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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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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Seniors should get break on school taxes

Fourteen years ago, I moved from Toronto to the wonderful town of Newmarket.

I raised three children, all of whom attended school in town, so I didn't mind paying school taxes for them.

They all grew up and left home, but I was still working, so I still didn't mind the education taxes.

But now that I'm a senior citizen, why can't I get a 20 or 25-per-cent reduction on my school taxes?

I know of many houses in town that have two or three families living in them, all with school-age kids, yet only the homeowner pays school taxes.

My second pet peeve is the running of the Ontario government.

To me, all politicians want is to see how much they can stuff into their pockets.

HAVE YOUR SAY, WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

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

These government executives each get a week off at Christmas and about three months of holidays in the summer.

Then, they can retire with a \$120,000 annual pension.

I have been retired for 22 years and my pension might be \$14,000 per year.

V. GODFREY
NEWMARKET

You can read letters, columns and stories from The Sun-Tribune on yorkregion.com



Considering its benefits, growth usually wins in York

Housing starts are referred to as a leading economic indicator because it's something you might want to try to keep an eye on, or even influence, considering what they indicate about how the rest of the economy is likely to do later on.

So, if housing starts are up, usually good things follow for the economy in the months and years ahead. Why?

Part of the reason is it means jobs for people who build houses, who supply the materials, who work at the banks that look after the financing.

With the money they make at those jobs, they buy things (cars, clothes, food), which helps other businesses.

Also, once houses are built, people need furniture to put in those houses, appliances for the kitchen, wallhangings for the walls, plants for the planters and beds for the bedrooms.

They have to buy all that stuff somewhere, that somewhere hopefully being the stores in our community you might own or where you might work.

Meanwhile, their hair needs cutting, their teeth need cleaning, their cars need tuning, their kids need



Bernie O'Neill

tutoring. A whole service industry springs up around them.

They might put in a swimming pool. A company needs to be hired to do that. They might want a deck and hire someone for that. And so on.

This phenomenon is what makes York Region the wealthy place it is. Ontario is growing, people are coming here from around the world, new houses and condos are being built, bringing thousands of new residents, who you might also call customers.

Nevertheless, some people wish we didn't have all these housing starts, that things didn't need to change so much, so fast or that every home didn't have to look virtually the same, with brown brick walls, black rooftop, white or

brown garage door.

Where's the character, the variety that can make a community at least a little more visually interesting? Enter the highrises which, again, a lot of people don't seem to like.

They also complain about traffic congestion, a valid concern.

(Frankly, some of the efforts to combat traffic woes have to make you wonder. For instance, the bus rapidways — the buses will travel up the centre of busy streets, meaning passengers will need to cross a couple of lanes — granted, at the light — every time they get on or off of a bus. Considering the way people drive these days, you have to wonder if this is safe. The region will need 200 red light cameras to combat this, not just 20.)

The point here is, growth has many challenges. But many will push to see growth continues in their community, considering the benefits.

Petitions and protests may get people's attention, but growth usually wins out.

Some consider this a sad reality, but either way, it is reality.

On a lighter note, I will say I may have come up with a way to keep people going out to buy new things, without having to build so many houses.

My solution? Everyone should

immediately go out and buy a puppy.

I say this from personal experience, having recently become the co-owner of one Ruby three weeks ago.

With AOP ("acquisition of puppy") as my own leading economic indicator (it's also a sound she makes, "Aop!"), it appeared at one point I may need new furniture, new carpets, new legs for the kitchen chairs, in fact new anything that can be peed on, chewed on or worse.

This is not to say I do not love the puppy, who is learning fast, is 98-per-cent house broken, plays with a "soft mouth", as they say, and does not bite, and really is a beautiful, smart and gentle dog, part lab and part collie.

It's just that, like a Canadian senator, if you take your eye off her for more than, say, 10 seconds, should could well do something she's not supposed to.

Hopefully, through proper training, she'll grow up to do incredible tricks and become a Hollywood star dog (movies, cellphone commercials) and support me in my old age.

For now, though, she is doing her part to keep the economy humming as we make repeated store trips for chew toys, training treats and new slippers.

Stouffville resident Bernie O'Neill is a York Region Media Group editor.