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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

### Celebration marred

On May 1, I held a birthday party for my 81-year-old Mom. To make room for family and friends in my driveway, I parked my own car on the street.

This car was brand-spanking new, the first new car I've ever owned. I work very hard to provide for myself and my children. We were all proud, not as much of the "new car" but of what it represented to us.

While we celebrated, someone bashed in the side of my car, it appears by kicking it. The quote to repair is \$931. My insurance deductible is \$1,000. Repairs must wait.

We did hear commotion outside, including loud voices. Our puppy barked.

There was smashed glass from a liquor bottle all over the ground. Just down the street, the fencing surrounding the old high school had also been damaged.

To all parents and school teachers who see this note, I

ask that you pass it on to the teenagers in your life and your classrooms. Remind them of the people they hurt.

**DEBORAH MACDONALD**  
STOUFFVILLE

### Proud to live in Stouffville

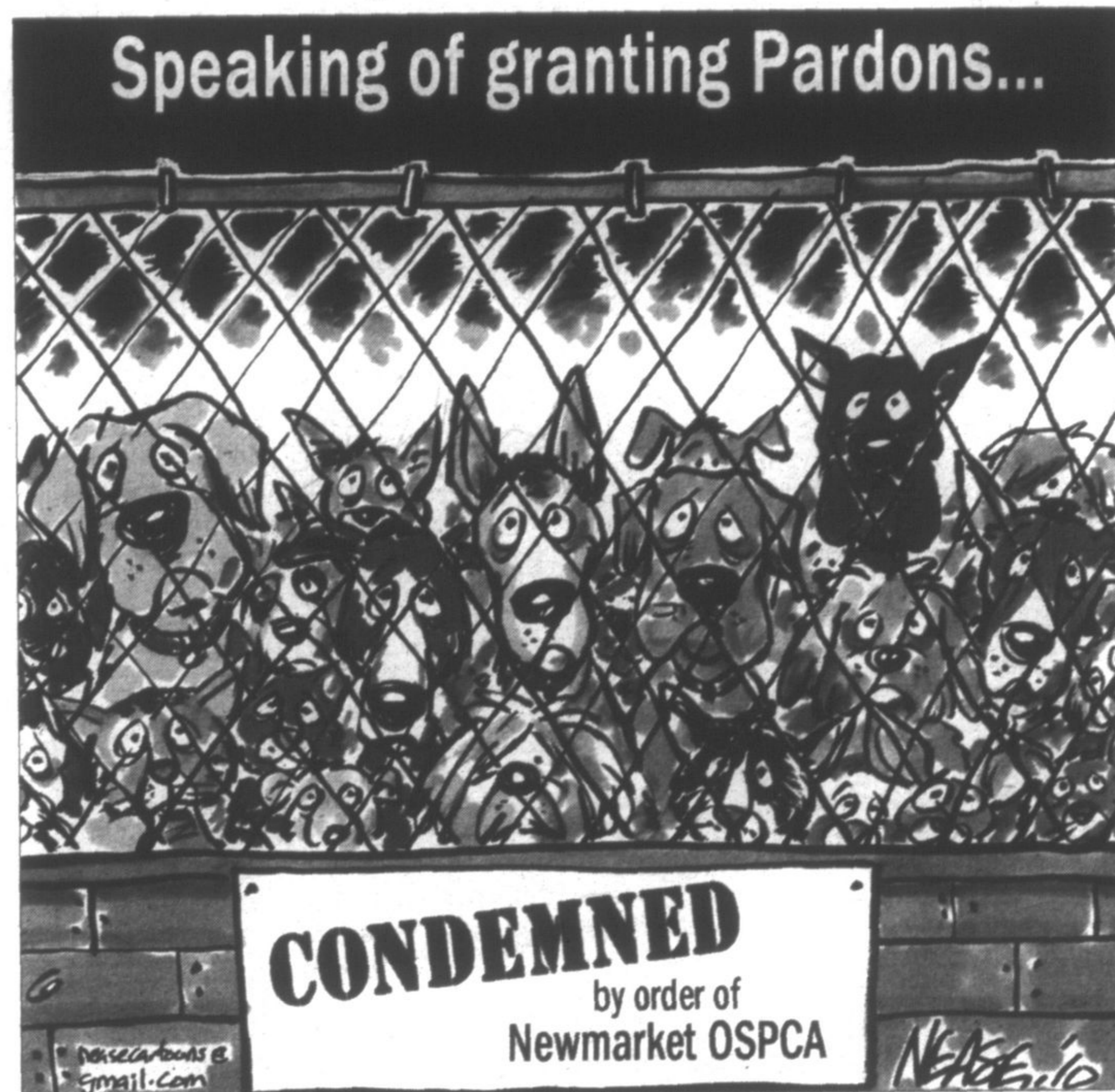
Congratulations to all those young families who were out May 1 cleaning up litter around Byers Pond and the pathways nearby.

