

OPINION

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune

6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON. L4A 1G7
www.yorkregion.com

PUBLISHER *Ian Proudfoot*

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Debora Kelly

BUSINESS MANAGER
Robert Lazaruko

DIRECTOR, ADVERTISING
& DISTRIBUTION
Nicole Fletcher

YORK REGION PRINTING
GENERAL MANAGER
Bob Dean

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More tickets, clean garages would solve parking problem

I have been monitoring the parking article and the letters to the editor in *The Sun-Tribune* and felt it was time I write my own.

There are several issues related to parking in these new neighbourhoods:

People that live here are not using their garages, which is causing the root of the problem.

We live in a single house and park one car in the driveway and one in the garage (as do a small portion of our neighbours that are courteous to others).

If more people would take the lead and clean out their garage and actually park a car in it, this would solve the bulk of the problem. Each and every one of these houses has at least a single-car garage. Few people use them.

The builder has provided each house with at least two parking spots (one in the garage and one in the driveway).

People can't use them because they are full of stuff, which should be stored in their basement or another location.

Cars park overnight and exceed the time limits.

If the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville would actually enforce the bylaws and hit people where it counts (in their pocket

HAVE YOUR SAY

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E-mail letters to jmason@yrmg.com

book), you would start to see a lot of people start to obey the bylaws and actually clean out their garages and park in them.

You can always tell when the parking bylaw officers have done a recent sweep. Mysteriously there is a big reduction in illegally parked cars.

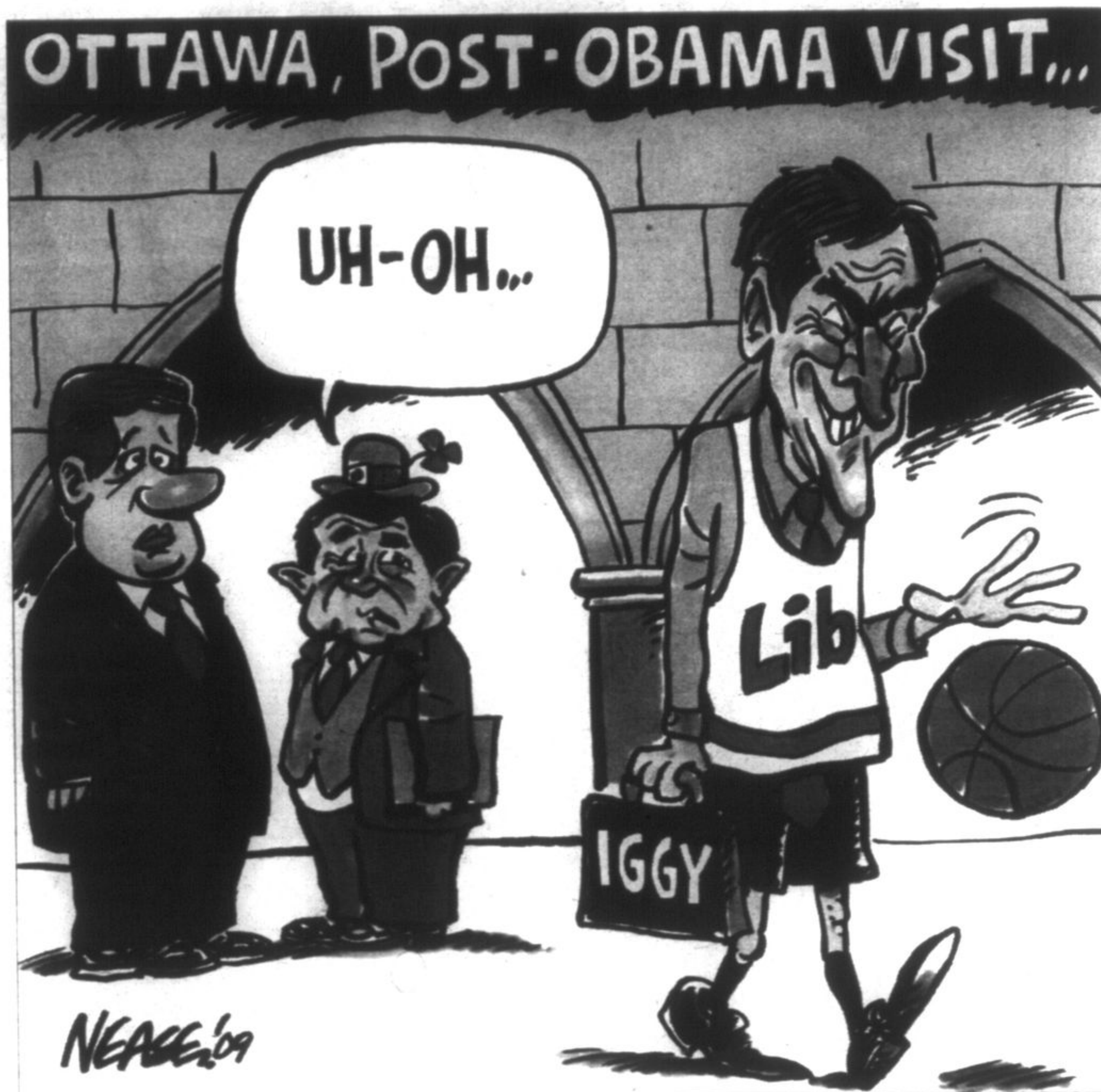
The town does not have an effective parking bylaw. The parking bylaw does not have a specification to only allow parking on one side of the street.

