own niche in the high-tech industry.

Economic upheaval, especially in one-industry towns, remains inevitable.

The key, however, is to make sure secure well-paying jobs aren't always replaced by service-industry jobs, which tend to pay less and are often less stable.



Letters to the Editor

Community, craftsmanship on display at Christmas events

Some of the best examples of Stouffville's "Country Close to the City" appeal took place over the weekend of Nov. 25 to 27 at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum's Victorian Tea in Vandorf, the Country Pastimes craft show at Lemonville Community Centre and lunch served at Lemonville United Church, within walking distance of the craft show.

Visitors to the sale were greeted by a doorman, complete with top hat. They were served tea, fancy sandwiches and plum pudding on fine china by hostesses dressed in Victorian styles.

A tour of the museum buildings after tea gave a real sense of stepping back two centuries, especially in the historic Brown house with its traditional Christmas decorations and toasty woodstove.

A wonderful variety of handmade Christmas decorations, sewing, preserves, and baking was showcased at the craft show Friday to Sunday in the historic community centre.

Visitors were greeted by the fragrance of evergreen boughs, complimentary cider and a friendly welcome by participants in the show. Admission was free.

Many attending the craft show walked up McCowan a short distance to the lunch available on Saturday in the basement of the United church.

The church was decorated beautifully for Christmas. The church women had prepared half a dozen types of homemade soup (as many bowls as you wanted), sandwiches and

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 or fax 905-513-7525

home baking for dessert. And although the lunch was well attended and tables at a premium, there was no sense of haste communicated by the gracious volunteers serving there.

The light snow, which had just fallen on the countryside and trees, was visible through the church windows. It all added to the ambience and country charm of the occasion.

Events like this remind us of the enduring value of craftsmanship in a world flooded with disposable junk.

They demonstrate the generosity of volunteerism at a time when so many seem to have time only for themselves.

They also reinforce the sense of community and heritage so important to the town at a time when massive development threatens to obliterate the small town character so many of us cherish.

Thanks to all who contributed to a wonderful weekend.

JILL MCWHINNIE
 STOUFFVILLE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Luckily, Columbine didn't come to Stouffville Secondary

Panic was understandable in the voice of the parent whose child had just called home.

It wasn't the usual looking-for-a-ride-home-from-school or going-to-a-friend's-home-for-dinner-to-kick-off-the-weekend call parents of teenagers know so well.

It wasn't even a phone call. It was a text message sent from under a desk in a classroom at Stouffville District Secondary School Friday morning.

In emergency lingo, it was a "code red". The school had been locked down, meaning students and staff remained where they were until further notice. That turned into two nervous hours of wait and see.

Unable to get more information at the scene or by calling the school, some parents called The Sun-Tribune, including the one with text message.

Visions of the movie *Bowling for Columbine* or other school slayings in Red Lake, Minn., or Taber, Alta., sprung to mind, at least in our York Region newsroom.

With two reporters and a photographer at the Bramble Crescent school, we were able to provide parents some of the facts, as we knew them at the time, verbally and through our website, yorkregion.com

A male student was allegedly discovered holding a female student at knife-point in a school washroom. Another student coming into the washroom reported the incident to school officials. The York police emergency response unit and nine cruisers responded.

By early afternoon, the situation was calming down. The flack-jacketed and helmeted ERU officers were leaving the school. Students would soon come and go at will. Deep breaths all around.

The incident remained the talk of the weekend at the junior hockey game or in line at the A & P. No arrests had been made. No one in a school of 900 could figure out who the attacker or victim were. Normally verbose York Regional Police hadn't issued a news release.

By Monday afternoon, the jig was up. Principal Arlene Smith issued a letter to parents and copied The Sun-Tribune, saying the incident never happened.

There was no victim or attacker. Just a false story that sent a school and a community spinning.

No Columbine II. But a moment to reflect on what we have and how it could change in the blink of a text message.

Jim Mason is editor of *The Sun-Tribune*.

<p>EDITORIAL Editor Jim Mason jmason@yrng.com</p>	<p>PRODUCTION Manager Pam Nichols pnichols@yrng.com</p>	<p>Managing Director, New Business & Flyer Sales Dawna Andrews dandrews@yrng.com</p>	<p>EDITORIAL 905-513-1717 Fax: 905-513-7525</p>	<p>STOUFFVILLE Sun-Tribune A York Region Newspaper Group community newspaper</p> <p>The Sun-Tribune, published every Thursday and Saturday, is a member of the Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. Metroland is comprised of 70 community publications across Ontario. The York Region Newspaper Group includes The Liberal, serving Richmond Hill and Thornhill, Vaughan Citizen, The Economist & Sun (Markham), The Era-Banner (Newmarket/Aurora), Stouffville Sun-Tribune, Georgina Advocate, York Region Business Times, North of the City, yorkregion.com and York Region Printing.</p>
<p>ADMINISTRATION Office Manager Vivian O'Neil voneil@yrng.com</p>	<p>ADVERTISING Classified Manager Ann Campbell acampbell@yrng.com</p>	<p>Managing Director, Real Estate Mike Rogerson mrogerson@yrng.com</p>	<p>ADVERTISING 905-513-1717/Classified: 1-800-743-3353/Fax: 905-853-1765</p>	
<p>EVENTS MANAGEMENT Shows manager Bonnie Rondeau brondeau@yrng.com</p>	<p>Retail Manager Stacey Allen sallen@yrng.com</p>	<p>Accredited FDSA</p>	<p>DISTRIBUTION 905-513-1717</p>	