

# OPINION



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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  
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## Editorial

# You deserve option of voting online next year

### ISSUE

**Whitchurch-Stouffville council is  
considering online and telephone  
voting for the 2014 election.**

**Y**ou probably don't bank like you did in 1982. You don't make a purchase at the LCBO using a short pencil and small piece of paper. And Consumers Distributing, which also forced you to fill out a form to buy an item, close its last store before many of you were born.

But we still vote like it's 1982 - or even 1882 - in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Town council will have an opportunity to change that next month.

We agree with a staff report that recommends online and telephone voting should be part of our 2014 election.

Electronic voting is not the magic elixir that will increase voter turnout 13 months from now - but it is the step in the right direction for a forward-thinking community.

Online voting, even only for the advance polls, will be more inclusive. Think of the disabled, our students living away from home and the single parents in our community who may not be able to get out to vote on election day.

Consider the commuter who boards a train at 7 a.m. and doesn't return to our community for 12 hours.

Environmentally speaking,

online voting uses less material goods. It will also mean fewer drivers on our roads on election day and a reduced carbon footprint.

Older voters can still head to the polls and use a pencil to vote. It's their tradition. It's a social experience for them.

But our younger neighbours are banking, shopping, reading newspapers and reserving books at our library on their phones and laptops.

Call it convenience or service. It is the way of the day.

Think of online voting as an extension of the e-services package the town is providing our residents.

It's not free - about \$3 per voter - but it is the future as the Ontario communities that welcomed online voting in 2010 and previously noted.

York Region Media Group newspapers across the region, including The Sun-Tribune, along with our Community Links Panel citizen groups, are attempting to increase voter turnout in our communities to the 50 per cent mark.

We call it The Big 5-0 project.

We call online voting progress.

We hope you and your councillors can vote for that.

**BOTTOM LINE: You are doing  
everything from banking to  
shopping online already.**

**Is there an issue about which you are passionate?  
You could be a Saturday Forum contributor and  
get the chance to have your piece published along  
with your name and headshot. E-mail your 450-word  
submission to [jmason@yrmg.com](mailto:jmason@yrmg.com)**

## LETTER OF THE WEEK

### Cyclists disobeying rules of road

*Re: Cyclist's death no shock to riders, Aug. 31.*

While I agree cycling can be dangerous, I go out often on weekends and I have to say I don't see packs of cars:

- running red lights and stop signs;
- riding side by side, forcing motorists to leave their lane;
- pulling up beside vehicles, blocking their view to safely cross the intersection - the intersection the motorist arrived at first.

The list goes on...

In case you haven't figured it out, I see cyclists breaking the law often. Just talk to anyone who lives up here in the "bush" about all of the city slicker cyclists who swarm our roads on the weekend, breaking laws and, quite frankly, being a nuisance.

And let's all be honest with ourselves here. Yes, cyclists, you pay taxes, too. But motorists pay more. And what we pay goes into the roads for maintenance and improvement. Also, we pay insurance. It is also expensive.

Do cyclists pay insurance? No. Even though under the Highway Traffic Act, a bicycle is a vehicle, you do not pay any fee or have to hold any insurance. You don't even have to wear a helmet if you don't want. Huh.

Until you cyclists start paying fees equal to what motorists pay and for insurance, I

think you should keep quiet. Motorists pay a lot of money and we will not be run off the road by non-contributors.

And maybe if cyclists followed the rules and didn't clog the road and force drivers to risk legal recourse for leaving a lane, you might actually have a case or, at least, some respect from motorists.

But everyone knows the truth about cyclists, they just can't admit it. Cyclists don't belong on roadways. It doesn't mean they can't use them.

But cyclists, you will never get whatever it is you are looking for because when our ancestors were building this country, they were building for the future and growth, not accommodating a certain few who don't like cars.

If you want your own "bicycle road-network", go raise money and start building. You cyclists force motorists to break the law, on roadways we pay for.

York Region forests also have a lot of trails to ride on. No cars there.

And why did Steven Kemp of the region say motorists should "re-evaluate the way we use roads"? He should think before he makes a comment to the media.

I'm fairly sure there are more motorists out there paying his salary through taxes than cyclists.

**NICK HOCHER**  
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

### Distracted drivers most dangerous

*Re: Bad, distracted drivers  
need to be blitzed, column by  
Jim Mason, Aug. 29.*

I have been following that situation with interest for some time and this problem is progressively getting worse.

It wasn't more than a few months ago I read it was most likely inevitable distracted driving deaths would outnumber drunk-driving deaths in the near future.

Last Thursday morning, just before I read Jim Mason's column, I was reading the Globe Drive section of the Globe and Mail.

In a small article, provincial police Deputy Commissioner Larry Beechey said 47 of the 177 deaths on provincially patrolled roads this year involved distracted driving, compared to 32 impaired driving-related

deaths.

We're there. Distracted driving is more dangerous than drunk driving.

Maybe MADD should change its name to Mothers Against Distracted and Drunk Driving.

Drivers should turn off cellphones when they drive and if caught, should face the same punishment as drunks. Then maybe we could get the 47 deaths down to 32, also.

**ROB MACLAREN**  
STOUFFVILLE

### 'Zoo' rabbits escaped

*Re: Stouffville zoo no  
more, column by Jim Thom-  
as, Aug. 29.*

"As the story goes, two rabbits escaped from a pet owners yard", Mr. Thomas wrote. Well, I can tell you now with certainty the origins of this story are true.

Up until this February my animal-loving sister,

Rebecca, lived on Commercial Street, which runs just off Mill Street. With the help of our dad, Rebecca and her four-year-old son, Logan, built a very large outdoor enclosure for many guinea pigs and rabbits to live in.

While we did our best to chase them down and return them home when they invented new escape routes, a few sneaky rabbits made it out once in a while.

Though I feel a small need to apologize for the destruction of what I am sure was a few neighborhood plants, we all just want to give our thanks.

To the neighbors on Mill who fed and cared for the runaways, thank you for giving them love. To the people who went the extra mile to take them in and make enclosures, we hope you or your kids had as much fun as Logan did.

**SAM CLAPPERTON**  
STOUFFVILLE