In Toronto, where many neighbourhoods have narrow streets, parking is only allowed on one side of the street, to not disturb traffic. There is no such bylaw in Stouffville.

There are many times when cars are parked directly across from each other on opposite sides of the street. This really makes it difficult to get down these streets in a normal car and even worse in winter when the street is narrower.

I could only imagine what it is like in an ambulance or fire truck responding to an emergency situation.

J. SMITH
STOUFFVILLE



Life can be boring when we're in touch 24/7

My 13-year-old son, almost 14, now has his own cellphone, which is wonderful, I guess. At least for him.

He's getting older and it will be important for him to keep in touch with his personal chauffeur at all times.

Now that he is in his teens, walking home on his own from a friend's house or baseball practice will never be necessary, so long as he keeps that gadget charged up and helps his mother with the monthly bill.

That's what it's like for most of his friends. Their parents always know where they are, and better yet, the kids can always get hold of the parents, who have the keys to this magical device called an automobile and a licence to operate it.

All they have to do is call and mom or dad will be right over. How can we say no, when they've been good enough to call?

Which kind of makes me think young people today will be missing out on some of the teen rites of passage previous generations used to experience.

When I was young, it was walking home on your own on dimly-

lit streets from a music lesson or friend's house or baseball practice.

It was before cellphones and sometimes you just didn't have a way of calling — or you called and no one answered. Or someone got delayed somewhere and your ride never arrived. And there was no way of getting the message to you. So you were forced to use good old fashioned shoe leather to get you home.

You were only walking home, but still, it was an adrenaline rush, conquering your fear of the dark or of being alone on streets that looked different at night.

On nights like that my mind would always be racing and I'd wonder how I'd react if I were ever confronted by some wild-eyed maniac who'd leap from between two buildings with a jagged piece of glass in his hands screaming some religious or political slogan designed to throw me off, and then lunge at me, swinging his arms and making his eyes bug out and laughing maniacally, as in, "BoooooaaaaaAAAAH," etc.

Would I just freeze?
Call me apprehensive ("chicken"), I think, is the word we used as



Bernie O'Neill

kids), but that's the kind of thing I'd be thinking about as my heart raced and I wondered if there was some crazy person behind every hedge, when in fact the only crazy person was me.

My father's advice to us on the one-in-a-billion chance we were ever confronted on a dark street by a pitch-fork wielding nutbar in bib overalls and a goalie mask was to, quote, "Run like the bejesus!" Or, if he catches you, "Scream bloody murder!"

He got a chuckle out of it.
Of course those were different times and he was never really worried about us. I imagine he even

thought it comical that we were afraid of the dark or had been scared by the ad for some horror movie.

He never suggested self-defence techniques to use against oncoming maniacs such as a well placed karate chop to dislodge the Hungarian salami from his hand (it's a lunatic attacking you after all), and besides, none of us knew the first thing about karate.

Or I could swing my baseball glove or my sheet music at him.

What if he has a gun?
Then perhaps I should turn and run in a zigzag pattern and hold my breath and "think thin" and hope he's not only crazy but a bad shot, too, is the sort of thing he'd tell us.

In other words, razzle-dazzle him with your fancy footwork. Or pull your Three Stooges routine: grab him by the nose, poke him in the eye, slap him in the forehead from various angles — and then run like the bejesus.

Better to be an anonymous flash of arms and legs fleeing through the night toward home where we could live to tell him all about it.

With these demons dancing in your head, your heart would be rac-

ing, but it always felt great as you bounded through the back yard. Home sweet home.

So I am a dad now and I guess a lot has changed, driven by fears of predators out there, and by technology.

Where we used to walk to school, many kids get a ride every day. You don't see a lot of teens out walking on their own in the evening because, well, they get a ride. And we'd never dare stop to offer a ride to someone we knew, as it would almost certainly prompt a call to the police from a concerned passerby reporting a kidnapping was in progress.

Google is even offering a service where you can track people (most likely your kids or spouse) based on where their cellphone is. It just never ends.

The other day I noticed my son's cellphone wasn't charged, and sat on an end table for days.

He went to a friend's after school but used their home phone and left me a message, saying he'd walk home after.

Maybe he's noticing some of the thrill is taken out of life when your dad knows where you are, 24/7.

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.

Letters to the Editor,
The Sun-Tribune
6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON
L4A 1G7
jmason@yrmg.com

EDITORIAL
Editor
Jim Mason
jmason@yrmg.com

INTERACTIVE MEDIA
Marketing & Advertising
Manager
Dauna Andrews
dandrews@yrmg.com

ADVERTISING
Retail Manager
Dianne Mahoney
dmahoney@yrmg.com

Classified Manager
Bonnie Rondeau
brondeau@yrmg.com

Special Events Manager
Pam Burgess
pburgess@yrmg.com

PRODUCTION
Team Leader
Sherry Day
sday@yrmg.com



EDITORIAL
905-640-2612
Fax: 905-640-8778

ADVERTISING
905-640-2612
Classified: 1-800-743-3353
Fax: 905-640-8778

DISTRIBUTION
905-640-2612



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