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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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Editorial

We need more women in politics

Are there enough women in leadership positions in our town? Given that women make up half of the population of Whitchurch-Stouffville, why is there only one female councillor of the seven-member council running this town?

Much has been written about the so-called glass ceiling impeding women from reaching leadership positions in business and similarly in the House of Commons.

Politics, even on the local level, can be a blood sport and a very demanding position. Not all women — or men, for that matter — are willing to sacrifice personal and family time to be a politician who is virtually on call to voters 24/7.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities recognizes this is a concern across the country and is presenting a series of seminars to break down barriers and encourage more women to get ready to run in municipal campaigns to lead their towns and cities.

The national organization points out that actually 52 per cent of Canadians are women, yet only 24 per cent of the country's elected municipal representatives are female.

At the regional level, on the 20-member Region of York there are only three women, East Gwillimbury Mayor Virginia Hackson and Vaughan and Richmond Hill regional councillors Deb Shulte and Brenda Hogg, respectively.

When it comes to school trustees, the statistics aren't much better. One of eight women on the 12-member public school board represents East Gwillimbury and Whitchurch-Stouffville and of the eight women on the 10-member Catholic school board, the chairperson is Elizabeth Crowe, representing Whitchurch-Stouffville, King and Aurora.

The campaign series to encourage women to run for public office — financially supported by the Status of Women Canada — covers such aspects as campaign finances, media relations, how to present campaign literature and using social media.

The first session was offered in November, with the rest unfolding in January and February of the coming year. FCM hopes to boost elected female representation to the 30 per cent target suggested by the United Nations.

If you are a woman and believe you can do as well, or better, than the men currently offering leadership, now's the time to put your thoughts into action.

In three years there will be another municipal election, another chance for smart, caring, dedicated women to ask voters to elect them to council and school boards.

If you'd like to be one of those women, the federation of municipalities series might help; visit www.fcm.ca.

OH NO — THE BREAD IS SPICED FOR TURKEY DRESSING AND SHE USED REAL WINE, AND THE COMMUNION SERVICE IS ABOUT TO START!



Letters to the Editor

Tell relatives of deceased police patrols aren't needed

Re Van generating funds for police covert ops? letter to the editor by Steve Lusk, Dec. 3, and Do we really need cops in soccer mom vans? column by Bernie O'Neill, Nov. 24.

It is about time York Regional Police started using actual undercover cars for traffic patrol and not the dulled down Ford Crown Vic you can still spot from a mile away.

There are drivers out there who are a fatal-collision-waiting-to-happen and undercover traffic patrol will help get these drivers off of the road.

Driving is a privilege, not a right. The only people that will disagree with this program are the drivers who constantly look out for cop cars as they tailgate, run red lights, speed in excess and endanger lives.

I invite the naysayers to speak to anyone who has lost a loved one in a motor vehicle collision, where the other driver's careless driving was the reason their mom, dad, etc isn't coming home.

Pro-active policing is the only way to go. Thank you, York Regional Police. Come to my neighbourhood, I need a soccer mom to slow down some of the neighbours.

NICK HOCHER
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

Council blind to town it serves

Re: Council 'gives self' 43% raise, Nov. 17.

The other day my children asked why we don't have a big house with a three-door garage like the houses on the other street. I told them there is more than one way to measure your personal wealth. I reminded them of

all the things we have as a family that many people do not, most significantly our health.

Like my children, the town council of Whitchurch-Stouffville measures its wealth using a weak argument and limited vision. At least my children have an excuse.

Rather than measure their incomes and lucrative benefit packages to the income and benefit packages of the people who elected them, our town councillors measure their salaries to the salaries of the other overpaid councillors throughout the region.

Imagine if we all, as citizens, could give ourselves, right now, a raise of more than 40 per cent plus a benefits package equal to what our councillors currently receive. Our entire economy would tank in a year.

Examples of elected officials taking advantage of their privileged positions can be found everywhere. From a national defence minister who takes a search and rescue helicopter out of service to go joy riding, to our local councillors who give themselves the biggest raise in the region's history, we have endless stories of bad leadership at all levels of government to share with our children.

Greed is systemic in our current political culture, why should we think our local politicians are any different?

The "cost of living" that pushes up property taxes, along with our utility bills, on the cusp of a potential economic recession is the price we are paying for greedy leaders.

Our local council's enlightened self-interest with "what they deserve" has left it completely blind to a community's expectation of how they should serve and the mission of their office.

Happy holidays.

PETER MCNEIL
STOUFFVILLE



Bernie O'Neill

Governments can get creative to save cash

I read an article the other day about someone who put out a spoof press release saying Ottawa will give tax breaks to seniors who shovelled the sidewalks in front of their homes.

The joke appeared to be this strenuous endeavour was good for their health (and maybe our health care system?) and might even save them and the government some money, sore backs and heart attacks be damned.

Yet as governments everywhere seem to fall deeper and deeper into the red, the story got me thinking about what other incentives politicians might find themselves dreaming up.

Some are probably not that far from the truth.

ONTARIO HEALTH TAX REIMBURSEMENT: Parents who stitch their children's cuts or apply homemade casts on broken limbs will get \$200 back for each broken bone set or 10 stitches sewn, up to a maximum of four do-at-home medical procedures per year. For accidents that resulted in both deep gashes and broken bones, the reimbursement jumps to \$300.

Call the Health Ministry at 1-888-BAD-BREAK for your free sewing kit, plaster mix and children's extra strength Tylenol. (Or go online at healthsavingsforall.ca. Please include photographs or video proof of your child bleeding or writhing in pain. A repair kit will be sent within seven days. Please allow six to eight weeks for delivery.)

TRANSIT? WHAT TRANSIT? TAX REFUND: Transit workers may go on strike in your area and the people with the power to bring about a resolution really could not be bothered. Now you can get up to \$50 back to pay for new boots, parka, trail mix and bottle of brandy (keep your receipts), as you head out on foot to work or school in the driving snow. Again, think of what you're saving our health care system and the environment with your daily two-hour walks. Meanwhile, the region is saving \$77,000 per day.