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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.

Letters to the Editor,
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OPINION



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Editorial

Make councillors accountable

Want an accountable councillor? Want to make sure his or her activities are transparent?

Then be prepared to free up some time to deal with endless paperwork and start writing cheques. Too much is expected of a resident who wants to file a complaint against or get information about the spending habits of his local councillors. That's a vital problem that needs fixing.

True, some issues have spurred change. Several financial scandals in the GTA have forced councillors to make details about their expenses more accessible. To counteract ethics and financial scandals, councils in several municipalities, including Aurora, Vaughan and Richmond Hill, have formulated codes of conduct.

Still, there is little oversight from the province with regard to councillors' activities. This mostly hands-off approach must not continue.

Reports in the past year have detailed councillor corruption charges, conflicts of interest, improper expense claims and a number of councillors under investigation. And that's just what has been reported.

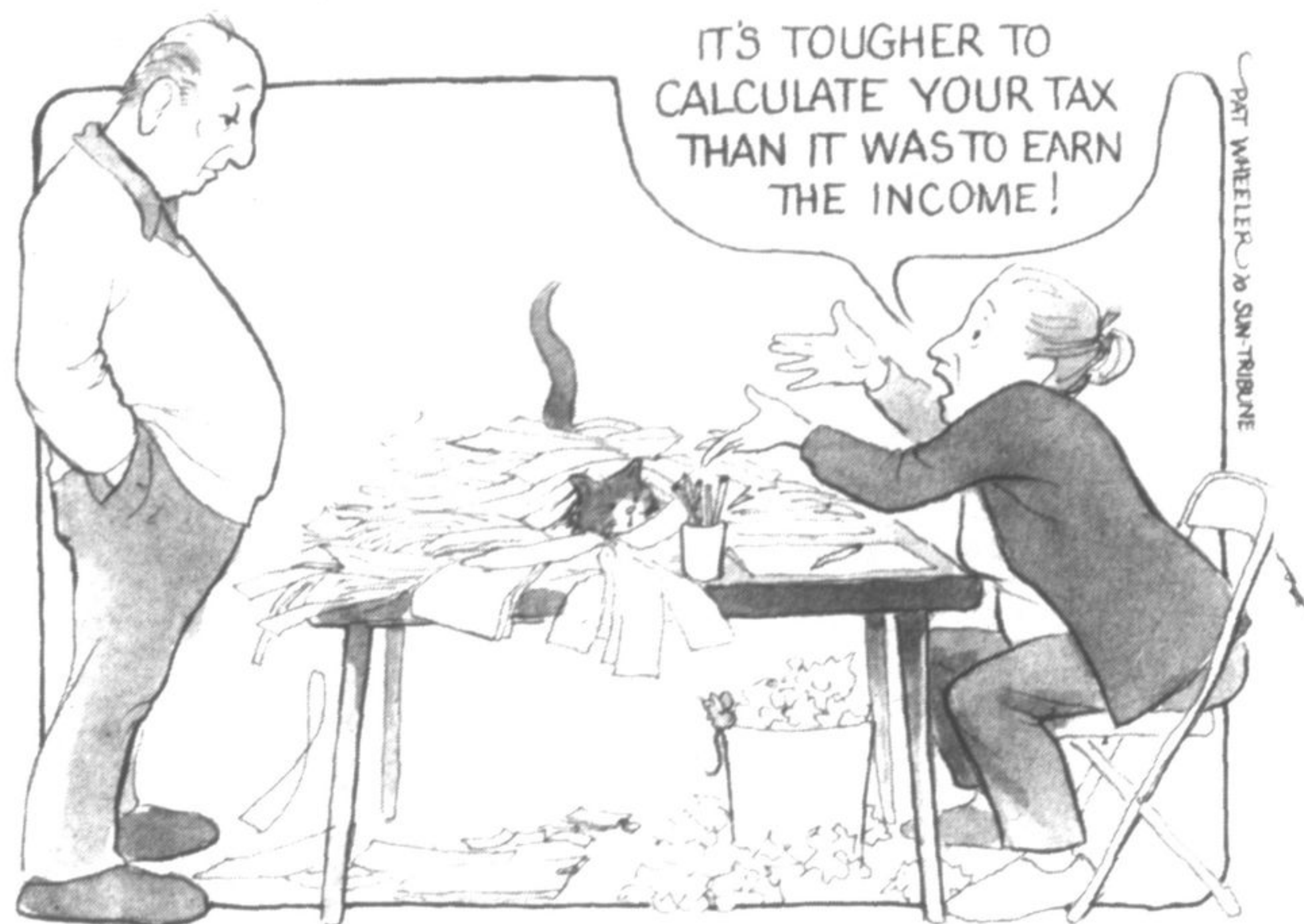
What's a resident to do if he has a complaint against a councillor? Unfortunately, the onus is on the resident to bring it forward, file the paperwork, pay out of pocket for the court fees and expend his own resources.

