

**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

### Fan of democracy? Cast a ballot

The Opposition parties returned to the House of Commons this week to push for new rules on prorogation, in the wake of the protests of thousands of Canadians who took to the streets in cities and towns across the country Saturday to demand their MPs get back to work.

Prime Minister's Stephen Harper's decision last month to shutter Parliament during the Olympic Games and come back with a Throne Speech and budget in early March has continued to dog him.

In York Region, a few hundred spirited citizens marched to Newmarket-Aurora Conservative MP Lois Brown's constituency office to decry the prime minister's decision as undemocratic.

The rallies were the latest avenue by which Canadians have voiced their disdain with the prime minister's move. The Facebook group Canadians Against Proroguing Parliament had 218,000 members as of yesterday. The latest EKOS poll has the Conservatives and Liberals tied in popularity, while an Ipsos-Reid poll suggests the Conservatives would receive just 34 per cent of votes if an election were held now, versus 31 per cent for the Liberals — a seven-point increase from a few months ago. The Conservatives have dropped 3 per cent since then.

In Ontario, the Liberals hold a 1-per cent lead, according to the poll.

It's clear many Canadians are following what happens on Parliament Hill and many oppose the latest prorogation.

Yet, if we care so much about democracy — enough for a few hundred of your neighbours to brave the January cold for a march and rally — why don't we demonstrate it at the polls?

Less than 60 per cent of eligible Canadian voters bothered to cast a ballot in the October 2008 federal election. Provincial and municipal votes, such as the one scheduled for the fall, attract even less attention. In Vaughan, for example, just 38 per cent of eligible voters cast a ballot in the 2006 municipal election.

We trumpet the importance of maintaining our democratic rights, but when given the opportunity to exercise them by choosing our political representatives, half of us, on average, fail to do so.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, close to 80 per cent of eligible voters cast ballots in federal votes. The numbers have steadily dropped since then.

If you care — really care — about Canadian democracy, show it by turning out to cast a ballot each time you are called upon to do so.



## Letters to the Editor

### Trip down memory lane at Stouffville singalong

This letter is in thanks for the efforts of a small group of volunteers and the leadership of Al and Trudy Yetman who hosted a joyful afternoon at the Lebovic Centre for Arts and Entertainment - Nineteen on the Park Jan. 17.

As part of the audience, I watched the glow on the faces of the rest of the audience, most of whom affirmed this was their first time at the monthly singalong, as they sang full-heartedly through favourites, including It's a Long Way to Tipperary.

The idea is simple enough: invite seniors to come together, to sing together.

All the music is from the 1940s and earlier, so it celebrates the lives and memories of so many of our older citizens, although all ages are welcome.

Their smiles and musical gusto continued for much of the two-hour singalong. We even had a strong and melodic harmonizing rising from the back seats.

The event was cheap (\$3 gets you in and there are free coffee and treats) — simple old-fashioned fun. In this day and age, that is not such an easy thing to find.

Al and Trudy Yetman managed to bring it all together with style.

The next singalong is Feb. 28.

CHARLENE JONES  
STOUFFVILLE

### How about more firefighters instead of fancy new hall?

I often drive by the new Stouffville fire hall and I have to admit, it is a beautiful building — the glass bay doors, custom light fixtures, rounded

### HAVE YOUR SAY

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pre-cast window ledges, esthetically and architecturally a true accomplishment.

However, it has left me wondering: is an exuberant building such as this really necessary?

Don't get me wrong, I support council's decision to fund full-time fire fighters and a new fire hall is certainly needed.

But given the limited budget available to municipally funded programs, perhaps money could have been allocated more efficiently.

If the goal of the fire department is to increase safety in our community, would we not be better off with a plain fire hall and hire more firefighters or buy more fire trucks?

