

**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,
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OPINION

Editorial

Province should end DriveTest strike

With Ontario's unemployment rate at nearly 10 per cent, the last thing the province needs is a labour dispute that can prevent people from getting jobs.

Yet that's exactly what the 14-week-old strike by DriveTest employees is doing.

The employees, members of United Steelworkers 9511, walked off the job Aug. 21, citing dwindling hours and poor job security offered by employer Serco.

The strike halted all services at DriveTest locations, including new driver tests, road tests and licence renewals.

Fortunately, the Ministry of Transportation is allowing an extension for people who require a test to renew their licence. General renewals are available at driver and vehicle licence-issuing offices.

This month, DriveTest re-opened seven centres, with managers providing the services. However, none of the centres is in York Region and the services are limited to written tests, road tests and out-of-province and out-of-country licence exchanges. On top of that, the services will only be offered to people who can prove they need their licences for employment or training purposes.

Drivers needing road tests for G2, G or D licences are out of luck.

The strike hurts employment on a variety of fronts.

For one, it's preventing many people from getting jobs or taking courses to upgrade their skills, as they may live in locations where a vehicle is required to get to and from work or school. Many teenagers looking for part-time work have parents who can't drive them around due to their own work schedules.

Truck drivers needing to upgrade their licences for employment were unable to do so for months. Now they can in seven locations, but those locations are inconvenient for many.

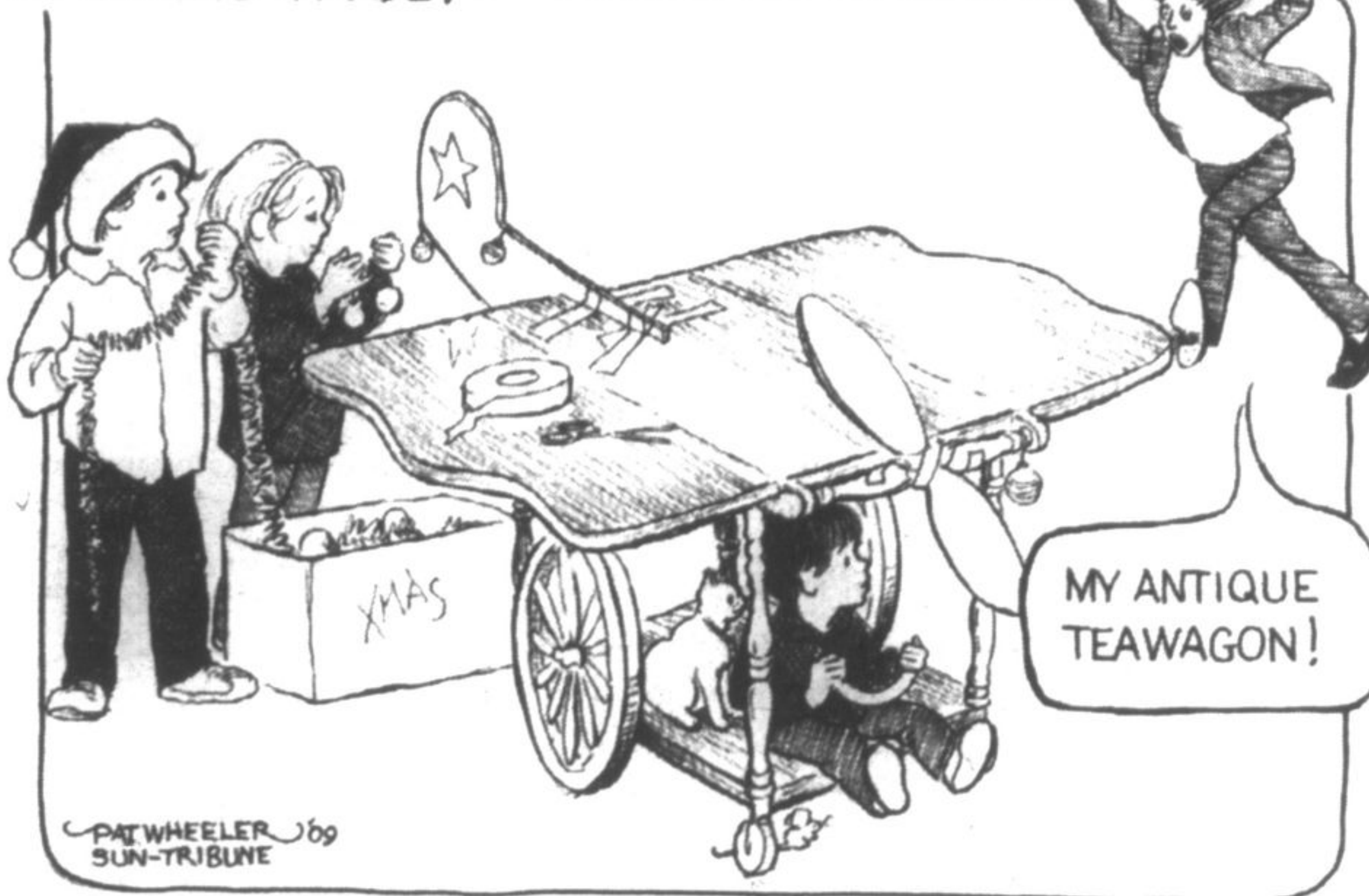
Driving instructors are also negatively affected, since fewer people are taking the written tests necessary to take training courses.

