

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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Editorial

Growth strategy key regional issue

You ought to feel relieved controversy over funding faith-based schools has been diffused by Progressive Conservative Leader John Tory's assurance any move to fund faith schools will be put to a free vote of MPPs. We would hope Mr. Tory's move clears the way for voters to look at the other important issues.

For York Region, the issue affecting all of us is rapid, massive growth, something the provincial government has a tremendous influence over, both in controlling it and lessening its impact.

Growth is a phenomenon that taxes all the services governments offer.

It affects the quality of our health care. If there are too many people for the size of our hospitals or number of family doctors or specialists practicing here, we experience it first-hand. Growth affects our daily commute. There are more cars on our already clogged roads, drastically slowing the drive, meaning parents spend more time away from their families, buy less healthy take-out meals after the rush home, with latch-key kids being baby sat by the oldest sibling and the TV set or video game console.

Growth affects the quality of our children's education, with students in portables or bused to distant schools.

Growth puts pressure on our recreation services, when hockey rinks and playing fields cannot meet demand.

Growth can even impact the social fabric of our communities, when 'new' residents move in and bring with them new traditions, interests and demands that may clash with those who moved here before them.

That's why it is important for voters to look at which party is responsive to this one, over-arching issue, the elephant in the room that it should be impossible for the parties to overlook.

Studies show York has fallen far behind in the level of funding it receives per capita. The Liberals are promising massive improvements to public transit, including subway expansion, to help deal with gridlock. They have also invested heavily in hospital expansion and a new regional cancer centre. But the party is also mandating growth in York Region and intensification in high-density areas without any promise of sustained funds to help this happen.

Progressive Conservatives are promising catch-up funding for high-growth areas like the 905 to improve health care. The party also pledges to work with municipal governments to meet the demands growth puts on them by tying funding directly to growth, an approach many in York Region advocate. Whether your main concern is health care, gridlock, education, or some other issue, you should consider which party is responsive to the special needs of communities undergoing rapid growth.



Off The Top

with *Jim Mason*

Confessions of a green-bin converting, hockey-fight lover

I haven't been to confession in 50 years.

It might help if I was Roman Catholic.

And, if I was of such persuasion, there would be a list. Not too lengthy, just your normal North American male's regrets and apologies.

For public consumption, I reveal the following:

- I'm sorry I'm not doing more with my green been. I'm trying, but there's so much to learn. It's like the first day of kindergarten. Some paper goes in the blue boxes. Others, the green bin. Still others, the garbage.

I'm a work in progress. Don't toss me out.

- Sorry, neighbours I have taken the neighbourhood back streets of north Stouffville to escape the traffic signals of Main Street.

Unlike some of my brethren, I don't ignore stop signs, speed limits and pedestrians.

- I wish I had videotaped a fight between Philadelphia Flyer prospect Steve Downie and Stouffville's Cale Tanaka, and not just because of Mr. Downie's big-time run-in with NHL justice last week.

The punch-up, a middleweight classic during Stouffville Spirit training camp five years ago, was one of the most even and lengthy hockey fights I've seen.

A Pier 6 brawl on ice, if you're into such things. Remember the old Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots toy and you're close.

For trivia buffs, Cale is playing at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Mr. Downie is sitting out 20 games for jumping another player last week.

- I have used too many thousand grocery store plastic bags in my lifetime. Enough to have a landfill site named in my honour.

But, before you sick David Suzuki on me, I am repenting and hauling canvas bags to and from the grocerias of Main Street.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.

Letters to the Editor

Duct tape would win election for Tory instead of faith-based funding

To win the upcoming election, PC Leader John Tory needed but one piece of apparatus, duct tape. Strategically placed, it would have guaranteed his party's victory over the deceitful Liberals under Premier Dalton McGuinty.

There are few issues that would allow Mr. Tory to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory, but, without doubt, public funding of faith-based schools is definitely one.

Agree or not, it would appear the current faith-based education system has failed them both.

Mr. McGuinty seems to be unaware of the excellent advice found in Psalm 34 verse 13, "Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit" and it is extremely unfortunate Mr. Tory's lack of familiarity with verse 3 of Psalm 141: "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips" has cost him and his party this election.

JOHN ALDEN
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

Wanna race? Go to the track

We hear so much about street racing these and the tragic consequence it can create.

If teenagers or adults want to race cars so badly, let them race on proper tracks.

Since they probably cannot afford it, this might deter them from racing.

ANDREW JOHNSTONE
STOUFFVILLE

What will Ontario party leaders do to lessen hardships on seniors?

CTV asked individuals to e-mail questions to ask during the debate of party leaders in the Ontario election.

The following question was sent in, but was never aired and, thus, never answered:

"Prior to the last election, senior citizens could look forward to:

- an education tax rebate.
- no health tax charges.
- assistance with chiropractic and physical therapy expenses.

We are not interested in alternative suggestions or reasons why others should benefit from our losses.

What does each leader intend to do to correct these financial burdens that affect seniors' enjoyment of their later years?"

Dalton McGuinty, John Tory and Howard Hampton, now is your opportunity to address this concern of a senior citizen.

GEORGE GORRINGE
STOUFFVILLE

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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.

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A York Region Media Group community newspaper
The Sun-Tribune, published every Thursday and Saturday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. Metroland is comprised of 100 community publications across Ontario. The York Region Newspaper Group includes The Liberal, serving Richmond Hill and Thornhill, Vaughan Citizen, The Era-Banner (Newmarket/Aurora), Markham Economist & Sun, Georgina Advocate, York Region Business Times, North of the City, yorkregion.com and York Region Printing.