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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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# OPINION

Stouffville  
**Sun-Tribune**

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## Editorial

### Do away with homegrown pot program

Let's get this straight.

The federal government grants licences to individuals to grow "medicinal" marijuana for their own use, but refuses to tell the local police services who holds such licences and it appears inspections are all but non-existent.

Does anyone see the potential for abuse here?

We've all heard about levels of government or agencies tasked with our protection failing to communicate with one another, but this takes it to a whole new level.

Licensed or not, a marijuana growing operation, particularly one that operates without oversight, comes with inherent risk.

There's potential for mould and electrical problems, not to mention attracting criminals if word gets out about what's going on inside the home.

A crook won't care about a Health Canada licence when he busts down the door seeking to rip off the place.

Such incidents are all too common in other parts of the region where illegal grow-ops flourish.

There are no rules on where these approved pot farms can be established, according to Health Canada.

It could be the house next door and, according to the government, you don't have a right to know about it.

Neither do the police.

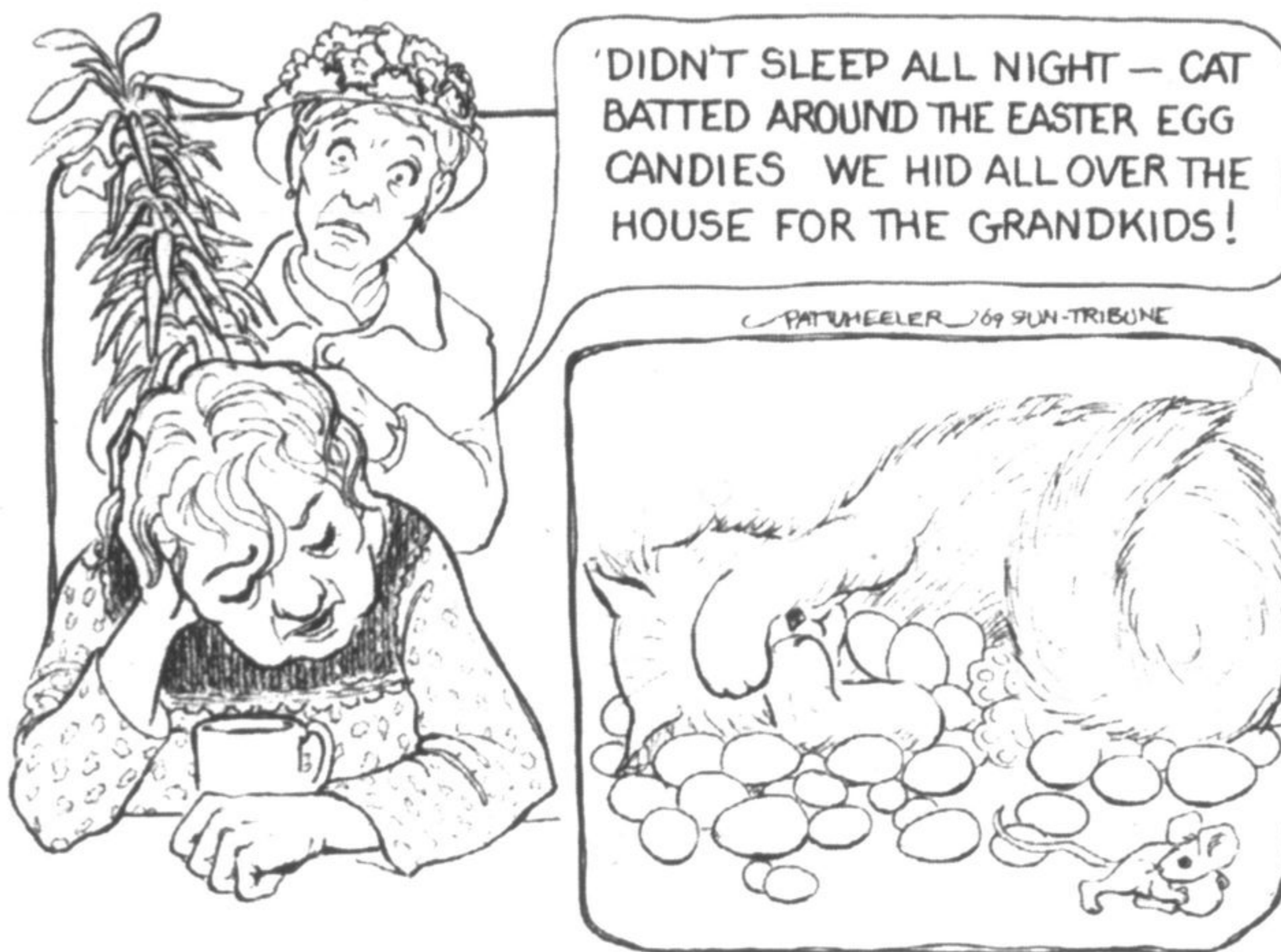
York Regional Police have already stumbled upon two in residential neighbourhoods in our community. Where are the others?