While the right to strike is an important safeguard for workers and one way to force improved working conditions, surely the company and employees should be making efforts to make the concessions required to get a contract.

However, since 14 weeks have gone by and both sides can't seem to do that, perhaps the government should step in to help with the negotiations.

Failing that, back-to-work legislation might be the only solution. After months of diminished services, the right of Ontarians to drive and contribute to the provincial economy must outweigh the workers' right to remain on strike.

NEWS ITEM: FLOATS STILL WELCOME
IN SANTA'S PARADE!



Letters to the Editor

Brierbush Hospital should be remembered

Re: *Stouffville had its own hospital, Did You Know?* feature, Nov. 19.

I was pleased to see your article about Stouffville's former hospital.

My colleagues, Dr. John Button and Dr. Doug Brodie, and I spent many hours at Brierbush doing anaesthetics, tonsillectomies, minor surgeries, obstetrical deliveries, palliative care and treating medical illnesses.

The X-ray unit under the front porch saved many patients a long bumpy ride to Scarborough General.

While not a state-of-the-art medical facility, the nursing care at Brierbush in a neighbourly atmosphere was top-notch.

It is important such a significant historical community asset should not be forgotten. Thank you for publishing this article.

DON PETRIE
STOUFFVILLE

Moving to Canada? Learn English

Re: *Editorial, English difficult for newcomers*, Nov. 19.

I must protest your editorial. Is it not clear to people coming here that English is our first language?

It was clear to me when I came in 1957 and it was clear to the millions who came before the Pan family.

This absolutely crazy editorial makes us look like idiots because we do not supply all the services in their language and we assume English would be understood.

The time for action is now? Are you out of your mind. The time for action is for the families who come here and do not speak English to learn it.

I do not care what the Prof. Pashang

HAVE YOUR SAY

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

thinks. Learn English. It is my language, your language and our language.

Are you so "inspired" by political correctness to give up your language? Great, move to China. In plain English, we will help but not feel sorry for these people.

PAUL H. HOFFMANN
STOUFFVILLE

Concert pays off for schools

This week, cheques in the amount of \$906 will be delivered to seven Whitchurch-Stouffville schools, participants in the 17th annual student music scholarship concert.

The event, sponsored by St. James Presbyterian Church, earned a record \$6,562, bringing the 17-year total to \$70,500.

The funds will be used by Summitview, Whitchurch Highlands, Ballantrae, Harry Bowes, St. Mark, Stouffville Christian and Stouffville Secondary to further their music programs.

The concert would not have been possible without the whole-hearted support of area businesses, service clubs and individuals as well as staff music directors, parents and students. Thanks also to the York Region District School Board for its co-operation.

Congratulations to A.J. de Boer, a graduate of St. Mark Catholic School, recipient of the 2009 St. James Presbyterian Church music scholarship.

JIM THOMAS, JIM PATERSON
& GERRY IRWIN
STUDENT MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP CONCERT



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

More than one finger in the Stouffville salute

How could you tell Stouffville was losing more of its innocence? Becoming more Manhattan and less Mayberry R.F.D., if you will.

The barometer, for some, can be as simple as trying to pull your vehicle out of a parking lot onto Main Street.

"Used to be the first or second car would let you in," the coffee shop expert professed. "Now, it's seven."

Blame unparalleled growth, the chorus recited. More whining about the good old days surely followed.

But really, it's all about education. If you weren't brought up and encouraged to hold doors for the elderly, say hello to strangers or let other motorists in line, you can't be faulted.

Flipping the bird is almost a national sport on the 401. Up here, we wave using more than one finger, hopefully, friends.

And don't think our new neighbours don't notice. Many proudly call their new home town "charming" and "friendly". They're with the program.

But how do we rope in the uninitiated? Just keep doing what you're doing, Stouffville.

Set a good example. Pay good deeds forward.

York Region, and Whitchurch-Stouffville, are, after all, officially Character Communities, where being polite and courteous are encouraged, if not the law.

Our newspaper group performed tests of tolerance and neighbourly conduct across York Region earlier this decade. Stouffville shone.

I'd like to think we would still ace the test, but that's up to all of us.

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