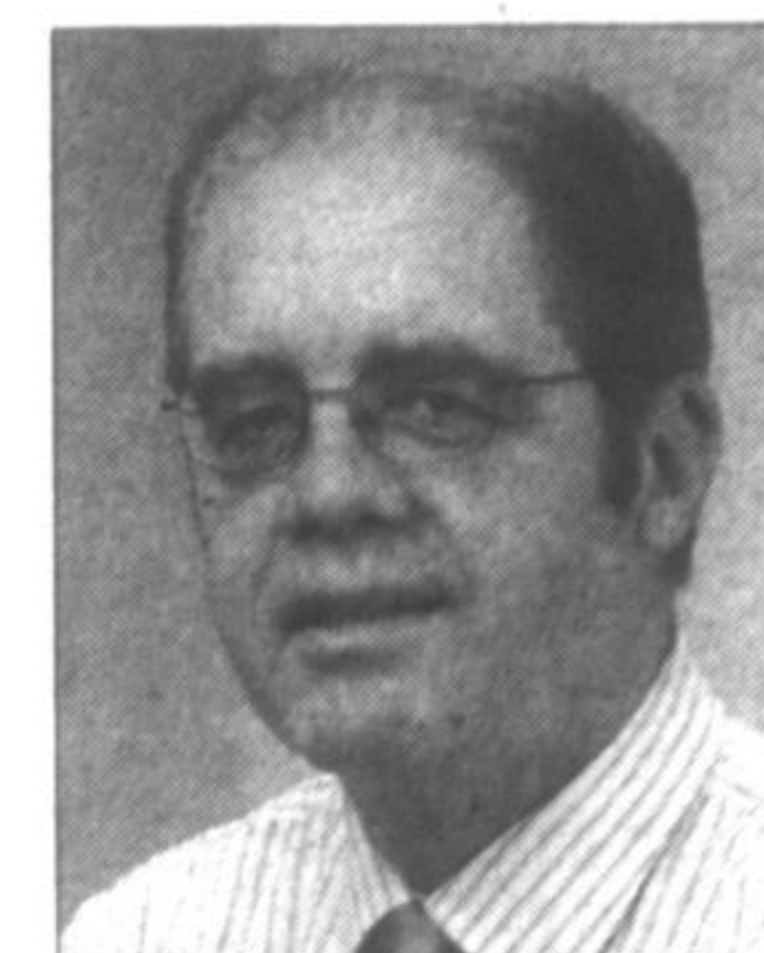
Beautifying the town can be a good use of tax dollars, yet a fire hall can hardly be called a public space.

Perhaps the town could have used some of the money invested in the fire hall to alleviate the financial burden imposed on struggling downtown businesses, which will now be required to pay more for the upkeep of Main Street.

The whole situation is a good lesson in trade-offs, a lesson I hope town council and Mayor Wayne Emmerson have learned when it comes to planning a new town hall.

DREW COSBURN  
STOUFFVILLE

You can read letters, stories and columns from The Sun-Tribune at [yorkregion.com](http://yorkregion.com)



### Off The Top

with Jim Mason

### We're better for knowing you, Mick

Murray 'Mick' Redshaw was old Stouffville.

No big-box stores and four-lane highways on this guy.

Walk into Schell Lumber to quickly buy a plank and you could still be there an hour later, shooting the breeze with Murray, a few one-liners tossed in with your purchase at no extra charge.

Murray died Jan. 17. His funeral was held last Thursday.

He wasn't a politician or a big wheel. He was *people*, the kind others enjoyed being around.

He refereed and coached hockey, built a rink for the neighbourhood kids and lived for family.

One of 13 children in a blended family, he lived all of his 77 years in or around Stouffville. His dad died when he was 10. That forces you to go to work early in life, and stay late, apparently. Murray worked for 59 years at Schell before retiring last year.

"He just liked being around people and talking to them," said Phil, one of his three sons.

They both worked at Schell, creating a father-son comedy routine of their own at times.

More than 500 people visited the family at the O'Neill Funeral Home last week, some waiting more than an hour in line. Hundreds more were at the service at EastRidge church.

Don Miller, who was fast friends with Murray since they were seven years old, spoke from the heart. So did Ron Schell, the third of four generations of Schells Murray worked with and for.

Murray Wagg, another childhood pal, was in the crowd.

"Everyone just had a nickname in Stouffville back then," he said. "He was Mick. That's how it was."

And the Stouffville of today is better for knowing him.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.