

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON L4A 7Z5

PUBLISHER **Ian Proudfoot**

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stouffville above this behaviour

Re: Letters to the editor, *With change comes crime*, Aug. 5, by Ken Sandiford and *Newcomers not to be feared*, Aug. 19, by Lisa Thompson.

After reading the letters, I wondered when the war of words between the old and new residents of our proud town would become a more peaceful, productive discussion.

I am neither a new nor old resident, I fall somewhere in between. Yet, Stouffville is known as my family roots. Five generations of my heritage have been in this area since settling in Canada.

I would like to propose we use our interest and involvement in this town for the betterment of the community, as opposed to mud-slinging between neighbours and laying out blame for the changes on the newcomers. We are a better community than this.

Whether old or new to the area, there may be a point you are missing. This town was built by the hearts and spirit of neighbours helping others, respecting each other and sharing and making use of the local resources to begin the make-up of the town we now call home.

In the spirit of the foundation of our town, please, neighbours, forget this senseless banter and battery of each other and the breaking of our community spirit.

I am not so idealistic that I am looking through rose-coloured glasses, but we all live

here for our own reasons.

One being just as important or valid as another and it is possible for us all to reside here happily.

Change is inevitable.
Let us respect our neighbours throughout it.

We are all community members. New or old, we are all here and we all have an investment and involvement in our town.

Community members obviously care about the town or the time would not be found to write letters. Therefore, I see no real reason not to move on and open up more productive, critical discussions when it comes to the issues of our town.

The point is do we not have more pressing issues to discuss amongst ourselves, as citizens, other than the length of time you have resided in our town?

What about issues like traffic control, crime or the need for new facilities?

Let us stop placing blame and let us get proactive in our discussions, not reactive, to our town's changes, but let's do it together.

A town with a strong community spirit will always survive and always has a special feel to it when you walk down the streets.

Chances are, we were all drawn to it here in Stouffville.

JANIS LOVETT
STOUFFVILLE



Taxing your patience one final edition

York Region council had just given away \$500,000 of your money when my first column appeared in this newspaper in January 2005.

The federal and provincial governments have just given away \$400 million of your money as I write this, my final column in this newspaper. I was angry then and I'm angry now. I only hope that over the past 19 months, I've made you angry a few times, too.

When York handed \$500,000 to agencies promising to help tsunami victims, it at least was intended to help the helpless.

(I objected because it was done with no public consultation and despite the countless opportunities citizens had to donate on their own behalf.)

Last week, the two senior levels of government handed hundreds of millions to General Motors so it could build muscle cars in Oshawa.

We're supposed to be con-

cerned about alleged global warming and depleting oil supplies, yet your tax dollars are going to manufacture V8 engines.

The stunning inconsistency and hypocrisy are half the annoyance. My blood boils further at the media-accepted myth this will "protect" or "create" jobs (for \$80,000-a-year autoworkers).

Government handouts to business don't create jobs — they kill jobs at profitable, successful companies by confiscating taxes from them and handing the money to firms that are unsuccessful by definition. The federal government collects more money than it spends, by at least \$4 billion this year.

Meanwhile, York Region's own Greg Sorbara announced last week that the Queen's Park Liberals have a \$298-million surplus, thanks to your "health premium" tax that has done nothing to improve medical care. The surplus arrives in time to help the government seek re-election, after increasing its tax revenue by \$6 billion since 2003, up 32 per



Bruce Annan

cent. The average Canadian family earns \$79,396 a year. Taxes from all levels of government consume 46 per cent of that, or \$36,650, according to the Fraser Institute.

We pay more in taxes than for food, clothing and shelter combined.

A few readers have told me to quit complaining and be thankful to live in such a great country.

Indeed, we're lucky — blessed with peace and security, a bounty of natural resources and a population of immigrants and their descendants who sought freedom

and were willing to work for self-sufficiency. It is a blessing we have largely squandered.

We should have the world's best infrastructure and social services, yet we have a crisis in power generation, waste disposal, transportation and health care.

Ever since the days of the Trudeau-Broadbent coalition, our governments have responded to the complaints of special interest groups, demanding gobs of cash for short-term fixes.

In fact, they give grants to lobby groups so they can afford the staff to demand the government give them more money.

Not that anyone's ever satisfied with a government handout.

It's always "a good start, but more is needed" — and the so-called "spokesperson" for victims du jour is usually taking a cut of the funds.

The philosophy of the whiners who dominate the daily news is simple: take the money from the people who earned it and give to

the people who didn't.

The growth of government has led to the decline of service clubs, volunteerism and charitable donations, as tax-burdened Canadians are forced to decide that charity begins at home.

My sympathies lie with you poor buggers dragging yourselves out of bed at 5 a.m., spending an hour each way on the highway and working so you can give your kids a decent home... with the 54 per cent of salary the government lets you keep.

We shrug and say what can you do? The answer, write a letter to the editor or pick up the phone and call the office of your mayor, MPP or MP.

Thanks for reading.

Bruce Annan is a York Region writer and consultant. He can be reached at bruce.annan@gmail.com. Comments regarding this column for the letters page can be sent to jmason@ymg.com.

LETTERS POLICY

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space. Letters to the Editor, The Sun-Tribune, Stouffville, ON L4A 7Z5. jmason@ymg.com

EDITORIAL

Editor
Jim Mason
jmason@ymg.com

Assistant Editor
Rick Vanderlinde
rvanderlinde@ymg.com

INTERACTIVE MEDIA
Marketing & Advertising

Manager
Dawn Andrews
dandrews@ymg.com

ADVERTISING

Retail Manager
Stacey Allen
sallen@ymg.com

Classified Manager
Ann Campbell
acampbell@ymg.com

Assistant Classified
Manager
Bonnie Rondeau
brondeau@ymg.com

New Business

Development Manager
Mike Rogerson
mrogerson@ymg.com

PRODUCTION
Team Leader
Sherry Day
sdlay@ymg.com

EDITORIAL

905-640-2612
Fax: 905-294-1583

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905-640-2612 Classified:
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