

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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Editorial

Boom town growing concern

Try and find a person in Whitchurch-Stouffville who doesn't think growth should be slowed down in this municipality.

Unless you're talking within the development community, the people who make money off growth, forget it.

Growth is the No. 1 issue with residents, new and old.

Local residents have dealt with growth in the past. One of Stouffville's strengths has been its ability to assimilate newcomers.

A couple of hundred a year were welcomed with open arms during the many building booms this town has experienced over the last 40 years.

Now, those numbers are in the thousands, not hundreds.

The 2005 population of 24,343 was to rise to 32,343 by 2008, 42,343 by 2013 and 53,321 by 2021. Five years later, that total would be 62,321.

Now, we learn those numbers can be thrown out. They were too modest.

Now, 3,000 residents will be moving to Stouffville annually, up from 1,800 in earlier projections made in 2004.

That's small city status, not small town.

Those are just estimates and mere numbers on paper.

The reality for local residents is sitting in traffic, needlessly idling, while waiting for cars to snake along Main Street, the only east-west thoroughfare through Stouffville.

The reality is driving west to Hwy. 48, then doubling back to enter the Wal-Mart power centre south of Ringwood.

And this reality has been achieved with only a splash of the growth that will ascend on this town.

Councillors have privately whispered the town was not prepared for the boom, either with infrastructure or staffing.

Now, Whitchurch-Stouffville council is looking at the situation.

There's the chicken and egg question of who is responsible, the 2003-06 edition of town council or its predecessors.

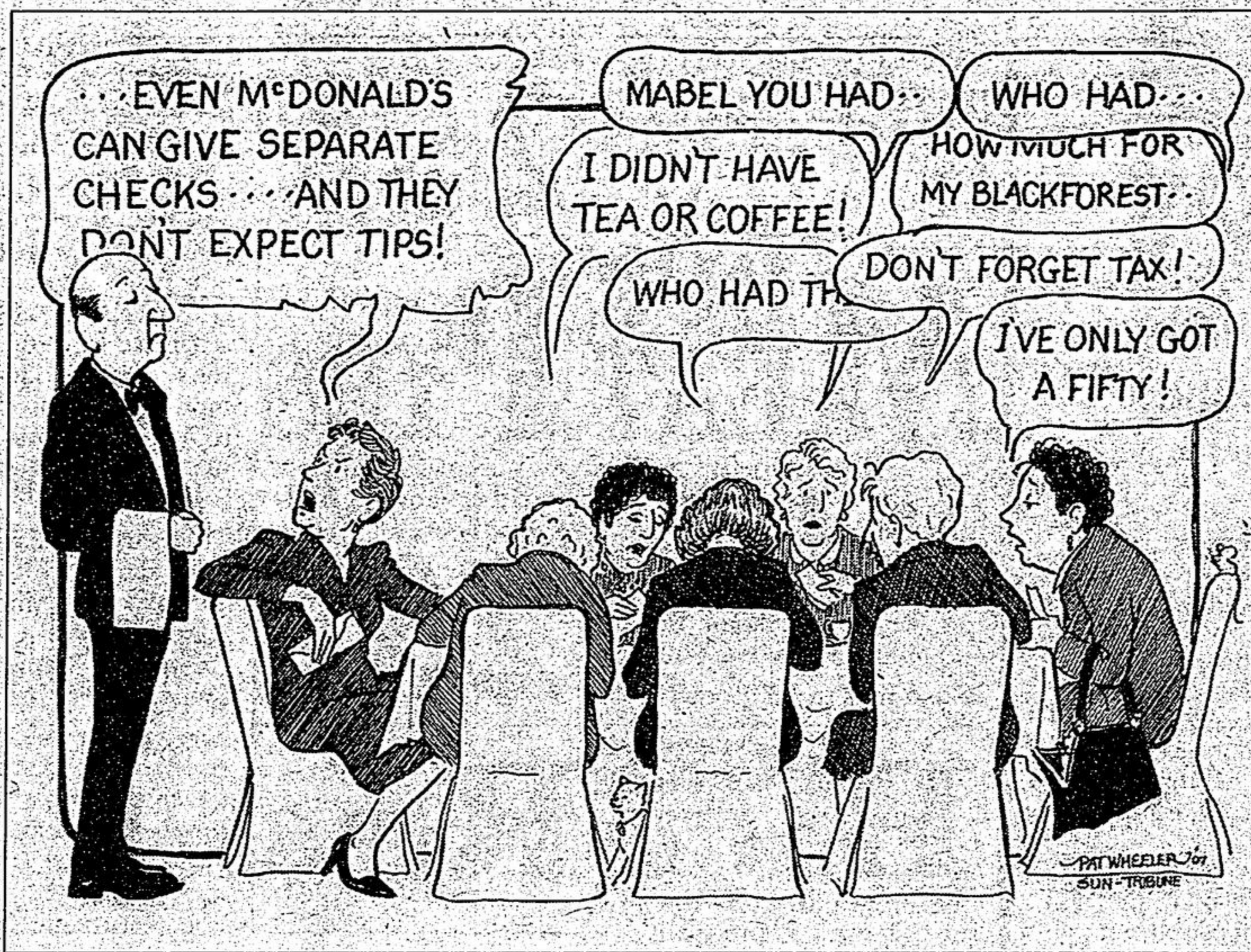
To the taxpayer trying to navigate Stouffville's streets, it doesn't matter.

