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905-640-2612
Fax: 905-640-8778

EDITORIAL
ADVERTISING
905-640-2612
Classified: 1-800-743-3353
Fax: 905-640-8778

DISTRIBUTION
905-294-8244

EDITORIAL
Editor
Jim Mason
jmason@yrmg.com

ADVERTISING
Advertising Manager
Dave Williams
dwilliams@yrmg.com

ADMINISTRATION
Regional
Office Manager
Melanie Attridge
mattridge@yrmg.com

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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,
The Sun-Tribune
6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON
L4A 1G7
jmason@yrmg.com

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Stouffville
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6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON, L4A 1G7
www.yorkregion.com

PUBLISHER Ian Proudfoot

GENERAL MANAGER
John Willems

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Debora Kelly

DIRECTOR, PRODUCTION
Jackie Smart

DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS
Barry Black

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DISTRIBUTION
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Editorial

How to make our roads safer

Country Close to the City is the sometimes-mocked motto of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Problem is, when urban and rural get together, it can sometimes lead to trouble.

Especially on our roadways. Take the case of Marie Flynn.

The 67-year-old Stouffville resident had her car T-boned at Elgin Mills and Reesor roads in northern Markham last month.

Once wasn't enough.

It was the second time in five years she has been involved in a collision at the intersection just south of the Whitchurch-Stouffville border.

The east and westbound traffic on Elgin Mills has to stop at the intersection.

Supposedly.

We doubt Las Vegas could give odds on the same person being hit under the same circumstances at the same intersection, where collisions are a rarity, according to York Regional Police. It's mind-boggling.

So is the way we drive, especially when country meets city.

Many of our rural roads weren't built as commuter byways, but that's what they have become. They are backroad detours around our provincial highways and regional thoroughfares.

The same Reesor Road, which is still known as Tenth Line as it winds through Whitchurch-Stouffville, has a speed limit of 60 km/h between Stouffville and Markham. Yet, commuters and trucks regularly exceed that as they blow past school buses and tractors going to and from Toronto and southern York Region.

Police can't be everywhere to nab every speeder and stop-sign runner, just as they aren't catching every distracted driver out there.

Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson has suggested more roundabouts. His counterpart in Markham, Frank Scarpitti, has staff investigating.

Of course, we can all do a better job when we're behind the wheel.

We can also keep an eye on other drivers. Road Watch is an online program of York police that allows you to report speeding, unsafe lane changes, disobeying traffic lights and stop signs and other offences.

Police can follow up with vehicle owners, alerting them that bad driving has been reported.

It's not going to change the world, any more than a speeding ticket will.

But it could make our world a little more civil and safer.



Letters to the Editor

Easy way to double up on Stouffville GO line

Congestion is costing Markham and the GTA billions of dollars per year.

It's time for us to seriously consider upgrading the Stouffville GO Train line to all-day service.

The main reason it hasn't been done yet is because of lack of funding, as putting down a second track all the way to Lincolnville would be expensive.

However, there is a cheaper alternative that has not been considered.

The Ottawa O-Train manages to run two trains in opposite directions on a single track. This is accomplished by having a short "passing track" at one of the stations.

The trains are timed so that they meet and pass each other at this station.

This option should be seriously considered for the Stouffville GO Train line, as it would be much cheaper and quicker to build than laying down a second track for the entire distance.

JOSHUA TOSSAVAINEN
MARKHAM

Watch for your bill to pay off Ontario's debt

Re: Could teacher dispute be about money, after all? opinion column by Debora Kelly, Jan. 26.

Ms Kelly quotes EFTO-York Region president David Clegg in a memo to union stewards as saying "if Ontario's other nine million taxpayers also chipped in \$42,000 each, the Ontario debt would be paid off. He may be on to something.

According to Mr. Clegg, the average York Region elementary school teacher will be contributing \$40,500 in retirement gratuities and \$1,237 in lost wages

HAVE YOUR SAY, STOUFFVILLE

► What do you think of these issues or others? E-mail letters to the editor to jmason@yrmg.com

in 2013-2014 from their pockets toward the debt.

When does the bill arrive at every other Ontarian's door to help pay their share?

NELSON DE CASTRO
RICHMOND HILL

Bring back photo radar

Let's look at the legal issue of speed iug. Should I be allowed to thumb my nose at speed limit laws? On just highways or is it OK to speed in school zones?

What other laws can I ignore simply because I disagree with them? Can I steal a candy bar? A flat screen? Can I bump off a few folks who I think are a waste of oxygen?

Why bother having any laws at all? Why tell our kids to obey laws when we break a speed limit on every day we drive?

I strongly support photo radar with the caveat that it is a cash grab that will be 100 per cent directed to the capital budgets of rapid transit systems.

All of the revenue collected would be given to communities that implemented photo radar but it could only be used to build new transit.

GREG HANNAH
MARKHAM



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Re-construction on in Spiritville

The Stouffville Spirit season will finish with an unusually quiet whimper tonight.

No Ontario Junior Hockey League playoffs for the first time in Spiritville since Jean Chretien was prime minister. No parking three blocks from the Stouffville Arena before staking out a spot to lay your blanket in the chilly, blue bleachers.

No graduates committed to scholarships at big-time U.S. colleges. No scoring kings.

In fairness, it's a lot tougher to make the post season in the 22-team OJHL than it was five or 10 years ago when only a couple of the 37 squads weren't invited to the dance.

But for loyal fans, it's gotta be rough. Ten months ago, they were celebrating the team's first OJHL championship win before watching it fall one agonizing win shy of a berth in the national tournament.

Only four players from that title team will be on the roster when the Spirit hosts the Aurora Tigers in the season-ender tonight.

(The Tigers, second-round playoff victims of the Spirit last year, have gone in the opposite direction. After opening the vault to player acquisitions, they're on the cusp of clinching the North Division title.)

The silver lining for the Spirit? Every player is eligible to return next year from what team officials call the youngest team in the nation. Some will graduate to higher levels, including Marc Stevens, who will be with Guelph in the Ontario Hockey League. Some won't be invited back. It's the nature of the beast.

Spirit general manager Kenny Burrows, reigning OJHL executive and Stouffville sports person of the year, will return. The architect of past Spirit glory is also one of four franchise owners.

The heat will be on to produce a bounce-back and show fruit from the many moves made this season.

Jim Mason, a former director with the Stouffville Spirit Jr. A team, is editor of The Sun-Tribune.