

EDITORIAL

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York Region Media
Group community
newspapers

The Sun-Tribune, published every Thursday and Saturday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. Metroland is comprised of 100 community publications across Ontario. The York Region Newspaper Group also includes The Liberal, serving Richmond Hill and Thornhill, Vaughan Citizen, The Era-Banner (Newmarket/Aurora), Markham Economist & Sun, Georgina Advocate, York Region Business Times, North of the City, yorkregion.com and York Region Printing.

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.

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OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Council has bigger things than whistle to work on

Re: Train whistle wastes energy, awakens people unnecessarily, letter to the editor by Paul J. Youngman, Aug. 19.

You've got to be kidding me. Is Mr. Youngman for real?

I think trains have been around longer than him.

I think his neighbours are keeping their windows closed so they don't have to hear him complain about whatever it is he doesn't like on that day.

The trains go by five times both ways every weekday and many people depend on them; they don't just pass through for something to do.

Would it be worth it if one person walked or drove in front of a moving train because Mr. Youngman doesn't like the noise?

As for a potential danger, hello? These things weigh tonnes and tonnes. Do you think you can stop them easily

once they get going? Do you think that might be a danger?

I could see how some towns would have to consider a ban on train whistles, if freight trains came through five times a night, for instance.

But I think our elected officials have better things to take care of with the town finances than to study train whistles.

And to try to tell us that this could be a problem to kids' ears? I don't know any children that stand there every time the trains come by.

Worry about how to get our boys home from overseas or the hungry, unemployed and homeless.

Please, stop your ridiculous comments.

If you don't like the train whistle, move.

P. KOVACH
STOUFFVILLE

You can read letters and stories from The Sun-Tribune at yorkregion.com



Will you say 'I do' when someone comes knocking?

Summer's over, school's in and it's time to focus on the Big Day.

The Big Day, you ask?

Yes, the one signifying your willingness to join in a lasting partnership, in sickness and in health, for better and for worse.

Well, for the next four years anyway. Oct. 25 is municipal election day.

Wait, don't go — hear me out, please.

I've heard the arguments against making the Big Commitment, such as: you lose the freedom of having only yourself to think about; it's boring; and only naive suckers do it.

And I know many have taken the Big Leap, only to be left, shattered and disillusioned, in the wake of all the cheatin', lyin' and broken promises.

You're not alone in being divorced from politics, with voter turnout typically tracking in the 30-per-cent range across York Region.

I remain hopelessly romantic about our right to vote. I'm not the only one, plenty of candidates want to make a match Oct. 25.

Angel Freedman was the first to register in Richmond Hill, declaring her candidacy for Ward 4 councillor last



Debora Kelly

January. Despite her enthusiasm, she found many residents unaware of the Big Day.

"People say, 'Can I vote?', while others say, 'I don't vote,'" she tells me. "People aren't engaged. There's a disconnect between council and people — they don't feel a part of it."

So began her bid to sweep Ward 4 residents off their feet by educating them about local government. She's not taking no for an answer, insisting, "People do want to be engaged."

They care about development, traffic, taxes and the environment, she

says. All municipal issues.

Daniel Salvatore, running for Ward 2 councillor in Vaughan, also found residents in the dark about their election date and local government. He's willing to woo them.

"I'm informing them of what my duties would be... I'm bringing them up to speed. They're curious and they're encouraged that I'm taking the time to do this," he says.

"It's my duty to remind them, 'If you're unsatisfied, things won't change if you don't vote.'"

While "there is a lot of cynicism out there", plenty of residents actively follow council.

"If they're still talking beyond two minutes, they're voters," he says with the authority of a man who has knocked on more than 7,000 doors.

Youth has its appeal, in marriage and politics: "People like that I'm young, that I have a fresh approach," he adds.

With youthful optimism, he hopes new initiatives such as advance voting in places like the mall will boost turnout.

In Newmarket, Maddie Di Muccio, running for Ward 6 councillor, says most residents are aware of the election and are "astute" on the issues.

After working online and at doors since last January, she, too, uses the E word: "People want to be engaged."

Like monogamy, some see municipal politics as boring. There are no political parties — no swinging from the chandeliers, so to speak — on big life-and-country-defining issues.

Rather, it's on par with daily life, taking out the garbage, getting the kids to soccer practice, scooping the dog's poop and cutting the grass.

"A lot of people assume that municipal politics is boring," Ms Di Muccio protests.

"I was guilty of that myself. But if you talk about the issues, it's not boring at all. People do care and they do want to talk about it."

So why the low voter turnout? "Candidates aren't doing enough to engage citizens," she says.

Hopefully, you don't need a Jumbotron or sky-writing proposal to get engaged — we'll provide election supplements and ongoing coverage on issues, if that helps.

Please vote on Oct. 25.

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