

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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Editorial

Come clean before election day

The hustle and bustle of politicking has begun municipally, with competing candidates battling it out for public support and power. But at least one York Region politician is vowing to carry the torch for transparent and open campaigning.

Vaughan Councillor Tony Carella took a courageous leap this week when he announced he will not take corporate and union donations. His campaign will be totally funded by the people.

And, more importantly, he will disclose before election day Oct. 25, when it matters most to voters, who contributed what money to his re-election bid.

Mr. Carella plans to upload this information each month to his website until Labour Day, then weekly thereafter until voters go to the polls. All political hopefuls are free to do the same, voluntarily.

We've said it in this space before and we'll say it again: Whether campaigns are being bankrolled by Satan or Saint Francis of Assisi, people have a right to know from where a candidate's financial support is coming before they mark their ballots.

For example, those who want to see development limited and more parks in their community would be uncomfortable with candidates whose campaigns are heavily funded by developers.

On the other hand, residents who are pro-development likely wouldn't want to throw their support and hard-earned dollars behind a candidate who was funded to a large extent by contributions by eco-friendly groups.

Granted, candidates who opt for openness, as has Mr. Carella, are taking a risk of political criticism about this or that donation, while their more secretive rivals escape scrutiny.

That's why we challenge each and every candidate and incumbent municipal politician in York Region to disclose their full list of campaign donors at the very least a week before the election.

Opponents of full disclosure of donors often cite privacy concerns as a reason why they don't want to give up who contributed to their campaigns. But this is utter nonsense because under the Municipal Elections Act, candidates must do exactly that anyhow — just later.

A slew of reforms to the way municipal elections are run in this province were passed recently, but disappointingly, the overhaul stopped short of mandating full disclosure on campaign donations prior to the big vote.

So, York Region candidates, are you up for the challenge?



Letters to the Editor

Canadian flag unwelcome by some Guatemalans

I spent five weeks in Guatemala last summer where I had been leading eight youths on a service and learning trip.

I have had the privilege of travelling in the past and have always been honoured to wear Canada's flag on my backpack.

However, in Guatemala, I spent some time outside a city called San Marcos and, before visiting, I was warned by a local to hide my flag, the very one that I had so proudly worn in the past.

I felt insulted at first, but after receiving some background information, I began to understand why.

In the towns outside San Marcos, the Guatemalans living there feel they have been horrifically affected by Canadian mining corporations.

These corporations have been accused of contaminating water sources around the mines with cyanide used for their mining procedures.

Workers are constantly going missing in the mines without any investigation.

Extortion and threats are used against the indigenous peoples to encourage selling, they say.

On top of this, the mass migration of workers to the area has destroyed the social environment by introducing brothels and bars and increasing violence and rape within the communities.

The Guatemalan people directly affected by these corporations are powerless to react. But we are not because it is our government's investments in these corporations that keep them going and bring us as Canadians

HAVE YOUR SAY, STOUFFVILLE

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

into direct involvement with these atrocities through our pension plans.

I believe, as members of a free democracy, we should not allow these corporations to treat other human beings in such an anti-democratic way.

How can we enjoy our standard of living when it is sponsored by such dealings?

MP John McKay has put into motion a bill of corporate social responsibility called C300 and it is designed to make Canadian corporations in other countries play by the same rules and responsibilities of our own democracy.

If you are at all interested in bringing social justice to the people who have been affected by these corporations for the benefit of our own pensions, please act to support Bill C300 or attend the free information night, which will be held at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library in late January.

Also, go to www.johnmckaymp.on.ca for petitions to send to our MP, Paul Calandra, or inquire at the library for details regarding the information night.

JOHN WIDEMAN
STOUFFVILLE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Still driving around in Stouffville's circles

Santa, just what is your policy on returns?

It's about that GPS you fired down the chimney at our place. Sure, it's fine for locating the nearest Subway shop or bail bondsman, but there are holes in the system.

The neighbourhoods off Millard Street east of Hwy. 48 don't exist, according to that foolproof address finder you passed off on me.

(Either you have an upgrade, Mr. Claus, or you disappointed a pile of children on those streets last month.)

Same for a high school gym in Fergus I was trying to find. No can find on the GPS, Santa. Sorry.

The little gizmo does have redeeming qualities, including giving precise instructions on how to enter and exit Stouffville's growing inventory of roundabouts.

Still, I need more help in this area. I could be giving myself the runaround at our roundabouts. (It brings back memories of moving from northwestern Ontario and trying to negotiate the street cars, police horses and pedestrian-activated crosswalks of Toronto.)

I treat roundabouts like I do revolving doors at office buildings. Wait your turn and enter the circle. No butting in. Continue through to your exit and leave.

Others have different rules, including the pickup that skipped the que like a bad kid in the merry-go-round line and nearly took my bumper with him last month.

Honestly, I don't know the rules and either do fellow motorists who commented on my roundabout column of a couple of years back. The town hasn't returned my call from back then and I haven't noticed any courses in roundabout rules being offered.

I'm just driving around in circles.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.