We are seniors who enjoy walking the pathways near Hoover Drive, around the storm water management pond and over the small bridge that leads to James Ratcliff Avenue.

We congratulated those we saw working so diligently and they told us "this is where we live", therefore they were glad to do the pickup.

A fantastic job. You made us proud to call ourselves residents of Stouffville.

**BEV & CLIFF FLOYD**  
STOUFFVILLE



## I should know if I'm getting value for my money

**I**t's my money. Goddammit. I have every right to see if it's money well spent by the politicians who get their hands on it.

There is nothing more outrageous than governments that wilfully waste and abuse public funds, than governments that play hide-and-seek with the use of public funds.

At the federal level, Auditor General Sheila Fraser, who already scrutinizes MP spending through independent audits, rightly wants to take it a step further.

She thinks taxpayers should know if they are getting good value for the more than \$500 million our MPs spend annually.

Sounds good to me. And Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe, of all people.

But not so for politicians from every other party.

Now, I'd like to be fair. And I'd like not to jump to conclusions — such as: some MP is getting his moat cleaned on my dime!

But what possible reason could our politicians have for not opening their books?

I don't know about you, but it makes



**Debora Kelly**

me think they have something to hide. I hope it's not a clean moat.

Ms Fraser's call for a "performance audit" is about accountability.

Accountability that is standard procedure in the real world, where senior managers can expect their expenses to be closely examined by auditors. But the last time parliamentary spending was audited was 1991.

The Conservatives, Liberals and NDP have dragged their feet since Ms Fraser made the request nearly a year ago — well before the expense-claim scandal in Britain that brought to light taxpayer-funded moat and pool cleanings, mortgages and plasma TVs.

Should we be surprised by the Conservatives' lack of enthusiasm, given

that the information commissioner has concluded this government is the most secretive in history when it comes to answering access to information requests?

If you voted for the Conservatives based on their platform of openness and accountability, this is another reminder the joke is on you.

But the opposition is no better on this issue. While the Liberals and NDP routinely demand accountability in the House of Commons for the expenditure of tax dollars, both leaders, Michael Ignatieff and Jack Layton, have said they are content with the current level of scrutiny for their own spending.

Coyness on spending isn't exclusive to MPs.

Opposition Progressive Conservative attempts to bring in a Truth in Government Act was defeated in the Ontario legislature last week.

The taxpayer protection plan would have expanded freedom of information across government and ensured disclosure of hospitality expenses and contracts and grants over \$10,000.

Given the frivolous waste and abuse of billions of dollars that has occurred — at eHealth, Cancer Care Ontario and OLG, to name a few — we need to know how our money is being spent by the

McGuinty government.

Apparently, the Liberals — another party that campaigned on accountability and transparency — doesn't agree.

But it's my money. Goddammit.

In York Region, accountability comes with a price tag in some municipalities.

In Markham, where councillors cost taxpayers \$1.2 million in 2009, expenses are filed in broad categories such as mileage/gas, travel and meetings. If, like the attorney general, you would like more details, get out your cheque book.

While full-disclosure expense reports are accessible online for Vaughan and Toronto politicians, in Markham, it will cost about \$2,000 after you file a freedom of information request.

Richmond Hill has a similar policy. Bottom line, we have absolutely no reason to trust our politicians if they keep their books closed.

And it's our money. Goddammit.

Debora Kelly is editor in chief of the York Region Media Group.