Investigations should not be left to novices. That's not justice and it's not checks and balances.

Maybe the province, with our tax dollars, can assign an ombudsman to independently research, determine the validity of each case and have the power to impose rulings under the act. While municipalities such as Aurora and Vaughan have integrity commissioners, their decisions are not binding — council has the ultimate power to ignore a recommendation.

One might be able to blithely say everything will be worked out at the ballot box this fall. And, sure, some activist citizens have been willing and financially able to investigate and lodge a complaint on their own. But the reality is few individuals have this option. Bottom line, the province should be ultimately responsible for ensuring the standards it sets through the Municipal Act are being met.

With six months to E-Day, if you think we need more provincial involvement in ensuring our councillors act in the most ethical, transparent and accountable manner possible, consider knocking on MPP Joe Bradley's door. He's in charge of the Municipal Affairs Ministry: jbradley.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org or 416-585-7000.



Letters to the Editor

In praise of Nineteen on Park

We hosted a fundraising party at Lebovic Centre for Arts & Entertainment - Nineteen On the Park this month.

The event featured dancing to a live band, gourmet finger foods, coffee and desserts and a silent auction. All proceeds went to the 2010 Ride to Conquer Cancer, which is a massive campaign to raise funds for cancer research.

This year, more than 3,000 riders will bike from the CNE grounds to Niagara Falls to raise money for research at Princess Margaret Hospital. These rides happen all across Canada and last year they raised more than \$14.5 million.

I wanted to share with our fellow Stouffville residents what a fantastic venue Nineteen On the Park is to hold an event like this.

Like most of us, I am guilty of complaining about the lousy job our governments tend to do when spending our hard-earned tax dollars, but in this case we came away clearly admiring the result of the massive renovations to this historic building.

Many in attendance raved about the quality of the venue and the very experienced band also commented on the exceptional acoustics. Being just off Main Street, the fact many guests could walk home was also a huge benefit.

The centre's mandate includes hosting charitable events such as ours, for which it charges a significantly reduced rate. That was key to the success of our event, but there was much more.

Many local businesses donated valuable items for the silent auction. Steven and Ashley from the hall were unfailing in their support and answering all of our questions and needs, no matter how trivial. They were fantastic.

Our goal was to raise \$3,000, and we ended up raising just over \$5,000.

Thank you to everyone who par-

ticipated in making this a success and we would strongly encourage the citizens of Stouffville to take advantage of this fantastic facility for events such as ours. It is just one more thing that makes living in Stouffville a pleasure.

JOHN ROMANIUK & MIKE WYNNE
STOUFFVILLE

All health care options should be covered

Why is it that the provincial OHIP and additional supplemental health care programs only pay for the use of extremely expensive pharmaceutical drugs and allopathic doctors when there are also fully qualified naturopathic and homeopathic doctors and medicine available, which can be a lot less expensive, but is not covered by our insurance?

I have been managing my cancer for more than eight years with the help of my oncologist (covered by OHIP) and my naturopath (not covered by OHIP).