The practice of licensing individuals to grow and harvest marijuana for personal use should end immediately as it's clear Health Canada doesn't have the resources or desire to police the program effectively.

Allow doctors to continue prescribing the substance, but have pharmacists oversee distribution.

It's the only way to stop the potential for abuse and make our communities safer.

*You can read editorials, letters to the editor and columns printed in The Sun-Tribune on our website. Go to yorkregion.com*



## Letters to the Editor

### Teenager's worldly possessions taken from Stouffville Arena

On Saturday, April 4, my 14-year-old son left a small tan-coloured sling bag at the Stouffville Arena. It was under a seat against the far east wall of Pad B.

A friend mentioned they noticed this bag during my son's hockey game at 1:55 p.m. I was sitting there with about only 10 other people, unbeknownst my son placed his bag there.

My son realized he left it there during their awards presentation at 3 p.m. He returned to retrieve it only to find it missing.

We proceeded to search every change room, garbage can, lost and found and the entire rink area. All staff helped to look as well. Unfortunately it was gone.

Inside were the following items: Candy apple red iPod, red PSP, ear phones, Call of Duty Xbox game, American Eagle jeans, A/E red t-shirt, A/E white with red striped shirt and a wallet with identification.

To my 14-year-old, these were his worldly possessions. Gifts from his Grade 8 graduation, 13th birthday and Christmas.

What puzzles me the most is the fact someone has this bag, knows who it belongs to, but has decided to keep it for themselves.

As a parent, if one of my children showed up with any of the above items I would without doubt question where it came from.

Whenever they tell me they have borrowed anything from a friend, I check with the friend to make sure this is the case.

If they say they found it, we pull out all the stops to find the owner. We have

### HAVE YOUR SAY

► What do you think of these issues or others? E-mail letters to the editor to jmason@yrmg.com

even gone so far as to put an ad in the paper looking for the owner.

I'm guessing that this isn't the case in all households.

We as parents try to instill a sense of honesty and respect in our children. To teach them to treat others as they wish to be treated.

It is clear from the above actions that others instill "finders keepers" and only to worry about yourself.

It was heart-wrenching to watch my son look frantically for his belongings and have to explain that not everyone is honest. He realizes he made a bone-head move leaving his bag where he did. A tough and costly lesson.

Kids just don't find things. People lose things. If the items were returned, we would all feel prouder of the society in which we live.

