

Free Opinion

The (precarious) Walk of Life

Council's ill-judged decision to reject a crosswalk in the vicinity of the GO station means we'll probably have to wait until some hapless resident gets struck by a car before the lesser form of life known as the pedestrian is given basic protection from the constant flow of traffic on Main Street.

The reason people jaywalk is not because they want to flout the rules, or play Russian roulette with their lives, but because there is a gap of almost 900 metres between the traffic lights at Ninth Line and the ones at Market and Mill streets. Those of us who live close to the downtown core and stubbornly persist in walking often see frail older residents and people with small children and strollers trying desperately to make a safe crossing. And heart-

warming though reports that Ward 3 councillor Hugo Kroon always stops for pedestrians are, can he guarantee that other drivers will operate in the same noble spirit? And if they don't, whose fault will it be when someone gets run over?

As editor of this newspaper, I constantly jaywalk, since I live between the two sets of lights and often weave my way through streams of traffic to catch a bus, enjoy a coffee at Red Bulb, or drop into the Latcham Gallery, the IDA and other stores on the north side of Main Street. Luckily I am fast on my feet, but the same is not true for many people, especially those who are no longer able to drive, or who are deluded enough to believe that taking their children for a walk is a healthy and

sensible idea.

Pedestrian traffic signals are not just needed for the constantly growing number of GO train users; they're essential for residents of Buckingham Manor and Stouffville Creek, local students and many others whose principal form of transportation is walking. Given that council voted to discuss the situation with Metrolinx in the hopes that the transit agency could provide a solution, maybe we should ask the latter to install a button that would lower the train gates whenever someone wants to cross the street.

The fact is, it's the town's problem to address, and the need for a safe crosswalk has been obvious for many years. To defer it yet again is a signal that pedestrians continue to be regarded as second-class citizens.

Free Thoughts



Readers Write

A Sustainable Offer For Community Energy

To the Editor:

Suppose the Whitchurch-Stouffville Energy Co-operative offered you \$800,000. Would you take it? You would ask some sensible questions, of course, but I think you would.

On Jan 20, 2015 the 110-member co-operative offered the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville an opportunity to take over our Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) contract for producing renewable energy. The town would have to finance the solar installation at 3.07 per cent from Infrastructure Ontario, as many municipalities across Ontario do to finance local infrastructure, but the project would cover all costs, including financing, and leave the town with over \$800,000 in net income.

This represents over three years of work by a group of residents who put in a lot of hours to make it happen. We want to make a difference; we want a more environmentally sustainable community.

We have a green project ready to be built: a 260kW solar generator on top of the Clippers Arena that will generate energy to our community. We hoped it would be 100 per cent community-owned, but the obstacles and delays we have faced mean we were unable to raise the capital ourselves.

Why not transfer the project to the

town? It is on town property, and other municipalities are doing it. The Town of Markham has built over 1,400kW of solar power on municipal roofs.

On Jan. 20 we presented this opportunity to the new council, who agreed to refer the matter to town staff.

But the opportunity is not finalized. Staff will bring back a report to council by the end of March. And we have lots of reason to be less than optimistic.

Through the proposed partnership the town will receive a net income of over \$800,000 over the 20 year contract. In return we are asking them to establish an environmental legacy fund to support further actions toward building a more sustainable community.

Our co-operative is giving the new council an opportunity to distinguish itself, to take this bold yet sensible step with an exciting green energy project, and join the shift toward sustainable living.

Call your ward councillor and the mayor and ask what are they going to do to support environmental action in our community. Visit www.energycoperative.ca for more details.

Harry French
Board member
Whitchurch-Stouffville
Energy Co-operative

Free Laughs

Guest Appearances

We labour to make a house a home, then every time we're expecting visitors, we rush to turn it back into a house.

Robert Brault

A dinner invitation, once accepted, is a sacred obligation. If you die before the dinner takes place, your executor must attend.

Ward McAllister

Hospitality is making your guests feel at home, even if you wish they were.

Anon

People are far more sincere and good-humoured at speeding their parting guests than on meeting them.

Anton Chekhov

My evening visitors, if they cannot see the clock should find the time in my face.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Even today, we'll brought up English girls are taught by their mothers to boil all veggies for at least a month and a half, just in case one

of the dinner guests turns up without his teeth.

Calvin Trillin

Quite a nasty piece of work. Not the sort of person you'd want to have dinner with.

Rowan Atkinson on Mr. Bean

Of course I don't want to go to a cocktail party. If I wanted to stand around with a load of people I don't like eating bits of cold toast I can get caught shoplifting and go to Holloway (prison).

Victoria Wood

If the soup had been as warm as the claret, if the claret had been as old as the chicken, if the chicken had been as fat as the host, it would have been a splendid meal.

Donald McCullough

She was so glad to see me go that I have almost a mind to come again, that she may again have the same pleasure

Samuel Johnson

Sometimes the fresh load of guests would turn up

before we had got rid of the previous group, and the chaos was indescribable; the house and garden would be dotted with poets, authors, artists, and playwrights arguing, painting, drinking, typing, and composing. Far from being the ordinary, charming people that Larry had promised, they all turned out to be the most extraordinary eccentrics who were so highbrow that they had difficulty in understanding one another.

Gerald Durrell, *My Family and Other Animals*

The only advantage of not being too good a housekeeper is that your guests are so pleased to feel how very much better they are.

Eleanor Roosevelt

To be an ideal guest, stay at home.

E.W. Howe

Visits always give pleasure - if not the arrival, the departure.

Portuguese Proverb

Stouffville Free Press

Whitchurch-Stouffville's independent community owned newspaper

UP AND COMING

The Stouffville Free Press welcomes community event listings from non-profit groups and organizations. Please send a brief synopsis of upcoming events by email to stouffvillefreepress@rogers.com

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