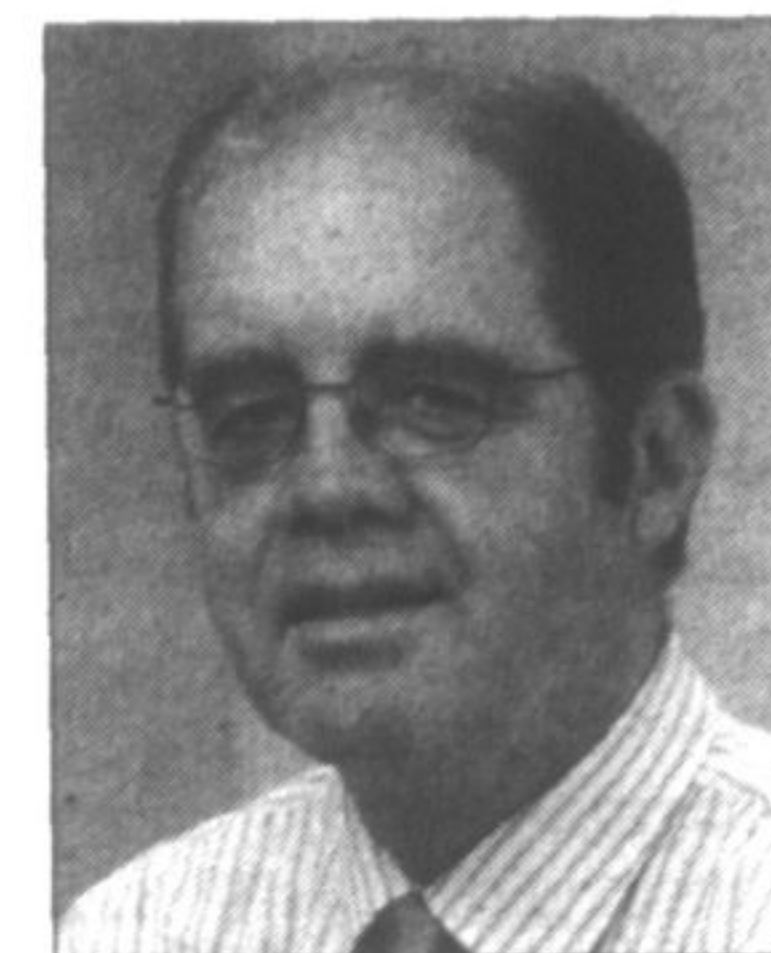
I have chosen to use treatments offered by my naturopath as being a lot less invasive than traditional chemotherapy.

However, even though these treatments are a fraction of the cost of chemo, I have to pay for them out of my own pocket and incur the financial stress.

As a taxpayer who has paid into the provincial system for more than 30 years, I feel all Canadian should have the choice of treatments, whether or not this is naturopathic, homeopathic or the traditional allopathic, and have all of these covered by our insurance.

In the long run, including these less expensive alternatives should be a whole lot better for all of us.

MARION SHEARER
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Family histories obliterated with one shot

I should have been a demolition man.

Or at least responsible for the fencing that goes around structures about to be removed from the skyline.

In Stouffville these days, there's plenty of work:

- Don't bother yelling "clean-up in Aisle 4" over the intercom at the old Canadian Tire on Main Street. As you read this, it could all be rubble. A new gas bar and who knows what else are to sprout up on the property.

- The old Stouffville District Secondary School is also coming down, where Edward Street meets Bramble Crescent across the soccer fields from the Stouffville Arena.

- The saddest sight of all is the homes down or about to come down for the realignment of the Ninth Line.

I know the Ninth will be a smoother ride with Hoover Welding, the Royal Canadian Legion, a piece of the Giles Chevrolet property and four houses out of the way.

I know accidents (like the one Saturday afternoon) should be less frequent with northbound motorists not ending up on Fairview Avenue and wondering "what in the heck just happened to the Ninth Line, Martha?"

But I think of the families forced to move from the houses they had turned into homes.

Fair market value is one thing, but family memories are a far more valuable commodity, at least in most family units.

Christmas mornings. Baby's first steps. Birthday parties. Family reunions. Barbecues with friends.

All gone with one swing of the wrecker's ball.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.