

# OPINION

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**

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## Editorial

### Tough times for factory workers

It's normally the plight of one-industry towns in Northern Ontario or fishing villages in Newfoundland.

The main local employer is on the verge of going belly-up and a lot of people fear they are about to lose their jobs.

In some cases, government will come along and offer help — a tax break, a grant to get that business through the hard times, a loan to retool and relaunch in some other more profitable form.

But those stories aren't just from the north or the east anymore.

In December, Newmarket's Tenatronics closed its doors. The employer of 380 people made antenna systems for the auto sector, including slumping GM.

The Canac cabinet making plant in Markham, which employed 1,200 workers, closed its Canadian operations in May, victim of the rising Canadian dollar and drop in demand from the dismal U.S. housing market.

In Vaughan, Progressive Moulded Products Ltd., a maker of dashboards for the auto business, locked out 2,400 workers citing financing problems and trouble in the auto industry.

For the former employees of these companies and other businesses in the manufacturing sector in York Region, these are very tough times. Loss of a job can mean upheaval in the home, mental health and drug and alcohol issues, trouble making mortgage payments, difficulty enrolling children in sports or music lessons or summer camp.

The region has lost thousands of manufacturing jobs the past few years, according to a regional report, meaning thousands of people are in this precarious position.

Unlike the north or the east coast, there are still jobs out there, but they are in the service sector and don't pay as well. Are our federal and provincial ministers aware that these kinds of closures are happening right here, close to the big city?

A federal minister visiting the region last week said new laws will protect those losing their jobs by ensuring they get paid what they are owed when a firm goes under. While that may help in the short term, people in this position will need a lot more.

Retraining programs will be the key for many of them to find good jobs that keep them living above a subsistence level.

Propping up sectors that can't survive rarely works in the long run. But certainly the many businesses that rely on the auto sector may soon need help to transition to the \$1.50-a-litre world that's on the horizon.

There will be tough choices ahead about whether or not we let these firms sink or swim, or throw them a life raft.



### Off The Top

with Jim Mason

### Slow ride home hits commuters where they live

You're sitting on Main Street watching the fuel gauge plummet like the Leafs' 2009 Stanley Cup odds.

Outside the SUV, dust piles up on the new wax as if a volcano just blew into Rupert Park.

You add gas station and car wash to list of places to visit. There is plenty of time to safely write as you play stop and go through the west end of the once small town.

That T-bone you asked for medium/rare is drying out on the barbecue at home, and it's well past well done. The dog has been eying it for 20 minutes.

If you needed a new excuse for being late, you've got it.

Because "I hit every light between Gormley and Stouffer Street red again, sweetie, honest. I was not at the (insert track, bar, cigar shop or buddy's house) this time," doesn't always work.

An appointment of mine last week blamed tardiness on the construction legitimately, I think.

On the bright side, you get a better look at those stores you drive by every day as you race to work. The stores that sponsor the Strawberry Festival and pay to have their names on your kids' hockey and soccer jerseys.

Greetings from Constructionville. Main Street is undergoing major reconstructive surgery from the Joan Rivers league, as if you needed a reminder.

Don't say you weren't warned. We've written about the oncoming construction for at least a year.

And get used to it for another couple off years, in sections.

But, until that massive shovel cuts through the pavement and traffic is diverted onto bumpy, snail-like trails, it means little to motorists.

But, try and get home from the grocery store, all of which are on the west side of town coincidentally, without the burgers and potato salad turning into salmonella, and it hits home.

We're human. We're like that.

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

## Letters to the Editor

### Did politicians consider health, safety when approving added truck traffic?

It would appear that my efforts to curb construction traffic on Hoover Park Drive in southern Stouffville are a waste of my time.

I was informed last week the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, more specifically, the mayor and my councillor, approved the use of Hoover Park Drive for the transport of soil to a building site.

I now understand the work has been stopped, the trucks halted and the route is being re-examined.

I further understand this was the most "cost effective" route to use.

Did they consider the health costs of the original decision? They were willing to expose the residents of this area to the diesel exhaust fumes of some 200 trucks per day for a 15-working-day period.

These trucks were to be traveling through a high density residential area, in the peak of summer, as children were outside playing or in a nearby park.

It is a known fact that diesel fumes are carcinogenic. I wonder what the soot particle per cubic meter was when these trucks passed through our community earlier this week?

We moved here, to this "country close to the city" environment to get away from the city. For the past 10 years, we have lived in nothing but construction. We have experienced more construction here than we ever experienced in our former community.

It has always been my stand that the development revenue generated by the builders is extremely important to a municipality, and as such, they turn a "blind eye" to many of the builders' activities. Construction traffic is most assuredly one of them.

My wife, a non-smoker, had part of her lung removed a few years ago due to lung cancer.

I had to tell her that she could not go out and enjoy her garden for 15 days.

ANDREW VICKERY  
STOUFFVILLE

### Rick Hansen event fifth largest in Ontario

On June 8, we held the Scotiabank Wheelchair Challenge benefiting Rick Hansen Wheels in Motion in the arena parking lot.

The support we received was overwhelming. Sixteen teams took part in the timed relay course, and everyone had an amazing time. Teams are already anticipating the rematch next year.

All participants now have a better understanding of the challenges an individual living with a spinal cord injury faces in their day-to-day life.

Congratulations to our winning teams: fourth, The Hot Wheels; third, Team Sauce; second, Team Wayne, and first, Anderson Haulage.

We would like to thank our wonderful ambassadors, Luke Anderson and Wayne Feasby, who continue to inspire us all with their words and actions.

A special thank you to our emcee, Sun-Tribune editor Jim Mason, Janet Geddes from Scotiabank, Mayor Wayne Emmerson and all of our volunteers who helped make the day so successful. A total of \$25,877 was raised, making our event fifth in Ontario.

In the words of Rick Hansen, "remember to never give up on the power of a dream — anything is possible."

MARTINA BARTLEY & JANE ALDEN  
RICK HANSEN WHEELS IN MOTION  
STOUFFVILLE

### 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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