Fixing the problem, learning from it and moving on are important.

It's good to hear councillors wonder out loud if this town is ready for the growth it has approved.

They'll be the ones getting phone calls when children can't get into swimming lessons or minor hockey or commuters can't get out of town in a reasonable time.

Now, it's time to do something about it, where still possible.



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Hug a teenager, Stouffville, he or she needs it

One look said it all. It was the look on the teenagers on the front page of last Thursday's Sun-Tribune.

It was the same look on the face of this community's youth population as it went about its week. Walking home from school. Putting up a brave front at its part-time jobs and sporting events.

Sombre. Pale. Fatigued in every which way.

They were the friends of Morgan Fitzgerald, one of five lads killed in a two-vehicle crash near Meaford nearly two weeks ago.

They were devastated. Some still are. Who could blame them? Who would want to be in their Nikes?

They were to be welcoming Morgan back to Stouffville District Secondary School this week, not mourning his death.

Their look has been seen too often in this community.

From the early 1980s into the '90s, it seemed as if one young person a year was taken from Whitchurch-Stouffville, usually via a car crash.

The small town's only high school braced itself.

Parents, with the already unenviable job of raising teenagers, were forced to explain life's ultimate mystery.

Why? Grandparents die, grandchildren shouldn't.

But they do too often in an area of the province where highway driving is both a fact of life and the ultimate symbol of freedom for many teenagers.

Our youngsters will get through it, bruised and troubled.

They've always been our societal outcasts, with their unique wardrobe, hair and music. Something bad happens and they're the first to get blamed.

Not now. Now, they need our help, our love. They need a hug from this community to let them know we care.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.

Letters to the Editor

Is Stouffville outgrowing its hydro?

After just having paid my reconciliation hydro bill, which was an exorbitant amount, we had yet another power outage Friday.

This would be the third this month alone. Albeit, one of the outages was announced by the Hydro One before it took place, giving us a chance to make necessary preparations.

Given the fact this is the coldest month of the year, I would just like to know where the problem lies with the hydro in Stouffville.

For many like myself, it is simply an inconvenience, but for the sick and elderly it is much more.

I am aware of the telephone number to report if the outage, is indeed, causing an emergency situation.

But how many people know who they can call for help?

I realize when the power is out, we are not paying for it, but how about a little rebate on our hydro bills for the inconvenience?

I also realize we should be grateful for having any hydro, but it just seems the outlying areas of Whitchurch-Stouffville seldom suffer hydro shortages.

Is Stouffville, perhaps, outgrowing itself?

D. JONES
STOUFFVILLE

Woolley was talk of water cooler

The news broke that OPP Commissioner Julian Fantino is pulling the plug on Sgt. Cam Woolley's descriptive "bad drivers".

You know something? It is sad, but you have to laugh in disgust at these people who just don't

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get it. Most of us spend hard-earned dollars to keep our vehicles mechanically sound and safe. We adhere to the rules of the road.

Mr. Fantino needs to focus on stiffer penalties for those who break the law and think they can get away with it, especially repeat offenders.

Sgt. Woolley's comments and on-site participation during the holiday weekend blitzes created water cooler talk.

People commented on what he said, how stupid some people are and you know what?

Maybe this talk inadvertently was overheard by a co-worker who just may be one of those idiots trying to get away with an unsafe car or reckless driving.

If it can change the habits of one driver, isn't it worth it?

Mr. Fantino, don't focus on what your offers can do, but rather what you can do to change the attitude of the courts.

Do you know how many people listened to Cam Woolley to see how stupid people really are?

For those people who are not getting the message, a hard tactic needs to be implemented.

CYNTHIA HIATT
STOUFFVILLE

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