

# OPINION

Stouffville  
**Sun-Tribune**

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## Editorial

### Budget brewed for average voter

There's a beer company whose slogan is This Bud's for You.

That might be the view of York Region residents after Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's latest financial blueprint: This Budget's for You. Financial prudence, paying down the debt, a new tax shelter for people who have the money to sock away, are all meant to appeal to voters in York Region and other communities on the edges of Canada's largest cities.

At the same time, we are being courted by efforts to help cities replace decaying infrastructure, which also is a growing concern around here, one the mayors have been speaking out on for many years. And there's money to improve transit, another issue that hits home for those of us trapped in our cars and missing time with our families. All in all, it is a small-c conservative, responsible approach most households can live with.

Our national debt, accumulated over decades, is in the \$450-billion range. Ottawa is running a small budget surplus, by comparison, and is suggesting that money go to pay down this debt, a debt-reduction program that was started under the Liberals.

As the debt drops, the country's credit rating goes up, the interest it pays on debt drops and the fiscal future for ourselves and our children gets brighter.

Should the Liberal Opposition have taken down the government over these proposals? Absolutely not. There's little appetite for an election and there is little wrong with the government's budget proposals.

In many ways, we are benefiting from this minority government situation. The Opposition has had real influence over the Afghanistan mission and this budget. The ruling party did not propose anything radical. There's been some real debate over the issues between the Liberals and Conservatives (with the NDP and Bloc, at no risk of forming a government, free to make whatever claims and promises they please). And we are avoiding a federal election campaign that most of us do not want.

In a province where we have lived through Rae days — under former NDP Premier Bob Rae, who spent to avoid recession only to leave the province saddled with debt and the decimation of the NDP at the polls in the mid-'90s — it is notable the federal government is resisting calls to ramp up spending to head off a possible economic downturn linked to problems in the United States. Threats this week by U.S. Democratic frontrunners to change the North American Free Trade Agreement, perhaps not realizing it has allowed U.S. companies and brands (such as Budweiser beer) to penetrate Canadian markets and a U.S. slump in general are reasons to worry.

Getting our finances in order to deal with possible troubles ahead is the best approach.



### Off The Top

with Jim Mason  
*Making this a more livable home town*

If George Costanza can pretend to be an architect on Seinfeld, why can't an editor dabble in town planning?

It can't be that challenging, can it? For starters, don't put a fire hall near a nursing home. The sirens and flashing lights don't sit well with folks who need their rest.

Sorry, too late. The new Stouffville fire station is in the same hood as Parkview Home and its neighbouring seniors village. On the flip side, the ambulance in the hall will be very close by, when needed.

You build schools near the students that will attend them.

You put a mix of housing types, from bungalows and towns to two-storeys, in the same development. Kudos to this town for doing such. There are too many streets of all vintages in too many municipalities lined with cookie cutter houses.

If we want residents to walk or cycle to the barber or the florist, we put shops in residential areas. Stouffville once worked so well in this regard. You could stroll downtown in the 1970s from every corner of the then smaller town and get groceries, hardware, clothes or flowers.

The place grew and downtown became more service oriented. Now, so many of the retailers are in the west end, on or near Main Street.

The problem for my fellow east-enders is the lack of retail in our neighbourhood. Success Square is the exception and now includes a pharmacy and walk-in clinic, to go with the pizza take-out, variety store, laundromat and others.

It's not enough. The northeast corner of Main Street and 10th Line was advertised for decades as the future home or a plaza. The land still sits vacant.

The growing network of walking paths is a step forward. The new parks appear welcoming and useful.

But, a better spread of retail and services would make for an even more livable Stouffville.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-

## Letters to the Editor

### Honour Pat Madigan's memory by paying his kindness forward

Re: A fond farewell for Mr. Hockey. Feb. 14

Thank you for the coverage you have printed on Pat Madigan.

My brother was indeed a wonderful man, funny, realistic, involved and caring and we will miss him terribly.

Sun-Tribune editor Jim Mason has captured the best of Pat and has expressed so beautifully what we all feel in his column and stories.

And this Stouffville community of friends, neighbours and the Spirit Jr. A hockey team?

What a wonder it is to me to see the many expressions of concern and caring; the meals delivered to the door, flowers, visits, sponsorships, fundraisers and too many phone calls to return in a lifetime.

Please accept the thanks of the Madigan and Wilcock families. We are blessed to have your support as we were blessed to have had Pat's love and support.

Emerson said it best: "To share often and much to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived; this is to have succeeded."

My dear brother was that success and the best way we can honor his memory and your generosity is to pay his life forward with an act of random kindness.

Life is not all about us; it is about whom we become when we give to others as Pat did.

Thank you all so much.

SUSAN MADIGAN  
BURLINGTON

### Hockey updates on yorkregion.com amazing, prompt and excellent

Ours is a big hockey family and we wanted to find out the update on Sunday's Jr. A playoff action involving our York Region teams.

Aurora was playing at Newmarket and Stouffville was hosting Huntsville.

(Vaughan and Markham are playing in another series.)

I said to my son, "Let me check out the York Region Media Group's website."

Sure enough, you had an amazing story with all the details from both games at yorkregion.com

We just wanted to thank you for your excellent and prompt reporting and posting.

Keep up the great work.

JACKIE COUSINS  
RICHMOND HILL

Would you like to comment on a letter, story, editorial or column in The Sun-Tribune?

Do you want to share your thoughts on another local issue?

We love letters to the editor e-mail [jmason@yrmg.com](mailto:jmason@yrmg.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.

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