

# OPINION

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**  
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## Editorial

### Where is our youth at election time?

It's too bad the youth of Whitchurch-Stouffville didn't organize their own election debate this fall.

Or attend one of the pre-election discussions already called.

Because candidates and members of the public are sure talking about our youth, we thought they may have something to add to the discussion.

Even if they're under the voting age, of 18, there's no reason they can't contribute. And, at the same time, learn about our system of government.

In the 1980s, Stouffville District Secondary School hosted its own debate during school hours. It was one of the most raucous and interesting pre-election meetings during that campaign.

Call it a lesson outside the classroom that could pay large dividends later in life. High school civics or politics teachers should all but mandate attendance by their students.

The lesson goes two ways. Candidates can quickly get a feel for their potential youth constituents.

The problem? Adults are making decisions or at least promises for young people without consulting them, in all cases. Would the town plan a park, theatre or arena for a community without inviting community members to give recommendations? No.

Some candidates are calling for a youth centre to be resurrected here, as if it's the catch-all solution to all that ails our youth.

It isn't, as this town found out so loudly with the failure of the Ice Box youth centre in the 1990s. Older teens stayed away in droves. Our kids still hung out in the park, on Main Street or outside the arena.

Busy teenagers were too busy with part-time jobs, homework, sports, church and clubs to attend.

Show us a youth centre that's worked in another similar sized Ontario community and we'll talk.

A movie theatre would be nice, but corporate Canada only seems interested in constructing mega-screen complexes. Could our town leaders interest an investor in opening a smaller cinema similar to The Roxy in Uxbridge?

Can programming be tweaked at existing facilities to accommodate teenagers? Some candidates have talked about opening up our schools into the evenings. Can programs be run at the Stouffville Arena and the Lebovic Leisure Centre swimming pool?

Talk is cheap. What do our young people really want?

Please, tell us. Because, for now, their silence is speaking volumes.



## Off The Top

with Jim Mason

### Smilin' staff sergeant turns in badge for classroom

The Community Safety Village of York Region is normally bustling with youngsters this time of year.

The centre, in Bruce's Mill Conservation Area on Stouffville Road, imparts safety lessons to six to 12-year-olds from across the region.

There were no children in the village one evening last week, but its main hall was packed.

The crowd, largely police officers, active and retired, was there to say farewell to one of its own.

One of its favourites.

It's hard not to like Staff Sgt. Rod Sine. The warm smile, hearty handshake and actions that echo our police's services motto so wonderfully: Deeds speak.

Speakers at the dinner, from a childhood pal from Markham to cop colleagues from across the region, all spoke of the qualities that make the former Stouffville resident so admirable. So likeable.

Professionally speaking, it was more of the same.

Two-time York officer of the year. In 1979 for the arrest and conviction of three robbers in Markham and again in 2002.

A personnel file jammed with thank-you and commendations.

But it was pro-active policing, the stuff that doesn't normally draw splashy headlines or newspaper columns, where Staff Sgt. Sine shone.

The safety village was his baby, and still is, at least until tomorrow, his final day with a badge.

He did it all, from twisting arms in corporate York Region to raise money for construction to actually building some of the smaller structures at the impressive complex. "Lean-tos", as Chief Armand La Barge, who swung a hammer next to the staff sergeant, said, referring to their primitive carpentry skills.

Staff Sgt. Sine worked for eight years on the village, which opened last year.

At 51, Staff Sgt. Sine isn't buying white shoes and moving to Miami. His second career, as a professor in Seneca College's police program started 18 years ago part-time. As of next week, it will be his only job. He also plans to "give back" to the community he says gave so much to him.

Plus, there will be more time to spend with the loves of his life, daughter Emily and dad Don, both in Stouffville.

And when he passes the gates to Bruce's Mill and sees a busload of children entering for a day of fun and learning at the safety village, he'll smile.

As only Rod Sine can.

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

## Letters to the Editor

### Accident waiting to happen next to seniors complex

My parents, Ken and Doreen, have been residents of the Parkview Village retirement home for many years.

They are enjoying everything retirement has to offer. Close proximity to many stores in the area serves them well now and will hopefully through their future years.

A pathway has been constructed through the Parkview grounds to a sidewalk on the west side of the building.

This sidewalk is on Weldon Road, one of the newest and busiest roads in our town, south of Main Street next to The Lion pub. Directly across the street to the west is the Sobeys grocery store, which is frequented by many of the seniors from the complex.

The area where the seniors cross Weldon is a grave concern. No crosswalk and no lights make it an accident waiting to happen.

I have seen many seniors pushing their wagons, using their walkers and canes to cross this road. I value my parents' lives and those of every senior using this route who enjoy the convenience of the close proximity of the grocery store.

With the new high school being built just down the road, along with numerous houses, I would think this road will one day resemble Main Street itself.

If the candidates in the Nov. 13 election want to score one with the seniors and their families, I suggest they act on this one fast before a convenience becomes a fatality.

ANNE SALVAGNA  
 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, 6290 Main St., Stouffville, L4A 1G7, e-mail [jmason@yrmg.com](mailto:jmason@yrmg.com) or fax 905-640-8778.

### What do our teenagers need?

Re: *Something for all, except our teenagers, column by Caitlin Leger, Oct. 21.*

Miss Leger writes that many of Stouffville's teens have a lack of social events and activities. She expresses what I have heard many times: "We have youth impatiently awaiting something more to do on a Friday night in Stouffville than sit at home and watch a rented movie."

What I am wondering is what exactly do the future leaders of our society want? Will the new state-of-the-art Stouffville District Secondary School accommodate the social functions our teens seek? Do we need to build a youth centre? Perhaps between the Lebovic Pool and arena, as well as the new school and proposed theatre, we have the facilities. Members of our town should sit down with our youth, form a committee and listen to these voices. I'm sure many residents would invest time to ensure our teens have a safe and social environment in this great town.

I believe we have the resources. Let's start listening and make it happen.

FRANK LIPARI  
 STOUFFVILLE

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