

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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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

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Some immigrants work hard at being Canadian

Re: Moving to Canada? Learn English, letter to the editor by Paul Hoffmann, Nov. 26.

I salute Mr. Hoffmann for having the courage to write a letter sharing publicly what is often considered taboo for fear of being labelled anti-immigration or even worse.

I work with a lot of people who came to Canada and the United States from all over the world. I see those who are so proud and appreciative of what this country offers that they work very hard to be Canadian.

For some, English is a very hard language to wrap their tongues around, literally, but they want to teach their children what it means to be accountable for their decision to make such a life-altering move.

I remember one colleague who was so adamant to learn

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the Canadian culture that he refused to move his family to a local community that mirrored where they had come from.

He also enrolled himself into a linguistic course to make sure he learned how to speak English and not just take an ESL course. He did that out of his own pocket, not expecting the Canadian government to pay for it. Luckily, our employer also offered assistance as it was good for our business.

So the sentiments Mr. Hoffman shared are not just from Canadians of 1957 but also from new Canadians.

We need not be ashamed to proudly state Canada is of two official languages, English and French in that order.

SHAEN ARMSTRONG
STOUFFVILLE



Soon they'll be legislating tuque, boot readiness

This week's snow always makes me wonder what it is like for people who have moved to York Region from parts of the world where it is not possible to freeze to death four months of the year if you were to happen to wander outside and get lost, and where winter coats and hats and boots and gloves and mittens and earmuffs and scarves and longjohns and turtlenecks and road salt and snow tires and shovels and booster cables and tuques and lip balm and snowblowers and ice scrapers and lock de-icer and CAA 24-hour roadside assistance are all practically unheard of.

And you think if people in Trinidad or Nicaragua or Hong Kong had in fact heard of any of this stuff, they'd pick another place to move to.

Which makes me think we must be doing a good job of marketing Canada overseas. I imagine in the Come to Canada posters we're all standing in the Rockies in our shorts and T-shirts and hiking boots checking out construction of Olympic venues, or hanging out on



Bernie O'Neill

the beach at Lake Simcoe — in July — and everything is just swell, despite the zebra mussels.

And if there is snow in one of the posters, we're catching it on our tongues and building snowmen — and snowwomen! — because this is the type of country we are! And we're skating on a municipal rink holding hands.

Or laughing as we cross-country ski. And we're making snow angels, which must seem mysterious for people who don't really give much consideration to angels or Christmas or St. Nick.

Who is this rotund old guy with the

beard giving out toys? I hope our taxes aren't paying for this instead of our publically funded health care.

Yes, we're having fun. Fun in the snow. Fun stuck in the car, which is not moving because of the snow. Which is now melting because, even though it snowed, it is now raining.

And I am in the parking lot in water up to my ankles, which is a bummer because I am wearing shoes, not boots, even though I've lived here all my life.

It's just that when I went to get my boots in the morning, one of the laces was missing, as I'm sure one of my sons needed a lace for something back in April and I told him, "Here, take the lace out of this boot. I won't be needing it again until December."

Maybe there should be legislation for people like me — a fine for not having my boots all laced up and ready to go for the first snow, my gloves out of basement storage, my tuque dusted off and ready for service.

Around this time last year, there was an incredible shortage of winter tires because of something along these lines for drivers. Quebec had made winter tires mandatory, which prompted a rush on tires there and a

shortage here.

The law applies Dec. 15 to March 15. Fines go as high as \$300.

Do we need a law like that here?

Based on what I saw yesterday — cars that couldn't get up the most modest of inclines, leaving a trail of frustrated motorists behind them, you have to think such a law would have helped, even if it is expensive and intrusive and it's not yet Dec. 15.

I personally don't think winter tires are necessary for everyone — a decent all-season tire with enough tread and a driver going slow enough and leaving enough room between cars based on the winter conditions, should be fine.

I've always hoped people moved here not just for the "free" health care, but perhaps to be a little more free from excessive government interference in their lives.

Legislation targeted at the few who make driving even more expensive for those of us who use enough caution to keep our cars shiny side up all winter, would be a setback.

Stouffville resident Bernie O'Neill is a York Region Media Group editor.