

# OPINION

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**

6290 Main St.  
Stouffville, ON L4A 7Z5  
www.yorkregion.com

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## Editorial

### Community of churches bless us

It's an underground world of the sweetest kind.

And it's at home in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Thankfully

Our town has been known as a community of churches. Centres of religion dot Main Street, as well as suburban streets and rural roads.

As well as being havens for religious expression, they are also community centres of the kindest variety.

So, our town needs another youth centre?

Our churches are youth centres, hosting their own youth programs and inviting the community to join in. They hire staffers and recruit volunteers. They build gymnasiums and other facilities suited specifically to youth. They take an interest in our young people.

Our churches do mission work in our community and far beyond.

The church in Churchill, north of Musselman's Lake, is also the home of the Whitchurch-Stouffville food bank. Churches across the municipality send food to the centre.

They also collect money and goods for the needy of our community. And they do it quietly, often not even acknowledging their work in their own church bulletins.

Beyond local borders, they send and support missionaries in the worst of situations across this country and around the globe.

They support food grains and water projects. They supply medical aid and the professionals to administer it.

One of the finest examples is the Igoma Project, which marries church with community in support of the African village that bears its name.

The project includes the provision of clean water, medical care and education.

It has been referred to as an example of what Canadians can do to share their affluence effectively.

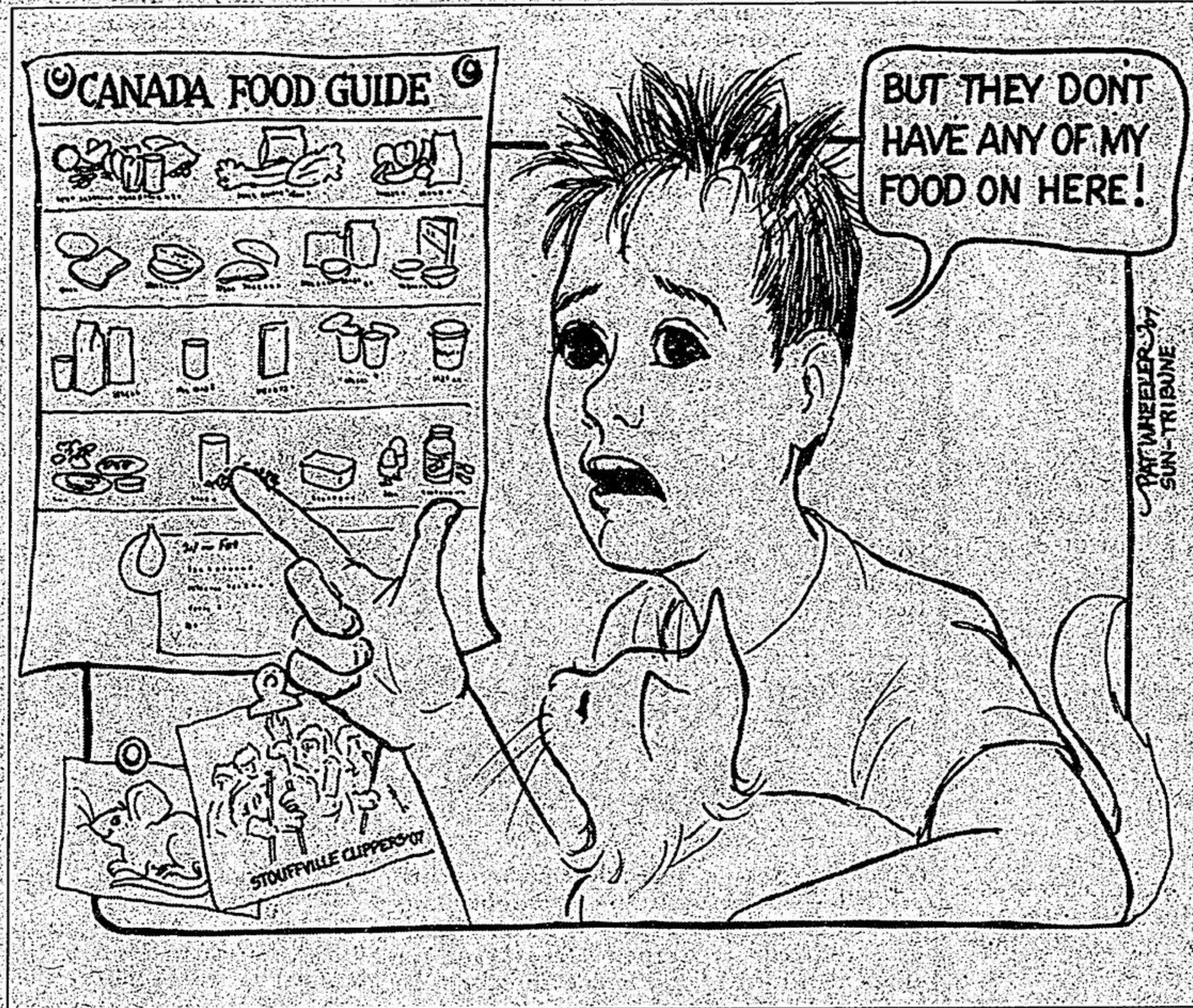
Igoma volunteers raise money and collect supplies here for the benefit of people on the other side of the world. People they will most likely never meet, though some will.