KAREN KIATIPIS  
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

### Creek or garbage dump?

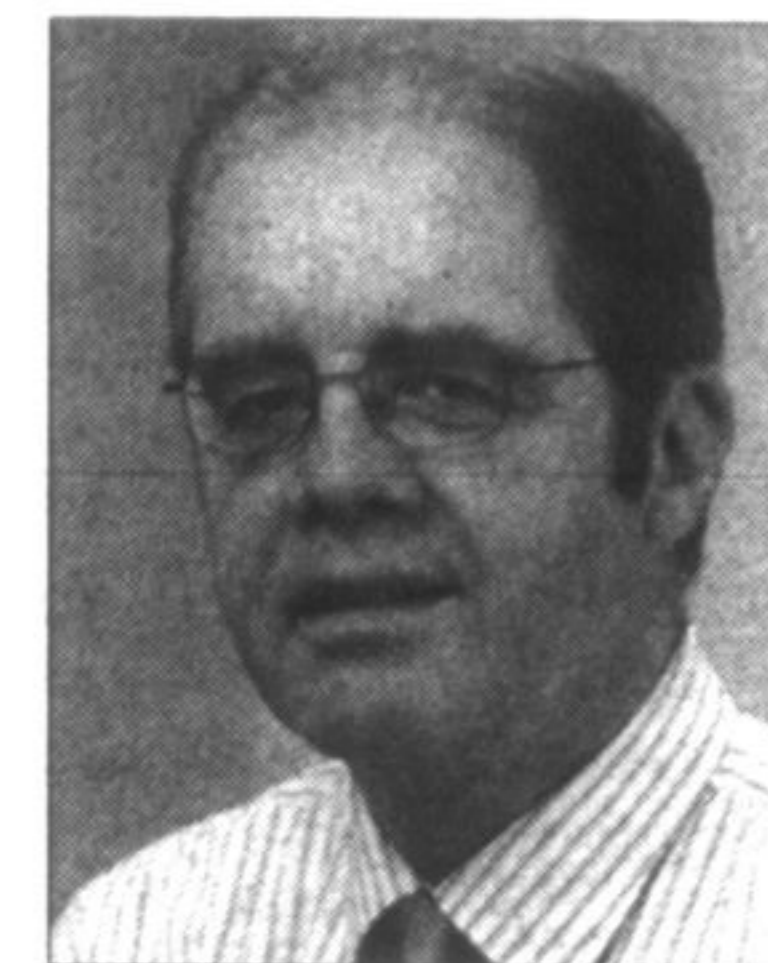
Not every town has a creek running through it. Stouffville has.

Stouffville also has what looks like a garbage dump.

As seen from the south side sidewalk on Main Street, it appears as though Stouffville has combined the two.

And what's in all those lumpy little black plastic bags that are no longer hidden in shrubbery or snowbanks?

BARBARA BRASS DUNCAN  
STOUFFVILLE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

### Getting pulled over by police never felt so good

For the record, my SUV stops for fire trucks with their lights flashing, charity bake sales with butter tarts and little tykes at crosswalks.

I appreciate the work of our soldiers around the world and our emergency workers here at home.

That's in case anyone wondered, after I wrote about an unusually elevated police presence on a Saturday morning in sleepy Stouffville. Readers responded in well-written letters. We thank them for sharing and showing a passion for the safety of their neighbourhoods.

I have friends who are cops, including my best pal from high school. I've covered the funerals of officers killed on the job and written stories on officers of the year.

In 30 years of journalism, I've interviewed hundreds of police officers. In case we ever forget, they're people, too. With marriages, kids, health problems, unwanted stress, mortgages and parking tickets.

I think I've got an idea of what their life is like. And, as much as I don't want it for myself, I thank them for being out there in all kinds of weather, in all sorts of nasty, often criminal, situations.

In 27 years of living here, I'd been stopped by police once, for going 14 km/h over the speed limit on Hwy. 48 in 1983. Guilty as charged, I paid the tiny fine.

Until last week, that is, when a York police car came out of nowhere on otherwise deserted Bloomington Road. I had been doing the limit, stopped at Warden Avenue, when the big lights lit up the countryside.

"Just doing random spot checks tonight," the young officer said after running my driver's licence through his computer. "You're free to go. Have a good night."

I didn't thank him for scaring the bejeebers out of me. I did thank him for doing his job well.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.