Some Igoma volunteers pay their own way to Africa to offer help first-hand.

We all can't do that.

But we can support our churches and the relief work they provide at home and away.

We are blessed by their presence in Whitchurch-Stouffville.



## Letters to the Editor

### Mayor shouldn't be blaming previous administration

Re: *Bring on growth, start with us: seniors*, Feb. 15.

What is our mayor thinking?

I can only comment that if the current situation weren't so tragic it would be comic.

Mayor Wayne Emmerson has been quoted in recent issues of The Sun-Tribune expressing a frustration with the past decisions and with infrastructure.

What he fails to point out, of course, is that most of the challenges the town is now facing are a result of his inability to deal appropriately with the consequences of his council approving 5,500 home starts more than a decade ago.

Having agreed to the massive residential growth more than 10 years ago, mayor and council should have appropriately established a plan to deal with it.

Instead there was no plan attract industry to improve the tax base and no thought given to deal with the infrastructure needed to support the population growth.

It seems Mr. Emmerson felt new housing alone would increase the tax revenues enough to cover the cost of infrastructure. A classic example of faulty thinking.

Now, Mr. Emmerson is pointing his finger at the previous administration whose only sin was inheriting his mistakes stretching back

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@yrng.com](mailto:jmason@yrng.com) or fax 905-640-8778.

over three terms.

The fact Mr. Emmerson is proud of his history of minimally raised taxes is laughable, because if he had proposed reasonable tax increases during his terms in office, they would have helped mitigate more recent hikes.

I won't even stoop to mention the recent pay raises for mayor and council members. Some councillors represent no more than a few thousand residents.

In the article, he also questions the increase in town staff hiring. How can he possibly expect to accommodate the current and future demands on town offices without improving the services offered, expanding staff and hiring qualified professionals?

To say that Mr. Emmerson is ill-equipped to deal with the challenges facing Whitchurch-Stouffville over the next four years would be a charitable understatement.

DALE CARTER

FORMER CHAIRPERSON, WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE ECONOMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE



### Off The Top

with Jim Mason

### The ultimate in smalltown vandalism

Never been a big a fan of vandalism. It all seems so bloody senseless. Snap off a car antennae. Kick in a window. Rip out somebody's prized shrubs. Mission accomplished. Call it a night. Yet, it's probably one of Whitchurch-Stouffville's most popular crimes. In the grand scheme of things, it can't compare to assault or other more serious crimes.

But nothing gets the phone ringing or the letters-to-the-editor bin filled faster at The Sun-Tribune than someone getting his garden stomped, storefront spray-painted or BMW keyed.

And it's not just private property taking one to the head.

The rear of our church, St. James Presbyterian, took a beating earlier this month. Thugs smashed or shattered five windows at the storied Main Street house of worship.

I doubt it was theological differences that prompted the attack. There was no message I could see doubting the Presbyterian doctrine.

Or maybe that's been done to death? The lunheads that damaged St. Mark Roman Catholic Church earlier this decade expressed a religious message using spray paint, as I recall.

Or maybe it was an attempted break-in? Churches in out town have been hit before.

And we all know most modern churches leave stacks of gold bars and bags of collection plate offerings just sitting around. Besides, the furnishings are so homey, they could fit with any decor.

Breaking into or damaging houses of worship brought about by should be treated with the same disgust the robbing of graves and the desecration of cemeteries. No sympathy. No mercy.

It takes zero class and probably a buddy hopped up on something hallucinogenic to commit such a crime. Throw the book at them.

And make it the good book. *Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.*

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### EDITORIAL

Editor  
Jim Mason  
[jmason@yrng.com](mailto:jmason@yrng.com)

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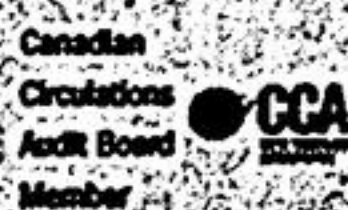
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### PRODUCTION

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Sherry Day  
[sdlay@yrng.com](mailto:sdlay@yrng.com)



### EDITORIAL

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